‘STARE INTO MY FEAR’:

Contemporary Japanese Narratives on the “Comfort Women”

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Contents

Suppose I feel a pain which on the evidence of the pain alone, e.g., with closed eyes, I should call a pain in my left hand. Someone asks me to touch the painful spot with my right hand. I do so and looking round perceive that I am touching my neighbour's hand (meaning the hand connected to my neighbour's torso).

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations"*

Writing the rifts that can never be closed up, the traces of *the events'* violence as scars into our present stories—it is that which the possibility of sharing the memories of *the events* is staked upon.

Oka Mari, *Kioku/monogatari* (*Memories/Stories*)

My hair is falling out. My teeth are falling out. I have rashes. After the amnesty deadline I enter my house like a stranger. And barren. I sit around for days. Staring. [. . .]

No poetry should come forth from this. May my hand fall off if I write this.

So I sit around. Naturally and unnaturally without words. Stunned by the knowledge of the price people have paid for their words. If I write this, I exploit and betray. If I don't, I die. Suddenly my grandmother's motto comes to mind: when in despair, bake a cake.

Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*

I think it's less about the role of the person giving testimony and more about what attitude the listener adopts toward him or her. How do they go about participating in the process of recollection, how do they remember "together" with the speaker a past that they themselves have not experienced? Perhaps it is admissible to term this "mutual recollection", even when the two have no shared horizons, but what that means is creating a past that intervenes in "the now".

Yoneyama Risa, comment in a discussion featured in Tomiyama Ichirō ed. *Kioku ga katarihajimeru* (The Memories are Starting to Speak)

A nation's literature must tell its citizens the truth, including that about its crimes, and literature must voluntarily participate in confronting the past and the crimes it contains. I am convinced of that.

Christa Wolf, "*Nihon no dokusha e*" ("To Japanese Readers")

But this search for ways to turn memory into something that is neither toxic nor addictive must begin by recognising the diversity of the dead and the complexity of the experience of war. It must find ways of crossing the frontiers between 'our dead' and 'theirs', remembering both together without denying the differences of their experiences.

Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Lest We Remember...The Future of the Past in Japan and Australia"

Preface

As the testimonials of former “comfort women” from the 1930s and 40s publicly emerged in the 1990s, it became clear that public discourse about the Second World War as understood by the postwar generation in Japan had to be put under critical reexamination. Up till now, the image of the war most commonly shared was based on stories told by the survivors of the atom bombs, Tokyo air-raid and the Battle of Okinawa, which created a narrative which highlighted the cruelty of war and the importance of pacifism. The testimony of the so-called military “comfort women” has brought the Japanese face to face with the fact that there is a portion of public memory that is deliberately not addressed when the Second World War comes up as a discussion topic within schools, the mass media and various kinds of cultural forums in Japan.

This project is an attempt to examine the reception given within Japanese society to the testimonials of former “comfort women” and to focus upon how accounts of the acts of cruelty and war crimes committed by Japanese soldiers in the Imperial Army have been received after the war. It is concerned with the question of how individuals have responded to these historical facts concerning the war crimes committed by the previous generation after they became publically known from the 1990s onwards. It also demonstrates the variety of ways in which people have confronted the past colonialism and its memories. The differing opinions between generations on the topic, the confusion and embarrassment that results from knowing the facts, the various reactions to the testimony, or else a failure to react and a lack of interest, the question of how coming into contact with the testimony altered people's view of the war or sent it down a different track, and the question of what possibilities there are for meeting with the children and grandchildren of the victims or the perpetrators—by looking into all of these issues, I hope to consider the way in which war memories are formed and passed on within Japanese society.

On a personal note, it was having the opportunity to listen to the testimony of former “comfort women” in 2010 which directly formed the impetus for me to conceive this project. Being confronted by the physicality and the voices of women actually giving testimony is a very different experience from that of reading their testimonials on paper, or learning about them through films or video clips. The shock that I received listening first-hand was overpowering, and, as a listener, I didn't know how to take it in, or how I could put it into words. From the earnest pleas of those affiliated with the support movements to the fact-denying statements of

the historical revisionists, there are countless commentaries about “comfort women” as a political issue—for the dominant discourse about the issue is political—but it seemed as though the questions of the experiences that *individuals* had had in listening to the “comfort women’s” testimony, or how this testimony can be accommodated within the body of other war memories passed down via families or communities, had been neglected. It was with an awareness of this problem in mind I set out, voice recorder in hand, to visit those who were familiar with the testimonials of “comfort women.”

The interviewees include people of various age, profession, gender and nationality who had come into contact with the testimony of “comfort women.” Honestly, eliciting people’s reactions to the issue of military “comfort women” was no easy matter in present-day Japanese society where there is a strong tendency for even close friends to avoid political topics of discussion—through fear of conflict, or political apathy, or else as a kind of defence mechanism that makes people wary of engaging with troublesome topics. Many interviewees were rather reluctant to talk about “comfort women,” which has now developed into an international political issue and is the subject of much media wrangling. Also, there were interviews that I could not include here for various reasons; some interviewees declined to continue after the first meeting, the others showed hesitation about their comments being published. I realised from these experiences that some people who really had something to say about this topic, understanding the pain of women as their own, preferred remain silent.

What follows is the scripts of these interviews, as well as a poetic essay concerning the experience of listening to the live testimonials, and a journal. My initial plan was to keep my private thoughts to an absolute minimum throughout the project, but I later revised this idea, owing in part to the guilt and discomfort I started to feel about placing myself in the position of a reporter who simply threw out questions without being confronted by them. There was also another reason for my decision, which was more personal. Through my dialogues with the interviewees, I felt that this represented a chance for me to historicize my personal familiarisation with the issue that had taken place over several decades, and that I needed to note these ideas down in some form. Therefore, the journal came to include personal entries and autobiographical recollections amongst other notes documenting my work, excerpts from news reports, jottings about books I'd read, and so on.

In carrying out this project, particularly in the process of creating the interview scripts, I tried to create a communal workspace and share knowledge about the issue with others. This idea was conceived because many of the interviewees told me that they experienced difficulty in finding reliable sources of information, which was understandable considering the current political situation surrounding this issue. The Japanese government has been doing its best to control the media, and the revisionists' loud campaigns have flourished, particularly in cyber space. So, building up a common ground of knowledge as to the historical facts, which may seem indisputable to foreign readers, was extremely important in the process of interviews and compiling the scripts. I often shared books, films and exhibition materials with the interviewees, exchanged views about the contents, and discussed how the script should be compiled. After these experiences I naturally came to believe, if the act of writing could be realised as a place of interaction and dialogue with others, then that would be the most fitting way of dealing with this issue.

(14th August, 2014)

Note:

The title of the project comes from the words of Pak Yong-Sim, a former "comfort woman" living in North Korea: "I am speaking the truth. You must stare into my fear." (Nishino Rumiko, *Shōgen ni dō mukiauka* (How Should We Approach Testimony? p.246.) I would like to express my gratitude to the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM), for whose help in the realization of this project I am much indebted.

Part 1

Stare Into My Fear

Stare Into My Fear

1

Speaking about the events, or else, the impossibility of doing so. Even those who have taken the decision to speak cannot entirely own the ensuing narrative. The speaker plays a merely passive role, their attempt at speech fated to be abortive. Those cries that spill out from the gnarled body. The loss of memory that is necessary for survival. Crouching down on the shoreline of speech. Just when it appears that things are about to take shape, they are swept away again by the counter-current, the memories of the events dragged back inside the body. There they continue to torment the speaker relentlessly, and each time a wave hits, the supine body cannot stop itself from being eaten away by the darkness.

These are the kinds of wounds where the only chance for survival is to not look at them directly. Energy which has no other place to go attacks your body's own cells. You are overcome by the impulse to take someone by the shoulders and shake them, to scream with all your might, but you know that actually, you cannot so much as whisper a plea for help. The vast amount of energy used up by staying silent. This foreign entity that has remained locked away inside the body, not let out for a half a century, has distorted your internal organs, giving rise to an untold amount of pain and discomfort which defies scientific explanation. It sets about working upon every cell in your body—turns on you, the owner of that body, as an enemy. All the cells in your body bare their fangs. The unfathomably long span of time for which you endure that foreign entity buried inside your body.

2

When the words produced have a life staked upon them, when the words themselves are bleeding, how can one accompany them? In particular: at the times when I am holding my breath and straining my ears, and you are contorting your face in pain and wringing out the words from your thin body to reproduce a picture of past violence, heedless of the tears that are spilling down your face. At the times when I am to some extent responsible for those words being required of you over and over again. You thrust your hands inside those memories that have been lost to enable your survival, combat the attempts on the part of life itself to prevent their vocalization, in order to gouge out the fleshy lumps of memory. The one giving testimony, and the one taking it in. In what relationship do you and I stand to one another at that time?

Unlike the clumsy, uncomfortable language that is used to speak of the pain, your body is extremely eloquent. Talking of those things endangers your very existence, and just as the fact of your standing there alongside the memory of those events sends emotion shaking its way through your body, which then takes hold of me. The voice creeping up, crushing your organs. Even someone like me who doesn't speak your language can sense your rage, your despair, your desperation as it tears open the seal of your memory and tries to speak of the events. With trembling hands, you hold out the lump of flesh you have ripped out. I take it in my two hands, enraptured. What does staring into your fear really mean? Will I be able to see it?

3

When, after such a long time, the events hidden away deep inside the body are given a voice, you observe them shift across from one language to another. The interpreter must take those bleeding words in straight away, chew them up, and then instantly spit them back out in a different language. I remember how one of the interpreters at the public hearings of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Committee, said the following: "Because you use the first person all the time. I have no distance when I say 'I' . . . it runs through me with I."[1] Silence, moans, sobs. When these are drawn into the body, recomposed in a different language, and given shape by the interpreter's own voice, whose memory is that interpreter's body reliving? Interpreting: a task which requires accuracy and precision. The shock at what one's own voice is enunciating, the impulse to recoil from it. The emotional response, the contagiousness of it. Such are the arduous conditions to which the body of the interpreter, too, is subject.

4

An auditorium: you are in the audience. People with passes strung from their necks flock around the figures on stage, and no sooner have the cameras, held like weapons, given out their first flash than the blood in your body begins to surge in the wrong direction, you sense the ground wobbling beneath your feet, and you have to grab onto a nearby hand rail to catch your breath. The flashes expose the bodies of the witness all at once. The hair tied up and slicked back, the oval face covered in deep wrinkles, the bony neck supporting it, the slim arms sticking out of a man's shirt—the cameras attempt to capture these as the marks of the "victim". With no place to hide herself on stage, she stays rooted to the spot. Her determined expression vanishes, her shell snaps shut, and it seems to you that she has lost her face, though she still has it. You find that the colour has drained from your vision, too.

The primitive violence inherent in the relationship between those who give testimony and those who listen to it. You think of the distress of the speaker who has to face their memories of the events, again and again, aware all the time of the strangers' gaze upon her. The camera flash that rips open the space at that moment brands the figure on stage with a sign—a sign which seems to you to rob her of all other traits. The cameras not only make visible the guilt of the people staring at her on stage, but also unexpectedly reveal what lies inside of you. Your field of vision loses its colour, and you struggle to make it through the confusion, to survive. You witness the terror of all the nameless ones who chose to keep silent, even though they knew that the responsibility for the events rested outside of themselves.

5

Staring into your fear: if that means also twisting back on myself so as to direct a fixed stare at my own panic, my own horror.... Not a confusing of one event with another, and different again to empathy or compassion, this is a field of experience hard to categorise. The violence of the flash of light projected from me to you also shatters an airtight glass container buried deep inside my body. It was my blood, my viscera that you saw lying in front of you through eyes narrowed against the glare from the glass shards scattered all around. The memory of the events that has made all your behaviour since seem strange. The seal on that memory has been broken, and now I hold it in my hand, as a fragment of the events that make up history.

To those who have given their testimony, and those who chose to remain silent—to all of those who carry the events around with them.
"Stare into my fear," you said.
Am I really ready to do that?

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1 Krog, p.195.

Part 2

Interview Transcriptions

Y.U. (University student)

The first time I encountered the word “comfort women” was in a history lesson in junior high school. They weren’t mentioned in the textbook, but when we were learning about the Nanking Massacre, the teacher explained about “comfort women”, and I remember it because I found it shocking. After that, I didn't make any effort to find out about it off my own back, but then, by coincidence, I ended up going to see an exhibition of photographs about comfort women in Shinjuku[2]. After that, someone I know told me about the military “comfort women” archive in Waseda[3], and I went along and read all kinds of material about it.

Our history teacher in junior high school told us that, as well as everything that went on in the Nanking Massacre, there were also some other victims called “comfort women”, who had been abused sexually. I was surprised to hear that, but it wasn't beyond my imagining. I was quite taken aback to know that there was actually a proper “name” given to those kinds of victims. The word “comfort women” was new to me at that time, but I remember that just the fact that they had a name surprised me. The history teacher at that time was a young woman, in her mid-twenties or so. She was a Japanese history teacher originally, though at that time she also was teaching us world history. I went to an all girls' school, so it was only girls in the class. Thinking about it now, I reckon that if it had been a male teacher, he probably wouldn't have said anything about “comfort women”.

I didn't talk with my friends about it... In fact, I've never talked about “comfort women” to anybody. When I went to the [WAM] archive in Waseda, I think the only person that I mentioned it to was the person who'd told me about it. I didn't speak of it with my friends. I went to the photograph exhibition alone, too. Why is that? Now that you ask me, I really wonder why myself. I guess that there are all kinds of things that I find shocking when I discover them, but then I work them through by myself and don't tell anybody else about them.

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[2]Exhibition of Ahn Sehong’s “comfort women” photograph series from 26th June – 9th July 2012, held at the Nikon Salon in Shinjuku, Tokyo. The exhibition had been approved by the gallery’s panel and plans made, and yet, before the exhibition began, Nikon announced its cancellation without any discussion. The photographer launched a provisional injunction which was ratified by the court, and the exhibition went ahead as planned, but included a ridiculous degree of security, with metal detection devices and huge numbers of security guards.

[3]The Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM) is an archive museum in Nishi-Waseda, Tokyo.

I found out about the Ahn Sehong photography exhibition because I used to do photography when I was at high school, and I'm into it. When you go to a photography show, there's usually all kinds of flyers for other exhibitions, and I'm in the habit of picking them up. I think that there was a poster or flyer for the Ahn Sehong show at another exhibition that I went to. I went to see it by myself. I'd been to that gallery several times, but I'd never seen it that crowded before. It's usually pretty deserted, in fact, but on the day I went, I could see from outside how many people were inside, and wondered to myself what all the fuss was about. There were police there, not just in front of the gallery itself but outside the building too. We had our bags checked, and had to go through a metal detector, like when you're getting on a plane. None of the people who were looking at the exhibition looked like the sort to be into photography, either. They weren't looking at the pictures at all. It felt like a really strange situation.

I didn't know that there were former military "comfort women" who were still alive, but looking at the photos in that exhibition I realized that there were, and that really took me by surprise. I'd thought of the issue as something from the past, but when the people are still alive, and you can see their faces in a photography exhibition, you realize that we're living in the same age, and that came as a shock to me. Looking at the photos, I saw that they were living really humble lives, and so I thought that maybe they weren't getting any money from the government. There was a brief explanation in the exhibition itself of how some of the women can't go back to their native countries. They were taken out of Korea, and they're still in China, and there are some of them who can't really speak either language well. They were taken out of Korea at a young age, so their Korean isn't perfect, and then their Chinese isn't great either, and they say that they're too ashamed to face their families, so they've remained in China. Learning that, I felt incredibly sorry for them. It's not their fault that that stuff happened, and yet they feel like they can't face their families...

[Looking at the photograph collection by Ahn Sehong, *Over and Over: The Story of the Korean "Comfort Women" to the Japanese Military Who Were Left in China*][4] I remember this one. I wondered where she was looking... Oh, is the photographer a man? I thought it was a woman. Wow, he was lucky that these old ladies agreed to talk to him about their experiences. You know how, in the Rwandan genocide, the Hutu people were in the minority but they had

[4]Ahn Sehong, *Jūjū : chūgoku ni nokosareta chōsenjin nihongun ianfu no monogatari* (Over and Over: The Story of the Korean "Comfort Women" for the Japanese Military Who Were Left in China), Ōtsuki Shoten, 2013.

greater power?[5] There were lots of rapes of the Tutsi people, and lots of people gave birth to babies as a result. There's a photographer called Jonathan Torgovnik who made a series of photographs about the women who had given birth to children that were the products of those rapes, and he's a man as well.[6] That surprised me, too. The idea that a man would interview those women, and they'd answer his questions... I can't imagine what an interview like that would be like, and I wonder what it is that leads them to open themselves up to a man. Those women are in a really pitiable situation too, some of them driven out of their homes by their families, and living with just their children where nobody knows of their existence, and they say things like, "Sometimes I find myself wondering whether or not I really love this child." The women who have been raped start to feel like their own children are somehow part of the brutality.

The first time I came into contact with the testimony of former "comfort women" was in the Waseda archive. Reading all those painful stories, I had the illusion that my own body was starting to hurt for them. But I couldn't stop reading, and I read all the testimonies, and then felt intense nausea and depression. I don't think about [those women] during my everyday life. But when I think about the antagonism between Japan and China, or Japan and Korea, I feel uncomfortable at the way that people speak as though they didn't exist. And I felt like it's such a sad thing that after those women have died, nobody will be able to conclude for certain that ["comfort women"] really existed.

The subject of "comfort women" doesn't come up at all in the course of my everyday life. My mother owns a bar, which is marketed as a Chinese place, and all the girls who work there are Chinese. Sometimes there's a problem that blows up between Japan and China over the rightful ownership of islands, and the customers say things [to the Chinese girls working there] like "You lot have been naughty," as a joke. The girls know that they're just joking, so they say things like, "That sort of talk isn't for here, it's got nothing to do with us," and get out of it that way. But even at times like that, the "comfort women" issue never comes up. I'm sure that nobody knows about them, it's all just kept hidden away in the dark. I wonder why that is. All the political talk about it is so inorganic. It should be a discussion between people, a human

[5]This is a mismemory on the part of the interviewee. It is, in fact, the Hutu who occupy the ethnic majority in Rwanda, and the persecuted Tutsi who remain a minority people.
[6]Jonathan Torgovnik, *Intended Consequences: Rwandan Children Born of Rape*, New York: Aperture, 2009.

discussion. There are people who've been hurt, and I think that it's that kind of thing that people should focus on. I think people hide from it because it's so raw. Everyone tries to turn away from those kinds of things.

I've never spoken to my mother about "comfort women". But I've been to Nanking, once, just by coincidence. I went with my father. My father had to go there for work, so I went along with him. At that time, he said that people in Nanking didn't really like Japanese people, and we should avoid speaking Japanese wherever possible because it was a bit dangerous. That was before I knew about "comfort women", but I wonder if I knew about the Nanking massacre then? It was before I'd learnt about it in school, anyway. So in the lessons [on the Nanking Massacre] in Junior High School, I was always thinking about how that had happened there in Nanking, in the very place I'd visited.

(October 2013, Waseda)

K.O. (Literature Professor)

Whenever there was an article in the paper about the "comfort women" issue, I'd read it, but I was never so concerned that I wanted to do something or take action. I guess I'd just read reports or introductory books and that was about it. It was never addressed in my school education. For it to be taught in the elementary and middle schools of the time would have been...well, I'm not sure they even teach it now. I'm a bit stuck when you ask me what kind of awareness I had about it. I don't think there was anybody who did it and enjoyed it of their own volition. But even in Japan itself, there are stories about young girls being sold into the business down in Tokyo by their families whenever there was a famine in Tohoku and so on, so I think a number of factors were involved. And of course I think there must have been people who didn't like it but had no other way to live and just gave in, and, as in the display today, there must also have been people who were taken away without a clear idea of what it was about and then only found out once they got there.[7] So if you ask me what I think about it, I'm not sure

[7]"Taiwan 'Comfort Women' Testimonies: How *Ah-ma* Were Made into Japanese," the 11th Special Exhibition at the Women's Active Museum of War and Peace (WAM), Tokyo, held July 2013 – June 2014.

what to say.

It's not like it was just about "comfort women"...Maizuru [in Kyoto Prefecture] was one of the designated ports for returnees arriving back from the Asian continent. There's a museum there about the evacuation experience, and in this case, it's the Japanese prisoners of war who were interned in Siberia who are the victims. So even if you tour these places, in the end you still don't know what to say. In the flow of history, individuals are tossed about by some insurmountable power, and the lucky ones were saved and able to return, but there were many who died over there as well. I also thought this when I saw the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. In any case, there are people who get caught up in knotty situations and the only thing you can say is that their lives were tragic. I remember the critic Kobayashi Hideo's line, "History resembles the massive resentment of humanity." I think what he said was right.

Today was my first time encountering testimonies by former "comfort women," but when I saw the display, I felt there were real people there. So from now on, whenever this topic comes up, I think I'll definitely remember what I saw today. Up to now, I'd basically understood it as a general issue. In that sense, it was good to see this. I saw the photos of the survivors lined up at the entrance of the Women's Active Museum of War and Peace (wam). Everybody is so aged, and some look a bit like my mother does now. I think they must have been beautiful when they were young. When I went to the Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots, I think the photos of the young soldiers who flew off were also lined up that way. No, wait, maybe their names were all written out together. I was also speechless then. Maybe all you can do is look...Standing before someone who had that experience, anything you say would be empty. That's a powerful feeling. I feel sorry, but "sorry" is a flimsy word, isn't it? But what else could you say? "It was unfortunate" makes it sound like an abstract problem.

Whenever something terrible happens, and as long as they and their direct relations are not involved, people will think, "I'm sorry. It's such a pity." But what they are thinking at the same time is, "I'm glad it's not me." Nobody actually says so because it sounds egoistic, but I think everybody feels it. Tolstoy wrote a story called *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. The protagonist is a man who dies at around the age of 45, but the first chapter is all about the reactions of his colleagues. They say things like, "He is dead, not I." [On the surface] everybody says, "I'm sorry," or "It's a pity," but because it's Tolstoy, you get deep down into human egoism.

And then, although this is specifically a women's issue, I wonder if I could really put myself in their position. It's something distorted by time and context. I mean, it's likely I'd have had to carry a gun. When I was at university, I saw the film *The Human Condition*, and read the original book by Gomikawa Junpei, and it was a really powerful work for me.[8] I think Awashima Chikage played the role of the brothel madam. The protagonist is a man named Kaji, and he alone refuses to interact [with the soldiers who use the brothel]. Obviously, because it's a film he's an idealized figure...and then there's a scene where all these mean-looking soldiers troop into the rooms of the brothel. To see it in the film is really ugly. And of course you'd look better if you could act like Kaji. But that's how movies are made. As I was watching, I was wondering what it was like in reality. I think that situation must have existed. Maybe there were soldiers who didn't go, but I'm sure enough of them went. I'm not sure what I'd do if I were in that situation. I don't really want to think about it.

I mean, my father was in Taiwan. Toward the end of the war, he was in an anti-aircraft unit in Taipei, I think. His stories were relatively peaceful. He had two younger brothers, but the first died while he was still young and the other was killed in Burma. I think my father's call-up papers came later because he was the eldest son. I'm pretty sure I heard about him being assigned to an anti-aircraft unit in Taipei. He was a private. And then my father's younger sister got married toward the end of the war. Her partner was younger than my father, but of a higher rank, say, private first class. But because the guy was the fiancé of my father's sister, my father was the one acting superior. When they went out, the ranking soldier would have my father sit on the bicycle behind him and peddle like mad so they wouldn't be late – things like that. The soldiers on watch were so surprised their eyes almost popped out. Those are the kinds of things I heard. Whenever they met up after the war they would bring up these memories. But I never heard about "comfort stations". I think my father was already married by then. I would ask him what it was like when the enemy planes appeared, and he told me about it. He said they'd shoot off the guns, "Bang, bang, bang!" and never hit anything. If the searchlights were left on too long, they'd end up getting targeted by the enemies, and then there'd be calls of "Take cover! Take cover!" because of the danger. That kind of thing. My father was a cheerful guy, I guess. So I heard these humorous recollections, but I never heard about "comfort women."

[8] *Ningen no jyōken* (directed by Kobayashi Masaki, starring Nakadai Tatsuya) is a six-part film that was produced over the period 1959-61. The film is based on Gomikawa Junpei's novel of the same name.

In any case, since I was born after the war, there's no way to know what it was really like...It was around the time we got a television, so I must have been in middle school. The first memory I have is of a live-action documentary program about war. It was a 30-minute program with a specific theme each time, covering things like the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Battle of Midway, the Battle of Guadalcanal and so on, and I remember I used to watch it every week. Even though I was a child, the primary interest for me was the fighting. Like, "I can't believe we lost here, dammit!" And then there were films. There was one called *Storm Over the Pacific*.[9] Also, *Emperor Meiji and the Great Russo-Japanese War*.[10] Things like that. It was interesting, like learning about history. I think it must have been around elementary or middle school. I stopped watching that kind of thing after I entered high school.

Also, there were several levels for thinking about Japan's issues with the war. There was a kind of technical debate – had the Japanese won at Midway, the war would have unfolded differently, and so on. Then, on a bigger scope, Japan's actions can be considered within the course of world history. I'm no expert, so the interpretations change radically depending on whose book you read. In some cases, I think, "We were reckless. Wasn't there any way to achieve a compromise?" Other times I think, "In the end there was nothing to be done. That's what the situation dictated at the time." So these big historical flows and then the concrete tactical debates and then issues like the "comfort women" are all mixed up together. Those men who shot off their guns and intimidated the "comfort women" who were trying to escape were not just doing it out of some sadistic perversion, but probably also had been given some kind of responsibility in the war. They resorted to control in order to protect that. If you're in a situation where the "comfort women" don't do as they're told, and the supervisors know they'll get it from their superiors if nothing's done about it, then they'll try to maintain order even if it requires a bit of violence. You get a sense these kinds of things went on. So even with this issue, I get the feeling like, you can't keep bringing it up as a single issue. Of course, I really do feel sympathetic toward the people who were treated in such a cruel way.

And then, in these conditions, when I happen to catch some kind of history film or whatever, I

[9] *Hawai Middouei daikai kūsen: Taiheiyō no arashi* (directed by Matsubayashi Shūe) is a special-effects war movie produced by Toho Co., Ltd. It was released in 1960.
[10] *Meiji tennō to nichi-ro dai sensō* (directed by Watanabe Kunio) is a war movie produced by Shintoho Co., Ltd. It received notoriety as the first film in which an actor (Arashi Kanjūrō) portrayed the emperor. It was released in 1957.

think our generation was really blessed. But it's not because we were right...My parents' generation suffered so much during the war, and some of them died. As a result, the next generation – though I'm 66 already – were in that sense able to live without any major events, but now I feel like we don't know what the future holds.

I've never spoken to anybody about the "comfort women" issue. Although I spoke with my wife about it, like, "Now Miyake-san is bringing up this issue." As far as taboos go, I'm generally not one to worry about what people think are taboos. But if I did think this subject was taboo, I wouldn't be talking about it with you. I'm sure I would try to change the subject. But I don't worry about taboos so much. Sometimes, even when I'm talking with my wife I'll mention some indecent topic and end up getting scolded by her [laughs].

(February 2014, Shinjuku)

S.N. (Singer)

I'm not so clear about when I first heard about the "comfort women" issue, but somehow for me it was mixed up with the stories about the Japanese orphans left behind in China after World War II. Those two issues are connected in my memory. I think it must have been when I was in high school. Maybe in social studies class or something, one of the topics that came up was about how some war orphans had come to Japan to meet their families, which had been split apart by the war. And the existence of "comfort women" came up in that context. That was the first time I think.

I never took a course on modern history so I never learned about the Pacific War or other wars in class.[11] It must have been a history class from an earlier part of my education, but I've forgotten at which point it was. Maybe on the morning news that day, there was a report on somebody who I think was a "war orphan" who had come from China, and there was this scene of an elderly woman meeting her family. So the teacher brought up this story as a topic [in the

[11]In middle schools and high schools, Japanese history classes generally follow a chronological curriculum that begins from antiquity and proceeds to the present, which often leaves relatively little room for covering recent history.

class]. And then somebody must have asked a question or something. That was the first time I ever heard the word "comfort woman." I think the scene I saw in the morning news and the contents of the discussion in the class became linked. Actually, I think the awareness that this kind of thing happens was strangely real for me, like, I really felt that terror.

