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## Japan's "comfort women": No end to the struggle

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This article is a continuation, in the form of an update from the year 2010 to the present year 2016, of the author's previous publication from: *Crimes Against Women (Women's Issues)*, ISBN: 978-1-61668-480-8, Imperial Japan and Its "Comfort Women," Chapter 8, pp89-102, (2011), David Wingeate Pike. (from Nova Science Publishers, Inc.)

## JAPAN'S "COMFORT WOMEN": NO END TO THE STRUGGLE

David Wingeate Pike

In 2010 two basic questions remained unresolved. Did the Comfort Women number in the hundreds, or in the hundreds of thousands? Were the Comfort Women enslaved by private local enterprises, or by the Japanese military following instructions from the Japanese Government?

A conference was held on April 14-17, 2014 at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Organized by *Global War Studies* in San Diego as part of its cycle Seventy Years On, the conference marked the year 1944. Among the speakers was Toyomi Asano, professor of political history and international relations at Chukyo University. In his conference abstract Asano wrote of "comfort women who had served with Japanese forces at the front. The women were prohibited from refusing to have sex or go out freely. [...] The women apparently were enjoying their lives." In his oral presentation Asano closed by denying the importance of his topic, estimating their number at some twenty or thirty only, all of whom "were having a good time." To the bewilderment of his audience, Asano then presented photographs of the women, showing them, far from "having a good time," either glum or miserable. Question time arrived. The author of this chapter, who was present, referred the audience to *Crimes against Women* (AGS, 2010) and informed the Japanese professor that no scholar of this subject could support his findings and that the estimate of the victims, far from numbering in the twenties, numbered in the tens of thousands. Professor Asano sat stone-faced in his chair.

That estimate is one on which historians are in general agreement. Floyd Whaley in the *New York Times* put the figure higher, at between 80,000 and 200,000, most of whom came from Korea.<sup>1</sup> On the question of the perpetrators, if they were indeed the Government and the military themselves, it required an open confession and a full apology without added clauses. This was the sticking point. The pattern of dialogue became a shuttlecock. Every Japanese gesture toward a confession and a full apology was followed and neutralized by a dissenting opinion. Every step forward was followed by a step back, to such a point that it became a dance.

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We resume the account at the point we left it (see note 61). The two fellow-alumni met again in Tokyo, when the American Ambassador John Roos (JD, Stanford) presented his credentials to the Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama (MA, MA, PhD. Stanford). Hatoyama came from a most distinguished political family. His grandfather Ichiro had been three times Prime Minister. His father, also Ichiro, had served as foreign minister in the mid-1970s. As for Yukio, he had quit the conservative Liberal Democratic Party in 1993 to co-found the left-of-center Democratic Party of Japan, which in September 2009 won the election to the lower house in a landslide, ousting the LDP. *Stanford Magazine* interviewed them in Tokyo, separately,<sup>2</sup> but whatever discussions the Prime Minister and the Ambassador had about the comfort women were not mentioned and have gone

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<sup>1</sup> Floyd Whaley. "In Philippines, Former Sex Slaves Speak Out", *International New York Times*, January 30, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> *Stanford Magazine*, January-February 2011.

unrecorded. It would be helpful at this point to insert a summary of events from the beginning of our investigations into the crimes under study.

The International Military Tribunal for the Far East (May 3, 1946-November 4, 1948) had applied the principles of the Hague Convention of 1907—the first international treaty implicitly outlawing sexual violence—and the Geneva Conventions of 1929, which stated that women prisoners of war “should be treated with all consideration due to their sex.”<sup>3</sup> Documentary evidence in 87 rape cases and eight more relating to the comfort women were submitted to the Tribunal, but suspects were rarely mentioned and even more rarely charged.<sup>4</sup> The Tokyo Tribunal was followed by the so-called minor war crimes trials. Among the historians who later engaged in researching the crimes was Hirofumi Hayashi of Kanto Gakuin University in Yokohama. As an authority in this field he reported on the “Dutch trials” held in Batavia (now Jakarta) in 1948 in which Japanese officers were convicted for the forced prostitution of 35 Dutch women.<sup>5</sup>