But there was no discussion [in the class] of what the word "comfort" signified. Just a brief mention that there's some issue to do with "comfort women." I think the teacher was avoiding explaining the meaning of "comfort" in "comfort women." There was only a mention of the word itself. It was later that I learned on my own the facts about the "comfort women." I guess I went home and asked my mother about it or something. At the time, I still didn't understand so much about "comfort women," but I remember I was really angry that Japan had allowed this kind of thing to happen. And then I was thinking about how to process this news, and more than seeing it as a major problem, it was more like, not like a "fire on the opposite shore," but, even as you think, "Something horrible happened," you end up getting detached from it.

I remember the scene [of the elderly war orphan reuniting with her family] because it was so impressive. The idea of a family that was torn apart by war reuniting after all those decades was shocking. I think it's because even then I could imagine the experience of being torn apart from my family. Something that happened years ago was the reason behind the current news and the woman finally getting to meet her family. I had a visceral sense of how the past is connected to oneself.

When I heard this project's theme is about "comfort women," I realized I hadn't taken it so seriously as a problem. Honestly, I was confused about how to think about it, how to understand it. I think that whether it's the Japanese media or people's understanding of the situation, there's been no maturation with regard to issues like the things that are actually happening, the things that are allowed to happen, and I think this applies to me, too. I was reminded that I have a low awareness of social issues. So, regarding the questions about the "comfort women" issue, like how much I had learned about it, and what kind of opinions I have based on my knowledge of it, I thought I don't really have any opinions.

For me, the experience of reading the script was bigger.[12] As you read, you gradually become

[12]At the request of the organizer, the respondent was asked to give a reading of a text on "comfort

the person, like, that person's experience becomes your own. As you read their voice, their experience becomes a part of you. There might be only the barest similarity with yourself, but something like an emotional experience emerges as your own memory. That's really terrifying, or at least that kind of terror exists. But, also, their experiences of oppression are female experiences. It's like, how should I as a woman think about that oppression, or the pain of that experience [of being a woman]? I don't have an answer, but in the end, with regard to what happened, I guess I should think about it as a woman.

When I went to see the display at the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (wam), the thing that really stayed with me was reading the panels with the testimonies one by one.[13] In fact, more than a description in an article, seeing the raw words of each person gave me the feeling that they were there, speaking in front of me. The same as when I read the script, I had the sense the words were entering my body. Although I don't have the same experience, when I see the people talking I start to cry. I had a similar feeling, and felt I have some kind of anger that wells up inside me, like, this cannot be allowed.

Beyond that, I can't speak to the idea of actually having an opinion about the "comfort women" issue. But this is something that's actually happening, so maybe even now I can still do something to bring the women some kind of happiness. I don't know what I can do. I'm not really sure what I can do, but in any case, I realized there's a part of me that's angry about the situation. It's not something I can put into a statement like, "This is what has to be done." It's something I can only express as a kind of physical opinion...

(February 2014, Harajuku)

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women," which was also recorded.

[13]"The Military Does Not Protect Women: Okinawa, Japan's Military Comfort Stations and Sexual Violence by the US Military," the 10th Special Exhibition at the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM), Tokyo, held June 2012 – June 2013.

K.B. (University Adjunct Lecturer)

Unfortunately, I don't remember the first time I came across the term "comfort woman," but by the time I really became aware of it, it was already an issue between Japan and Korea, or even simply an international issue. The Japanese government's denial of the issue is a negative legacy for Japan, and I think, along with Nanjing, the fact is they want to make the whole thing go away. I subscribe to the Asahi Shimbun and the weekly magazine *Friday*, so those are my main sources of information, but needless to say I get much more information from *Friday* [which as a weekly can address stories newspapers do not]. But to be honest I can't say I always had the same deep interest in the issue that I've had since I saw the movie *The Murmuring* some 20 years ago. It's one among a number of major issues including Minamata disease, Okinawa and Nanjing, and I was aware that this is one of those things that the nation has been constantly avoiding, trying to obscure the place of responsibility, and I think that was about it for me.

The first testimonies by former "comfort women" that I ever encountered were in *The Murmuring*.[14] Along with being appalled, I thought that even if they don't want to recognize this organized, violent atrocity, the Japanese government (or military) must admit it happened. I think I saw *The Murmuring* sometime between 1993 and 1995. I went to see it with my daughter, who was between elementary and middle school at the time. There was a youth group in the union for Kawasaki City employees. It was a very active group and my husband was a member, so we went to see the film because there were some other members who were tackling the issue and had organized a screening. (My husband had already seen it, so he must have been working at reception, or something like that.) I don't remember where the screening was held, but it must've been some place like the civic center in Nakahara-ku. Both before and after the screening there were discussions and appeals about the issue.

It's just a shame that after we saw the movie, I don't remember having any discussion with my daughter about it, and I'm not even sure she remembers seeing the film. I have to ask her next time we speak. Probably, what I was thinking at the time is that this was a movie we should see,

[14] *The Murmuring* is a documentary film by Byun Young-Joo following the lives of the elderly women who live in a residence for former "comfort women" known as the "House of Sharing." It was released in 1995. It was followed in 1997 by *Habitual Sadness*, and then in 1999 by *My Own Breathing*, constituting an eventual trilogy of films about the women of the "House of Sharing."

and I wanted to show it to my children (in the end, my sons were busy with middle- and high-school club activities and couldn't make it), but because it was a delicate issue and my daughter was at a delicate age, it was hard to have a straightforward conversation. I don't really remember the names of the women or their faces, but the atmosphere in that home and the pained way they spoke stays with me. Along with the pain in their hearts, these women who escaped from hellish conditions had this strange brightness about them that was different from resignation, and I thought that was maybe the piercing resilience they obtained through experiencing great hardship.

Until now, I thought about it relatively emotionally, but after seeing the display at the Women's Active Museum of War and Peace (WAM), I feel I have a pretty clear picture.[15] For example, what kind of women were taken by what route, by what means and at what time, how many there were, and also, although there's no end to it around the world, whether sexual violence has ever been carried out at such a scope and by such means. I'd heard about the lies and counterfeit solicitations, but got a concrete sense of it from the stories of the witnesses. I felt it's impossible to say, "There was no coercion," about a situation in which women were intimidated by soldiers with weapons when they were taken away, and violence was imminent if they refused. I think the display is an important site for learning about the historical facts because it deals with documents that are rooted in fact.

Until now, even though I didn't have a precise grasp of all the facts, I just had this growing sense of distrust that the country had to be concealing something again. Maybe this is my bad habit? I don't think there's anything wrong with my "intuition" and "feelings," but it's an issue of having "all the facts," so it's important to know those facts. In that sense, I think that in seeing the display I was able to "harvest" the finer details of the history to date, and in obtaining that kind of confirmation, I feel it's become easier for me to speak to others. Conversely, it's the people who want to deny the facts who are invoking only their "feelings."

It's too bad that until now I haven't had a chance to speak to people about the "comfort women" issue outside of those who are already involved in related activities. Even in my immediate community, I think there is a certain number of people who think we need to face it

[15]"Taiwan 'Comfort Women' Testimonies: How *Ah-ma* Were Made into Japanese," the 11th Special Exhibition at the Women's Active Museum of War and Peace (WAM), Tokyo, held July 2013 – June 2014.

straight on because this is something that was done by the Imperial Japanese Army, but I get the feeling that normal conversation is a really difficult situation for bringing it up. It's not like I've ever tried to broach the topic and failed or anything, but it's weird how it never comes up. When [Osaka Mayor] Hashimoto Tōru made his statement [in 2012 about "comfort women" being a necessary evil], there were of course people who said it's embarrassing or idiotic, but that was it. Maybe if I had prompted those people to speak more, some different things might have come out...But that's one of my limitations. Now that I've learned all these precise facts, I think I'll have more opportunities to speak from now on.

The reason I feel that this issue is viewed as even more of a taboo than the Nanjing Massacre is that in the end it's related to sex. In Japanese society – and this includes myself – the culture has never been one to talk directly about sex. On top of that, I think issues that connect to the underside of society, like the way that licensed prostitution has long been normalized in Japanese society, are even more off limits. If that connects to the silence about such a major "crime," then I think it's inexcusable for the victims.

(March 2014, Saginuma)

M.M. (Language Instructor)

The first time I heard about military "comfort women," I was either in middle school or high school. The class on Japanese history was really boring, but it's not like there was anything else to do, so I was flipping through the pages of a textbook that had nothing to do with that day's lesson. I was interested in the Pacific War from when I was in elementary school, and read books and novels about the war, so I was curious to know how it would be treated in a schoolbook. That's when I found a reference to Japanese military "comfort women." It was the 1990s. It was 1991 when I advanced from elementary to middle school, the same year the first former "comfort woman" in Korea went public with her story. At the time, there were references to military "comfort women" in the Japanese history textbooks, although I wasn't aware of the news about Kim Hak-Sun. I have no memories of hearing about "comfort women" at home or school.

So my first encounter with the military "comfort women" issue was a purely linguistic one. I got a powerful sense of discomfort from the sound and appearance of the word I'd found in the textbook – "comfort women" – but without understanding precisely what it meant. I could imagine that it had something to do with women, but because of the unnatural and stiff words like "military" and "comfort," I couldn't grasp a concrete image. I couldn't picture how they looked or spoke. I felt it was the kind of word that turns living people into abstract concepts. Also, because I had some idea that "comfort" had some kind of sexual connotation, I was shocked by the gap produced by this oppressive language and the explicitness of the actions associated with it. Like, what the hell is this? At the time I didn't realize it was sexual violence, and part of a sexual slavery system carried out under colonial domination, but the premise of the word – the idea that women at the frontline would give "comfort" to soldiers there – made me want to throw up. That nausea was basically connected to the discomfort and frustration I somehow regularly felt about the gaze society turns toward my sex, and the roles expected of my sex, but at the time, instead of expressing it in words and thought, it manifested as an impulse to erase my physical sexual characteristics as something that should be denied.

There was a period after that when "comfort women" didn't really come up in my awareness, but then at university, majoring in English Literature, I studied about the history of British imperialism and the colonial independence movements, as well as issues related to historical awareness. I had some interest in researching literature in the context of post-colonialism and imperialism studies, so I also learned about Japanese imperialism, and that was when I really encountered the "comfort women" issue.

From childhood I'd read testimonies and memoirs about the Pacific War, and also had a certain interest in how memories of war are passed on to future generations, but until I really became aware of the "comfort women" issue, I didn't have any perspective for thinking about these issues in tandem with the offenses committed by the Imperial Japanese Army. I'd read records about the atomic explosions and the Battle of Okinawa, the firebombing of Tokyo, so I knew how terrible war could be, but I think I understood it through an exceptionalization of the damage Japan had suffered. Having the former "comfort women" go public with their stories and getting to learn about the atrocities committed by the Japanese army allowed me to recognize the inappropriateness of the narrative that was built up around the war in postwar Japan – a narrative that downplays critical views of the imperialism of the Japanese government and the emperor system, while exceptionalizing Japan as the victim. War is about

killing, so there are two sides to every story, but compared to what we suffered, the facts about the offenses we committed are easily forgotten. I realized how one-sided and fixated on our own suffering the narrative of the war is in Japanese society, and also how deeply I had internalized that narrative.

What shook me the most was the photo of the wooden plaques with the women's names that were suspended in the "comfort station". It was in some book – I think it was photo documentation taken during the war – and there were these Japanese women's names written in black ink on the plaques. I don't recall the names, aside from "Aiko," but in the photo all these common Japanese women's names, names that many people have even today, were written on the plaques and lined up in a big row. I knew that the women who were forced to work in the "comfort stations" were given Japanese names, and knew about the *sōshi-kaimei* policy pressuring Koreans under Japanese rule to adopt Japanese names, but it was such a shock to see the photo of those wooden plaques all lined up and hanging together. I even found the names of family members and friends there. Although I didn't see my own name in the photo, I could imagine that among all the countless Japanese military "comfort stations", there must have been some place where someone was called by the same name as me. Who stole the names from these women, and replaced them with "my" name? I was filled with doubts and anger. I was angry with the people who created and ran the "comfort women" system, angry with the people who accepted that system as a matter of fact, angry at the fact that the sex of these women had been violated, their names stolen, and that they'd been reduced to the status of sexual slaves. Since then, I always pay attention to the names when I read the testimonies. Aiko, Mitsue, Kayoko, Namiko – through the names that were given to the women at the "comfort stations", I feel I'm physically connected to this issue, and that I, too, am a part of this issue.

The first time I heard the testimony of a former "comfort woman" was at an international symposium commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery.[16] It was the kind of experience where something

[16]The International Symposium to mark the 10th anniversary of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery, "What Did the 'Tribunal' Bring to Justice, and What Has Changed—Sexual Violence, Racial Discrimination, and Colonialism," was held at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies on December 5, 2010. The witnesses in the second part of the symposium, "Hearing Testimonies by Victims of Sexual Violence by the Japanese Military in Asia," were Wei Shaolan (Guilin, China), Luo Shanxue (Guilin, China), Narcisa Claveria (Luzon,

definitely changed for me from before that day and after. Before then, I'd come across testimonies in books and such, and done some research on the issue, but never actively put myself in a situation where I could hear the story directly from the original person. I'm not sure why I decided to go to the symposium. I'd heard about the event from a friend, but I remember that morning I spent almost the whole time wondering whether I should go or not. Maybe I couldn't get my courage up. I think I anticipated that if I went, it would be a decisive experience, and I was afraid.

I got to the venue just before the second part was about to begin. There were all these guards standing outside the university lecture hall and it was a really weird atmosphere. Strict measures were in place to prohibit people without an ID card hanging around their necks from entering, and I had to make my own card. It was my first time attending a symposium that required this kind of procedure and I was surprised by the heavy vibe. I knew that these were measures to prevent rightwing groups and racists from entering the venue, but I had no idea their interference and harassment was so bad. In any case, the strict security around the venue was impressive. It was like a preview of the intensity of the testimonies I would be hearing.

On that day there were four witnesses, from China, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. There were a mother and son from Guilin. The mother had been forced to work as a "comfort woman" by the Japanese military, and the son was conceived while she was in the comfort station. Their testimony was heart breaking. Derided as a "Japanese devil" by the people around him, and having experienced daily abuse, the son said, "I've already given up on my life, but at least I hope the Japanese government will admit its wrongs to my mother." It was like even between mother and child (or precisely because they are mother and child?), there was some kind of topic they couldn't broach with each other (even if that itself is what connects their pain). The son looked to be about the same age as my father, but in his bearing and manner of speaking, it seemed his anguish was as long and deep as the years of his life.

This day was the first time I heard the testimonies directly, but I never thought that observing the place where testimonies are presented would be so physically consuming. Of course it must have been more draining for the speakers, but even just sitting in a chair and listening, I was in

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Philippines), and Elizabeth Cox (Papua New Guinea).

a state of collapse by the end of the four witnesses' statements, and after leaving the venue I was in a daze for the rest of the day. I thought I was just listening, but maybe my body was attempting to respond with some kind of emotional reaction. It was that physically consuming. The venue was some kind of large lecture hall, and I was sitting in second-story seats quite removed from the stage, but it felt like the witnesses were right there in front of me.

We were listening to the testimonies through translation, so it might have been due to the gap in timing between hearing the voices and understanding the words. Because I was free from trying to keep up with the meaning as the witnesses were speaking, the tone of those muffled voices, the tension in the space that was created by the testimonies, the depth of their despair, the tears streaming down their cheeks, the severity of their expressions just before they reached the most painful parts of their stories, the anxiety, and the relief after the statements concluded were impressive. At the same time, it was frustrating not being able to instantaneously understand the words the women were saying. I wanted to find meaning in the sounds and sensibility of the words they were speaking, rather than as something translated into Japanese. I felt if I could do that I would be just the slightest bit closer to understanding their pain. Of course, it's not just about understanding language, but I had some kind of urge to digest, to swallow into my body the voices and words of the women as they were.

What was shocking, aside from the testimony, was the surge of camera flashes from the press, like a mountain of flame that rose up as the witnesses stepped into the center of the stage. Maybe I was a bit naïve because it was my first time hearing testimonies. But when I imagined the emotions of the witnesses who were speaking about things they would prefer not to speak about, even though they acted courageously in front of everybody, it must have been a complex feeling for these former "comfort women" to be turned into photographic objects. It made me uneasy imagining that if I were standing on the stage, I could get injured by the violence of the cameras.

After the symposium, I thought for many days about how to respond to the testimonies I'd heard. It was something I had sought out myself, but I didn't know what to do with what I'd received from it. There was a period where I kept replaying the scene from that day and getting hit by that weight, or imagining the torment of the women who kept these stories closed within their hearts for so many years, or trying to connect the visceral parts of the stories with my own pain. Of course, I was not only thinking of the women during that time, but also researching

the history, and was able to think about what I could do about it.

(February 2013, Kagurazaka)

A.V.L.M. (Portuguese Teacher, originally from Brazil)

I knew about the Japanese army's sex slave system when I was at university, but it was only a superficial thing. One of the elective courses I took at university in Brazil was a class on World History, where we were shown a documentary about war, and specifically World War II. But for the most part the documentary depicted war itself, and not sex slavery. Actually, in the documentary the women were referred to as "war victims," as opposed to "sex slaves." I also took a course in the Japanese Language Department, and the teacher taught us about cultural things like *tanka* poems and *enka* ballads or calligraphy, but with almost no reference to the war. In terms of Japanese history, we learned about domestic wars – wars from way long ago – but nothing really about recent wars with other countries or, specifically, World War II.

Since coming to Japan 11 years ago, I've had more opportunities to see news reports dealing with the issues surrounding the war in Asia. That's how I came to know more about the issue. I saw the documentary *My Heart is Not Broken Yet*, and learned about how the former sex slaves are seeking the Japanese government's acknowledgment of its past mistakes.[17] And then I came across a book explaining the inner workings of the war.

The first thing I felt after watching *My Heart is Not Broken Yet* was anger that the war had happened, and then a profound sadness. In war there are only two sides: those who dominate and those who are dominated. The big dominating force is the government, which makes the soldiers fight, and forces them to conquer those who don't belong to their group. Unfortunately, Song [Sin-Do] did not belong to any group, and so like all the victims was humiliated and treated as an "object." They were in a situation without any human rights, but

[17]The movie *Ore no kokoro wa maketenai* (My Heart is Not Broken Yet) is a film by Ahn Hae-Ryong released in 2007. Produced by the "Association to Support the Trial of the Japan-Resident Comfort Women," it documents the Korean resident of Japan and former "comfort woman" Song Sin-Do's campaign in Japanese courts to receive an official apology to former "comfort women" from the Japanese government.

they had to take on such a burden. For the people with power, the victims were nothing, just "objects." They could be abused until they broke down, and then thrown away. Because they feel that way, they probably think there's no need to seek forgiveness or to explain what actually happened. For the people without power, those with power were part of a power game. In this game there's a fundamental, natural rule, which is, where there's power, there's subjugation.

There are politicians who deny the historical facts and people who trivialize the atrocities that took place in the former colonies, but that follows with what I've already said. Because they can't accept the errors of their past actions, it's natural they [those on the side of power] should think that way. As far as I know, there was an order from the authorities to attack the enemy, to charge, win, kill everybody. The soldiers were brainwashed. There was a strategy of elevating the military leaders and reinforcing the soldiers' sense of mission in the war. The soldiers were supplied with both weapons and hatred, and then, so they could feel a bit more human, they were allowed to commit the worst of all atrocities. In other words, they were allowed to use women, many of whom were still children, for their own "comfort."

Women of all nationalities were randomly picked out from the streets. Like a hunt. For those with power, women were not people. They made no attempt to identify some aspect of humanity in their enemies, and in this case, the women can't even be categorised as enemies. They were simply "objects" to be used in war – essential goods, merchandise, even. For many current politicians, the atrocities never happened. So there will probably never be any explanation [from them]. I've never once met anybody who talks about the Imperial Japanese Army's sex slave system. Maybe it's because they're ignorant of the subject, maybe it's because of the gravity of the issue. We all know that women and children are the main victims of war. But when we are confronted with that destiny, we unconsciously feel impotent. We say, "That's war. There's nothing to be done."

In Brazil all kinds of members of criminal gangs are "imprisoned" in the jails. Often, when the family members of these criminals go to visit them, the wives and daughters, and mothers, even, are forced to have sex with the leaders of rival gangs in exchange for the lives of the inmates. The news became public thanks to a lawyer who could not stand seeing this situation. And it became clear that this issue has a long history, and has been tolerated by people in the know. As far as society is concerned, anyone who is incarcerated is an enemy, but for

competing gangs, the relatives are themselves enemies. So it's almost natural that the leaders would keep quiet about this issue. Because if there were no voiceless rape victims who could be treated as "objects," they'd have no concern for anybody.

This is just one example of things that are taking place right now, and not something that took place on the battlefield. While this is something that permeates society as "an obvious fact," there is always a stronger and a weaker side to every dispute. Silence: whether it's the silence of the people, or the silence of politicians and authority figures, the fact that everyone keeps their mouths shut about this issue conveys approval regarding the complicity of the group and the dictates of society. But it's also a painful weapon that pierces the souls of those who have to bear that silence.

(April 2014, Akabane)

R.N. (Contract Worker)

The first time I heard about military "comfort women" was probably in my world history class in high school. The teacher was a woman, although I don't remember exactly why the topic came up. It was a girls' school. In the class it wasn't like the teacher was elaborating from a text, but more like she happened to mention these women existed. And that's when I think I first heard the term military "comfort women." It must have been around my second year of high school. Our school was a bit unusual, in that instead of starting the education from ancient history, we began from around the time of World War II. And then, instead of going into the present from there, we went back in history. So maybe it was actually in my first year of high school. I remember that the teacher was super worked up when she talked about things like the military "comfort women" and the Mukden Incident [of 1931, used as a pretext for the Japanese invasion of Manchuria].

At the time, I didn't really have a clear picture of exactly what was meant by "comfort women." Just a vague understanding that the women experienced some kind of sexual suffering. But in high school I didn't try to think further beyond that. I think I probably saw media reports about the issue. I remember somehow the image of women sobbing and appealing for something. But

I never really considered why they were crying, and what they were appealing for. That was during high school.

After that, I became more familiar with the military "comfort women" issue through a class at university. The course was on the cultural history of Japan, and I took it as part of my liberal arts studies. It was around my first or second year of university. The class was a yearlong credited course led by two teachers. Half the course was led by Fujime Yuki, and the other half by another professor. I think the part led by Professor Fujime was about gender theory, and the military "comfort women" kept coming up. Professor Fujime would talk about reports in the media, and we would watch video materials. But I don't remember why I chose that course...I would just sit by myself in the back of the lecture hall and listen.

There were a lot of shocking things in that course. Because war is an ugly thing to begin with, I knew that kind of thing might come up. So it's not like the topic itself was shocking in any way, but Professor Fujime showed us articles and photographs from the time that verified it. There was a photograph of the entrance to a comfort station with a hanging banner upon which was written "Service by Japanese Beauties," and that was a shock.[18] Like, what is "Service by Japanese Beauties"? Seeing that kind of thing gradually drove home the reality that it actually existed. One of my teachers from middle school, who taught us archery, had been in Manchuria during the war, and it was like, "Wait, so that means he might have actually known about this kind of thing?" We never heard anything about it, but thinking that way gave me a bit of a shock.

The thing that stays with me most from the university course was Professor Fujime's position of not denouncing women in the sex trade. I think her attitude was that if there are women who need to sell sex in order to survive, or even those who take pride in it as their vocation, then we shouldn't denounce them. Of course, we tend to ignore the circumstances of the people who go into the sex trade, and impose moral judgments on their profession based on

[18]A reference to a photograph of a "comfort station" that was established in Jiangwan Town in Shanghai in 1938. The photograph shows a pair of banners set up before the entrance of the "comfort station", with the words "*Mi mo kokoro mo sasagu Yamato nadeshiko no sābuisu*" (Service by Japanese beauties offering up both body and heart), and "*Seisen taishō no yūshi daikangei*" (Heroes of the great victorious holy war are warmly welcomed), written upon them, respectively, in thick black ink. Reproduced in *Ichioku nin no Shōwa shi, dai 10 kan: Fukyoka shashin* (The 100-million People's Showa History, vol. 10: Unauthorized Photographs), Mainichi Newspaper Company, Tokyo, 1977, p. 62.

biased views – like, they just want to deceive men – and I think that mentality was stronger for me. But I have the impression that Professor Fujime's course was a good opportunity for overcoming that feeling. I began to think that choosing to do that kind of work is not what is bad. Rather, thinking that the work is bad makes it harder to see the full situation, even with regard to current historical issues. Because I'd never really thought that way to that point, I thought it opened up a new perspective, like, expanded my horizons.

Last year, when I went to the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM), I got the sense I'd heard about it at university, and the display made me recall what I'd learned.[19] It's not that I had some new realization, but more like a reaffirmation that, yes, Professor Fujime had discussed this topic. It was right when [Osaka Mayor] Hashimoto Tōru made his statement [about "comfort women" being a necessary evil], and the museum was packed with foreign visitors.[20] And then I saw one of these kids from the rightwing online message boards causing a disturbance in the exhibition venue, and I thought his response was just like my mother. He spoke really loudly and got really emotional. He asked them [the museum staff] insistently, "What's your basis for saying those things?" I wanted to say to him, "You talk about a basis or proof, but have you actually looked at the display?" I remember I thought the way he responded to them with this kind of hysteric reaction was just like my mother. Because when it's someone else you can see it more objectively. So thinking about what I could do to be able to speak with these kinds of people, I kept one ear open while viewing the rest of the exhibition.

And then on the bookshelves at WAM I found a book, published by the Mainichi Newspaper Company, of photographs from the war period that had been caught by the military censors and were never published.[21] I remember I borrowed the same book from the library when I

[19]"The Military Does Not Protect Women: Okinawa, Japan's Military Comfort Stations and Sexual Violence by the US Military," the 10th Special Exhibition at the Women's Active Museum of War and Peace (WAM), Tokyo, held June 2012 – June 2013.

[20]On May 13, 2013, Hashimoto Tōru, the mayor of Osaka and then-joint-leader of the Japan Innovation Society (now active as the Japan Innovation Party, *Nihon ishin no tō*), sparked controversy when he stated that the "comfort women" system was "necessary." In full, he stated, "When soldiers are risking their lives running through a storm of bullets, and you want to give these warriors – these emotionally charged men – some kind of rest, then anybody can understand the need for a 'comfort woman' system."

[21]*Ichioku nin no Shōwa shi, dai 10 kan: Fukyoka shashin* (The 100-million People's Showa History, vol. 10: Unauthorized Photographs) focuses on photographs that were prohibited from publication during World War II. During the war, all photographs taken by cameramen embedded with the

was at university, although I can't remember why I borrowed it or what prompted me. So I found it on the bookshelf at WAM and it brought back memories for me. I don't know when it was published, but I was impressed there was a time when newspaper companies would actually work with this kind of material. It doesn't really happen now. References in the media to both military "comfort women" and the Mukden Incident have almost completely disappeared.

I've never spoken to my friends about the military "comfort women" issue, and there was one time I thought that if I were to bring it up I'd have to be pretty circumspect about it. There was an older guy at my part-time job who would curse out Korean residents of Japan, and that was the first time I heard derogatory terms like *chon-kō* [comparable to "gook" in American slang] and things like that, and I was amazed that there were people who actually use such words. I was working at a cleaning service, and I'd have just regular, everyday conversations with the guy who came to pick things up, like, "How's it been," that kind of thing. I don't remember how we got onto the subject or what kind of things I said, or even why the guy suddenly got sparked like that, but in any case his face transformed. I remember how strange his eyes looked. What could have got him so worked up right then? He really lost it. I thought, "This guy's really worked up," and without arguing back at him I just kept silent and listened. It was only the two of us in the store, so the whole atmosphere was really unpleasant. And then I remember I sent him on his way, feeling, like, wow, people actually think that way. Beyond that I myself never raise the topic, or the word *Chōsen* [a Japanese term for Korea, referencing the former Joseon kingdom], and I wasn't able to talk about Korean residents of Japan. But that incident drove home for me that whether it's Korean residents of Japan, or the use of forced labor, or the military "comfort women," these are probably not the easiest topics to bring up with people.