France in French Indo-China had similarly conducted its own minor war crimes trials. The records of the trials were held and originally issued by the Permanent Military Tribunal in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). Copies of these official documents passed to the Japanese Ministry of Justice, and from there to the National Archives in Tokyo in 1999. Although they became available to the public in 2007, it was only in summer 2014 that they were examined by researchers. The papers provided the first documentary evidence to come to light of sexual violence committed on French women by Japanese soldiers, and included the case of a Japanese officer referred to as Captain X. His unit came across two young French sisters on the battlefield. The captain sexually assaulted the older girl. He took their small amounts of cash and all their clothes, and then confined them in his company’s living quarters. For seven weeks he organized or tolerated the abuse and rape of the sisters by his subordinates. At the end of this ordeal, the sisters were shot dead. According to the documents, in January 1947 Captain X was convicted of murder, rape, complicity in rape and robbery in connection with events that included the massacre of more than 40 French prisoners of war. The court condemned him to death and the sentence was carried out on August 12, 1947.<sup>6</sup>

Korea in one regard was in a special category among the countries occupied by Japan. It had been under Korean rule from 1912. It was again in a special category among Japan’s comfort women.” By far the largest proportion of these women was Korean, and it was in Korea that the first voices were raised, though not until the 1990s.

A group of 80 survivors began to stage weekly protests outside the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. Then, when three South Korean women filed suit in Japan in December 1991, the cause of the comfort women—and sexual violence in conflict—became a public issue. Japan retorted that all war-related claims by South Korea had been settled in 1965 when the two countries established diplomatic ties.

A change came in 1993. On August 4 of that year, the Japanese government issued an apology known as the Kono Statement that acknowledged for the first time that the imperial military had been at least indirectly involved in coercing women into sexual slavery during the Second World War.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. David Wingeate Pike, ed., *The Closing of the Second World War: Twilight of a Totalitarianism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001). For Nanking, pp. xxxv-xxxvi. For Unit 731 (bacteriological warfare), pp. xlix-li. For *owabi* and the problems with apology, pp. xli-xlii. For the Major War Crimes Trial, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Kayoko Kimura, “Stance on ‘Comfort Women’ Undermines Fight to End Wartime Sexual Violence,” *The Japan Times*, March 4, 2015

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

(Unofficial Translation)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs website Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the result of the study on the issue of “comfort women”. August 4, 1993.

The Government of Japan has been conducting a study on the issue of wartime "comfort women" since December 1991. I wish to announce the findings as a result of that study.

As a result of the study which indicates that comfort stations were operated in extensive areas for long periods, it is apparent that there existed a great number of comfort women. Comfort stations were operated in response to the request of the military authorities of the day. The then Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations and the transfer of comfort women. The recruitment of the comfort women was conducted mainly by private recruiters who acted in response to the request of the military. The Government study has revealed that in many cases they were recruited against their own will, through coaxing, coercion, etc., and that, at times, administrative/military personnel directly took part in the recruitments. They lived in misery at comfort stations under a coercive atmosphere.

As to the origin of those comfort women who were transferred to the war areas, excluding those from Japan, those from the Korean Peninsula accounted for a large part. The Korean Peninsula was under Japanese rule in those days, and their recruitment, transfer, control, etc., were conducted generally against their will, through coaxing, coercion, etc.

Undeniably, this was an act, with the involvement of the military authorities of the day, that severely injured the honor and dignity of many women. The Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity once again to extend its sincere apologies and remorse to all those, irrespective of place of origin, who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.

It is incumbent upon us, the Government of Japan, to continue to consider seriously, while listening to the views of learned circles, how best we can express this sentiment.

We shall face squarely the historical facts as described above instead of evading them, and take them to heart as lessons of history. We hereby reiterate our firm determination never to repeat the same mistake by forever engraving such issues in our memories through the study and teaching of history.

As actions have been brought to court in Japan and interests have been shown in this issue outside Japan, the Government of Japan shall continue to pay full attention to this matter, including private research related thereto.

Japan thus formally apologized in 1993 to the women who were forced into wartime brothels for Japanese soldiers. It should be noted in the Kono Statement that although the translation is unofficial, it was done by the Japanese and that the term “against their will, through coaxing, coercion, etc.” is repeated in the document itself.

Negative reaction to the Kono Statement came from both sides of the argument. The apology and admission of responsibility by the Japanese military became at once a source of irritation to Japanese conservatives and nationalists, who objected to the statement on many occasions. During Shinzo Abe’s first term in office (2006-2007), his Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hakubun Shimomura called for an “objective” look at the Kono statement. In 2007 he said: “It is true that there were comfort women. I believe some parents may have sold their daughters. But it does not mean the

Japanese Army was involved.”<sup>7</sup> Again, at a press conference on March 1, 2007, Prime Minister Abe expressed his doubts about the Kono statement, saying that there was “no proof” of coercion.

A fund was later set up by private donors in Japan that made payments to a number of comfort women in Asian countries. But many comfort women rejected the payments on the grounds that they did not come from the government, and found the apology by Yohei Kono inadequate in describing the scope of the atrocities.<sup>8</sup> Their stance was strongly supported by lobbies in the People’s Republic of Korea, ever eager to drive a wedge between Seoul and Tokyo. As for comfort women living in the RPK, nothing is known of Pyongyang’s efforts to give them assistance.

And then there was the Shrine. The Yasukuni shrine, and the annual pilgrimage to the shrine every August 15, had been the source of friction between Japan and the rest of Asia ever since fourteen Class-A Japanese criminals had been buried there at the end of the Second World War.<sup>9</sup> It had become a tradition for Cabinet members to attend the ceremony, and the visits to the shrine by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi (2001-2006) had clearly offended China, Japan’s biggest trade partner. In order not to cause further economic damage to Japan’s ties with China, his successor Shinzo Abe had made it a point in 2006, as his first act as Prime Minister, to fly to Beijing.

The visits to the shrine continued until in 2010 Prime Minister Naoto Kan (2010-2011) broke from his predecessors. He not only refused to visit the shrine but ordered his cabinet to do likewise. The action was unprecedented. Kan followed it up with a renewed apology on August 9, 2010 for Japan’s brutal colonial rule. This time the apology was addressed not only to Korea but to all of Asia—which did not include the Dutch or the French, it might be added. In Seoul a spokesman for President Lee Myung-bak said South Korea accepted the apology. This apology did not touch on the issue of individual compensation for those who had been forced to work as slave-laborers or as slave-prostitutes, but it was enough to inflame conservatives. Tabloid newspapers denounced it as “treasonous diplomacy,” while rightist groups protested loudly in front of the prime minister’s residence.

There followed several years of relative calm in which Tokyo seemed to be mending its fences with neighbors still traumatized by Japan’s brutal march across Asia. The dispute over the comfort women then resurfaced, putting Japan at odds with its postwar protector, the United States.

In May 2012, after the issue had been dormant in the United States for six years, the sex- slave issue was given new attention when Japan’s consul general in New York tried to have a monument to sex-slaves removed from a public park in New Jersey. Unconfirmed reports that US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton had banned the use of the euphemism “comfort women” in favor of the more direct term “sex slaves” prompted a retort in the Japanese Parliament in July 2012 by Foreign Minister Koichiro Genba, who called Clinton’s term “a mistaken expression.”<sup>10</sup> Under its conservative Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda (2011-2012), Japan again challenged the claim that the women had been forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military. The conservative *Yomiuri Shimbun* tangled with the Kono statement, and in its August 16, 2012 editorial claimed that no documents had been found that could prove there was any truth to what Kono had suggested. The *Yomiuri* added: “As long as the Kono statement is valid, it denies the Japanese government the chance to refute the claim that the Japanese military abducted Korean women and girls to use them as comfort women.” The newspaper

<sup>7</sup> “Abe protégé urges ‘objective’ look at sex slave apology, draws flak,” *The Japan Times*, October 27, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Floyd Whaley, “In Philippines, Former Sex Slaves Speak Out”, *International New York Times*, January 30, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Pike, *The Closing*, op. cit., p. xxxvii.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Fackler, “China envoy recalled to Tokyo over dispute,” *International Herald Tribune*, July 16, 2012.

found this to be “extremely problematic.” Another editorial on August 30, 2012 stated that the statement “must be reviewed” because “no evidence proving the forcible recruitment of comfort women has been found.” On August 24, 2012 Toru Hashimoto, mayor of Osaka and co-leader of the populist and nationalist Osaka Restoration Association, added his support, insisting that there was no proof that the Japanese military had forcibly recruited comfort women. Foreign Minister Genba planned to hold a meeting with his South Korean counterpart, Kim Sung-hwan. But the meeting never took place, because the two nations remained too far apart.