Because military "comfort women" is a topic about which everybody's outlook is really divided, if some men openly stated something like, "There was never any such thing as military 'comfort women,'" I'd probably just keep quiet and not think of arguing with them. Because it's a topic that can really set people off, I think even to voice your stance on the subject could be considered a challenge. Maybe it's a trauma. I even butt heads with my mother when it comes to the military "comfort women" and the Mukden Incident. My mother's mantra is, "It didn't happen, and Japanese people wouldn't do that kind of thing." When you bring up the topic she

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Japanese military had to pass through military censors, who ranked and administered them based on three categories: 1) Review Completed; 2) For Holding; and 3) Unauthorized.

gets hysterically angry, and even like the guy from the cleaning service, she goes crazy and her eyes fill with anger. So I physically feel like it's a really tense topic for the relationships between those people and me. I wish they could talk about it more reasonably, but when I feel like the other person might come out with a hysteric reaction, then I guess I think it's better not to say too much.

My mother gets really worked up. It's not like I'm blaming her. I'm not trying to hurt her, and it's not like I'm saying she's the one that did it. But even in just talking about the fact that it happened, it somehow gets personal for her and then she just loses it. For example, I thought maybe my mother's father – my grandfather – might have been involved with "comfort women" or forced transports, but he had a weak constitution, so even though he was in China, it doesn't sound like he was actually fighting. I'm not sure what he was doing. It seems like my father's father also had a weak constitution and never went to the front. So I don't think it has anything to do with my family members. But she's always saying, "The Japanese are great!" Whenever there's a TV program about Japan or that talks about Japanese technology, she always says, "There's no country as good as this." My mother has never once set foot outside of Japan. She's never even been on a trip.

The first time the topic of military "comfort women" came up with my mother was last year, when a bronze sculpture of a young "comfort woman" was erected in the United States.[22] As we watched the news report, my mother rejected the idea that "comfort women" ever existed, so I softly said, "Even in Japan there are people who met that fate," and then she was like, "There isn't a single person in Japan who says that kind of thing. They just say it because they want the money!" I was really taken aback, like, "Can you hear what you're saying?" And then I mumbled, "I don't think father would say that kind of thing," and that was the end of the conversation. I don't think my father has such extreme opinions as my mother, although if the subject comes up he basically clams up. Probably because my mother has her stance, and he doesn't want us fighting, if he takes my side then my mother will get put out. Or, rather, he knows I'll get angry if he supports my mother's position. So I think because of that delicacy he doesn't really state his own opinions clearly. I've never asked him what he really thinks.

[22]The "comfort woman" statue was erected in 2013 in a city park in Glendale, California. It is a replica of the "Peace Memorial" representing a former military "comfort woman" that was installed in 2011 in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, Korea. In the United States there are also similar memorials at multiple sites in New York and New Jersey.

My mother is a wall that I just can't scale. I think if I found the right approach she might be open to listening, but more likely is she just won't hear it. If I just open my mouth she immediately starts in with denials: "That's wrong!" "It never happened!" It's this exasperation that we'll never have a dialogue. Just bringing up the subject makes things tense. I think, here we go again with the same reaction, there's no way to beat it, and I get deflated. It's always the same. We always end up fighting. I still don't know what to do when the subject comes up. Because my mother gets so emotional, I also get incensed. I hold my breath whenever we're eating together and some news about Korea or China or the Senkaku Islands comes on TV. Like, "Please don't say anything. Please don't let me have some opinion about this." I just don't want to get caught up on the topic. My own and my mother's responses just don't line up. I'm not sure how we ended up like this.

(May 2014, Shinjuku)

S.K. (Singer)

It must have been 2006. A person named Lee Yong-Soo came to the university to speak about her experiences. I happened to go see it. The event was held in a lecture hall, and there must have been more than 100 people there. The translator entered, materials were passed out, and we listened to what Lee had to say, but in the end it was a shock. It was her voice. There was the tone of her voice, and the sound of her saying the words *oma*, *oma* [mother, mother] stays with me even now. That was, I think, when she was describing how the Japanese soldiers took her away, and it was so painful to hear. Even the translator was crying…You're just at a loss for words. I think it must be pretty difficult to put that into language. She also spoke in Japanese, but even just by speaking a bit of Japanese, there are all kinds of historical circumstances behind why a person like her is able to speak Japanese.

I remember it was such a shock that I couldn't even speak. She was talking about how the soldiers beat her legs so she couldn't run away, and then when she was lying on her side there was a single flower blooming there, and she asked the person next to her what kind of flower it was, and the reply was that it was a Korean bellflower [*doraji*]. And then she also sang in front

of us. And she said that even under such terrible circumstances, she fell in love with a Japanese soldier, like a kamikaze pilot or something. I think she must have said his name was Hayakawa. She fell in love, but as a kamikaze he went off to die. It must have been such an extreme situation. Having to be with dozens of people every day and then by chance falling in love with a kind soldier. Even though he ended up dying.

I think what Lee sang was a Japanese song. The place was completely silent. She had finished speaking and then when she started singing everybody just listened quietly. I was sitting right in front of her when suddenly she asked me whether I thought the song had reached him [Hayakawa], and I was surprised, but I said I thought it had [laughs]. After that there was a smaller gathering. It was about 10 people from the seminar or something. I happened to have an instrument with me, so we sang "Doraji" and "Arirang" together.[23] And then we took a photo holding hands together. She was kind, although from the distributed materials you got a severe impression of her. It was written that she planned to commit *seppuku*. I was shocked. I remember I was really furious and angry about what the Japanese army had done. But [at the gathering] she was saying things like, "In the end, let's work together to make peace." Like, "From now on, how we go about making peace is the important thing."

I think it was really important to hear her voice. You can read all kinds of information and writing, but I think I decided to go because there aren't so many opportunities to hear the actual person speak in their own words. The voice of that woman lingers somewhere inside me even now, and I've never forgotten her name. It's just that, regarding the issue of how to deal with her testimony, maybe I'll always...I get the sense that, including those parts that don't sit so well with me, it'll probably always remain with me.

What I mean by parts that don't sit well with me is that it's not just about the "comfort women" issue but also about the world situation, including Japan, where it seems like chaos is only increasing every day. When I went to Okinawa, I heard the story of a woman who was a survivor of the Himeyuri "Lily Corps" [a group of students who were mobilized as a nursing unit during the Battle of Okinawa], and she talked about how some of her best friends were killed by explosions, and how someone standing in the back was blown up by a grenade thrown by a Japanese soldier. And when she was talking, she said, "There are many people

[23]"Doraji" and "Arirang" are well-known Korean folk songs.

who aren't able to talk about this. There are people who've been hidden away in their homes this whole time without saying anything." I think these elderly ladies are constantly living with their memories. So I think it must be really tough for them. I can't fathom how painful it must be to live like that. Even then, I think the people who do continue to testify must be driven by some sense of mission to pass on their stories. I want to open my ears not to the people who are speaking loudly on TV or through megaphones, but to those small voices that are full of tentativeness and hesitation, and maybe even confusion. Since I accept those voices, somehow I have to get close to them.

[Before I had a chance to listen directly to a testimony], I thought I could separate myself from it. But the moment I heard that voice, I think in some way it also became my own story. It's impossible to share everything, or even to completely understand the suffering of that person. But – and this is not only about the former "comfort women" here – the moment I hear the testimony from that kind of voice, I guess I feel I take something on myself. Otherwise I wouldn't be there. I'm not really sure why I go to hear it. But I think there's some power in being there. Information that can't be put into words (I guess it's not quite information as such...), like the tone of voice, the pitch, the resonance...whether it's the former "comfort woman," or the Himeyuri survivor, or the old man from Ie [where there was intense fighting during the Battle of Okinawa]. It's something you just have to feel, like the slightest catch in the voice. I don't know what, but when you're there, I think there's something to those effects.

Because there was a translator, at the testimony gathering the words came through another person. Because translation comes via another, there are things that you become aware of, but, also, maybe there are things that are different from the original. I ended up getting into the parts that precede verbalization. I think it's because there's something that calls out from the depths of a voice. Meaning comes after that. It could be the way the story is told, the way of speaking, the movement of the hands, the gaze, even the atmosphere in the venue. I think these things are deeply related, and that's what's important. Of course there was some frustration [to hearing it in translation], but there's more to it than that.

I actually made a song about Lee's love story, because I couldn't process my experience of the event. It was like I felt there was nothing I could do. I had to give it some kind of shape. It was so shocking. Maybe the memories of that love are a little aestheticized. I think it was necessary for survival, because it was such an awful experience. But it was pretty fun to sing songs like

"Doraji" and "Arirang" with her. Because we were singing together. I think Lee was about 16 or 17. If it weren't for the war, it would have been her time to shine. And it was in that very moment that she was cast into a hellish experience.

With Okinawa, I first went with my seminar to Henoko. We went to Henoko and the Himeyuri Monument and Ie. At Ie, we also went to see Ahagon Shōkō's Nuchidotakara House Peace Museum.[24] Ahagon is no longer alive, but there's this person called Jabana Etsuko there, and she suddenly scolded us, like, "You have to work for peace!" [Laughs] I thought she was a real character. But when we spoke, she said, "Japan today is turning back toward war. Having experienced [war], I think we really have to put a stop to this." She was a kind person, incredibly powerful. Because she's carrying on Ahagon's will. Also, what the old man said at the place where we stayed in Ie was that when the fighting came to Okinawa, because he was young, and the graves in Okinawa are big, he went to hide in the graveyard. But he recalled how back then people were still buried in the ground and the place had a really strange smell. That's such a vivid memory. Even now in Ie the base is right there in the middle of everything and the runway the Imperial Japanese Army used still exists. And not just in Ie. The place where the Okinawan folk singer Kadekaru Rinshō was born is right in the middle of Kadena Air Base. He pointed his finger, saying, "That's where I was born," and it's the base runway. This is an ongoing situation.

I think I have some kind of particularity about voices. It's the thing that most fascinates me, although I get really hooked on story telling as well. It's not like I'm purposely trying to hear all these stories about the Ainu or Okinawa, but there's something that just draws me there. It might not only be about the voice. It might be something that can't be put into words; it might be something in the land itself. But when I go to these places, I always feel something. I think it's something that will always be there for me.

People talk about globalization, and how information travels so quickly even across impossible distances, and maybe we're losing some minority languages due to that, but precisely because we're living in such an age, it's really important for me to listen to those sounds that come

[24]Ahagon Shōkō was a peace activist who led the movement against forced land seizures by the US military. He opened the Nuchidotakara House Peace Museum in Ie. Jabana Etsuko is the museum's current director.

before language, that come before verbalization. We're overflowing with words, whether it's social networking sites or online information. But I think there's absolutely something that gets lost the moment it becomes words or print. I'm attracted to the idea of listening to and approaching such things. I'm attracted to the voice before language. Also, folk songs. I make music, but sometimes something changes the moment you put it into melody. I'm also really interested in language, and I wish I could turn that kind of resonance, that afterimage that comes from language, into an atmosphere, but I guess it's a pretty difficult thing to do.

(May 2014, Shinjuku)

K.M. (Housewife)

I first came across the term military "comfort woman" some time ago. Maybe when I was in high school. For my generation I think it was relatively early. Certainly, the Japanese history teacher in my second year of high school was a bit different from others, and for half the year had teams of students do group study on the theme of human rights. Instead of just teaching us about Japanese history, he split us into teams, and then had us do group study on issues related to discrimination and human rights like discrimination against the *hisabetsu buraku*[25], Korean residents of Japan and African-Americans. My team chose to study about discrimination against the *hisabetsu buraku*, and we would go to the library to check out various books and do research. I read all kinds of books during that time. And, as part of that, I think I also read books about the war. I don't remember which one it was, but at the very end of one book about the war, there must have been this tiny note about "comfort women." That was the first time I saw the word and processed it as information.

But my high school was an exam school, where that kind of teaching approach is unthinkable. So at some point I began to feel antagonism toward the teacher. I wanted to take the university exam for Japanese history, but I thought the way the class was going, it would be out of the

[25]*Hisabetsu Buraku* literally means "discriminated community." The term is used to refer to groups of people who were outcast under the feudal system due to their work in "unclean" occupations such as butchery, tanning and undertaking. The descendents of these groups continue to suffer discrimination and ostracization into the present. (*Trans.*)

question. I had absolutely no memory of learning anything about Japanese history. All I had was what I knew from studying for middle-school exams. Normally, in high school you'd study the history in greater depth and then be prepared for the exam, right? But I didn't even have that base of knowledge. During the group-learning period, at first everybody brought books and tried hard to tackle the project, but then it just got ridiculous. So I don't have any memory of what came after that. Probably we wrote something down and shared it with the rest of the class or something. I had beautiful penmanship so I guess I was the one who wrote everything. I have a vague memory of it, but as for the contents, I'm not even sure whether we presented it or not. I'm not even sure what kind of books we referenced. I just remember that it was at that time that I first learned about the term military "comfort woman."

In high school when I learned about the term "comfort women," all I thought was, "Oh, so that's how it was." I read that the Japanese military took military "comfort women" with them to the front, but there were no more details in the book. I didn't even understand the meaning of "comfort." Like with the "volunteer corps" [*teishin tai*], I couldn't really imagine what the term entailed. So I probably just processed it without really understanding anything about it. And I didn't feel any drive to learn more after I read the book. Since then, it was only recently that I've been able to hear and think about the term in a new way. Now, I think, "So the Japanese armed forces went to war with that kind of thing on their minds as well." This kind of thing is inconceivable in another country. I wonder what's the right way to think about it?

But when it comes to war, soldiers from all countries end up raping women. I heard that the Japanese "comfort station" system was originally conceived as a preventative measure against soldiers raping women. Well, the damage doesn't stop there, but I'm just not sure what to think about Japan as a country carrying out a war with that kind of policy. Terrible things happen when any country gets involved in a war, but for the country itself to take the lead in creating that kind of structure is not normal. I'm partly dumbfounded about what on earth they could have been thinking, and then, on the other hand, it's like, well, it was meant to be a preventative measure.

I think [Osaka Mayor] Hashimoto Tōru's statement from last year was stupid. It's beyond the pale. But recently the president of Korea is also cutting off ties with Japan over the "comfort women" issue, right? I think it's kind of stupid as a politician to stop dialoging with Japan over this one issue of the "comfort women." Really, [in the movie *My Heart is Not Broken Yet*] this

person [Song Sin-Do] said it, right?[26] "We cannot make war. I keep sharing my experiences, but I am looking to the future." I think that's right on. History does not go away – because the things we've done do not go away. But I think it's hard because political complications always come up. Issues between one country and the next...like, the victims, like Song-san, who appeared in the movie, they're not looking to solve the problem with money. Instead of "Give us money," they're saying, "We want you to apologize." Like, "You did something wrong, so we want you to apologize as a nation."

But when you talk about apologizing as a nation, someone like [Prime Minister] Shinzō Abe wasn't even around at the time, right? He's about the same age as me. So I think even if you call it an apology, it's not, really. That's the difficult part. Besides, with all these prime ministers constantly changing in Japan, and none of them having lived through that era, could you really be satisfied with someone going through the motions of an apology? So it's difficult. I mean, when you hurt someone.

[When I saw the movie] I thought Song [Sin-Do] is great, someone to respect. She's exposing her painful past to let the young people know that "war is unacceptable." And she's doing this with an outlook that says, "There is a future." I think that's pretty rare. I certainly couldn't do it. Of course, I'm sure support from the people around her has helped. Most people would try to seal off those memories as something shameful, right? Thinking about it from the opposite side, there are the soldiers from the Japanese armies who went to war and harmed these women. Some of them might still be alive. But you don't hear any of them coming forward to testify, do you?

Because my father was still a high-school student, he was press-ganged into the military factory at Seta [Shiga Prefecture], and never went to the frontlines. My grandfather had previously gone to war, but didn't deploy in the Pacific War. So although I never heard tales about the frontline from my direct family members, maybe among my relatives there was someone who used the "comfort stations." But nobody would ever say anything about that. People can't really talk about what they did. I hate war. It's horrible. It's the worst kind of human behavior.

[26]This interview was conducted following a screening of the documentary film *Ore no kokoro wa maketenai* (My Heart is Not Broken Yet) (See note 17).

I speak with my husband about the "comfort women" issue. But because he's a man, he has the idea "it happens in every country." I don't speak with anybody else. Probably for women my age it's not such an interesting topic – maybe now that it's become such a big deal, but I can't say for sure…You can't talk about this issue if the other person lacks a certain knowledge about human rights. I think that's what it is. When it comes to human rights, you can't talk to someone without that knowledge, even if it's a good friend. In the end, you can't talk to someone who's going, "Huh? What's that?" It's like in Tokyo, there are lots of people who don't know about the *hisabetsu buraku* issue. It's not that they don't want to speak about those issues, but more like they simply can't. I'm concerned in my own way, and if something catches my eye then I'll read it, but I have no idea how much time other people are spending thinking about it.

I lived in New York for two years.[27] The anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor came around twice during that time. On Japanese TV the programs about Pearl Harbor talk about how "Japan did it! We were triumphant!" But if you want to talk about how the same incident is appreciated in the US, it's crazy. It's like, "Japan was the worst country. As Americans, we were humiliated." This kind of thing is on the TV news, like, "Today is the anniversary of Pearl Harbor." And there are memorial observances that are held. It really brought home that I was now in the country that was on the receiving end of the attack. Having experienced that twice in two years, it really left an impression on me. I began to feel as a Japanese person that we had done something wrong that day. I have that kind of memory.

When it comes to Pearl Harbor, people point fingers, saying, "Japan was wrong. It was the Japs!" But there's no broadcast about how "Americans were wrong" about the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. In the US, people say the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima were about speeding up the conclusion of the war, and not about obliterating Japan. In other words, their explanation is that the atomic bombs were justified. When I saw that on the American TV news or somewhere, I thought, "Huh?" It really irritated me. I had no idea until then. Maybe it's because I was never really interested and hadn't read any books about it. But the first time I learned about it was a shock. When you live in a foreign country, you get the news from that country's perspective. Over there, they don't do any kind of commemoration on the anniversaries of the atomic bombings. You'd think it would be normal

[27]The respondent lived in New York from 2001 to 2003.

to have some kind of ceremony for the souls of the dead on the anniversaries of the bombings.

(June 2014, Iidabashi)

J.W. (Corporate Employee)

The first time I heard the term military "comfort woman" must have been around when I was in 6th grade. I saw something one of my friends had written about it. Maybe it was a summer vacation assignment, or an exhibition report...maybe some kind of presentation about history done on craft paper. In any case, there was a reference to "comfort women," and those words leapt out at me. At the time, without knowing so much about it, I just wondered what it could be, but that was my first encounter with the term. Maybe it was the impact of seeing the Chinese characters. It was a combination of characters I'd never really seen before. Like, what is a "woman" who provides "comfort?" At the time all I could do was wonder about it.

Later [the expression] came up frequently in the news, but it never really stuck with me. It was around middle school and high school. It would pop up now and then on the television. There would be coverage about the military "comfort women" issue, and then, along with that, discussion about what happened to the people in China, and what happened to the people in Korea, and so on. But it just didn't interest me. And I never had a chance to talk about it with anybody. I just thought it's impressive that it's been such an issue from my teens until now. My understanding was that instead of a specific incident that became a major problem, it was more like a constantly ongoing issue. But I never had any idea why it was an issue.

So it must have been around middle school or high school. I somehow figured out that it was specifically [a sexual] thing. I don't think I had any awareness of things like rape or sexual violence when I was in grade school. Like, in Japan knowledge about sex is considered taboo, right? And then nobody tries to teach about it. I think I must have figured it out relatively late, but once everybody started to get interested in sex, then when I saw something in the news about "comfort women," I would think, oh, maybe it's about that. I never actually confirmed it with anybody else, nor did I research about it, but I just knew that's what it was.

But even after I figured out that part, I never thought to read books and get the facts. I only had the impression it was a term that came up whenever there were tensions with Korea, but I didn't know any details, nor did I try to learn the details. I thought of it as a thing of the past. It's like, you always hear about it, and it's been viewed as a problem for a while now, but I had a sense of distance from it, like, it happened in the past. People who were in their 20s then are in their 80s now, so they're getting on in years, but even then I just got stuck on the idea that it was ancient history.

So this is really my first time thinking consciously [about the "comfort women" issue]. I never had any prejudice about the theme. Some people might get suspicious about the intentions of an interviewer, like, what are you asking me? But thinking is important. Even if it's something you don't know about, once you know the facts, you necessarily have to have an opinion. That was exactly the state of mind I was in when I first heard about this project. It was a time when I wanted to elaborate my thinking by challenging myself to learn about something I didn't know, instead of remaining ignorant about it. So I think even if it had been a different theme I might have accepted it.

This time I read a book about "comfort women" who came from Korea, and in the end they were tricked and taken here.[28] They were told they would be providing service as military nurses, only to end up being forced to do those things. Korea was a Japanese colony at the time. It's like they were sex slaves. Of course the situation between the countries and the historical context is different, but there are Japanese people who have been abducted to North Korea, right? I thought it was similar. I don't know what was said to lure them, but they took them away, right? The North Korean abductions are such a major thing in the mass media, but wasn't Japan doing the same thing? And they purposely sought out young people who were still innocent, and took them, right? If they used women from brothels, then the soldiers might get venereal diseases and get out of commission, so they specifically chose people who were not like that for taking away. What was also shocking was this story about how girls as young as 6 or 7 were given to rural families as "brides" and then made to work as servants. I had no idea about that. The destitution of Korea under Japanese colonial rule was really terrible.

[28]Kawata Fumiko, *Akagawara no ie: Chōsen kara kita jyūgun ianfu* (The House with the Red-Tile Roof: The Military Comfort Woman from Korea) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1987). The book is a record of the experiences of Pe Bon-Gi, who was take from Korea to Okinawa as a "comfort woman," and continued to live there following the war.

The thing that most interests me is sexual discrimination. Of course it's a problem that [the people who were made to be "comfort women"] were physically reduced to being slaves...but I thought that at the time all women were treated about the same. I think the problem has changed shape and form, but it's still rooted in today's world. That's why cases of sexual heckling occur.[29] It's the same. It's like it's in our DNA. So if you want to talk about the social progress of women, or whether to have a child or not, or whatever, it's probably not going to change overnight. These are the links I made [with the knowledge I gained about the "comfort women" issue]. If you link it to the present, I think you can consider it as all part of an attitude toward women that says, "Why don't you have a baby," or, "Population decline is happening because women aren't having children," or even the way that women receive lower salaries than men in the workplace. In that sense, I lived all this time in complete ignorance about the "comfort women" issue, and nothing about my life would have changed if I had remained ignorant, but once I know about it, it's no longer someone else's problem.

As I just said, at the very least it relates to issues of gender discrimination in our own contemporary lives. Or maybe something similar might arise as part of the Abe administration's machinations regarding Japan's right to collective self-defense.[30] If the same situation repeats itself, and men are sent away as soldiers while women remain to take care of everybody else, then I could see something like it happening again in Japan.

From kindergarten to high school I went to a private school near Yasukuni Shrine. Walking to school from Kudanshita station, it was a matter of course that I had to pass through the grounds of the shrine. So, without really understanding what Yasukuni Shrine was all about, I simply considered it part of my school route. My mother and grandmother both went to the same school, and by the time my mother went there it was already located near the shrine. I'm

[29]On June 18, 2014, while addressing questions to the metropolitan government regarding its support measures for pregnancy and birth during a session of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly, the assemblywoman Shiomura Ayaka (Your Party) was heckled with sexually discriminatory remarks by a representative of the Liberal Democratic Party, with other assembly members echoing his derision through their voices and laughter.

[30]On July 1, 2014, the Japanese government held an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet, where it was decided to revise the customary interpretation of the constitution to approve the right to exercise collective self-defense. Numerous citizens gathered before the Prime Minister's Residence in opposition to the Cabinet decision, protesting late into the night.

pretty sure that in my grandmother's time it was somewhere else. When was it that it moved next to the shrine? Probably after the Great Kanto Earthquake [of 1923]. Since it was part of my mother's school route, I don't think she had any problem with having her daughter follow the same route.

But somehow I did feel something strange about the route. All these rightwing loudspeaker trucks were always there. When Emperor Showa died, it was decided we should go home that morning, and we were quickly sent off. The teachers were really anxious about sending the students home as soon as possible. I put a note into the shoe cubby of my friend, writing, "I'll be waiting at Kudanshita station. Let's go home together." And although I'm certain I put the note into the shoe, for some reason the teacher had it, and the next day I got a big scolding. It was that tense. Most likely they wanted to get the children as far away from Yasukuni Shrine as possible. On the administration side, because they were all adults, they had a sense that something might happen, but we children had no idea. It was like, "Do we have to go home so early? What's going on?" That was in January 1989, so I was in my fourth year of elementary school.

When I was in first grade, my younger brother was in kindergarten. At his kindergarten, there was this project where the children covered bottles in clay and then decorated the bottles by sticking beads and marbles into the clay, which they then painted after it dried. My mother asked me to do her a favor and pick up some stones from Yasukuni Shrine. I was like, "Huh? What's she asking me?" When I asked why, she explained that she wanted some nice stones for my brother's project. But I was like, "Why stones from Yasukuni Shrine?" So I don't think my mother really understood what Yasukuni Shrine is about. I thought it's really bad that she's so innocent about it. I knew what the purpose of the shrine was. I must have heard it from somebody. And then every year when August comes around the politicians all go, right? There's always controversy about whether the prime minister will go or not. So I had some idea about what was being venerated there. Even though I was just seven years old, I was appalled at being told to pick up stones from there. And then thinking about why my mother would tell me to pick up the stones, I refused, telling her, "Absolutely not!"

I don't talk about the "comfort women" issue with anybody, not even my family. Discussions about sex are considered taboo in education, right? So necessarily the "comfort women" issue is also wrapped up in that, and even now I'm an adult I feel it's a little difficult to bring up.

Even if we each have our own thinking, it's not something you can broach with anybody. I have a really strong sense of taboo about sexual issues. My grandmother was the kind of person who thought, "Girls and boys should not be in the same room. Girls should be raised with girls only." In a sense that's also discriminatory, right? So I was raised with the idea that boys are not clean. I really thought they were dirty. Even my father said that. So I thought I shouldn't speak with boys. I started going to the private kindergarten from my second year, and before that I'd been at a co-educational kindergarten in our neighborhood. And even then, my grandmother was angry about it. Like, "You can't send her to a place where there are boys!" And it was based on her idea that I was sent to a private school.

And then, around fifth grade, I was going to the summer course for cram school. I got to be friends with the public-school girls and boys there, and when I told my parents I wanted to invite them over to play, we got into a big family discussion. Like, there will be boys coming...and I said, "If it's going to be such a big deal, then I won't invite anybody over again, and that'll be that!" They always changed the channel whenever some kind of sexual scene came up on TV dramas – that kind of thing. I was raised in a home with a strong sense of taboo. So the "comfort women" issue never comes up with my family, and I guess I don't really talk about it with other people either.

(July 2014, Kagurazaka)

M.K. (Housewife)

I was aware [of the "comfort women" issue]. I was aware, but because I'm originally from Hiroshima, there's also the atomic bombing. Of course, as I child I'd visited places like the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, and the shock it gave me made me feel that I had to know about what happened, but knowing is also painful, and I wanted to avoid that. Once I became an adult I somehow decided I could never go back to the museum. Even just seeing the building, I feel I can't go back inside. I have two children, and my mother is in Hiroshima, so they've been going there since they were small. I would always tell the children, "Go [to the museum] with your grandmother. I'll be waiting here."

For me the "comfort women" issue is similar to the atomic bombing. It's something you need to properly understand, but I did my best to avoid it. There was an NHK documentary about the people who were in Hiroshima when the bombing happened, with survivors drawing pictures of the scenes they saw that day, and it was a really good program.[31] I happened to catch it on TV some years ago, and I thought, I have to see the whole thing. It's a bit embarrassing to say so, but that was really the first time I thought I had to know what happened. Because this is something that actually happened, and my life is connected to it. It's impossible for me to understand the bombing from the same point of view as the survivors, but I feel a need to know the facts. You can't go on covering things up. Even if I can't see it exactly from their position, knowing is the one thing I can do.

I always felt the same way about the "comfort women" issue as well, but then one day I borrowed a book from a friend, and I thought, OK, this is something that I really have to know about. The first time I actively [tried to learn about the "comfort women" issue] was when I read that book [Fumiko Kawata's *The Women of the Imperial Army's Comfort Stations*]. Until that point, maybe I had seen bits and pieces about it on the news or that kind of thing. But this was the first time I properly read about it in the form of a book, and I had no idea about the Waseda museum [The Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM)]. I never had an opportunity. And then suddenly I got interested, and thought I would go check out the museum once the weather cooled a bit.