No sooner had the dispute quieted down than a new factor entered into it. In April 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe seemed to question whether Japan was the aggressor during the war, saying that the term “invasion” was relative. Suggestions were made that the government might revise or even repudiate the apologies. Predictably, Japan’s former enemies were once again aroused. Again the Japanese Government backed away, stating that the government would abide by the official apologies made.

On May 7, 2013, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters that Prime Minister Abe shared the views expressed in the 1995 apology made by the Socialist Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama (1994-1996). At a separate news conference, the chief cabinet secretary, Yoshihide Suga, said the Abe government would not revise the Kono statement, which formally recognized the military’s responsibility in forcing women into sexual slavery.<sup>11</sup>

Toru Hashimoto, the mayor of Osaka and seen by some as a possible future prime minister, stepped in on May 14, 2013, to provoke a new outcry. Japan, he said, had been “unfairly demonized.” Women forced into wartime brothels for the Japanese Army during the Second World War, he explained, had served a necessary role in providing relief for war-crazed soldiers. He further suggested that U.S. soldiers stationed on Okinawa should make more use of the island’s sexual entertainment industry, which he said would reduce the incidence of sexual crimes against local women. Yonhap, a South Korean news agency, quoted a senior government official as saying that Hashimoto’s comments exposed “a serious lack of historical understanding and a lack of respect for human rights.”<sup>12</sup> The comfort women system was simply not necessary, said Banri Kaieda, the president of the opposition Democratic Party.

Hashimoto held his ground. When pressed later on the issue, he said that the brothels “were indeed necessary at the time, to maintain discipline in the army.” He added that in any case there was no proof that the Japanese authorities had forced women into servitude. Instead he put the women’s experiences down to “the tragedy of war.”<sup>13</sup> Hashimoto gave the same speech on May 27, 2013 to overseas journalists at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan. It was as much a plea to domestic voters before the coming summer parliamentary elections as it was an attempt to reach out to global public opinion.<sup>14</sup> The U.S. Department of State responded by calling Hashimoto’s remarks “outrageous and offensive.” A censure motion was introduced on May 30, 2013 into the Japanese Parliament, but Hashimoto survived it, and to divert attention from his contentious remarks about comfort women, he turned to the upcoming G-8 Summit (June 17-18, 2013 in Northern Ireland) as a

<sup>11</sup> “Government Won’t Revise Apologies to War Victims,” *International Herald Tribune*, May 9, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Hioko Tabuchi, “Wartime Brothels Called ‘Necessary,’” *International Herald Tribune*, May 15, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Hiroko Tabushi, “A New Stand on Wartime Brothels,” *International Herald Tribune*, May 28, 2013.

fine opportunity for the nations' leaders to examine how soldiers around the world behave toward women in wartime.<sup>15</sup>

It was once again an impasse. Jonathan Tepperman, editor-in-chief of *Foreign Affairs*, summarized the quandary in magisterial fashion.

The answer is that no one will go first. The best thing that could happen for Asia today would be for Japan to apologize once and for all, in a manner that is as clear, comprehensive and un-nuanced as possible. This means doing something like what Chancellor Willy Brandt of Germany did in 1970 when he fell to his knees before a monument to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, or when President Richard von Weizsäcker recognized the principle of Germany's "collective responsibility" a decade later.<sup>16</sup>

Imperial Japan's crimes weren't the same as Nazi Germany's. But democratic Germany has profited enormously from its open, non-defensive approach to the country's past, and democratic Japan would as well. Japan's victims, for their part, should press to have their legitimate grievances addressed – and then move on, as France, Russia and even Israel have done with the Third Reich's descendants.

But this, sadly, is unlikely to happen. Politicians in the countries concerned have too much to gain (or so they think) from continuing to stir the pot. Thus Japan likes to point out that it has already apologized multiple times for its misdeeds, and that it has even paid compensation in certain cases. This is true. But it is also true that various Japanese politicians, catering to their conservative and contrition-weary base, continue to undermine those apologies by questioning them and the historical record.

When I interviewed Abe in Tokyo two weeks ago [mid-May 2013], he was carefully opaque on whether Japan had been the aggressor in World War II, and defended the right of Japanese leaders to visit the Yasukuni Shrine (where 13 Class-A war criminals are buried) by comparing it to America's Arlington National Cemetery. [...]

In China especially, the nationalist demon would be hard to stuff back in its box. Nor would this approach salve the private pain of those, like former wartime "comfort women", still seeking acknowledgements and reparations from Tokyo. But it would cool the region's boiling waters while letting all sides save face. And it might just be the only way to avoid an actual shooting war that no side, despite the overheated talk, wants or could afford.<sup>17</sup>

It was now the turn of Japan's Finance Minister, Taro Aso, to create a fire-storm.<sup>18</sup> An outspoken nationalist famous for slips of the tongue, Aso made comments that appeared to call on Japan's

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<sup>15</sup> Kayoko Kimura. "Stance on 'Comfort Women' undermines fight to end wartime sexual violence," *The Japan Times*, March 4, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Pike, *The Closing*, p. xli.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Tepperman, "Asian tensions and the problem of history," *International New York Times*, May 25, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Taro Aso had already been the center of controversy. In December 2008 the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, under prodding from an opposition lawmaker, released documents showing that in the last four months of the Second World War some 300 British, Dutch and Australian prisoners of war had been forced to work at a mine in western Japan owned by the family of Taro Aso, at that time the Prime Minister. One of Japan's wealthiest politicians, Aso had long denied what historians and surviving workers of his family's coal mine had consistently asserted: that the mine, like many others during the war, had used prisoners of war as well as forced laborers from Asia. The documents, totaling some 43 pages, had been retrieved from the basement of the Health Ministry building, and at a parliamentary session on December

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conservative government to emulate Hitler in his takeover of the Weimar Republic and to learn from the Nazis how to quietly rewrite the Constitution. Forced to explain his meaning, he insisted on August 1, 2013 that his words had been taken out of context and he had never meant to praise the Nazis. The uproar did not subside. The comments served to confirm the fears of some Japanese and many other Asians that members of Abe's government wanted to revise current views of the Second World War by showing Imperial Japan in a more positive light.

Critics speculated that Shinzo Abe might return to the nationalistic agenda that he pursued in his first term as prime minister seven years earlier, when he drew outrage in South Korea and even the United States by his denial that Koreans and women from other conquered nations had been forced to serve as prostitutes for Japanese soldiers during the war. The downfall of the first Abe administration had been due also to his attempt to have history textbooks rewritten. Abe now said his government would adhere to apologies made in the mid-1990s to the victims of Japanese aggression and to the women who were forced to serve in wartime brothels – a reversal of his earlier stance that those apologies offered an overly negative view of Japan's conduct during the war. Following his election victory in July 2013, Abe signaled that he would not go to the Yasukuni shrine, knowing that it would outrage South Korea and China.<sup>19</sup>

Nothing had changed. "The biggest historical sticking point between Japan and the United States," wrote Victor Cha and Karl Friedhoff, "remains the comfort women." The practice of conscripting young girls as sex-slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II requires a formal acknowledgement and apology. Mr. Abe should also meet some of the survivors. Japan's long-running practice of accepting the existence of such practices but denying the government's involvement irreparably stains the country's reputation in the international court of public opinion."<sup>20</sup>

The matter of historical revisionism in textbooks once again resurfaced. Prime Minister Abe instructed the Educational Ministry to approve only textbooks that promoted patriotism. He was primarily concerned about the Second World War era, and wanted to shift the focus away from disgraceful chapters in that history. It was reported that he wanted the "comfort women" issue out of the textbooks, and he wanted to downplay the mass killings committed by Japanese troops in Nanking. His critics replied that by sanitizing Japan's wartime aggression he was fostering a patriotism that was dangerous. They pointed out that both he and President Park had personal family histories that made them particularly sensitive. After Japan's defeat in 1945, the Allied powers had arrested Abe's grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi, as a suspected Class-A war criminal. As for Park, her father, Park Chung-hee, was an Imperial Japanese Army officer during the colonial era, and later, in the period 1962-1979, South Korea's military dictator. "In both countries," wrote the *New York Times*, "these dangerous efforts to revise textbooks threaten to thwart the lessons of history."<sup>21</sup>

The textbook question drew the *New York Times* to publish a letter from a Japanese-born American citizen: "The fact that Japan's leaders are still trying to rewrite the country's World War II history deepens my despair for its future prospects. I grew up in postwar Japan with the standard high-school

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4, 2008, officials of the Health and Foreign Ministries acknowledged the validity of the documents. Norimitsu Onishi, "POWs used in coal mine of family of Japan's Aso," *International Herald Tribune*, December 20, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Fackler, "Politician in Japan retracts Nazi comments," *International Herald Tribune*, August 2, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Victor Cha and Karl Friedhoff, "Ending a feud between allies," *International New York Times*, November 15, 2013. Cha had served as adviser on North Korean affairs to President George W. Bush. Friedhoff was a Fellow at the Council on Global Affairs in Chicago. The *International Herald Tribune* had become the *International New York Times* on October 15, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> "Politicians and Textbooks," *International New York Times*, January 14, 2014.