[About the reports on the "comfort women" issue], I never thought I had any particular prejudice against the Korean people, but, you know, it's a really intense scene. The former "comfort women" are all crying and screaming. Because I wasn't really listening to the content [of the women's claims], and just took it in visually, and because the Korean people were so emotional in their expressions, it put me off a bit. But if you really understand the content of what they're saying, then it's actually the kind of thing you need to listen to. It's embarrassing to admit that because of my ignorance I was a bit put off. But after reading the book, I felt I had to know more, I had to understand it.

After reading some of the testimonies, I felt that each person had their own experiences and

[31] "NHK supeshyaru: Genbaku no e – shimin ga nokosu Hiroshima no kiroku" (*NHK Special: Pictures of the Atomic Bombing – Documents of Hiroshima Left by the People*), 2002.

feelings, and I can't say any one [was more affecting than the rest], but there was one woman [Pe Bon-Gi] who was living in Okinawa [after the war], staying in this kind of shack with all the windows shut up. Of course, it would be impossible for anybody who had her experiences to remain normal. You have to live with it for the rest of your life. Ultimately, as a woman I can imagine everything about their experiences. I can imagine myself being in that position. On the other hand, I'm amazed that they didn't die, that they kept on living, although I'm sure some committed suicide. I was able to empathise with the experiences of all the survivors.

[After reading the book] I went to the library to look for other books on "comfort women," but I didn't know what was out there, so I looked for whatever I could find. In Shanghai there was a ["comfort station"] called *Umi-no-ie* [Beach House], which was set up by a Japanese proprietor, and there's a book that was written by the proprietor's son, who was raised in the brothel. He wrote the stories of the "comfort women" [based on his childhood memories]. The book is called *Messages from the Military Comfort Station "Umi-no-ie": The Comfort Women Designated by the Japanese Special Naval Landing Forces*.[32] But the book is written from a man's point of view, and I had doubts about what this man wanted to achieve by writing in such a carefree way. In the end, men and women have completely different perspectives. The author was there. He saw and heard what was going on. He knew about the suffering of the women. But the utter casualness [of his tone] was what was really shocking for me.

Men are the perpetrators. I think that's the real point. One hundred years ago, no matter the country, women were treated as objects. So men's understanding of women starts from that point, and they don't even take something like [the "comfort women" issue] seriously. It's like they have no idea at all. As far as men were concerned, women and children were the same as objects. Like slaves. I really feel that was the case. For the generation of my father, and that of my grandfather, I think the people who went to war are the perpetrators, but even for them, war is a really extreme situation where everyone's out of their senses, everyone's a little crazy. It's like, the Japanese idea is "government knows best" [*oyakata hinomaru*], right? So ordinary people don't think. Everyone says there's "no need to think." Like, "You don't have to think, just let the higher-ups deal with everything." My father was a total grunt. I'm sure he had some

[32] Hana, Kōhei, *Jyūgun ianjo "Umi no ie" no dengon – Kaigun tokubetsu rikusentai shitei no ianfu tachi* (Messages from the Military Comfort Station "Umi-no-ie": The Comfort Women Designated by the Japanese Special Naval Landing Forces) (Osaka: Japan Democratic Press Center, 1992).

feelings, but he never thought so deeply, and was educated to believe he didn't have to think.

My father fought in China and in Okinawa, but he's dead now. That's a big regret. I should have asked him about it. The people who went to war don't talk about it. Maybe just a mention here and there. They say only a few people survived the bloodbath at Okinawa, like a band of survivors. So they don't talk too much. The only thing my father always said was, "I have no excuse for living." But after I read the book [*Women of the Imperial Army's Comfort Stations*], I realized I really should have asked about it. I thought if my father left any documents about the unit he was assigned to in Okinawa, then I could ask my brother to show them to me. So in the end knowing is the one thing I can do. Then I start to get going, want to learn more, and then through knowing, maybe a different action might be possible. If I had read this book [when my father was still alive], I would've been able to carry on his experiences of the war.

I never [talked with anybody about the "comfort women" issue]. At minimum, if it's not someone who's actually read the survivors' testimonies, then there's no common ground. So I can't speak, or maybe there's nothing to talk about. So, no. It's impossible to talk without a certain level of knowledge. [When I tried speaking with my husband], there was no comment. Silence. [He] knows way more than I do about history, and usually I'm the one who can't keep up with him, because I don't know so much. Maybe he just doesn't know so much about it. It's like he doesn't want to know about it.

Japan is so into covering-up. My daughter is in Germany. She sees news about Japan from a European perspective, and she always comments about how Japan tends to hide things. It's like the Japanese media only ever pick up news about violent events and bizarre killings. My daughter says that in Europe that kind of thing rarely makes the news. The main topics are politics and world affairs. Even then, there's so much information doctoring in Japan. If we don't investigate ourselves, and there's only what's in the media, then it's completely unreliable.

Recently I happened to see an article in the Nihon Keizai Shimbun in which Yoshizawa Hisako – who of course lived through the war herself – said, "Ignorance is the biggest terror," and I thought that was spot on. I'm sure there are tons of people who could form their own opinions and statements if they just had the information. But nobody lets them know, so instead the media picks up news about some weird killing and all people ever talk about is how "Japan is a

horrible country where girls can't walk around alone." The important information is getting lost. People aren't informed. Ignorance is unacceptable, but if you leave things the way they are then people will be ignorant. Passively swept along. Really, if you don't have your own interest or concern and try to stick with it, then you just get more and more confused. Especially for women, when they read [the survivors' testimonies], I'm sure they'd think of it as their own experience. But there's no chance for them to learn. That's the biggest problem. So I absolutely think that it should be in the textbooks and all the facts should be stated.

(August 2014, Saginuma)

Y. Y. (University lecturer)

I'd come into contact with various reports [about the "comfort women" issue] through the papers and on TV and so on, but it was from 2007 onwards that I began to have a direct involvement with it through my academic research, and to think about it deeply. After I started doing my Ph.D, that is. It wasn't the main theme of my doctorate, but it was spoken about at the seminars that I attended, and friends of mine organized events where former "comfort women" came and spoke to which I was asked along, and so on. There were people around me who were involved with the issue, and it was generally just taken for granted that it was something everyone would know about. The most continuous form of contact that I have with the issue is reading books about it, I suppose, like Lee Chong-Hwa's *The Political Philosophy of Whispers*.[33] In about 2008 or 2009, Lee Chong-Hwa came to participate in one of the seminars I was attending. I think the first time she came, I hadn't read the book, but I started reading it during the course. I didn't pursue the issue that thoroughly, but I guess it was around that time that I became aware of it as a current, ongoing problem. That was when I was in my mid-twenties, so I suppose it was relatively late. I guess I'd come into contact with it before then, too, but I don't remember so well.

[33] Lee Chong-Hwa, *Tsubuyaki no seiji shisō: motomerareru manazashi/kanashimi e no soshite himerareta mono e no* (The Political Philosophy of Whispers; The Sought-After Gaze—At Sadness, and At That Which Has Been Hidden) (Seidosha, 1998).

I have the feeling that military “comfort women” were mentioned in our textbooks at school, but the schools that I attended weren't really the kind to put much energy into teaching modern history. I don't remember making an effort to learn about history in university either. In fact, I feel like I chose my courses in a way that meant I avoided that kind of stuff. It wasn't a conscious decision or anything, it was just that it was the inward-looking subjects like literature and psychology that I was really interested in. I have no memory of speaking about those things at home, either, though it seems like a real shame. I think [my parents] are interested in that sort of thing, but when you speak of “comfort women”, the question of the colonial territories naturally arises. My maternal grandmother lived for a while on the Korean peninsula. So I guess they must be interested in it, but they didn't talk about it, I got the feeling that perhaps they were avoiding it, or else, acting as if it didn't exist. My maternal grandmother was the eldest child, and she was already in her mid- to late teens when the war ended, so I'm sure that she knew that it was going on around her. I guess that, because she knew at the time, it was even harder for her to talk about, that there were bits she found impossible to speak of. I'm sure it was in part our fault for not asking, but it’s still not clear what happened. I never tried deliberately asking her about the issue of military “comfort women” or anything like that.

I guess it was in about 2010 that I went to an event where [former “comfort women” came to speak]. I can't remember how it was that I ended up going, I guess someone must have told me about it? There were people in the same study group as me whose research was directly involved with that stuff. I remember that event well. Members of the university teaching staff who I knew were standing outside the venue where it was being held to serve as kind of security in case the right-wingers came along, and I remember saying hi to them. The security was pretty strict, although once we were inside, it was basically just listening to people talking in a normal way...

[Listening to the first woman’s testimony], I didn't understand the language she was speaking, so I had to rely on the interpreter. I think she was Filipino. I remember that her way of speaking, the way her emotion was put across whenever she spoke felt like something that couldn't be expressed [through language]. Of course, the same went for the content, too... To give a different example, there was someone else there who could only speak a kind of Chinese that wasn't Mandarin, and someone who seemed to be her son was on stage with her, interpreting what she was saying. The interpreter, too, was talking in this incredibly excited fashion, as if the woman's words had rubbed off on him, and what he said was then translated

again, into Japanese. Translation is such an incredibly delicate, difficult task. The informational content of what people are saying gets conveyed, but [the unified whole of the person speaking] separates out into strata, and you get only a misty understanding of things. On the other side of that mist, everything is clear, but I remember feeling as if it was something I couldn't understand with the linguistic experience I'd had up to then, with my vocabulary at the time.

Something I remember now is how in 2007, before I went to that meeting, I was working as a teaching assistant for a lecture series for undergraduates entitled 'Peace and Culture', which had a different speaker every week. There's a woman called Kaori Sakagami, now teaching at Tsuda College, who was previously employed by a production company that was working in cooperation with NHK to produce documentaries for NHK Educational TV. It was that company which made the programme on The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery which caused a scandal.[34] We invited her in to speak at the lecture series, so I had a chance to listen to what she had to say. She told us how the intervention happened when Shinzō Abe [the current Japanese Prime Minister] was Chief Cabinet Secretary, and explained the process by which people from that subsidiary company and the people involved with producing that programme, including top figures from NHK, [were pressured], resulting in it being aired with skewed content. I think that was the first time that I'd heard about that. Rather than being about the actual content of the testimonies themselves, my interest tends more toward the “comfort women” issue in the context of political intervention in programme production and that kind of thing. I found out [from Sakagami’s speech] about how there is a kind of taboo in the broadcasting world surrounding “comfort women”, in particular the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery, which explicitly made clear the Emperor's responsibility in the Second World War, an issue which is still a taboo today. I said that I started to think about it seriously after changing university to start my PhD, but I guess that was the first major trigger.

I haven't read all that many testimonies [of former “comfort women”], and rather than the testimonies themselves, I'd say that I'm more interested in aspects of the issue like Japan's war

[34]The NHK Education Television programme *Towareru senji seibōryoku* (Accusations of Wartime Sexual Violence) broadcast on 30th January 2001, second in the “ETV2001 How to Deal With the War Series” “, caused an outcry when it emerged that Abe Shinzō, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary at the time, and other politicians had exerted pressure on the programme makers, and the contents were falsified.

responsibility, or the treatment of gender within the periods of Japan's colonialist expansion and curtailment. There's a collection of essays called *History and Responsibility* edited by Kim Puja and Nakano Toshio, which I have skimmed through.[35] Even before going to study abroad, I had an interest in the nature of the connection between literature and the political and historical contexts within the colonised territories, both during and post occupation, and I now write papers about the subject. I do feel that there are limits to what I can do when approaching it from within the confines of an English-language literature perspective, and there was also a part of me which wasn't sure, as a man, how to go about approaching the topic, with the sexual violence it entails... When thinking about issues surrounding colonialism, about the vestiges of that, the scars and the memories left over from it, then an important issue to be addressed is how women's bodies have been effaced. Back at that time I wasn't able to take that kind of language apart, rephrase it, think about it properly.

That doesn't just apply to the "comfort women" issue, but also for example the question of Japanese-American relations on Okinawa, which is something I came to be interested in around the same time, and how that is spoken about now. The way that Japan thinks about Okinawa, the way that Okinawa represents itself can't be thought about without considering, for example, the question of creating masculinity or femininity. Even if the issue could be neatly sorted out on a philosophical or theoretical level—which it actually can't—when you get to the level which is closer to people's feelings and emotions about the matter, it's not just [material] for a paper or so on, it takes time to take it all in properly, and think about it. In my case, I don't think I'd be able to understand the issue if I didn't take lots of diversions, reading or finding out or thinking about things that at first sight seem totally unrelated, not just the "comfort women" issue itself but many other things.

I'm also interested in the question of giving testimony, of becoming a witness, and have thought about it a fair deal, so I think there are things that I can say [on that subject]. Regarding literature and testimony, the thing I immediately think of is Holocaust literature, as well as the criticism of that and the research that's been done about it. In terms of Japanese-language stuff, the first thing that come to mind is something that [the Okinawan author] Medoroma Shun said. While he's writing his novels, he reads all kinds of testimony. He says that people trying to

[35] Kim Puja and Nakano Toshio (eds.), *Rekishi to sekinin——"ianfu" mondai to 1990 nendai* (History and Responsibility; The "Comfort Women" Issue in the 1990s), Seikyūsha, 2008.

write literature should read as much testimony as they can. Rather than asking what testimony is, or what is the impact that it has on the writer and the reader, find out what it is that happened through reading the testimony, he says. He speaks of it as the basis of the writer's creative stance. In his case, of course, he's speaking about the testimony from the Battle of Okinawa in mind.

Another thing is something they say about the Battle of Okinawa, [which I think also applies to the surviving "comfort women"], is that by the year 2030 there will be nobody left alive who has experienced it. So inevitably, there's this sense of crisis that, when all the people who give testimony have died, there will be nobody who can pass the truth about the past down to other generations. This issue of how that stuff should be passed on is a common theme of the artist Yamashiro Chikako. It's the idea that maybe the process of listening to people giving testimony makes you yourself a witness, that it leads to a change in the meaning of giving testimony (not in a revisionist direction). In the words of the academic Yakabi Osamu, who talks about the idea of "becoming an Okinawan" and "relearning the memories of the Battle of Okinawa"[36], even people who are surrounded by that kinds of testimony should make an effort to learn about it once again.[4] People who live far away, for example in Tokyo, have to put in an even greater effort. He calls the way in which we listen [to testimony] into question.

The third thing I want to mention is closely related to my own research, and it concerns what I was speaking about in the lecture series I was in charge of at university. In colonised territory, or else in places where fierce racial discrimination is a part of everyday life, people mostly focus on the binary relationship between the perpetrators and the victims. Of course it stands to reason that that binary relationship would be key but, on the other hand, there is also a tertiary category, which is that of the observer. There's the issue of how we should think about this observer figure. One of the attitudes of the observer, which is in fact the one assumed by the majority, is to pretend that this victim-perpetrator dichotomy doesn't exist. I think that's an attitude that enables one to go about one's daily life without any trouble. It's an attitude of rejection, denial—to assert that those things are not going on, or have no relation to you. This is not just an attitude taken by individuals, it can also be an attitude taken by whole groups or communities. The question is how you [move that toward the direction] of what is really going

[36]Yakabi Osamu, *Okinawasen beigun senryōshi o manabinaosu* (Relearning The Battle of Okinawa and the History of American Military Occupation) Seorishobō, 2009.

on, how you convert denial into recognition. I'm constantly thinking about how that should best be done.

That three-way perpetrator-victim-observer relationship [came into play] at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for example, where the issue of testimony was also placed under the spotlight. The idea is that, if the focus is placed solely on the binary relationship between perpetrator and victim then testimony itself becomes a form of spectacle, and so there's been a lot of people, including academics and writers, who have thought about an alternative way for the majority, who are the observers, to take in this testimony—a way which isn't just mere consumption, which doesn't deny its relationship with oneself.[37] [My thoughts about the "comfort women" issue have] also been largely influenced by that way of thinking.

How does one bring about recognition of those facts that have been denied? Thinking in terms of the areas that I've been involved with through my work, I think that works of literature, or else literature understood in a broad sense to include films, poetry, plays, music, novels, criticism etc., can still play a pivotal role. Even if it doesn't affect all of the observers, I think literature is crucial in helping at least some of them to reach the point where they can give testimony, admit that what happened happened, even if they don't launch press charges or voice criticisms about it. In this sense, the word testimony has a different meaning from the way in which we mean it when we speak of the victims' testimony, a slightly broader meaning.

I'm really interested in the issue of testimony in that sense. [I'm fascinated by] those works of literature which have served to give testimony [in the broad sense]—like Jean Genet and his commitment to the Palestinian cause.[38] Edward Said called Joseph Conrad "the most interesting witness to European imperialism,"[39] but in fact, as well as being a witness [i.e. someone who gave testimony], he was also a collaborator. So there's all different levels to it, I think. You can be a witness and observer, or you can be a witness and a collaborator, and so on. Their words are not the testimony of the direct victims—not of the victims of the slave system or the exploitation in Africa in Conrad's case, or of the Palestinians in Genet's case—but rather

[37] Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*, London: Vintage Books, 1999.
[38] Jean Genet, *Un Captif Amoureux*, Paris: Gallimard, 1986; "Quatre heures à Chatila," *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, 1st January, 1983.
[39] Edward W. Said, *The Pen and The Sword: Conversations with David Barsamian*, Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1994.

as testimony that brings to light the relationship between perpetrators and observers, that helps pass it on to successive generations.

(August 2014, Takadanobaba)

K.O. (Works at an organization; lives in the USA)

I don't honestly remember the first time I heard the term “military comfort women” used. It's the recent usage of it on the news and so on that's left the strongest impression on me, the way you hear it all the time but its meaning still feels somehow vague. From the scraps I gleaned through hearing the news or reading the papers, it had a pretty heavy feeling to it, tied up with politics, the war, crimes and so on, and I feel like I ended up sort of avoiding it, turning my eyes away from it, not ever making the effort to find out the facts properly.

This was the first time that I'd encountered the testimony of former comfort women. Of the links I was given, I first watched the video of Jan Ruff-O'Herne[40], and then all of the witness testimony videos on the Fight for Justice website[41]. I'm embarrassed to admit it, but I had no idea that the Japanese Army had set up “comfort stations” in so many different places, and that, through a variety of different ways, women from all different countries and regions came to find themselves placed in that situation. It's usually Korea and China that appear on the news in connection with “comfort women”, so my association with those countries was definitely the stronger one, although I was sort of vaguely aware that those weren't the only two nations in which it had happened. In any case, it made me realize again that I'd never given much thought to the situation or the background to it in any great detail.

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[40] A video of Jan Ruff O'Herne, a Dutch woman who served as a “comfort woman” in Indonesia, appearing on the Australian television programme “Talking Heads” in February 2009, produced by Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

[41] *Fight for Justice: the Japanese Military “Comfort Women” — Resistance to Forgetting & Responsibility for the Future* is a website run principally by the Centre for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility and the Violence Against Women in War Research Action Centre. It includes documents and testimony videos related to the military “comfort women” issue.
〈http://fightforjustice.info〉

I was a bit surprised to find out that there were Dutch women in Indonesia [serving as "comfort women"], especially since the video of Jan Ruff-O'Herne was the first that I watched, but then, after that, I started to feel like I might have read that fact before or learned it somewhere, like it was buried somewhere deep in my memory. Hearing or reading in the news about "comfort women" together with talk of "compensation" and "trials", I thought of it pretty much as a political issue, and I guess I tended to group the women all together. I don't think I'd ever thought about [the former military "comfort women"] as individuals, even though in reality, everyone obviously had a totally different experience of it—of the time leading up to it, of what they went through at the time, and what happened to them afterwards.

After that, I read various testimonies, and a good few of the people said how they believed the new generations were different, or that they were receiving support from Japanese citizen support groups, or that they wanted the Japanese and Korean governments to get their act together and sort things out so that Korean and Japanese children could get along with each another, and those kinds of sentiments had a big effect on me. I think that listening to just snippets from the radio, I'd heard things that suggested [the former "comfort women"] hated the whole of Japan [as a result of their experiences], and also heard about Japanese people who were hostile to those women, but what I felt this time was that what the women wanted was for the Japanese nation to admit responsibility for those inhumane unacceptable acts that were inflicted on individuals during the abnormal circumstances of war, and to compensate them accordingly. In thinking about that, I sensed once again the kind of abnormal character of war, the unforgivable nature of what happens as part of it, and the indignation that has no place to go.

Watching that stuff, I felt ashamed for having never made the effort to find out more about it before, never reading those websites before, even though would have only taken thirty minutes or so. It seemed like maybe it was some kind of sense of guilt that had prevented me. It's as if I somehow wanted to turn my eyes away from the acts carried out by Japanese people—of whom I am one. About the Kōno Statement[42], too, my knowledge on the subject was pretty much just that he had admitted that such things had gone on, my understanding was incomplete, I didn't know that individuals are not being compensated in a way faithful to that

[42]A statement made by Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Kōno Yōhei in 1993, admitting for the first time that "comfort women" had been coerced by the Japanese army. (*Trans.*)

statement. But reading the words of the women on the page with all the testimony, or the statements of ex-soldiers, I felt like they were making a very calm and very fair request: for Japan to give compensation as a way of fully acknowledging what happened in the past, fully admitting the effect their actions had on what came after, and the hardship that they caused.

I also wondered why it seems to be so difficult for Japan's younger generations to face this incredibly reasonable request head on. It even started to seem bizarre to me, how difficult the Japanese government finds it just to acknowledge this stuff properly. I'm sure that there are hidden complexities to the situation that I don't understand, but I feel like there is so much that the new generations could do by just thinking calmly and reasonably about these things—for example, finding out about it and thinking about it for ourselves (of course, using unbiased information sources is important here) and then forming our own opinion on the matter. That means not being swayed by news that doesn't tell the whole story, or letting ourselves form preconceptions based upon biased reports of the situation.

And then, this is a slightly different topic, but listening to that testimony, I wondered to myself where those former “comfort women” got their strength from, to be able to stand up and bear witness to what happened. I guess there's lots of different reasons for their strength. There are some who have built a family who loves them for who they are and accepts them in their entirety, including all that happened in their past, and then there are others who, now they are old, feel they have to speak out, for the sake of those [with similar experiences] who have already passed away. Of course, I don't want to just talk about that element of it, to try and make it all into some kind of redemptive tale, but thinking about the courage to come forward like that, and then, reading the testimony of the people in the army and their thoughts about pacifism left me speechless. Also, I feel like it's not right that we, the Japanese post-war generations, let our lives pass without reading or hearing these people's courageous words, these words steeped in blood and tears. Because as far they aren't listened to, they are mute, voiceless. We have to make the effort to know more [about those kinds of things].

Have I ever spoken with anyone about the “comfort women” issue while living in America? Hmm, a Korean friend of mine and I once tried to explain to a mutual Vietnamese friend about the discussion between our governments over the “comfort women” issue. This was before I watched the testimony videos, or saw the Fight for Justice website. But that Korean friend is even less knowledgeable about the issue than I am (uninterested, maybe, or just prefers to live

in a forward-thinking way, rather than brooding over the past or talking politics) so we didn't give a very deep explanation or discussion. In fact, neither of us could give proper answers to our Vietnamese friends' questions, and at that time, I thought to myself that I'd research it at a later date, but never really did. Honestly, I don't remember any other times that the topic has come up in conversation. This time, in listening to the experiences of the former "comfort women" through a different medium to usual, it struck me as a real shame the way that, when you say that word "comfort women", it comes with this political image attached, and thanks to that, there are far fewer people willing to listen to the experiences of the women who actually experienced that stuff. Apart from that, there haven't been any other colleagues and friends from other countries who have asked me about it, perhaps because they have the perception that it's a sensitive topic, or else they just don't know much about it.

(September 2014, Washington D.C.)

K.S. (Company employee)

I've known about "comfort women" for a long time. I first heard about it when I was very young, probably when I was a primary school or junior high school student. I was watching a TV programme and there was a scene depicting it, though it only lasted for a second. It was a wartime drama, the sort that they often have on TV in August [to coincide with the anniversary of the end of the war]. At least I think that's what it was. I'd heard the word "comfort women" even before that, in another TV drama, where they'd shown young girls being forcibly taken away. Then, in this one, there was a scene showing a huge room with all the "comfort women" lying there, with just partitions separating them, then all these Japanese soldiers lining up clutching their money, and then going and doing their thing. It left a really strong impression on me. [The scene seemed to suggest that the "comfort women"] had been taken away against their wills to this place. The women were lying there staring at the ceiling with expressionless faces, and the Japanese soldiers with notes in their hands just kept coming and coming, one after another.

[Watching that] I felt really sorry for those women, and thought what a horrible thing war was. But then I'd also seen scenes on TV of the women in villages attacked by foot-soldiers in the

Sengoku period, or Japanese women being violated by Chinese and Russians when returning to Japan from Manchuria or Sakhalin after the war, so I kind of thought that those things happened regardless of the era or country, and I didn't have the impression that the Japanese troops were doing anything especially evil. I don't mean to say that what they did was OK because other people were doing the same thing, but rather that everyone who commits those kinds of acts is terrible. I also felt angry towards those in command who didn't enforce the rules. I guess I thought, that's what war is like, and that's why it's so terrible.

I suppose it was some time in the nineties [that I saw that drama]. Maybe they'd made it in light of the first former "comfort women" who came out and gave their testimony around that time. [In regards to the "comfort women" issue as you see it reported in the media,] well, I don't trust the media as it is anyway. They change the way they report things depending on the way that someone or other feels about it. I don't trust what they say an inch. I think I was probably able to accept [the depiction of "comfort women" as I saw it in that drama as a child] pretty unquestioningly because it didn't come with the question of people's interests attached, had none of the usual commotion surrounding it. I guess at that time I didn't think the media was bad, either.

[I've been interested in history since I was really young.] I really liked war-related things, and made plastic models of battleships and tanks, and so, from quite a young age I would sometimes watch historical documentaries and dramas. I wondered about why the Japanese army had attacked China, why and how they'd lost, and read *Japanese History* manga[43] in order to find out the answers. That was when I was in primary school. You know, boys are into those kinds of things, and I was also influenced by my friends. A friend I had had from when I was tiny was also into that stuff. As kids we made battleships and tanks together, and talked about all kinds of things. When we were at university, or maybe it was before that, anyway, very occasionally we'd talk about what the war must have been like.

I was pretty interested in modern history, but there was almost no one else at my school who was. I guess my parents might have had an influence on me in that regard, too. It wasn't like they came out and said much about it, but they watched a lot of historical dramas on television

[43] *Nihon no rekishi* (Japanese History) is the generic name for educational manga series about Japanese history, published by major Japanese publishing companies such as Shueisha, Shōgakukan and Gakken.

and so on. [In our history classes at school,] we spent no time [on modern history] at all. We really just whizzed through it. It was about the same depth of understanding I'd picked up from reading the *Japanese History* manga, because that included a bit of modern history, too. But, come to think of it now, apart from that one old friend of mine, there wasn't anyone else who was interested in history like I was.

[I like visiting Korean history museums.] As far as the main ones go, I've been to the National Museum of Korea, the Seoul Museum of History and the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History. Of course, there are all different types of history museums, and some of them have old earthenware vessels from ancient times or Buddhist statues from the middle ages, but it's the museums of contemporary history that I'm interested in. For example, the period post-1900, when the West started making its way into Asia, and the whole region became modernized. I'm also interested in wartime history, and the post-war regeneration of the country. Really, I'm interested in all history, regardless of the country, but I have a special interest in Korea because I like Korean pop music, and it's through that that I've come to know a lot about the country's history. It didn't start out as a desire to know about Korean history in particular...

[In the Korean history museums,] there were displays about various kinds of anti-Japanese activity, like how, during the war, there was a provisional Korean government in China set up by Korean political leaders who'd escaped the country, which coordinated resistance activities within Korea against the Japanese colonial government. There was also a part depicting the kind of room the average Korean citizen lived in during the war, the general living situation. But it wasn't like the exhibitions discussed the terrible treatment Koreans received at the hands of the Japanese or anything intended to stir up anti-Japanese sentiment. It just explained, in quite a factual way, that this was the way that most Koreans lived at the time. I don't think that "comfort women" were discussed. In fact the thing that most stuck in my memory from my visits to those exhibitions wasn't the section about Korean-Japanese relations, but that about the political struggles in Korea – the postwar struggle for presidential power and so on. It made me realize that there was a lot of conflict that took place. Maybe it was just me who didn't feel it was anti-Japanese, though. Something that struck me is how the perceived contents of an exhibition change according to the viewer. The way people feel about things changes depending on their particular perspective, their beliefs about things. For example, if a Korean person was looking at that exhibition [I'm sure they'd think very different things to me.] I guess

they get taught about all that history at a young age, and although they probably don't think about it much during their everyday life, when they're looking at an exhibition like that it seems likely that all that stuff they've forgotten about would be roused, and they might find their anti-Japanese sentiment getting stirred up by looking at something like that. But for me, as a Japanese person, that didn't really happen.

In May this year, there was a special exhibition at the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History about "comfort women", but I didn't see it. I was more interested in the exhibition about modern Korean history in the same museum, which covered the period spanning from 1900s right through to the K-pop sensation of recent years. In fact, that exhibition was about all the stuff I'm most into, so I went to see that. At the entrance to the museum, they have all these LED panels showing all sorts of video clips. It's a really advanced, modern kind of museum. The maps and so on inside the museum are all 3D, and you can touch them [and move them about]. So in this exhibition there were displays showing what life was like in the fifties and sixties, the Prime Minister's chair, stuff about the K-Pop boom and the most recent TV programmes, and so on. When I found out about that I decided I really wanted to go and see it.

The exhibition about modern Korean history is a permanent exhibition, but when I came to the end of that, there was a special exhibition room at the end, that was just there for a limited time. I glanced at it, wondering what it was, and saw that there were all kinds of *manga* and pop art-style pictures there. There were lots of kids there to see it, lots of parents with children, so I thought that maybe it was a special *manga* or animation event or something, but when I looked closely I saw that it was an exhibition about "comfort women". At that point I sort of lost courage and decided not to go in. I found out later they were displaying the exhibition that had appeared before at the Angoulême International Comics Festival[44], but I didn't know that at the time, and I thought maybe that they were trying to portray the issue in a way that was easy for even kids to grasp. The reason I didn't go inside at that time was that I knew what "comfort women" were after seeing that drama all that time ago, and because I knew, I felt like going inside would only make me feel bad. Also, I'm easily recognizable in Korea as a Japanese, and I felt like people there who were feeling emotional might start having a go at me, and I didn't

[44]At the 41st Angoulême International Comics Festival in 2014, there was an exhibition about manga dealing with the issue of military "comfort women".

want that to happen.

I don't mean that the exhibition had a [menacing] feeling to it or anything like that, it's just that I myself was scared... You never know what people who use those kinds of things as an outlet for their rage are going to do. I think the media probably has a share in the blame for [that way of thinking]. Before I became interested in Korea, I studied a bit of Chinese. At that time, I had to visit China for my work sometimes, so it made sense. Some Chinese people are really patriotic in their way of thinking, they really believe that China is without fault, and I think my fear of not knowing what people are going to do stems from that time. It's not like anyone has actually ever said anything bad to me. But I was over in Hong Kong when Japanese company workers were arrested, during the time when the Senkaku Islands dispute was erupting, and there was an anti-Japanese rally.

In fact, though, there were only about 20 or 30 people at the rally. They just met up in this huge park and started making a lot of noise, and that was it. The people around them were totally uninterested, and were just napping and so on. It was really only a small proportion of the population who got worked up about the issue, but when I got back to Japan and saw the news, I found that they were making out like it was a really big deal. I guess that if you have it planted in your mind that there are people who feel that way, then [deciding not to go inside the exhibition like I did] is the kind of decision you end up making. You start to feel scared. That event is one of the reasons I lost my trust in the media. Our company has an office in China, and some of my colleagues are living out there. There have been times when I heard about a demo going on over there, [but when you speak to them about it, they say that] most people don't take part, and the people who do aren't especially dangerous. But when you watch it on television it seems like everyone is furious.

[My grandparents] lived in Manchuria during the war, but they came back before the war ended, so they didn't have terrible memories of the final period or anything like that. [When I was a child,] I didn't ask those around me [about the war], and they didn't speak about it either, so I haven't heard anything about it. My grandma never spoke of it. Just the fact that she was in Manchuria, that was it. I don't know if she doesn't speak of it because it was a hard time, or what. I somehow developed this feeling that I shouldn't talk about it. So I guess I deliberately avoided asking her about it.

In that sense, I was interested in the way people lived in Manchuria back then, and so on. That might have been why I was so interested in the [wartime] dramas. I didn't ask my father much [about my grandparents' experience] either, and he didn't speak about it to me of his own accord. I don't know if it's true or not, but my father once told me [that the Chinese adored my grandfather]. He said they loved him because he was so kind, although I really don't know if that's true. My grandfather wasn't in the army. I don't know if that was owing to some kind of physical problem or not.

When it comes to the question of whether or not “comfort women” really existed, I don't know the facts at all, so it ends up just being a matter of intuition, but it seems to me that if you think about it rationally, reasonably, then it's obvious that that sort of thing would be necessary. If you have tens of thousands of men, then some kind of thing of that kind would be necessary in order to satisfy their desires. Also, I think it takes a considerable amount of bravery to come out and reveal that you had those kinds of things done to you. I find it impossible to believe that those people would gain anything from [speaking about those] kinds of things, though that's just a feeling. I think of it as an issue that needs addressing.

When it comes to this issue, I wish someone would produce some kind of scientific proof, or at least a scientific way of looking at it. This is getting away from “comfort women” for a minute, but there is a job in our world which is prostitution, right? And we can ask, for example, how many prostitutes are needed in order to satisfy the sexual desires of 1000 men. There's supply and demand, and there's the question of how many people you need in order to fulfill that demand. And then you can work out, given how many troops there were stationed in Korea at that time, and how many people would be needed to fulfill those demands. Suppose you need a hundred people, then how many people would there be actively seeking that job? If a hundred were needed and only fifty came forward, then I guess it stands to reason that the other fifty would be taken away against their will. I guess that's one way of looking at the issue.

(September 2014, Waseda)

A. S.（Member of regional organization）

On 13 August, 1996, at the initiative of the youth group of the Kawasaki Workers' Union [of which I was part], we showed the film *The Murmuring*. That was eighteen years ago. We screened it at a place called the Nakahara Meeting Hall, in front of Musashi Nakahara station on the Nanbu line, which is now known as Epoch Nakahara. I guess there were about two or three hundred people there, and I think it started at six in the evening. It was just a one-off screening. News of it got passed on by word of mouth, and we gave out flyers and so on. I think one of the people responsible for hosting the event gave an introduction to it. I was there on the day, working on the reception desk. But that was eighteen years ago, so I don't really remember the content of the film. My family came to see it too, but I don't remember asking my daughter or wife what they thought or anything like that.

There was a reason why we ended up showing that film, which is linked to the history and climate of Kawasaki[45]. As you probably know, there is a company originally called the Nihon Kōkan (now the JFE Engineering Corporation) based in Kawasaki, which is an ironworks. Before, throughout, and after the Second World War, that ironworks employed a lot of Koreans living in Japan. There were some Koreans who were brought over here to work there by force, and some who came seeking a job after the Japan-Korea treaty of 1910, and remained here after the war. I don't know the exact figures, but there were about 20,000 Koreans living in Kawasaki. There's a region of Kawasaki by the coast where a lot of Koreans live, and the people living there set up a welfare organization called Seikyu-sha, which runs local crèches and so on.

In terms of what has happened in this particular area, I think about the Hitachi Employee Discrimination case, where a young Korean living in Japan, called Pak Chong-Sok, took the Hitachi company entrance examination, but wasn't employed because he was Korean. So there was a discrimination dispute that he won, which was very rare for cases like that at the time. Also in Kawasaki, there was another dispute over the issue of Koreans refusing to be fingerprinted[46], and at the heart of that was Seikyu-sha, the welfare organization I mentioned before. The main figure in that was Yi In-Ha, a first-generation Japanese Korean priest.

[45]Kawasaki is a city located in Kanagawa Prefecture, positioned between Tokyo and Yokohama. (*Trans.*)
[46]In the 1980s, there was a wave of Koreans who refused to be fingerprinted, as was required by the Japanese law at the time for non-Japanese citizens. This requirement was eventually dropped by the Japanese government. (*Trans.*)

In terms of anti-discrimination disputes and so on, the Japanese left wing protested pretty hard against the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea of 1965. It was obviously unfair, the treaty, and they claimed that that unfairness was based upon prejudice. It was mainly the new left wing, rather than the communist party, that fought on that score. Before that, there had been the 1960 demos over the Anpo Treaty, and then again in 1970, and in between those two demos there was the student movement protesting against the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea. When you look at the content of those protests, it's pretty clear they didn't really have a firm grounding, but the sort of protests that Kawasaki's Seikyu-sha was involved in—focusing on discrimination through a single individual's case, or opposing the fingerprinting law—[had a concrete aim].

Also in Kawasaki, and I think this was the first time this happened anywhere in Japan, there were protests against the municipal government, because [Korean] people were paying taxes but weren't allowed to enter state housing. The city mayor back then was Itō Saburō, who'd been voted in as the socialist and communist candidate. At the time, Tokyo had Minobe [Ryōkichi] as its governor, Yokohama had Asukata [Ichio] as its mayor, Kawasaki had Itō, Kyoto had Ninagawa [Torazō], and Osaka had Kuroda [Ryōichi]: it was a full set of reformist politicians in government all around the country. That lasted until the early 1970s. It seems unthinkable now, but in those days, the socialist and communist candidates were the ones who got elected as governors and mayors. That was what it was like then. [The Kawasaki mayor] Itō said that "law and regulations cannot override humanity", and didn't press charges against those who refused to be fingerprinted. That was how things were in Kawasaki.

So those sorts of disputes were going on in the area, and the youth group of the union, of which I was a member, took part too, participating in various activities and so on, and it was then that someone mentioned this film *The Murmuring* to me. Who was it, I wonder? I guess it must have been one of the people from the Seikyu-sha. I suppose one of the Seikyu-sha employees asked us if we'd show the film. And with how things were at that time, we just agreed to do it, in a very natural way. We hadn't been involved with the military "comfort women" issue directly, and it wasn't like we were instructed [to show the film] by the main body of the union, we just decided to do it, voluntarily, because we were interested. Up until that point, I hadn't known much about military "comfort women", and I didn't know about the film either, but we decided to screen it, and so we did, in August 1996. That was how it happened.

Kawasaki's sister city is in Korea. It's a place called Puchon, which is about 20 minutes from Seoul on the underground. One of the activity leaders [in the youth group of the union] organises a kind of study tour there every year, so I've visited about four times. One of those times, there was a trip to visit the "House of Sharing" which the film is based on, although it just so happened that I couldn't make it on that particular occasion. That tour is still running, and [the person who organizes it] is around the same age as me, and retired a long time ago. He really takes Japan-Korean relations as his life's work. Now he works as a part-time lecturer at some university or other. There's a place in [the Sakuramoto district of Kawasaki] called Cement Street, with many Korean barbeque restaurants and so on, and for a while he talked about trying to make it into a major Korean town, of a similar sort of scale to Chinatown in Yokohama. The idea never quite took off, but he's a pretty passionate person, and has lived in that area from when he first went to university, putting his roots down in the community, teaming up with the Seikyu-sha people and involving himself in all kinds of projects. He's still running those study tours.

Apart from the screening of *The Murmuring*, I haven't been personally involved in any support activities related to the "comfort women" issue. At some point, a former "comfort women" in Indonesia came over to Japan, and I went to a lecture she gave. That was over ten years ago, too. I didn't organize the event or anything, so I can't even remember exactly how many years ago it was. I have a feeling that it was in Yokohama. That was after the film screening. It's pretty long ago, so I don't remember what she said. In any case, I just went along, I wasn't involved in any support activities. In the film I watched recently, *My Heart is Not Broken Yet*, there was a society offering support to Korean former "comfort women" now living in Japan. I didn't know that support organizations like that existed. That's true, though, right—there really are groups of Japanese activists offering support [to former "comfort women"]? Nowadays, it seems like everybody just bashes the *Asahi Shimbun*—you don't see people offering support to others, people don't really show much interest. Public opinion has changed, so now it's the *Asahi* that gets bashed. Personally, I'd like to do away with all the [right-wing] publications: *Shukan Shinchō*, *Shūkan Bunshun*, *Shūkan Gendai*, *Shūkan Post*, not to mention the *Sankei Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun*...

In regards the Pacific War, my father went over and fought in China. I was born after he came back to Japan, but he never said a thing about the war. Just the fact that he fought in China, and also I saw a photo. I think he was just standing there holding a gun. Of course it wasn't while he

was fighting. The only thing my father would say [about that stuff] was that he had been to China during the war. I don't even know how long he was there for, or where. He's been back several times after the war ended. Maybe he went with war friends or something. I don't know why he went back, and I didn't ask.

I guess talking about the war is a kind of taboo. War means killing people. It stands to reason that you wouldn't want to talk about it. Even if it's just talking about how you were a victim, with bullets coming flying at you, there's no way that remembering those sorts of things is going to be pleasant. All the soldiers who went to war want to forget about it but they can't, and so they become traumatized and so on. The Self-Defense Forces troops who went to Iraq were attacked by mortars and so on, but they didn't exactly take part in the war. And yet still, 28 of those who went have killed themselves. That stuff can traumatize you even if you're not directly participating in it, so just think about what it must be like if you're actually fighting and killing people, almost getting killed yourself. It must mess you up mentally, and even if it doesn't, you wouldn't want to speak about it decades after it happened. I guess that's just how it is with war. So many things happen that you don't want to speak about, both things done by you and things done to you.

Basically, in Japan, people complain about the ways in which we suffered [during the war], but they [won't admit responsibility] for the harm they caused. It's like that with “comfort women”, and also with the Nanking Massacre. It's a taboo to talk about the things that we did during the war. Of course, through the atomic bombs or the air raid on Tokyo on the 10th March where a hundred thousand people were killed, we lost lots and lots of people including civilians, and I'm not denying that these are serious issues, but when it comes to what Japanese did [to others] during the war, people won't speak about it. I don't think it's just Japan that's like that. In general, people don't want to speak about the harm they caused in other countries. Germany is the only nation to have actively pursued taking responsibility for all the things they did.

[Speaking about topics like “comfort women” or war-related issues outside of the damage that we endured] is basically not something that people do. Even within the union youth group, I never really spoke with anybody about “comfort women”. It's only recently that I have. I was out drinking with some other guys, and we were talking about the *Asahi Shimbun*, so I tried [bringing it up]. I wanted to see what people would say and they all came out with opinions like Hashimoto [Tōru, the Osaka mayor]—you know, the idea that it's not just Japan who did those

kinds of things, everybody was doing it, that kind of thing. [The people I was out drinking with] were all apolitical types, and came out with things like, “Well, I'm sure 'comfort women' probably existed, but it wasn't just Japan doing that kind of stuff. If there's a war, every country needs a system like that, right? So isn't weird to go around lumping all the blame on Japan?” The idea that someone would be let off for stealing something because other people also steal is totally unthinkable. And yet, even though it won't get them off the hook, people still seek redemption in those kinds of attitudes.

[War is taboo as it is,] but when you get into the territory of “comfort women” and the Nanking Massacre, things to do with war and sex, then that’s really the taboo within the taboo. I guess if we were [on the side of] the victims we might be able to talk about it a bit, but we're [on the side of] the perpetrators, so it's extra hard. In addition, I think there's lots of people who have a feeling, I don't know if you'd call it nationalist or not, but a feeling that they don't want Japan to be the sort of nation that does those sorts of things. That's really the sort of pettiness that lies behind nationalism. When Japan got totally thrashed in the World Cup, the news reports were all talking about how the Japanese fans were, going around picking up litter—saying how great Japanese people were, what a great country it is to be part of. I was watching it all with a critical eye, but that's what people turn to make them feel better. To feel some sense of superiority over other nations. That's what nationalism is about.

(September 2014, Shibuya)

M. S.（Traveller）

I have a feeling that I saw [the words military “comfort women”] in some textbook, but I have no memory of studying the issue in any detail. I didn't like class much anyway, so I didn't really listen properly. I don't know when it was [that I saw that textbook], but it was just mentioned there as an issue that existed. You know how when you're young, people don't really talk about those kinds of [“sexual”] topics anyway. I feel like at school, they just said the word, “comfort women”, and gave a vague explanation, like “they were people who served men”, and then left it at that. But after I got old enough to understand that stuff, I found out that during the war there were people who were forced to become kind of sexual slaves. I don't know when it was

that I found that out. I guess it was before high school.

It's pretty recently [that I became aware of "comfort women" as a social issue]. You know how when relations with Korea turned sour, the Koreans started making bronze statues of "comfort women" and things? After that, it appeared on the news even more than ever. [I feel like the media coverage of the "comfort women" issue] tends to do a lot of covering up of the unsavoury parts. It seems like the Japanese government refuses to bring the truth out into the open, taking the stance of, "well, what happened happened, but there's nothing that can be done about it now". I sense that there's pressure being put on them from somewhere not to admit that it was wrong. And when it comes to what the Koreans say on the matter, well, I guess they're probably right... But then I look at the way that the [South Korean] President, Park Geun-Hye speaks about it and I feel like it's a little bit over the top, you start to suspect that she's might be using the "comfort women" issue as a trigger to try and exert pressure on Japan. Even if what she's speaking about is historical fact, I feel like she's doing so in order to try and claim political advantage. I find myself wondering why she gets quite so emotional about it.

This was the first time [that I'd seen the videos showing the testimony of former "comfort women"].[47] But I'd always imagined that those were the kinds of things that went on, and what they said was pretty much as I'd expected it would be. But the fact that there were so many "comfort stations" means that there were really a huge number of people taken as sexual slaves. If there were that many, then isn't it still only a really small proportion who have come forward? I guess [a lot of people] still want to hide the fact that it happened? Probably even the people it happened to would rather not speak about it, if they can help it. [The former "comfort women"] don't want to speak about it, and Japanese society wants to hide away from it, so it never gets brought out into the open...

Even if you tried to compensate the victims for the experience of being forced to live in those "comfort stations", too scared to run away for fear they'd be killed, there's no way you could. I really hate the idea that you can solve all problems with money. I often think about if, for example, your child was killed because of bullying or something, and you asked for

[47]The materials watched by the interviewee were as follows: a video clip of Jan Ruff-O'Herne appearing on the Australian television programme produced by ABC (See note 40); the programme "'comfort women' One Last Cry", depicting the remains of "comfort stations" around the world and former "comfort women", produced by the USA's Korean broadcasting corporation Arirang TV, and broadcast in March 2013.

compensation for your loss, how, when you get given this sum of 50 million yen, you must feel so empty. You've got [this great sum of money], and won the court case, but your dead child will never come back. I'm sure the government would like to sort everything out with money. But however much compensation and allowances these people are given now, they'll never get their youths back. They're all elderly already, anyway. You can't give compensation for that.

I used to live in Yokosuka, which is near an American military base. I was really young at the time so I don't remember it very clearly. After my parents sold our house, we went to live with my grandma there for a while. I remember how one time, when we were near the base, I've forgotten exactly what exactly it was that we were doing there, my grandma and parents told me that I shouldn't go wandering around there by myself. When I asked why, they told me that there were Yanks living around here, and they'd have their way with me. At the time I didn't understand what they meant by “have their way”. But then, when I got a bit older, it was seen as a kind of status symbol to be going out with one of the American soldiers among the girls who went to school in the area.

[Now, remembering my family's words back then,] I think about how America has the power over Japan now. I feel like my grandma knew from the war of cases where women were made to sexually serve those in power, and that was passed down to me, via my mother. Through that experience and others, I came to realize that, when a certain group of people are in a weaker position, either in war or in military matters, that's what happens to their women. I don't know whether I'll experience the situation of being at war in the future or not, but at that time it was hard for me to imagine, and I didn't take it very seriously. But now that I have to go in and out of the base as part of my job, I know that there are [American soldiers] who fall in love and get married and so on, so I don't think you can say anything so general as “you need to watch out for American soldiers”. Although there definitely are cases of sexual assault, as there are on the American army base in Okinawa, too.

I've searched on the internet before [about military “comfort women”], but there was just so much information there, I had no idea what was true and what wasn't. There were some websites which said that the women were just doing a job, like prostitutes today do, and received a proper wage, and there were others that said people from poor households were sent to the stations by their families in order to make money. Then there were others that said that the women were taken to the “comfort stations” by force and made to serve as sexual

slaves. Which version is the truth, I wonder? I've looked at so much stuff on the internet that I feel even less sure about it than I was before. I think that some of the stuff in the media is deliberately written so that people who see it will spread false information. If that's how it is with NHK and [the major news providers] too, then there's really no information sources that you can trust.

[Thinking about my own thought processes when it comes to the “comfort women” issue,] I guess generally speaking, and I think this is true of everyone, I sympathise most with things that I or people close to me have also experienced. In the narrow sense, “the people close to me” would be my family, and I guess in the wide sense, it would be people of the same nationality as me. But I think that if we ourselves have caused other people harm, then we can't sympathise with the pain that we've caused them. If, for example, someone in my family murdered somebody, and that person's family was furious about it, I don't think I would be really able to understand that person's sadness. I'd be trying to find a reason why my family had done what they'd done. I think all humans [would be the same in that respect]. I think the solidarity instinct overrides the sympathy instinct.

So if I saw someone crying because of something my grandfather or some other member of my family did in the war, I would really sorry about it, but I think the sentiment that, well, my grandfather could hardly have gone against his nation's orders, he had no choice in the matter, would be stronger. I know it's shocking to say this, but I guess the one thing that gives people a ray of hope in these matters is just to think, well the Japanese had no choice in the matter. I've read too much on the subject and I don't know what to believe any more, but I guess I tend to end up gravitating to the articles saying things like how other nations did similar things in the war, or how the “comfort women” weren't brought to the stations against their will but came there in order to earn money, and I guess [those articles] have a stronger impact on me. I think that rather than the statements of the victims, it's the kind of articles excusing the acts of the Japanese that I tend to absorb, somehow, unconsciously.

That's not something that I have any control over, it's just human instinct. It's a kind of defence mechanism that comes into play I think, where you seek to protect your loved ones and those close to you, rather than sympathising with the other, the victim. What I'd really want to do would be to accept the wrongness of my actions, understand it, apologise for what I'd done, while still keeping a strong hold on to my pride and sense of identity. But when I look at how

my mind actually works, I see how I end up thinking about how my country had such-and-such a reason for acting as it did, and so on. Imagine, for example, if I got into a fight and injured someone. Of course, I think that kind of violence is inexcusable, but in that situation I'd start thinking up excuses, think that of course I had a reason for punching that person, that the person really insulted me, and so on. But then the parents of the other party will be angry, crying, saying that I hurt their child. And of course I'd feel bad about that, but I'd still look for excuses for my action.

I sometimes go abroad, and recently, it seems like everybody's realised that talking about the war is some kind of taboo, so suddenly nobody does it any more. But once or twice in the past, people have asked me whether I knew about a certain thing that happened in the war, and I've thought, no, I had no idea about that. Those experiences made me think that I needed to study more history, although I never actually did. I wonder when that was? Maybe it was when I went to America when I was in high school. Or maybe it was when I went to Saipan by myself to get my diving license.

On the subject of war, I just remembered something, from when I was living in Sydney.[48] When I was in my third year of primary school, I went with my family to visit Canberra. Do you know the place called Orange, in the suburbs of Canberra? There are all these white graves there. Anyway, we went there. Talking about the war always made me feel really depressed, and I always hated it when they showed war programmes on TV, or *Grave of the Fireflies*[49] and so on. But my father liked that kind of stuff, and he took me along. And then this old Australian guy came up to us, and started ranting at my dad. I had no idea what he was saying at all so I was just standing there staring into space. Neither my mother nor my brother spoke English, and I don't think my father really understood most of it, but this guy was standing there talking away for about an hour. He seemed angry. He was really worked up, anyway. When I asked my father afterwards what he'd been saying, he said that he hadn't really understood much, but that it was just talk about what the Japanese had done when they'd come here in the war.

I'd never studied about what the Japanese Army did when they went to Australia during the war. I asked my dad if the Japanese had come here and attacked, and he said that actually, yes

[48]The interviewee lived in Sydney, Australia from 1987 to 1992.
[49]*Grave of the Fireflies* is a Studio Ghibli animated film released in 1988. Set in Kobe, it depicts the struggle of two siblings to survive during the final months of the Second World War. (*Trans.*)

they had. But I wasn't all that interested in history, so I just thought, wow, really, that was never in the textbooks, and then it kind of ended there. I never looked up anything about it. [Though I did wonder what he could've had to speak about] for a whole hour…

I guess that old man probably had all this anger and he didn't know where to release it, but from our perspective, the people who had been alive during the war were already becoming fewer. In terms of the Japanese education about the war, we only learn about the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In this country, we like to cover up uncomfortable truths, so we talk about the unfortunate things that happened to us, but we mostly cover up all the harm that we did to other nations.

(September 2014, Hakodate)

S. A. J. (Instructor, originally from the USA)

American public schools usually teach children about World War II at around the age of ten or eleven; however most schools focus predominately on the Holocaust and the war efforts on the European front. The curriculum usually includes a variety of school excursions to Holocaust museums and other places like this. (These museums are rather graphic and haunting to many children at this age).

At my school, students first learned about WWII in the 5th grade, but they learned about our participation in Europe as well as our involvement in the war in the Pacific Theatre. By middle school students in my school system were already familiar with most of the "obvious" war crimes committed by Japan, such as their treatment of POWs, the Japanese invasion of China and Indonesia, etc. However, the sex slaves were not a large part of the discussion due to the students' relative ages and the nature of the topic. Students usually learned about the sex slaves at a later date (I believe it was 8th grade for me).

The discussion on sexual slavery during WWII was grouped with slavery in America as part of a unit in our course curriculum, so many students (who come from mixed and/or African-American backgrounds) could easily understand and relate to both subjects. We

watched a number of videos, and read quite a bit of literature about slavery, and much of this media was quite graphic (which was necessary to convey to the students the horrors of all forms of slavery).

I don't remember the subjects [of sexual slavery and slavery in America] being woven together into a tightly-knit lesson plan. Instead, they seemed to be used as examples to teach humanitarian ideals. We have a few days in the US, as well as an entire month (February) where multiculturalism and civil rights are often the subject of many in-class topics. For these months, we revisit topics that we've learned in the past (Holocaust, slavery, US western expansion, etc.) and talk about the repercussions from those events. We also talked about new topics, or topics that weren't discussed as much. For our school, one of these lessons focused on sex slaves and prostitution (which also happened quite often in American history as well, with the African slave trade).

I felt the lesson plan was effective in teaching the students about the events that occurred in other countries. A lot of the time primary and secondary school history teachers can be accused of having "tunnel-vision," where they focus on only one-perspective/worldview, and don't evaluate things from the perspectives of others. I was lucky enough to have teachers who were a bit more conscious of this. The only thing I didn't like about these sorts of lesson plans were that they could be a bit "scatter shot;" that is to say, not enough time was spent on any given subtopic, and there was very little scaffolding in the teaching pedagogy to allow the students to grow accustomed to the cultures being evaluated. For example, sometimes we would talk about a country that many of the students had very little knowledge of, so it was difficult to get students to empathize with that country's plight (though, comparing it to things the students 'are' familiar with and 'do' empathize with already, such as the American slave trade, did help with this a bit).

It’s difficult to recall what my response to the content [concerning sexual slavery] was. I assume it was equal parts intrigue and disgust. Most students, including myself didn’t find it entirely “unreal” or “unprecedented” for something like this to have occurred in world history (since most Americans are not sheltered from the violent world around them) but students were far from apathetic toward it. Most of us were confused as to how something so horrible could happen to begin with.

In my high school history classes, students were given an overwhelming amount of information about WWII from various sides/perspectives, and many of us had to do research papers about various aspects of the war. My high school offered a separate course that only dealt with our wars in the Pacific (WWII with the Japanese, the Korean War, the Vietnamese War, etc.). I didn't take this course, but there was plenty of discussion of these wars in other more generalized history courses.

I haven't watched too many testimonials about the subject [sexual slavery]. During high school we had an individual come to our school and speak about her experience though (Holocaust survivors spoke at this event too). It was interesting to hear what she had to say about her experiences during her enslavement. And she was very willing to answer all of the questions we had about the event. That was a lot better than any of the testimonial videos we watched before. I always felt like the testimonial videos were either 1) missing crucial information due to editing, or 2) impersonal, despite the personal nature of the topic to those victims.

My father's side is African-American, and as such my great grandparents were slaves. My grandmother used to talk to me about her mother's experiences and the stories her grandmother and mother told her. It was quite haunting to hear those things, and it is surreal to think of slavery (or similar atrocities) happening in modern times. For instance, 5 years before my parents met, it would have been illegal (in some states) for a black man and a white woman to get married.

To be honest, I cannot remember all the details of this survivor's testimony event. As I said, there was more than one, and the event wasn't dedicated to sex slavery. I believe we had an American POW, a nurse from Pearl Harbor, the woman who was a sex slave (I cannot remember, but I do not think she was Korean), and I believe a Holocaust survivor.

I remember that I and the rest of the student body were quite supportive of all the presenters. No one showed any disrespect, and everyone believed their stories for the most part. With American culture at the time (having been post 9-11... I think less than a year after), we were rather supportive of soldiers and survivors of war crimes. So most of the students wanted to join the military afterward and expressed their intent while some of the people were still speaking (especially for the POW, sex slave victim, and holocaust survivor). There are usually military recruiters at our high schools maybe for about two months out of the year, just

sitting at the entrance or near the lunchroom. So I can remember some students speaking about talking to, "that military recruiter" while we were leaving the auditorium. I remember that the only person who met a bit of difficulty was the Holocaust survivor, because we had some neo-Nazis at our high school; they either didn't believe his story, or felt he deserved what happened to him. It was sad to see that.

No, I have not [spoken about the topic with my Japanese friends]. I am quite willing to discuss the topic, but that sort of thing never came up. I've spoken with Japanese co-workers about WWII before, but even then the conversation never moved in that direction. It steered towards other things, such as the atomic bomb museum and the loss of the northern islands to Russia (since I am working in Hokkaido I hear about this latter topic a lot). Some people seem like they feel victimised (though they don't readily admit it), but others either do not feel that way, or are careful not to express those sentiments with me, seeing as America would have to be viewed as one of the antagonists for the "victim" argument to exist.

Americans (non-politicians at least) are not very keen on the Japanese revisionists and Holocaust deniers. It is a rather strange position for an individual to take, especially when confronted with so much evidence to the contrary. There is a definite agenda behind the people making these claims, and I feel as if something needs to change in Japanese school systems. If someone in America decided that "American schools shouldn't teach kids about slavery in America" everyone would think they were crazy.

(October 2014, Hakodate)

H. S. (Lawyer)

I do not recall when [I first learned about Japan's wartime sexual enslavement]. It was probably from some TV news or newspaper when the Japanese PM issued the official statement of apology. I was still young, so I did not really understand. Probably I only thought it was just part of bad things Japan did during the war partly because the term "comfort woman," which sugar-coats the real meaning, was too vague. The media or school classes did not explain in detail.

These videos that I got from you were the first ones [testimonies by sex slave survivors], I think.[50] I may have watched some on TV, but I have no recollection. Although I hadn't heard/read any testimony itself, I knew about sex slavery. So my feeling was not so emotional. It may be partly because I watched too many movies or studied international politics at college, making me immune. I was more surprised by the quite vivid testimony by the Japanese soldiers who raped these women.

No [, I have never spoken about the sex slave issue with my friends]. I talked with my Korean friends in general about the war, but did not specifically discuss the sexual slaves. It is not about awkwardness, but just never happened in retrospect. Maybe subconsciously, I was avoiding the topic, I don't know.

These were not serious discussions, but rather casual conversations regarding what Japan did during WWII. For example, when I visited one of my Korean friends' home, her grandmom spoke Japanese well because she was there when Japan occupied [Korean peninsula] and forced them to have Japanese education. But we didn't make it a big deal.

[Answering the question about the tendency in Japanese war memory and narrative to emphasize its victimhood,] I think it is because only a limited number of people had first-hand experience on the battlefield. On the other hand, regular people were the ones who suffered in Japan and experienced the bombs. It seems also that the media usually focuses on the latter.

I am not sure if they [soldiers] have chosen to be silent [about the atrocious aspects of war]. But theoretically, people do not want to tell anything bad they did, especially to their loved ones, who might start looking at them in a different way.

(October 2014)

[50]The video clip of Jan Ruff-O'Herne appearing on "Talking Heads" in February 2009 (see note 40); testimony videos of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery (2000) from the website *Fight for Justice* (see note 41).

R.S. (Medical specialist)

It's hard for me to remember the first time I heard the term military "comfort women". When the debate was going on, over whether or not the Japanese government would apologise for it, I saw some former "comfort women" on the TV news dressed in *chima jeogori*. I guess that was when I was in junior or senior high school. My memory about it isn't fixed, but I remember those old Korean women dressed in traditional Korean dress, crying. They looked very old, and it amazed me to think that they had been young once too. They were a long way away from the image in my mind that went with the words "comfort women".

In Japanese, we use the word *ian* [that means "comfort" in the term *ianfu* ("comfort women")] in other terms like *ian-ryokō* ["comfort holiday"]. It doesn't have a specifically sexual meaning.[51] So when I heard about the so-called '"comfort women" problem', I wondered what was so problematic about these women. But I was already a high school student at that time, so I sort of guessed what the term was being used to denote. I somehow sensed that it wasn't the sort of thing that I could go asking my mum about. So I never asked anybody, and so it was through watching the news that I came to understand that these "comfort women" were people placed in a really pitiable position of being forced into prostitution during the war. Even if they introduce people on TV as "comfort women", they never explain what the term "comfort women" really means. When relations with Korea took a turn for the worse and that sort of news was on all the time, I gradually came to understand what it was about.

I'm pretty sure that I never learned about it at school. I feel like it's not the sort of thing that they'd teach you about at junior high school. I mean, there's the tricky issue of what exactly this word *ian* means. I feel like it would be okay to teach senior high school students about it. But then, I took the science course at senior high school rather than the humanities one, so I didn't really study history at all. While the humanities students were studying history, we were doing science and maths and things, so my knowledge of history is pretty poor, even those bits which

[51] Slightly different to the English word "comfort", the Japanese word *ian* implies also recreation and fun. As indicated by the interviewee, it is also commonly used in the term *ian-ryokō*, or "comfort holiday", which means a trip put on by company or a group for its members to boost their morale. (*Trans.*)

are taken to be just general knowledge. So I'm pretty sure that I didn't ever learn about "comfort women" at school.

I didn't know about the Kōno or Murayama Statements[52] at that time. It's only in the last few years that I found out about them. I heard people on the news mentioning how the issue had already been sorted out, and that was how I came to find out about the Kōno and Murayama Statements. I think Murayama was Prime Minister when I was a senior high school student, so it might have been then that I first heard about "comfort women". I guess it must have been then. I don't know if that's when I saw the women on TV in *chima jeogori* or not.

In terms of what I've seen outside of the news, this was the first time that I'd heard [the testimonies of former "comfort women"]. I knew about the Korean "comfort women", but I hadn't been aware that there were also Europeans forced to become "comfort women" for the Japanese army. In the programme about Jan Ruff-O'Herne[53], they were using the word "comfort lady", in English, and at first I had no idea what they meant by that. It was only when I tried to put it back into Japanese that I realized what they were referring to. I think Japanese is really good at finding these euphemistic expressions that cover up the truth, to skillfully hide the real situation from view.

Ms Ruff-O'Herne was saying that it was a question of weighing the shame against the truth, and in the end, the urge to speak the truth won out, and she decided to testify. But that took fifty years to happen. She was talking about her upbringing, and listening to that, I understood that she was just a girl from a really ordinary family. She hadn't done anything bad at all, but one day she was suddenly taken away, and put in that situation. It's beyond imagining, really, but if you try and think about it in normal terms, it's just so awful.

I didn't know any details about the Korean "comfort women" either, and so I don't know what kinds of households they came from, or in what way they'd been brought up, but when I saw them coming forward [to give their testimony] and crying and so on, I always kind of imagined that maybe they came from households that were short of money, or there were some kind of

[52]The Murayama Statement was a speech made in 1994 on the 50th anniversary of the end of the war by Murayama Tomiichi, Japanese Prime Minister at the time, recognizing and apologizing for the suffering and damage caused by Japan through its colonial policy. (*Trans.*)
[53]The video clip of Jan Ruff-O'Herne appearing on "Talking Heads" in February 2009 (see note 40).

social factors in play that would result in them ending up as “comfort women”. That might be a prejudiced view to take. In any case, I vaguely thought it was girls from poor households who hadn't been given much of an education who ended up as “comfort women”. But when I heard what Ms Ruff-O'Herne had to say, it seemed like her household situation had no factor to play, it wasn't a question of wealth at all. I had this biased view of “comfort women” as those from underprivileged backgrounds, but seeing the testimony given by the Dutch lady, I realized that there are probably all kinds of different situations amongst the Korean “comfort women” also.

The thing about Ms Ruff-O'Herne's testimony that made the strongest impression on me was the fact that she was smiling all the time she was talking. Sometimes she laughed, and she smiled the whole time she was talking. I can't really imagine how you can talk about those kinds of things with a smile on your face. I guess it wasn't just her upbringing and the “comfort stations” that she was talking about. But I'm sure she'll never be able to forget what she went through then, and there must be all kinds of different triggers that remind her of it.

When I was a child, I often used to read books about the war. There was *Fly, Thousand Paper Cranes, Fly!* [54], a story about the atomic bomb. Then there was another one from Four Bunko [publisher] whose title I've forgotten, which was a collection of memoirs written by kids about their experiences of the atomic bombs. There was *The Girl with the White Flag*, and *The Morning-Star Lily Girls* too.[55] I guess it was largely books about the atomic bombs and the Battle of Okinawa. Then there was a book about some elephants in the zoo that got killed during the war, and *The Life of Maya* by Muku Hatojū.[56] During the war, people were supposed to forgo any kind of luxury, and people with dogs were told to hand them over, and in the end Muku Hatojū wasn't able to hide his dog any more, and it was handed over to the authorities to be killed. In the end he manages to save its life and it comes home, though in the end it dies, anyway. I feel like I read quite a lot of stories about animals that were harmed in the war.

Of course, those kinds of kids' books don't tackle the subject of “comfort women”. But when

[54]Tejima Yūsuke, *Tobe! senbazuru; Hiroshima no shōjo, Sasaki Sadako san no kiroku* (Fly, Thousand Paper Cranes, Fly! A Record of Sasaki Sadako, the Girl from Hiroshima) (Kōdansha, 1986).
[55]Higa Tomiko, *Shirohata no shōjo* (The Girl With the White Flag) (Kōdansha, 1989); Nasuda Minoru, *Himeyuri no Shōjotachi* (The Morning-Star Lily Girls) (Kaiseisha, 1977). Both are stories about children in the Battle of Okinawa.
[56]Tsuchiya Yukio, *Kawaisōna zō* (The Poor Elephants) (Kin-no-hoshi-sha, 1970); Muku Hatojū, *Maya no isshō* (The Life of Maya) (Dainippon-tosho, 1970).

you think about that stuff, you wonder about the female students who were working as war nurses. Were they okay, I wonder? I wonder if they were subjected to sexual assault? Quite possibly, people made up stories of romance and love, so people that didn't interpret what was going on as sexual assault.

My grandfather was in China for eight years. He's already passed away, so I can't ask him about it directly now. But for example, even if I knew my grandfather had visited one of those “comfort stations”, I don't think that I'd feel any kind of hatred toward him. He's my grandfather, after all. I think I'd try to understand it, to think that he was in an abnormal situation. But that's not to say that I think the “comfort women” issue is just something that has to be accepted. The two things are different. I just mean that I wouldn't think “there's no way I'll ever forgive him for what he did”, because he's my own flesh and blood. I think that, as an issue that affects society, it really is a problem. That's just my personal opinion.

I think that soldiers in the war fall under this illusion that they're incredible, all-powerful. I mean, they’re being judged by how many people they kill. But however you think about that situation, it's abnormal. Killing people was those soldiers' job. Generations who haven't experienced war can't understand what that means at all, being put in that sort of extreme situation. I don't think there were that many people who went to war because they wanted to kill people. There were some who chose to enlist, but most of the soldiers were conscripted. They'd get sent the red [conscription] paper and people would say they'd “made it”, even though it was clear that wasn't the case, cheered “Banzai”, and off they went to fight. I read somewhere that killing your first person takes a whole lot of courage, but after you've killed one or two, your senses become numb, and you stop feeling anything at all.

War is something that defies our regular ways of thinking about things. I think it would be impossible to do it in a regular mental state. Especially at the end of the war, when people didn't have enough food, they were starving, and lacking the proper weapons, I don't think they were in a position to make normal judgements about things. Not that I think that you can solve everything by blaming it all on the war. But I think that rather than talking it as the fault of the Japanese government, or about which country was worse, or saying that other countries were doing it so Japan wasn't that bad, what we should be directing our hatred towards is war itself, and that doesn't just apply to the “comfort women” issue either. Rather than saying Japan did this, did that, and that's wrong, it's better to focus on objecting to war, and taking steps to make

sure that it doesn't happen again.

(October 2014, Iidabashi)

E. T. (Housewife)

I started to take an interest in the issue of "comfort women" after the Korean Prime Minister Park Geun-Hye began [criticising the Japanese] about it, and began reading the Kōno Statement and things from around that time. But I haven't made any effort to pursue the matter any further by myself. I just made sure that every time it was in the news, I read the articles about it that were featured in all the papers. [Park Geun-Hye's response to the issue] misses the point. There are plenty of other political problems between Japan and Korea to choose from, so I think that it's odd that she puts such focus on that particular issue at this point in time, as a way of getting at Japan.

I mean, the whole issue was sorted out between the two countries at the time, right? Of course, war is a bad thing. But to be dragging it along behind you decades later? When you think about it like that, the "comfort women" issue is not the only thing. I'm sure there's plenty of other things [that could be brought up]. Japan has paid the Korean government a sum of money to compensate for the problem. They didn't pay it to the individual "comfort women". They paid it to the Korean government, and that was supposed to solve the issue. Is it called the Asian Women's Fund? Anyway, that was created, and the two countries agreed at the time that the issue was solved, so I don't understand why [the South Koreans are] going about now demanding compensation for individuals.

I guess if it was the 1990s [when the "comfort women" trials started], I would have been in my fifties still. When I was bringing up my children, I didn't really have much interest in this issue—I guess a part of it was that I didn't have the time to watch much news back then. So when I watched the film *My Heart is Not Broken Yet*, I was amazed to find out that there were people who had been involved in those kinds of activities. But in that film they miss out the question of why Song Sin-Do became a "comfort women"—what kind of background she came from, and how it was that she ended up in the "comfort station." At that time, Japanese people were poor too, and there were people here [also who sold themselves]. When Japan was really poor, there were some parents who sold their children. When you consider that, then however

it was that these people became “comfort women”, then the government can't go compensating them now, just because they say that they must. I know this sounds like a cold attitude to take, but I just think [the “comfort women”] got unlucky in being born into those kinds of circumstances at the time that they did. I guess that young people don't remember this, but in Japan we had Karayuki-san[57], the Yoshiwara pleasure courters[58], *Oshin*[59], and Obasute-yama.[60] If you start delving into all of those things one by one, you’ll never get anywhere.

Those are the bad bits, but they're only one part of history. I think that must be what people mean when they talk about “necessary evil.” They're bad but they're necessary. Thinking about it in that way doesn't shake the fact that war is wrong. But if there is war, one way or another, then I guess those kinds of things end up happening.

I'm one of them of course, but you know how the Japanese make a big fuss about how bad a thing war is once it’s finished? Like how they could have done something about the 54 nuclear power stations before they were built, but no, they go and make a fuss about it now. The Japanese like making a fuss about things after they've happened, but there's nobody who'll stand up and give their opinion before it actually takes place. That's how it was with the war too, plenty of people said afterwards about how wrong it was, but it was the citizens themselves who didn't stop it at the time, and the citizens who let 54 nuclear power stations be built. There's people who've done well for themselves out of those things and got away scot-free. If you think in that way, you see that it's always after the fact that people talk about how bad things were.

[The first time I heard the term military “comfort women” was] probably in conversation with my mother. My mother lived in Kobe, and there was a part of the town where lots of Korean

[57]Karayuki-san, literally 'China-goers', were Japanese women who went across to East and Southeast Asia to become prostitutes in the latter half of the 19th and former half of the 20th centuries. (*Trans.*)
[58]Yoshiwara was a famous pleasure district in Tokyo during the Edo period, established in 1617. (*Trans.*)
[59]*Oshin* was a very popular NHK television drama screened from 1983-1984, which depicted the life of a single woman, from childhood through to her death. Surviving the Second World War and various personal trials, she became a symbol within Japanese for perseverance through all kinds of hardship. (*Trans.*)
[60]The mountain commonly known as Mount Ubasute in Nagano Prefecture takes its name from the old Japanese custom of abandoning one's aged relatives on a mountain to die of starvation or dehydration. (*Trans.*)

people lived. She told me that she'd been advised from a young age to keep away from that part. She hated garlic, and she used to tell me about how whenever she went near there she could always smell it, and I have a feeling that during one of those conversations [she mentioned the phrase]. She didn't like Koreans. That must have been when I was in junior high school. When I got old enough to cook meals for myself, and started using garlic, my mother would always mention the Koreans. So maybe my mother has influenced me to look down on Koreans in some way too. I know that racism is bad, but my mother was born in the Meiji era, and she was the type of person to say what she thought. At that time I didn't understand [what the expression “comfort women” meant], and thinking about it now, I don't feel it's a very appropriate expression. You'd have thought they'd have come up with something else a bit more suitable.

I haven't spoken to anybody about the “comfort women” issue recently, no. That's what the Japanese are like, though. You know how the Americans and the British read a book, then go to a reading club and give their opinions about it? I had tea with some British people, there was a woman in her seventies or eighties amongst them, who had such well-formed opinions about things. I'm sure that working people are different, but still. Most Japanese housewives in their seventies or eighties just talk about what they're going to have for dinner and that kind of thing. I occasionally talk to my son [about “comfort women”]. But my son thinks of it as something that's already been solved, too, and hearing him say that, I feel like I agree with him, but the conversation doesn't go any further than that. I guess it's a bit of a tricky thing for men and women to speak about? What with it’s being sexual.

[When it comes to talk about the war in general,] I've heard lots and lots about it. I do volunteer work as what's called a “listening volunteer”. When you go to [old people's] homes and talk to the elderly, the thing that they remember the most clearly is the war. Even the ones who are going a bit senile. This is my fourth year doing it, and while I was listening to them talk about those things, I realized that, in a way, the war isn't really over. The people of that generation who suffered are still living, they're still only ninety or so, and their memories are all of the war. I've heard people talking about all sorts of things, the trauma that they went through when leaving China and so on. I guess the same is true now, but at that time there were lots of Japanese people in China. There were Japanese companies over there, like The South Manchuria Railway Company, and Oki Electric Industry Company had a branch out there, and so on. Of course there are some people with good memories, too, but there are also

lots of stories of hardship. Listening to the talk of people who returned to Japan after the war, I really felt the reality of the terrible things they went through. And then there's talk about buying groceries and things. People would have rice that they'd been to buy especially, taken off them at the station, and so on.

I suppose that I have my own experience of war. I was born in 1943, after all. I remember that we didn't have much to eat. For lunch there'd be just potatoes or pumpkin, that's what everyone in my family ate. In our case, my mother had lots of kimonos, and she often talked about how she'd traded them for food. In that respect, we were lucky, I guess. I think other people at that time had it even harder than us. That's about the extent of what I remember. Also, the company that my father was working for at the time evacuated out of the city, so we were living in Maebashi [in Gunma Prefecture]. Some Americans from a nearby base came up in their Jeep while I was playing outside and gave me canned chocolate and pineapple, and brown sugar and chewing gum. They were so good! I still really like chocolate and pineapple and brown sugar, to this day. I think [at that time] I was so shocked by how good they tasted, it was such an affecting experience, that it's remained with me to this day. I've only remembered that since becoming a listening volunteer, and hearing war stories from many different people.

The basic principle when being a listening volunteer is to just listen in silence to what people have to say. You are the listener. There's an NPO called Whole Family Care Organization, run by a person called Suzuki Kinue, and I went to a workshop that she put on. I started doing the volunteering along with the other people who attended that workshop. You start off by talking to people about the weather, then ask them about their physical condition, where they were born, how it was for them in their childhood and so on. Even when the topic of conversation is people's current interests, and you ask them whether they've done it for a long time, they usually end up talking about the war.

[The reason I began the volunteering is that] basically, I've always thought that I want to die without being a nuisance to my children. I nursed my mother, and it was such hard work. When I talk to my friends about it, they said to me that I should do some kind of volunteering now; that everybody ends up relying on other people some day, so I should help others while I still can. So I started thinking about the sort of things I could do. While I was living in Tokyo, I gave out meals. Then, when I moved out of Tokyo, I started doing transliteration work. I like reading, so I thought it would be a good job for me. I liked the activity itself, but I couldn't

really get used to the atmosphere in the place, so I gave up. So then I thought I should find something else, and the next thing that I found was a course training you up to be a voluntary psychiatric carer. I went to that every week for about a month, and then there was a practical training session that took place at a mental health facility with schizophrenic people and so on. I attended all the lectures, but when I went and actually saw the people I'd be dealing with, I realized I just couldn't do it, and I quit. And then, when I was wondering if there was something else I could do, I stumbled across this listening volunteer thing.

Suzuki Kinue learned about [this listening technique] in America, and [when I heard about it], I thought it sounded like something new and a bit different, and decided to give it a go. I basically enjoy being around people, and talking to them. But then when I went I discovered that it's no good to enjoy speaking, because it's all about listening to what people say. Even now, unless I put myself into listening mode before I go, I end up wanting to speak myself. I have to deliberately shift over from speaking mode into listening mode. For example, people at the home sometimes say negative things, like "I want to die," and so on, but you have to not sidestep those kinds of statements, you have to accept them, and go along for the moment with how that person is feeling, that wish to die. When that person starts to trust you, then they speak about their home life, and all other kinds of things. I've learned a great deal from it.

(October 2014, Iidabashi)

Y. I. (PhD student; originally from South Korea)

It's difficult for me to remember exactly when I first learned about the Japanese military's sex slaves, but I was about 14 or 15 when I began to form an awareness about it inside myself, through our study of it in history lessons in junior high school. Just learning the fact that Korea had been colonised by Japan, and that young Korean girls had been taken away unfairly and made into sex slaves was enough for me to feel anger toward Japan and Japanese people, to form a negative perception of them. My first perception of Japan as a country was formed from the fact of its having colonised Korea.

After that, I went on to senior high school, and learnt in more detail about Korea's period as a

Japanese colony, as part of my study for my university entrance exams. We could choose three topics as part of our social studies curriculum, and I chose Modern and Contemporary History, Law and Society, and Politics. In the Modern History section, we mostly studied about Korea under Japanese rule, and in the Contemporary History section, we learned about politics in Korea after its liberation. The sexual slavery system wasn't a major topic of study, but we looked at it as a part of the issue of Japanese-Korean relations. In studying the history of the Japanese colonial period, we looked at the policies adopted by the Japanese in governing the Korean people, in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. For example, in the 1930s, there was a political strategy implemented by the colonial government to eradicate the Korean nationality. Koreans were taught Japanese mentality, Japanese culture.

Education took place in Japanese, and it was forbidden to speak Korean. People were renamed with Japanese-style names. If the Korean people refused to follow this policy, they were denied permission to go to school, and had their supplies of food or everyday items cut off. In our exam, there were questions like: “Which of the following wasn't part of the ethical expunction policy imposed by the Japanese in the 1930s?” Then one of the options would be one of the policies implemented in the 1920s, and that was the correct answer. Unlike Japanese students, Korean students study about the colonial period in detail. Modern history was my favourite subject in senior high school, and so I probably was more sensitive to what we learned than my other classmates. To give an example, when I was studying for my exam, I remember reading a description in a textbook of how the Japanese army had locked a group of regular Korean citizens in a church and set fire to it so that all the people in there were burned alive, and crying at how terrible it was. Knowing these kinds of historical facts, as a Korean, it makes it hard to take a positive attitude towards Japanese people. Even now in South Korea, if a public figure or celebrity comes out with a pro-Japanese statement, it often gets picked up as an issue in the media, and they are publically criticized.

I've had the opportunity to listen to [the testimony of former “comfort women”] several times. It was in around 1997 that the “comfort women” issue became a problem in South Korean society, and I think that was after the testimony of Lee Nam-Yi, a former Korean “comfort woman” who was put into a “comfort station” in Cambodia, was made public. At that time, great shock and rage spread through South Korean society. I feel like recently, there’s much more opportunity to encounter the testimony of “comfort women” through all kinds of media.

The most memorable of those for me is an animation made in 2011, entitled *Herstory*.[61] As I watched that short film, which is based on one woman's true story, I was consumed by sadness. Whenever I hear about the fact that so many young women were taken away, not knowing where they were going, and sexually abused several times a day by the military, it always makes me filled me with sadness and anger. I think that the Japanese government's attitude of denial towards those facts makes the future prospects for Japanese-Korean relations even more grim.

Incidentally, on a personal level, it was the "comfort women" issue that roused my interest in Japan—as well as my anger, obviously. It was the reason that I studied Japanese so hard. There's a Chinese proverb that says "know your enemy, know yourself, and you will emerge unscathed from a hundred battles". I wanted to know more about Japan, so I studied Japanese very hard, from my time as a senior high school student. Thanks to that study, I was able to take part in a foreign exchange programme during university, and spent one year in Japan. Spending time hanging out with my Japanese friends, I felt the big gap that exists between Japanese and Korean people.

That was the first time I ever spoke to Japanese friends about "comfort women", when I was in Fukuoka as a foreign exchange student. I was walking along the street with my friend, chatting about various things, and I brought it up with her, quite naturally. I asked if she'd ever heard about "comfort women" in Japan, whether they'd learned about the history of the colonial period. She gave me just a short answer, telling me that she didn't really know about it, that they didn't really study that stuff in Japan, but it still gave me a real shock. I wanted to ask her a bit more about it, but it seemed like she wanted to change the subject. In the end, we moved on to talk about something else, but that was the first time that I made the important discovery that Japanese senior high school students don't really learn about the period of colonial rule over Korea.

Then, I came back to Japan to do my Master's. Things like the "comfort women" issue and the Yasukuni Shrine visits quite frequently cause a stir between Korea and Japan and are talked about on the news, so I've had a few chances to discuss those kinds of issues with my university friends. The opinion that stuck in my head the most clearly is, "It's unfair to criticize us for it,

[61] *Herstory*, directed by Kim Jun-Ki, 2011.

because it wasn't our generation that did those things." People say things like 'Why do we have to apologize? At that time, there were lots of countries colonizing other countries, it wasn't only Japan. Why are Korean people constantly seeking an apology from the Japanese?" They seemed to find the whole thing displeasing.

There are lots of problems that arose in Korea through Japanese rule that still haven't been solved, and that's why our gaze is directed at Japan. But I felt like Japan's gaze is directed less at Korea and more at Asia as a whole, and the Western nations who also had colonies at that time. I don't believe that you can justify unethical acts by looking to particular circumstances of the age, or the fact that other countries did similar things. What's more, the Japanese still maintain a perception of themselves as "victims" for the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. I find it really bizarre how people turn their eyes away from the question of why an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in the first place, and just speak purely about the damage done by the bomb.

Then one day, I was eating with a Japanese member of the research staff at the university. At that time, [the Osaka mayor] Hashimoto Tōru's statement about "comfort women" was making big news, and we began speaking about it. When I heard what he had to say about it, I felt totally at a loss. He said, "There's no proof that the Japanese government made Korean women work by force. Do you have any grounds for thinking that, any proof? If so, then tell me. If the government took young girls away forcibly, why didn't their families try and save them? More to the point, Japan has already paid compensation money to Korea. If what the "comfort women" are looking for is an apology, why are they demanding compensation, why are they demanding money? Several of the testimonies that have been made are not true." He saw "comfort women" as prostitutes, and thought of them as people who had gone to the war zones in order to make a living. He also said, "At that time, Korea was lacking in power. They were a weak nation. If Japan hadn't colonized them, Russia would have come along and done the same." It was the first time that I'd ever met anybody who said those sorts of things. He really denied the facts that the system of sexual slavery existed. He simply thought that it hadn't happened. He also told me, "Don't react so emotionally." He thought my reaction was an emotional one. Apparently, he wanted to have a "logical" discussion about the issue.

At the end of the day, his opinion was that, whether it be the question of Japan's colonial rule or the "comfort women" issue, there are lots of perspectives and examples that could be given,

so it is difficult to isolate “one part” and judge it as wrong. What I said was consistent, but in the end that is just one of many possible accounts that could be given of the situation, so it is impossible to verify it as the truth, or so he said. I honestly wanted to try and understand the Japanese perspective on the matter, not just see things from a Korean perspective, but at that moment, I realized that I still wasn't ready to comprehend things from a Japanese perspective. It was totally incomprehensible to me why people started talking about prostitution when the subject of “comfort women” came up. I felt like it was his perspective that was really only looking at “one part”, a really small part of the picture. The “comfort women” system was a government policy that was applied strategically and on a huge scale, and as such it is a serious crime. I think that the feelings that people want to evade make them come up with all kinds of excuses. I feel doubtful that that approach is really a “logical” way of going about things. I know that there are many different perspectives that you can take on these matters, but I think you have to be ready to discriminate between them, separate out the true from the false.

I felt like that on the subject of Japanese-Korean relations, I should know not just the Korean perspective, but also that of the Japanese. I was also concerned about how the “comfort women” issue could be resolved, so that our two nations could go about building a constructive relationship. However, the more I come to know about the difference in perception between Japan and Korea, the more I come to feel skeptical about whether that's really possible. I feel like that's probably the reason for the move to appeal instead to the international community, instead of just looking to the Japanese, why it is currently growing within South Korean society. I really hope that this issue can be resolved quickly, through continued effort within the political and non-political spheres, for the sake of the generations to come. I don't want the next generation to inherit this problem. If we can't sort this out in our generation, it's only going to become more difficult. I want to do anything that I can in order to aid that process.

(August 2014, Hiyoshi)

Part 3

Project Journal

2012

26th December

9am–12pm: collecting reference material

27th December

9am–12pm: collecting material

29th December

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material

Meeting in Shinjuku in the evening

31st December

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material

2013

5th January

From a memo I left on 8th December 2010. I feel like this contains the main point that I need to keep re-visiting, as the point of departure for the whole project.

> The experience of hearing live testimony. The shock that it brings, which far surpasses my expectations. A primeval clamouring that shakes the very core of one's existence. When sleep has turned against me, and I am lying there, the blinding flash of the cameras appears before my eyes. The bizarre sensation that the testimony I have gone and heard is now gnawing away at my flesh, attempting to change the makeup of my body. Something that is neither empathy nor compassion. Speaking about the events. The impetus toward speech. The struggle with that which frustrates the will to speak out. The stigmata branded upon

those who do give their testimony. The sediment of memory that has built up inside. That which cannot be swallowed, which sticks in the back of your throat, a foreign substance. Memory as something whose location you have to constantly check with your fingertips.

6th January

9am–12pm, 3pm–8pm: collecting and sorting material.

7th January

From *Jūgun ianfu* (Military Comfort Women) by Yoshimi Yoshiaki:

> Leaving aside that which is misremembered or covering up the facts, the testimony is incredibly important. Precisely because they [the women] don't exist in the world of the written word, those intense experiences have become incredibly vivid memories of the times in question, and with repeated questioning, facts surface that couldn't be spoken of by anyone other than people who had actually been there. These raw facts, which you will definitely not find in any military or government documents or records, can only be known through these women's testimony. (87)

8th January

From *Kioku/monogatari* (Memories/Stories) by Oka Mari:

> If I was to encounter testimony revealing the *facts* about *the events,* I too would find myself wanting to thrust it under the noses of those historical revisionists who deny those *facts*, deny *the events*, and say, "Do you still contest this?" But if it is the nature of that sort of testimony, whereby the speaker rips open their body, scarred from past wounds, and gouges out its interior in order to produce it, that means it proves the *facts* of *the events*, then what a grotesque thing it is. If, even after seeing this, the thick–skinned, shameless deniers would still deny *the events*—and I'm sure that they would—then would we surely make further demands of the women to gouge out more and more, to speak of pain that only those who have experienced such things could know? Yet how far would they need to rip open their body, how much would they need to writhe in pain as they told of what had happened before they were deemed to have spoken the *facts*?

[...]

We must not forget that it is the historical forgetting of *the events* which we see in post-war Japanese society, and Japanese people's powerlessness in the face of the pronouncements of those historical revisionists who deny *the events*, which is now forcing these women to give this testimony that seems like it will wrench them in two. And because that is the case, there is no doubt that we bear the responsibility for the violence they are suffering now. We could say that we are participating in their torture. At this time, is the attempt to contest the historical revisionists using the testimony we have gained, not a way of getting by without facing the fact of own powerlessness, our own participation in these women's torture—a stance that represents an unconscious denial of that powerlessness? (31-2)

Mother and grandmother are chatting over tea. According to their conversation the war conducted by the nation was undeniably wrong; however, there is no mention of those people who suffered incomprehensible deaths -- those who have been forced to live with the violence of *the event* that is war as a continuing narrative. The two women recall only their own suffering. In this sense, their conversation repeats the post war Japanese national experience, that is, a deliberate denial of the other, which is an expression of nationalism itself. (74)

There are those who, because they experienced *the events*, because they were on the inside of *the events*, because they still have to live the violence of *the events* in the present, cannot speak about them now. Then there are those who experienced that violence to the full with their own bodies, as with *the event* that is massacre, in other words, the dead, who, being dead, cannot give testimony about the violence they experienced. For that reason, other people must speak for them. Others—third parties, those who were on the outside of *the events*—have to give testimony. But they cannot just stand in for those who cannot speak and represent *the events* in whichever way they choose. If, when we try to speak of those *events* which spoken of in words should be impossible, we act like "those who can speak of them"; then, in that instant, we are betraying *the events*. The act of representing those unrepresentable *events*, of speaking about unspeakable *events*—surely, what needs to be done before anything else in this is to testify to the very fact of their unspeakableness. (77)

9th January

1pm–5pm: interview preparation.
Evening: meeting in Shinjuku.

11th January
9am–12pm: interview preparation.

The presence of the interpreter at the meetings where testimony is given. The delay in understanding the meaning until the interpreter speaks. Above all, for those who don't understand the language of those giving testimony, the separation of the process of understanding that comes about through the delay between taking in the speaker's voice, expressions and gestures, and cognitively grasping her meaning, has the effect of strengthening the emotional reaction to the testimony. The impetus to listen to the testimony directly, without an interpreter. But whose testimony? Which language?

12th January
1pm–3pm: interview
8pm–10pm: writing up interview script

14th January
9am–12pm, 3pm–5pm: writing up interview script

15th January
From *Yabureta chinmoku: ajia no jūgun ianfutachi shashin kiroku* (Silence Ripped Apart: A Collection of Photographs of Asia's "Comfort Women"), edited by Itō Takashi.

> An episode where one of the witnesses spoke of her anger toward Japan in "such a violent way that it flummoxed the young Korean interpreter"(15). Witness/interpreter/listener. What does the interpreter feel at that time?

19th January

9am–12pm, 3pm–5pm: collecting and sorting material.

20th January

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material.

26th January

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material.

30th January

I read Veena Das' essay, "Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain". The violence that occurred during the Partition of India—how the women received and spoke about "the events" afterwards.

> When asking women to narrate their experiences of the Partition I found a zone of silence around the event. This silence was achieved either by the use of language that was general and metaphoric but that evaded specific description of any events so as to capture the particularity of their experience, or by describing the surrounding events but leaving the actual experience of abduction and rape unstated. It was common to describe the violence of the Partition in such terms as rivers of blood flowing and the earth covered with white shrouds right unto the horizon. Sometimes a woman would remember images of fleeing, but as one woman warned me, it was dangerous to remember. These memories were sometimes compared to poison that makes the inside of the woman dissolve, as a solid is dissolved in a powerful liquid (*andar hi andar ghul ja rahi hai*).
>
> [. . .]
>
> This code of silence protected women who had been brought back to their families through the efforts of the military evacuation authorities after they were recovered from the homes of their abductors, or who had been married by stretching norms of kinship and affinity since the violation of their bodies was never made public. Rather than bearing witness to the disorder that they had been subjected to, the metaphor that they used was of a woman drinking the poison and keeping it within her [. . .]. (84-85)

4th February

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material.

5th February

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material.

17th February

From Arthur W. Frank's *The Wounded Storyteller*:

> Listening is hard, but it is also a fundamental moral act; to realize the best potential in postmodern times requires an ethics of listening. I hope to show that in listening for the other, we listen for ourselves. The moment of witness in the story crystalizes a mutuality of need, when each is *for* the other. (25)

> The story traces the edges of a wound that can only be told around. Words suggest its rawnesss, but that wound is so much of the body, its insults, agonies, and losses, that words necessarily fail. (98)

20th February

The memory of a certain event. The event of failing to comprehend its meaning. Unrelated to that person's will, a fragment of history that gets passed over into the hands of an individual.

25th February

9am–12pm: interview preparation.

26th February

9am–12pm: interview preparation.

27th February

I signed up to take Korean language lessons.

28th February

Interview from 1pm, then from 4.30pm.

1st March

From Ikeda Eriko, *Sensō no "kioku" to "kiroku"* ("Memories" and "Records" of War):

> The act of listening to the experiences of the victims of sexual violence takes significant courage and mental preparation on the parts of both the speaker and the listener, and cannot come about without mutual trust and a strong sense of necessity. It is just listening, one might say, and yet I wonder which questions to ask. I want to know about that person's way of life at the time of the *incident*, what kind of a girl she was. In what way was her everyday life torn apart, who arrived to put an end to it? But if she starts to speak about those sorts of particulars, then won't she be reliving the raw fear she felt, the hardship–won't I therefore be adding to her suffering? If she suddenly falls silent, can I bear to sit and wait in silence for the next words?
>
> I ask myself if I have the right, the qualifications, to listen to these terrible experiences. Will I be able to gain the person's trust? What will I do if it becomes too painful for me to carry on listening? After I have finished listening, will I be able to give the kind of help, to act in the kind of way that she is hoping for? I am dizzy with all these fears.
>
> The majority of the members of Video Juku [a women's group that creates documentaries aimed at creating a society free of violence and discrimination against women] were born in Japan, the perpetrating nation that refuses to accept responsibility for the war or what happened after it, and which has therefore been confronted by victims from all across Asia confessing their experiences. As I film with my camera, the sadness and indignation of these women laid out right before my eyes, I am tortured by guilt and powerless. (49)

2nd March

1pm–5pm: writing up interview script.

The strange task of writing the interviews up, making them into "text". In the process of rewinding the tape and listening to it over and over, I trace the speaker's breathing, their physical sensations. The sense that other people's words are flowing through my body.

16th March

9am–12pm, 3pm–5pm: writing up interview script.

30th March

9am–12pm: writing up interview script.

3rd April

9am–12pm, 2pm–5pm: collecting and sorting material.

16th April

I found a video of Jan Ruff-O'Herne appearing on a talkshow made by Australia's ABC in 2009 on YouTube. Ruff-O'Herne is Dutch, and became a "comfort woman" in Indonesia. She now has Australian citizenship, and lives in Adelaide. Her testimony and her writing about her experience is in English, so for me, this offers a rare and precious experience of being able to hear testimony that I can understand without an interpreter. Of course, there must be a big difference for her between speaking in English and in her native language.

17th April

1pm–5pm: interview preparation.

8th May

1pm–5pm: collecting and sorting material.

9th May

1pm–5pm: collecting and sorting material.
Meeting in the evening.

11th May

9am–12pm: interview preparation.

13th May

Interview at 4pm.

My reservations about being in the position of interviewer, the hatred I feel toward myself for just hurling one question after another. I want to take my time with my responses, speak about myself too, but I have to use the time I have in drawing out the interviewee's own words. The result of this is that I say little, drink in the unspoken words, and when I get home am driven by the impulse to fill this diary with all the things I didn't say.

In the evening, I find out that Hashimoto Tōru, the Osaka mayor, has made a statement saying that “comfort women were necessary” and “every country had them.” Astonishment.

14th May

from Osaka Mayor, Hashimoto Tōru's announcement (from SYNODOS):

> I admit the parts that need to be admitted, but the parts that are untrue remain untrue. When you study modern history a little more, so that you understand what the world was like then–see, if you hear off the bit about comfort women, it might sound like a terrible thing, but if you find out a bit about the history of that time, you see that it wasn't just the Japanese army, but lots of armies that utilized the comfort women system.
>
> It stands to reason, that if you have a group of people risking their lives, running through

places where bullets are flying about like rain and therefore under great mental duress, and you want to give them some kind of–well, it's not really rest, but if you want to give them that kind of thing, then everybody understands that a comfort women system is necessary. If you ask how Japan is being viewed by the Western nations for this, well, then, you have to say that the word of Korea and the other countries' word carries weight, and we get viewed as a nation of rapists. This is the most problematic element of the whole issue, and if what they say is untrue, then we have to come out and say so.

18th May

9am–12pm: writing up interview script

19th May

9am–12pm, 5pm–7pm: writing up interview script

22nd May

An interview I had scheduled gets postponed. The impact of Hashimoto's statement. Instead, I participate in an "Emergency Parliamentary Convention to Challenge Hashimoto's Statement." The high voltage of the rage in the venue is palpable.

5th June

1pm–5pm: interview.

1st June

9am–12pm: writing up interview script.

7th June

1pm–3pm: writing up interview script.

Meeting in Shinjuku in the evening.

8th June

9am–12pm: writing up interview script.

9th June

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material.

10th June

Books to read this month: *Archive Fever* by Jacques Derrida; *The War* by Marguerite Duras.

11th June

Books to read this month: *Lee Chong-Hwa, Tsubuyaki no seiji shisō (The Political Philosophy of Whispers); The Generation of Postmemory* by Marianne Hirsch; *Family Secrets* by Annette Kuhn.

15th June

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material.

23rd June

2pm–6pm: collecting and sorting material.

24th June

From Annette Kuhn's *Family Secrets*:

> Telling stories about the past, our past, is a key moment in the making of our selves. To the extent that memory provides their raw material, such narratives of identity are shaped as much by what is left out of the account – whether forgotten or repressed – as by what is actually told. Secrets haunt our memory-stories, giving them pattern and shape. (2)

> The past is gone for ever. We cannot return to it, nor can we reclaim it now as it was. But that does not mean it is lost to us. The past is like the scene of a crime: if the deed itself is irrecoverable, its traces may still remain. From these traces, markers that point towards a past presence, to something that has happened in this place, a (re)construction, if not a simulacrum, of the event can be pieced together. Memory work has a great deal in common with forms of inquiry which – like detective work and archaeology, say – involve working backwards – searching for clues, deciphering signs and traces, making deductions, patching together reconstructions out of fragments of evidence. (4)

29th June

At 1pm, I went to see an exhibition at the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM) with some friends. There were lots of people there. Must be the influence of the Hashimoto statement. A young man saying he was an "Emperor-worshipper" was disagreeing with the content of the exhibition.

30th June

The sort of historical events which you need to study in order to understand others' experiences of those events. The memories of those events. The clues reside in the fragment of history that has already been handed to you. What kind of history will those fragments make when they are all put together? The incredibly long time until you can get to it. That is what this project is about.

1st July

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material.
Meeting at 4pm

5th July

1pm–5pm: collecting and sorting material.

22nd July

The words of someone who lived as a child in the town in the USA where they have erected a "comfort woman" statue. Asks, "If I still lived there, how would I receive that news, as part of that community?' Then says "It's not a crime that I myself committed, but maybe I would have felt guilty, as a Japanese person." The moment when a place or past period of time with special meanings attached, an extremely personal time and place that they can feel great longing or fondness for, is suddenly connected to history with a capital "H." The fragment of history that person suddenly holds in their hand. The act of inspecting that.

30th July

3pm – 5pm: interview preparation.

31st July

Interview at 1pm.

1st August

9am – 12pm: writing up interview script

2nd August

9am–12pm: writing up interview script

3rd August

Interviewing someone may well be about going along with their feelings and their distress, even if it's only for a moment. Something lingers on heavily in my chest. The feeling that I have taken on something substantial.

4th August

9am–12pm: writing up interview script

5th August

9am–12pm: collecting and sorting material.

7th August

The violence inherent in the task of typing up the interviews, arranging them, is suddenly driven home to me. I can only hope to dissolve the gap between the speaker and my own interpretation...

10th August

I still feel down about what I wrote in the previous entry. Someone recommended to me *Intabyū no shakaigaku: raifu sutōrī no kikikata* (The Sociology of the Interview; Listening to Life Stories) by Sakurai Atsushi and I've started reading it. It outlines the fundamentals of interviewing. Very necessary for me at the moment.

11th August

I attend an international symposium entitled "From Victims of Wartime Sexual Violence to Agents of Social Change". Estelita Dy (from the Philippines) speaks to the audience of her experiences.

13th August

Tomorrow marks the anniversary of the day that Kim Hak–Sun came out and spoke publically of her experience, the first Korean victim to do so. It's also my birthday. I was aware of this coincidence even before I started to imagine carrying out this project.

14th August

Today it is 22 years since Kim Hak–Sun first went public about her experiences as a former "comfort woman." I was twelve at the time and living in Australia. In the Southern Hemisphere,

it's winter in August. I was oblivious to the former “comfort woman” coming out and speaking about her experiences in Korea; back then, I was interested in memories of the war, but all I knew about the Second World War was the atomic bombs, the Battle of Okinawa, and the Bombing of Tokyo. I didn't know about the Japanese colonized territories, the Bombing of Darwin, the Japanese torture of prisoners of war, or the women forced to become “comfort women”.

At 6pm, I take part in a demo in Shinjuku. The historical revisionists and those belonging to the anti–foreign movement line the roadside, showering us with abuse. A leaden sensation creeps across the lining of my stomach. Their agitation and the sort of things they are saying makes them stand out from their surroundings—summer vacation Kabukichō—but the people walking along the street wear fixed expressions like Noh masks which say clearly that they don't want anything to do with this *bother*. There are some people taking photographs on their mobile phones, presumably thinking that they’ve stumbled across something out of the ordinary. I guess that to their eyes, the people campaigning for a solution to the “comfort women” issue and the jeering rightists seem like one and the same.

15th August

At 10am, I get off the subway at Kudanshita Station, and decide to walk my old route to school. I had doubts about going, but I want to see the crowds with my own eyes. The high school that I went to is close to Yasukuni Shrine, which figures in the news each time politicians visit it. Several times on my way to school, I saw members of the Diet heading to the shrine on foot. I know from the news and so on that it is the anniversary of the end of the war, but still, seeing that scene with my own eyes dismays me unutterably. There are lots more young people than I had imagined. Just looking at it from a distance makes me feel despondent, and then I don't feel like walking to my old school any more.

17th August

I'm collecting newspaper articles from August 1991. I want to see how the events of the 14th were covered.

18th August

I try transcribing the newspaper articles that I found in the library. It would be great if I could look for articles from the Korean papers, translate them into Japanese and include them here too, but my linguistic ability isn't up to that yet.

From "A Comfort Woman's Pain, From the Heart: A Hearing in South Korea," *Asahi Shimbun*, (12th August, 1991):

> [Seoul, 10th August, Uemura Takashi]
> It has emerged that one of the "Korean military comfort women", those women taken to the war zones during the Second World War and forced to serve as prostitutes to the Japanese military, is living in Seoul, and The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (group representative: Yung Chung–Ok; composed of 16 organizations with a total of around 300,000 members) has begun to listen to her testimony. On the 10th, this council shared a tape recording of this woman's testimony with *Asahi Shimbun* journalists. The leaden mouths of these women, who have done their best to keep their experiences hidden, have finally begun to open.
> According to the Council, the woman is 68 years old, and lives alone in Seoul. She says she was born in northeastern China, and at the age of 17, was taken away to a comfort station in Southern China where a troop of two or three hundred soldiers was stationed. The comfort station was based in a regular citizens' house. There were five Korean women there, and each was given their own room. She was given the false name "Haruko", and was made to go with three or four men a day.
> "We were kept inside there, and all I thought about was escaping. I kept on hoping that no more [men] would come in." Several months later, she managed to escape, and settled in Seoul after the war. She was married, but has since lost her husband and children, and now lives on welfare benefits from the government.

From "Pleas for Japanese Responsibility: Former Korean Military Comfort Woman Comes Forward," *Hokkaido Shimbun* (15th August, 1991):

> Forced into Servitude Without Understanding What is Going On
> Every Day a Living Hell
> Requests for Compensation

[Seoul, 14th August]

On the 14th, a Korean woman living in Seoul who was violated as a "comfort woman" by the Japanese military in the warzone, under the pretext of serving as a member of the Women's Volunteer Corps, came before The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (based in the Jung District of Seoul, Group Representative Yung Chung–Ok), and agreed to an independent interview with the *Hokkaidō Shimbun*. She says that "because the Japanese nation refuses to take responsibility for the Women's Volunteer Corps issue, I hid my shame away," and made clear that she was not afraid to appeal for compensation from the Japanese government. Today marks the 46th anniversary of the end of the war. For our Asian friends trampled upon by the "Imperial Troops", the war still continues.

The woman is Kim Hak–Sun (67) from Chungsin-dong, Jongno District, Seoul (born in Jilin, China).

Kim Hak–Sun explains that in 1940, when she was 16 years old, she was placed by force in a comfort station for the Japanese military in a place known to the Japanese as Teppekichin in central China, together with three other Korean women.

"I was called out by the Japanese troops, with my adopted father and another of his foster daughters. My father got down on his knees and begged them to let him go, and they turned him back, and so, without having a clue what was going on, my days as a comfort woman began." (Kim Hak–Sun)

Unable to bear the terrible lifestyle that meant serving on average three or four soldiers a day, she escaped from the comfort station three months later, with the help of a Korean peddler who had visited the station. She then married him, and after living in China for a while, returned to Korea in 1945.

According to the group representative for the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, Yung Chung–Ok (formerly a lecturer at Ewha Womans University), the exact number of women who were taken by force from Korea to former Manchuria (currently northeastern China) or the Southern frontline is unknown, but the Council estimates 100,000 to 120,000. It is reckoned that the majority of the survivors live within Korea or in the surrounding area, but they have left their old towns, and so far this is the first person within Korea to come out and identify herself, although two Koreans living abroad, one in Japan and one in Thailand, have done so previously.

Kim Hak–Sun tells of the pain she carries around inside her, saying, "both my husband and my two children died, and now it's just me alone in this world, so although I'm ashamed, I

felt like I had to speak of it before I die. Whenever I hear the words 'Japan' or '*hinomaru* (the Japanese flag)', I get a crushing pain in my chest."

In October last year, various Korean organizations, including the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan and the Korean Women's Association United submitted an open letter to Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu appealing for a public apology from the Japanese government, but so far the only response has been an indirect announcement from the Japanese Embassy that they are "investigating the situation."

The Council, who say they will offer Kim Hak–Sun their full support if she decides to launch an appeal for compensation, says that "Following the brave appearance of Ms. Kim, we can expect to see the second and third waves of people coming forward to give their testimony soon. I want this movement to keep on gathering pace until both Japan and Korea have achieved a perception of history as it actually happened." (Yung Chung–Ok)

19th August

From "Australian Describes Ordeal As 'Comfort Girl': Women Tell Hearing of War-Time Sex Slavery," *The Canberra Times* (Associated Press, 11 December 1992):

TOKYO：An Australian woman cried as she told a public hearing on Wednesday how she had been a sex slave for Japanese soldiers during World War II.

And Jeanne O'Herne, 69, said visits to her daughter in Sydney were punctuated by painful memories: "Every time when I'm with my daughter and I take my little granddaughter for a walk in the pram and busloads of Japanese tourists in Bondi Beach get off the bus and I see the middle-aged men coming off the bus I think one of these might have raped me.

"We were enslaved into enforced prostitution," said Mrs O'Herne, who was a Dutch national during World War II. "It has taken almost 50 years for me to break the silence."

[. . .]

Mrs O'Herne said she decided to tell her story after reading the accounts given by forced Asian prostitutes.

"All of us women, we have all kept quiet for 50 years. This is the bond that has been between us, the silence for almost 50 years. Now all of a sudden we have decided to speak out. This silence has been forced upon us. We were told by the Japanese after the . . .[sic] brothels were finished they told us that if we were to tell anybody what the Japanese had done to us we would be killed."

20th August

Place names filled with nostalgia. Proper nouns that haven't been brought to mind for so long. “Bondi” is said to be an Aboriginal word meaning the sound of waves hitting the rocks. I try and say it in an Australian accent. Back at that time, there were lots of Japanese tourists coming over to Sydney. Not just to Bondi Beach, but everywhere.

22nd August

In her book *50 Years of Silence*, Ms. Ruff-O'Herne relates an episode about Bondi Beach:

> We were pushing the pram along the promenade when the usual busload of elderly Japanese tourists climbed down from their coach, armed with their expensive cameras and videos. Looking at them, I realized that many of the men were old enough to have been soldiers during the war.
>
> One of them approached me, gesturing that he would like to hold Ruby for a photograph. My overwhelming instinct was to grab her and flee but instead, I found myself smiling politely and obliging him. Carol noticed something wrong.
>
> ‘Anything the matter Mum?’
>
> I smiled, shaking my head. Here again was another lost opportunity. (O'Herne 135)

23rd August

I wonder where I was and what I was doing when the news about the press conference with Kim Hak–Sun was first broadcast. How did I manage to miss the fact it had happened?

My father's Sydney office was in Ultimo, south of Haymarket. It was inside a building owned by Fairfax Media, who publish *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Australian Financial Review*, and if I remember rightly, the printing press was on the ground floor. Sometimes, when my father went into work on weekends I went along with him to the office, where I would read Japanese books, or explore the building, which was deserted at weekends, with my sister. I wonder how many of those people working in that building in 1991, involved with all kinds of world news, paid attention to the story of the first Korean former “comfort woman” to come

out and give her testimony? Several Japanese newspapers were delivered every day to my father's office from Tokyo, just half a day late. My father, who was in the habit of passing his eyes over the major ones, says that he didn't notice any articles about the conference, probably in part because the Oceania-related news that came through on the news ticker was more important to him. He sometimes brought Japanese newspapers back home with him, so it's possible that there was an article about it in the bundle of newspapers in our living room.

25th August

From "Murdered nurses were probably raped by Japanese officers says academic," by Norman Abjorensen, *The Canberra Times* (22 September 1993) :

> A group of 21 Australian army nurses, massacred by Japanese troops on Banka Island in World War II, almost certainly were raped by soldiers before being killed, but the rape was covered up to protect their memory, according to a Japanese researcher.
>
> Only one nurse survived the ordeal, Sister Vivian Bullwinkel, and she made no mention of rape in her account to Australian authorities.
>
> Reports of the mass killing horrified and enraged a stunned Australia at the time.
>
> In a paper to be delivered today to an international conference on Japan at the Australian National University, Yuki Tanaka, now teaching at Melbourne University, says evidence suggests that Sister Bullwinkel "did not tell the truth at the investigation in order to save her dead colleagues from the disgrace as being known as victims of rape."

26th August

I read War Nurse "B"'s testimony in a document about the request made of the Australian Military nurses in September 1945 to become "comfort women" (Yoshimi 1992, 565–80). According to the explanatory notes, this document was put together by the Australia War Crimes Board of Inquiry in September 1945 (Ibid. 598–99)

27th August

Historian Tanaka Yoshiyuki talks about how, having returned from the war, his father and

uncle said nothing about the "comfort women" issue, and, touches upon how he was totally ignorant about it until the 1970s, saying:

> It is difficult to judge whether or not the fact that my father and uncles were silent about certain subjects, including the comfort women issue, means that they lied about their lives during the war. Was this a case of selective memory in which they suppressed entirely the issue of the comfort women and sexual slavery of the Japanese military? Or was it rather that even critics of the war long after Japan's defeat could not bring themselves to be frank about this and other sordid dimensions of Japanese colonialism and war? (Tanaka 3)

8th September

From Yakabi Osamu, *Okinawasen beigun senryōshi o manabinaosu* (The Battle of Okinawa: Relearning the History of American Military Occupation):

> Starting not with the "big story" but with the "little stories," the perspectives that reflect the history of families, or individuals (v).

> It's a way of thinking that begins with the "little stories" that are one's own, personal memories, and joining these up to the "big story" that is the Battle of Okinawa and the incidents that took place under American Military occupation, bringing up these memories and layering them up on top of one another ... As well as enabling a recognition of the objective facts to be passed down to successive generations, it connects with a position of trying to capture and broaden *the experience of what it was like to have been there* through the imaginative power generated by asking "what would I have done in that situation?", while keeping a hold on those fragments of memories of those post–war generations mentioned previously who did not have such experiences. (xi)

13th October

From "Japan Refused to Investigate Southeastern Asia in a Bid to Stop The Spread of the Comfort Woman Issue—Contradiction of Their Public Stance of 1992–3," *Asahi Shimbun* (13th October, 2013):

> It has emerged from diplomatic correspondence and interviews with government–related

figures that have been made public that, when the issue of comfort women for the former Japanese Army first became a political issue between Japan and Korea in 1992–3, the Japanese government avoided conducting interviews of the kind that had taken place in Korea, in other Southeast Asian nations, in order to contain the issue from spreading to other nations. This contradicts the government's public stance at the time, where they declared that they would pursue their investigation in countries outside of Korea.

14th October

Meeting at noon.

8pm–10pm: collecting and organising material

19th October

Notes on Korean language learning:

All my attention is focused on your mouth, the sounds it gives out. From those sounds I imagine the configuration of your lips, the position of your tongue, the volume of air that is released with your plosives, and I mimic this with my own. I pronounce your words over and over, imitating your intonation and rhythm. Doing this, I feel the "mood" inherent in the language sinking through into my body. Even in conveying the same meaning, the unique qualities of the sounds and rhythm and the cultural disparities that prop up in different languages mean that I can live distinct kinds of sensations, alternative thought paths.

26th October

9am–12pm: organising material

2nd November

9am–12pm: organising material

9th November

9am–12pm: organising material

13th November

1pm–2pm: meeting

30th November

From a conversation with a friend I meet up with for the first time in ages:

> The first time I heard the words "military comfort women," I remember feeling really uncomfortable with the sound, the way it looked on the page. I didn't know what "comfort" meant, concretely speaking. But I sensed that it was probably something sexual. I couldn't imagine at all what kind of people it was referring to, it's a dehumanising form of naming that deliberately prevents people from imagining, that blurs the facts...

14th December

9am–12pm: organising material

21st December

9am–12pm: organising material

26th December

Newspaper reports of the Japanese Prime Minister's visit to Yasukuni Shrine.

2014

6th January

Meeting at 6.30pm

11th January

When I tell people about my project, most say things like “I'm totally ignorant about 'comfort women,'” or “I don’t have much to say on the subject.” But when I ask them if they can remember the first time they heard the word “comfort women,” people give all different kinds of responses.

13th January

I watch the Ōshima Nagisa TV documentary, *Wasurerareta kōgun* (The Forgotten Imperial Army, originallybroadcast in August 1963). The documentary about the activities of the Former Japanese Military Disabled Korean Veterans and Civilian Personnel demanding compensation from the Japanese government. It leaves me with a lump like lead in the pit of my stomach.

15th January

1pm–5pm: organising material

19th January

1pm–5pm: organising material

25th January

I hear that, with the comfort women issue becoming more and more of an international political problem, there are people who are concerned about the influence it will have on Japanese children living abroad. Adults argue about whether or not it will lead to “bullying,” but I feel like it's a meaningless debate to have. In their own way, children perceive what is going on in the adult world. For children, what is more terrifying than being “bullied” is not being given sufficient knowledge to understand what they have experienced. Rather than holding on to the truth that you have earned by placing yourself in danger—facing the indignation and violence of the other, and seeing that there is ample reason for it—there is nothing more hurtful for children than not being given a rational explanation by the adults they trust. Isn't the real problem that the parents' failure to grasp the fact that it is the denial of history occurring in the adult world that is making their children vulnerable?

6th February

9am–12pm: interview preparation

7th February

4.30pm: go to see the Taiwan exhibition at WAM

6pm–8pm: interview

9th February

9am–12pm, 5pm–8pm: writing up interview script

11th February

9am–12pm: writing up interview script

Meeting at 5pm

12th February

The task of writing up the recording I've made. Making another's words, thoughts traverse my body. There are words I don't understand, those I can't process physiologically, those I can't digest and which stick in me like sediment. Every word, every perception, I try passing it through the filter of my body once to see what happens.

13th February

9am–12pm, 3pm–6pm: writing up interview script

14th February

1pm–5pm: collecting material

15th February

1pm–5pm: collecting material

19th February

Today 71 years ago, the planes of the Japanese military bombed Darwin, in northern Australia. They say that there were a total of 64 air raids in just less than two years. The wartime relations between Japan and Australia are mostly not known in Japan. If I had known just a little about it, the memory of that day would not still be with me now. The start of the 1990s, when my family lived in Sydney, was the time when those who lost their lives in the Bombing of Darwin were being incorporated into Australia's national history as heroes who were sacrificed in the war (Kamada 91).

22nd February

Meeting at 6.30pm

25th February

1pm–3pm: interview preparation

7pm–9pm: interview

1st March

9am–12pm: writing up interview

8th March

An autobiographical sketch. My first encounter with memories from the Other of Japanese imperialism. The scene took place at a nursing home in the Sydney suburbs. Did she refer to air-raids in Darwin, or was it POWs? Anyway she talked about the death of her son and refused to receive the flowers I brought from school. Being reluctant to confront it, I have suppressed the memory of that day for more than 20 years:

A bed. A body covered with a blanket, the side of a face inscribed with wrinkles. Short grey–blonde hair, pulled back tight. On top of the pile of pillows, only the neck moves, the clouded-over fish-eyes glaring out. That empty space covered in faded rose–patterned wallpaper, and then, beyond, the small, scrawny body of a young girl. Her skin is tanned brown, and she wears a turquoise checked dress. She is looking at the floor and it is impossible to make out her expression. Her hair is black. In her hand, she holds a bouquet of brightly coloured flowers. Under the hem of her dress, her brown legs like sticks hesitate to move towards the other person. The fierce expression of the old woman floats up on the opposite side of the room. That room, which contains just the two of them. A menacing space. The flowers didn't leave the girl's hand that day.

15th March
9am–12pm: organising material

18th March
9am–12pm: organising material

19th March
Meeting at 7pm

7th April
8pm–10pm: interview preparation

8th April
8pm–10pm: interview preparation

9th April
Interview at 6.30pm

10th April

Translating all day.

12th April

9am–12pm: translating

19th April

9am–12pm: interview preparation

26th April

9am–12pm: interview preparation

30th April

Meeting at 11am

10th May

Interview at 6.30pm

11th May

9am–12pm, 8pm–10pm: writing up interview script

17th May

9am–12pm: writing up interview script

22nd May

Interview at 6.30pm

23rd May

Article entitled "Screening of Korean Film Depicting 'Japanese Barbarism' in Lecture" appears in the *Sankei Shimbun* (21st May). The article is about a university lecturer who was discussing the "comfort women" issue, and problematizes the showing of a film on the subject to students. The article reports that there has been constant abuse and criticism of the lecturer and threats to the university since.

24th May

9am–12pm, 1pm–3.30pm: writing up interview script

4th June

2pm–4pm: interview

6th June

1pm–5pm: writing up interview script

7th June

9am–12pm: writing up interview script

14th June

9am–12pm: writing up interview script

21st June

I need to be careful when people are answering my questions in a language that is not their

native one. Getting things wrong, hesitating, the time taken to search for the right words. The difficulty of reflecting these things in the text.

5th July
Interview at noon

12th July
9am–12pm: writing up interview script

13th July
2pm–6pm: writing up interview script

5th August
The *Asahi Shimbun* publishes a special feature looking back at its first report of the "comfort women" issue, and correcting some erroneous content. In response to this, there is an outbreak of people saying that the "comfort women" issue is a fabrication caused by the *Asahi Shimbun*'s false reports.

7th August
9am–12pm: interview preparation

From Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*:

> In fact, perhaps the most common feeling we encountered while studying the Japanese war experience was a sense among those we interviewed that the war, like some natural cataclysm, had "happened" to them, not in any way been "done" by them. (3)

8th August
9am–12pm: interview preparation

3pm: interview

9th August

3pm–4pm: writing up interview script

11th August

9am–12pm, 3pm–6pm: writing up interview script

13th August

Interview at 4pm

From a conversation with a friend:

> Did you read the special feature in the *Asahi Shimbun*? I wonder if the people who are going around saying that it's the fault of the *Asahi*'s lies that other countries are blaming Japan, that the paper needs to take responsibility and should be summoned to appear before the Japanese National Diet, have actually read the whole article. I read it and thought, right, so that happened, but it doesn't change the facts [that "comfort women" existed]. When you read the whole article, your perception of the overall picture doesn't change at all. But the people who are coming out and saying in public that the entire thing is the Asahi Shimbun, that we should summon them to the Diet—have they actually read it? Are they deliberately making a mountain out of a molehill? Or is it a question of poor reading comprehension? I mean, they're politicians, right? Surely they'd read the whole thing?

14th August

9am–12pm, 5pm–6pm: writing up interview script

15th August

8pm–10pm: writing up interview script

17th August

4pm–7pm: writing up interview script

Interview at 8.30pm

18th August

Meeting at 1pm

19th August

1pm–4pm: writing up interview script

20th August

10am–12pm: writing up interview text

In the afternoon, I go and watch the film *Japanese Devils: Confessions of Imperial Army Soldiers from Japan's War Against China*. When a Japanese man is giving testimony about the crimes he carried out, there is a shot showing a glimpse of his wife from the dark of the kitchen. Had she heard him speak of those things before? If she had, did it worry her? If not, did she want to know?

23rd August

Thinking about the difference between the speech of the victims and that of the perpetrators. The reception of the testimony of former soldiers in post–war society. Testifying that you have caused harm to someone. Their fear that came from having to survive life within an immoral military organization. The soldiers were so highly controlled, fettered in so many ways, including sexually. Soldiers' human rights? Amid all the memories concerning the Second World War, how should we place their testimony so that we are able to listen to it?

26th August

2pm–5pm: writing up interview script

27th August

10am–1pm: collecting and organising material

28th August

From Suzuki Seijun, "*Sensō eiga to onna no kao"* (War Films and Women's Faces) in *Suzuki seijun essei korekushon* (*Suzuki Seijun Essay Collection*):

> I feel as though talk of the wartime experiences is something that should be done to children by their parents, not by other people. However, it seems as though parents don't much want to speak to their children about their wartime experiences. I suppose that they are trying to preserve their reputation and so on, but it's those people who don't want to speak about the war who are the ones who know what war was truly like. Keeping the truth locked up as just one's own personal experience is avoiding the responsibility for the defeat. The things that one did (not that you saw) in the war should be told without fear to one's children, even if it causes them astonishment. (145)

30th August

From Nishino Rumiko, *Motoheishi-tachi no shōgen: jūgun ianfu* (Testimony of Former Soldiers: Military Comfort Women):

> The words of a former soldier: "Saying that we had no choice is shifting the blame for the war, and that way of thinking is what has kept the issue of war responsibility from being resolved." (176)

31st August

At the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee. The public hearing of Jeffrey Benzien, a police officer in South Africa during the apartheid regime. Benzien's counseller, psychologist Ria Kotze, was summoned to appear in court. The poet Krog, covering the hearings, wrote the following after listening to her public statement:

> To reconstruct your memory, to beautify it, is an ordinary human trait, says the psychologist. Most people do it. But there are probably three kinds of memory loss. The first is voluntary – you change your memory because you are under threat, because you cannot bear to live with the reality. The second kind is involuntary – something is so traumatic that it rips a hole in your memory, and you cannot remember the incident or what happened just before and after it. But there is also a third kind of memory loss and that occurs when you testify in public. Kotze says Benzien's stress level were so compounded by having to testify and his anxiety about how this might affect the last bits of life he has with his wife and children, that it is quite possible he remembered even less than usual. (Krog 117)

2nd September
9am–2pm, 5pm–11pm: writing Part One

3rd September
9am–1pm, 8pm–12am: writing Part One

4th September
9am–1pm: polishing Part One

5th September
10am–2pm: interview preparation

6th September
Interview at 2pm

8th September
1pm–3pm: writing up interview script
Interview at 4pm.

12th September

10am–1pm: writing up interview script

14th September

10am–1.30pm: writing up interview script

Meeting at 3pm.

From a conversation with a friend:

> In the film *Japanese Devils*, the people speaking about the war crimes they carried out in China speak so factually, in such a removed, expressionless way, like they're reading aloud from a book. At first, I thought that was really weird. If it was the people on the side of those who'd been killed, people from the victims' side who were speaking about those things, they'd be really emotional in their delivery, right? I thought that the same would be true [of the perpetrators] as well. But then, when I thought about it afterwards, when you're speaking from the perpetrator's perspective, rather than speaking about it as your own experience, you'd have to speak about it [as something done] by someone else. If you didn't speak about it first as something separate from yourself then you'd never be able speak about it at all. When you think about it like that, I guess that those old men's calmness was actually a very human reaction.

15th September

Thinking about the difference between the speech of the perpetrators and the victims. Jean Hatzfeld, who covered the Rwandan Genocide, says the following about the comparison between the survivors and the killers:

> It was harrowing to see the risks these survivors took in telling their stories. They did not hesitate to let themselves be overwhelmed by their memories, their uneasiness, their pain. They dared to revisit forbidden places and to bring nightmares back to life. Quite often they spoke of memories and thoughts they had never revealed before, and seemed astonished at what they or others had said. They whispered, flared up, became harsh or

tender. The tone of their voices was never the same from one day to the next. Even if their stories changed in the telling, you had to listen to them with all your heart.

But the killers never allow themselves to be overwhelmed by anything. Their memories may fool them because of normal deformation over time, but that is nothing like the traumas and psychological blocks their victims have described.

Each killer controls what he says in his own way. Élie, for example, tries touchingly to express his feelings as precisely as possible, while Ignace automatically answers at first with a lie that he can then carefully refine. All of them gradually speak more sincerely as the interviews progress, making more of an effort to open up. Nevertheless, there is a cautionary line that they almost always refuse to cross. Although they speak in a monotone that increases our uneasiness, there is something more, something equivocal in their voices that makes us think these men are not so indifferent as they appear. Their guardedness is dictated probably by prudence or perplexity, often by a strange insensitivity, but also perhaps by a sense of propriety. (Hatzfeld 143–44)

16th September

2pm–5.30pm: writing up interview script, translating

17th September

1pm–5pm: translating Korean newspaper articles

I'm not making much headway with the translation because of my linguistic incompetence. With the content being what it is, as I read the Korean, looking up words in the dictionary and trying to grasp the nuance and the feel of the individual words and phrases, my insides grow heavier and heavier. And yet the text in Japanese reads pretty flatly and expressionlessly, showing no trace of my struggles with the bitter nuances of the source language.

19th September

4pm–6pm, 9pm–11pm: translating Korean newspaper articles

I'm surprised by the totally obvious truth of how different the experience of translating into Japanese from Korean is from translating from English. Where the Korean words used are

those which have their origin in Chinese characters, I first try and replacing with their Japanese Kanji equivalents in my translation. Suddenly, the temperature of the pallid Japanese sentences shoots up, grows feverish. Words like *disclose* (폭로), *horror*(참상), *rage* (분노).

27th September

8.30pm–9.30pm: interview

From "Hyperbole over Asahi Affair Tarnishes Brand Japan," by Jeff Kingston, *The Japan Times* (27th September, 2014):

> But why do these detractors think that coming clean about Japan's past hurts the nation's image? Surely Japan's reputation is sullied far more by the deniers and minimizers who can't accept responsibility over wartime atrocities, particularly when it comes to the comfort women system. Problematically, the shabby treatment of the comfort women, compounded by ongoing denials, stymies their efforts to rehabilitate and glorify the nation's wartime past.

28th September

10am–1pm: writing up interview script

30th September

10am–11am: writing up interview script

11.30am–12.30pm: collecting and organising material

1st October

3pm–5pm: translating

2nd October

8.30pm–9.30pm: collecting and organising material

4th October

10am–12pm: collecting and organising material

From "Investigation into Policy for Transmitting News Overseas Following Erroneous 'Military Comfort Women' Reports," NHK (4th October, 2014):

> In the light of the *Asahi Shimbun*'s retraction of some of their articles concerning the issue of military comfort women, the Liberal Democratic Party has voiced the need to reclaim Japan's honour, and is hurriedly investigating their policy for transmitting information about the issue overseas.
>
> In August this year, the *Asahi Shimbun* published a special feature investigating its reports on the issue of military comfort women, retracting an article based upon the testimony of a Japanese man claiming that "he had led comfort women away by force", declaring that they had "judged the testimony to be erroneous."
>
> In response to this, the Liberal Democratic Party announced their intention to create a special committee within the party to deal with the issue, claiming that "based upon the false testimony of this man, the demand from members of the UN for Japan to take national responsibility and apologize has been spreading, and as a party, we need to concern ourselves with restoring Japan's honour."
>
> In connection with the issue, Prime Minister Abe indicated that "groundless libel that the entire Japanese nation made sexual slaves of women is circulating around the world. It is through these false reports that this situation has come about." As well as investigating policy for the transmission of information to other countries, international organizations such as the UN, and foreign news agencies, the special committee will also investigate the effect brought about in international society by the news reports based upon the man's testimony, and make suggestions to the government accordingly.

19th October

11am–1pm: translating

The difficulty of switching between Korean and Japanese. My inadequate language abilities...

A draft translation.

From "Military Comfort Woman Reveals Horror" *The Hankyoreh* (15th August, 1991):

Military Comfort Woman Reveals Horror

Ms Kim Hak–Sun is First Korean resident to Disclose Truth About Past

Historical Facts Have to Emerge Eventually

Rage Still Rises Up When She Sees the Japanese Flag

On the afternoon of the 14th in the Korean Women's Association United offices, Kim Hak–Sun (67, lives in Chungsin-dong, Jongno District, Seoul, Picture 1), gave a press conference where she exposed the horror she went through when, at age of 17 and in the flower of her youth, she served as a comfort woman to the Japanese Army for a period of over five months. Of the Koreans who were forced to live as military comfort women under the imposed colonial rule of the Japanese Empire, she is the first of those living in the country to disclose her painful past since Korea's liberation from Japanese rule.

"I've wanted to speak about it for so long, but I didn't have the courage, and couldn't say anything. I decided to tell the truth because these are the 'historical facts' that have to emerge eventually. I feel better for having finally got it off my chest."

Ms Kim, now an old woman and her face etched with lines, began to speak about the time 50 years ago that she would rather not have remembered, her eyes constantly welling up with tears, in a way that was painful to watch.

"When I see the *hinomaru* (Japanese flag), I feel such bitterness, and a sense of revulsion in my chest. Now, when I hear the Japanese are saying on the TV and in the papers that it is untrue that the Japanese led military comfort women away forcibly, I get so sad I feel like my chest will cave in. I feel prepared to take the Japanese government to court."

Currently living off social benefits, through which she receives ten kilograms of rice and 30,000 won a month, Ms Kim has led a dramatic life.

Born in Jilin, Manchuria, in 1924, Ms Kim's father died a few months after her birth. Struggling to get by, her mother sold her to a *kisaeng* [courtesans who entertained high-ranking officials] training school in Pyongyang when she was 14. Having finished her three years of school, Ms Kim was planning to get her first job, and went with her foster father from the school to Teppekichin in Northern China, where a company of over 300 Japanese soldiers was stationed.

"My foster father who took me away at the time couldn't get any money from the Japanese military for me, and was powerless to prevent them from taking me away. For five months after that, my whole life was based around serving four or five Japanese soldiers practically every day."

The place where Ms Kim was based was a temporary building erected in front of the platoon

base, and housed five teenage Korean girls. The military provided them with rice and side–dishes, and they were placed under 24-hour surveillance. Ms Kim confessed that she had tried to escape on numerous occasions, but was found each time by the soldiers and beaten.

At that time, Cho Won-Chan (31), a Korean salesman who went between Korea and China selling silver coins, just so happened to come by the comfort station, and, securing his help, Ms Kim finally managed to escape. She subsequently went to Manchuria with Mr Cho, travelling around from place to place in Shanghai and other parts of China. After the end of Japan's rule of Korea, she came to Seoul with Mr Cho, where the pair settled. Ms Kim gave birth to a son and a daughter, but lost both of them immediately after the Korean War, and in 1953, her husband also passed away. She spoke in a tearful voice of the hardship she had endured throughout the course of her life, working as a housekeeper and a street vendor in order to make a living.

Ms Kim says she decided to reveal the truth about her past at the invitation of an atom bomb victim, Lee Maeng-Hee, who she came to know after leaving the job placement centre, and The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. She stated passionately, "The Korean government must seek a public apology and compensation from the Japanese in relation to the military comfort women issue."

Meanwhile, the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan stated that "through the testimony of the survivors and their relatives, starting with Ms Kim, we must reveal the truth about the women drafted into the volunteer corps which has been pushed to the underside of history." (by Kim Mi-Kyung)

25th October

10pm–11pm: interview

26th October

1pm–3pm: interview preparation

9pm–11pm: translating

27th October

10am–1pm: translating
3pm–7pm: writing up interview script

28th October

I read an interesting paper by Takei Ayaka, specialist in modern German and Jewish history. She states, "After the Second World War, when Germany and the other Western nations were facing the evils of Nazism and the Holocaust, false testimony was a conspicuous problem," and, drawing on examples of false testimony occurring in Germany after the war, speaks about the Japanese problems of the bashing of the *Asahi Shimbun* and the increase in historical revisionism in Japanese public opinion. In particular, the examples she cites of false evidence from those who were "neither perpetrators nor victims but third parties (as with Yoshida's testimony)"—"the cases of those who invent experiences of the Holocaust and publish them as autobiographical accounts"—are particularly interesting. Why do people create these accounts and pose as victims? As reasons, Takei cites the "wish to place themselves in a worthier position than that given to the victims", and "the trend in contemporary society to always think of oneself as a victim in some way." In Yoshida Seiji's case, he gave false testimony as a perpetrator rather than a witness, but his reasons for doing so are still very intriguing.

From "Gishō tono mukiaikata, shūseishugi no uketomekata; horokōsuto to hikaku shite" ("How To Approach False Testimony and How to Deal With Historical Revisionism: A Comparison With the Holocaust") by Takei Ayaka:

> Historical interpretation is something that is established through the accumulation of long years of research, and cannot possibly be annulled by one person's false testimony. If someone tried to deny the entirety of history on the basis of specific false testimony, it would be academic blasphemy. What we need to be most wary of is the intellectual poverty, what we could call the anti-intellectualism of contemporary Japan that allows knowledge gained through decades spent engaging with a mountain of historical resources to do battle in the same arena as the personal opinions of those who have never touched such a resource.

30th October

5pm–8pm: translating

3rd November

8am–10am: organising bibliography

6th November

Meeting at 6pm

17th November

3pm–5pm: interview

18th November

9am–11am: organising material

28th November

There are reports of how the *Yomiuri Shimbun* has apologized for using "inappropriate" expressions in its English edition by referring to "comfort women" as "sexual slaves" and similar.

From "Inappropriate Phrases in English Edition—Apology For Comfort Women Reportage" (28th November, 2014):

> Internal investigations have revealed that, in its coverage of the so–called military comfort women issue, the English edition of this newspaper, *The Daily Yomiuri* (now *The Japan News*), used inappropriate expressions such as "sex slave," "sexual servitude" and so on, in a total of 97 articles between February 1992 and January 2013.
>
> The *Yomiuri Shimbun* apologises for its use of expressions that may have invited misunderstanding, and will be creating addenda for all of the offending articles in its database stating that the articles used inappropriate expressions. An apology is also being

published in today's edition of *The Japan News*, and a list of the articles has been published on its website (http://the–japan–news.com/).

There were found to be 85 translations of *Yomiuri Shimbun* articles and original English articles featured in The Daily Yomiuri concerning the comfort women issue that inappropriately used the word "sex slave" or similar expressions.

Because it was believed that the word "comfort women" would be difficult to understand for those for those English readers lacking the necessary background knowledge, explanations based on erroneous information which did not appear in the Japanese edition of the paper, such as "comfort women were women forced into sexual servitude," were added to the articles.

For example, in the 30th August, 1997 edition, in the first page editorial column *Henshū Techo*, where the Japanese edition of the paper used the phrase "about 'military comfort women' and so on," the English article in *The Daily Yomiuri* adopted the expression "the issue of 'comfort women,' who were forced into sexual servitude by the Imperial Japanese Army."

There were also 12 articles which did not use the expression "sex slave," but which spoke of the coercion by the government or the army as though it was objective fact, defining comfort women as "women forced into prostitution by the Japanese army" and so on. As regards the 1993 Kōno Statement, at first its contents were translated correctly as "there were times when the authorities directly participated in this (recruiting of comfort women)," but later this was simplified and expressions liable to invite misunderstanding, such as that Kōno "acknowledged coercion by the military," were used instead.

From "Japanese newspaper retracts term 'sex slaves' from wartime coverage: Attempts to portray women who were forced to work in brothels as willing prostitutes at odds with mainstream historical opinion" by Justin McCurry, *The Guardian* (28 November 2014):

> Japan's biggest-selling newspaper has apologised for its past use of the term "sex slaves" to describe tens of thousands of women who were forced to work in Japanese military brothels before and during the second world war.
>
> The move by the Yomiuri Shimbun, a conservative broadsheet with a daily circulation of more than 10 million, has fuelled concern that sections of the country's media have signed up to a government-led campaign to rewrite Japan's wartime history and portray its actions on the Asian mainland in a more favourable light.

Revisionist attempts to portray the women as willing prostitutes hired by private brokers has soured Tokyo's relations with South Korea, where many of the victims came from. The Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, has yet to hold a bilateral summit with his counterpart in Seoul, Park Geun-hye, since he took office in December 2012.

In a statement carried in its Japanese and English-language editions, the Yomiuri said it would continue to use the phrase "so-called comfort women," a more ambiguous wording critics say downplays the women's plight.

Many mainstream historians and overseas media use "sex slaves" to describe as many as 200,000 women – mostly from the Korean peninsula – who were forced to work in frontline brothels until Japan's defeat in 1945.

The Yomiuri said the "inappropriate" descriptions had appeared on numerous occasions in its English-language edition the Daily Yomiuri, now known as the Japan News, for more than a decade up to 2013. The paper said it had not come under pressure from outside to alter its editorial policy.

In September, Japan's historical revisionists received a boost when the liberal Asahi Shimbun Shimbun retracted several articles it ran in the 1990s about wartime sex slaves.

The coverage was based on the falsified testimony of Seiji Yoshida, a former soldier who claimed he had witnessed women from the South Korean island of Jeju being abducted to work in military brothels. Yoshida, who died in 2000, has been discredited by independent investigations by academics and other newspapers.

Senior Asahi staff resigned and the paper became the target of sustained attacks on its editorial credibility from conservative rivals, including the Yomiuri.

In line with claims made by leading conservative politicians that there is no evidence that the military coerced the women, the Yomiuri said the previous wording had created the mistaken impression that sexual enslavement was official wartime policy.

"The Yomiuri Shimbun apologises for having used these misleading expressions and will add a note stating that they were inappropriate to all the articles in question in our database," the paper said in a statement printed in the Japan News on Friday.

The paper cited 97 articles published between 1992 and 2013 that used "sex slave" or "other inappropriate expressions."

The Yomiuri, a staunch supporter of the governing Liberal Democratic party, said "sex slaves" had never been used in its Japanese edition.

"The expression 'comfort women" was difficult to understand for non-Japanese who did not have knowledge of the subject. Therefore the Daily Yomiuri, based on an inaccurate perception and using foreign news agencies' reports as reference, added such explanations as 'women who were forced into sexual slavery' that did not appear in The Yomiuri Shimbun's original stories," the paper said.

Abe is one of several conservative politicians who have blamed the Asahi – and overseas media coverage of the sex slave issue they claim was based on the newspaper's falsified stories – for damaging Japan's international reputation. But he has stopped short of revising a 1993 government statement apologising to the women.

Mainstream historians point out, however, that the Asahi's recent retraction does not invalidate their contention that Japan's wartime government and military were involved in coercing the women.

1st December

8am–11am: writing up interview script

3rd December

Meeting at 8pm

11th December

Meeting at 6pm

30th December

5pm–10pm: organising bibliography

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* For the references mentioned in part 2, see footnotes. These should contain enough information to source the original materials.
* The bibliography above does not include newspaper articles quoted in part 3.