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101, boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris – France Tel: +33(0)1 47 20 00 94 – Fax: +33 (0)1 47 20 81 89 Website: [www.ags.edu](http://www.ags.edu) (Please cite this paper as the following: David Wingeate Pike (2016). Japan's "Comfort Women": No End To The Struggle. *The Journal of International Relations, Peace and Development Studies*. Volume 2. Available from: <http://scholarworks.arcadia.edu/agsjournal/vol2/iss1/4>)



textbook *New Japanese History*, written by Professor Saburo Ienaga.<sup>22</sup> Ienaga repeatedly sued the Education Ministry for trying to whitewash the description of Japanese conduct in Asia during the war. His various lawsuits ran from the 1960s to the 1990s, until they reached the Supreme Court and resulted in a decision in the professor's favor. I am outraged at how parochial Japan's leaders remain regarding the atrocities committed by an earlier generation. I admire the Germans, in contrast, for their courage and maturity in admitting the mistakes of the past and bearing full responsibility for Nazi crimes. [...] Japan, on the other hand, is still stuck in the mind-set of self-righteousness and delusional imperial glory. [...] Today's political leaders in Japan come straight from the families of war criminals who never had the courage of self-reflection or soul-searching after the war. The younger generation won't be able to move forward without an accurate accounting of Japan's wartime behavior. Unless Japan convenes its own Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the country may be condemned to repeating the mistakes of the past."<sup>23</sup>

Two weeks later, on February 28, 2014, the Abe government announced that the issue of the comfort women would be reexamined—in the context of the apology made two decades earlier and known as the Kono Statement. Yoshihide Suga, the chief cabinet secretary, said a team of scholars would be formed to examine what historical evidence had been used in compiling the apology issued by Yohei Kono, the chief cabinet secretary at the time. A former official who had helped draft the statement was now called in to testify that the main evidence was based on the testimony of only 16 former comfort women and that no documents were found to support their stories. Critics responded that while Abe had struck a very pragmatic tone in the first year of his new administration, he could be reverting to his earlier nationalistic agenda of challenging what he called “masochistic views” of Japan's wartime history. For many Koreans, and others, the questioning of the women by Japanese rightists was seen as proof of a lack of remorse for the suffering of the women.<sup>24</sup> Abe and his nationalist supporters, in casting doubt on the Kono statement, were suggesting that the testimonies of comfort women might be unreliable. This ran counter to the opinion of experts that personal testimonies provide crucial evidence.

Revisionist history was once again the accusation leveled at Japanese policy. *The New York Times* ran an editorial: “Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's brand of nationalism is becoming an ever more serious threat to Japan's relations with the United States. [...] It is directed against Japan's own history since World War II, which he finds shameful. He wants to shed what he calls the self-effacing postwar

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Pike, *The Closing*, pp. lxi-lxii. The historian Saburo Ienaga was professor at Tokyo University of Education, now University of Tsukuba (1949-1977), and at Chau University (1977-1984). His work was rejected, partly revised and again rejected. In April 1947 he first published *New Japanese History* as a general history text for high school, but in the following years it went through various forced revisions. The Ministry of Education objected to 216 passages that contained “factual errors and matters of opinion” regarding Japanese war crimes. Ienaga agreed to make certain alterations, but blankly refused several others. In 1984, in the same year that he was awarded the Japan Academy Prize, he filed suit against the Ministry for violation of his freedom of speech and demanded compensation. This led to three trials, the first in District Court in 1984, the second in High Court in 1989, the third in Supreme Court in 1993. In its ruling in 1997, the Supreme Court referred to “a certain abuse on the part of the Ministry in the form of unconstitutional censoring of Ienaga's report on Unit 731 and on sexual assaults at Nanking, and it ordered the State to pay Ienaga 400,000 yen (about \$3,400) as compensation. Shortly before his death on November 29, 2002, he was nominated by Noam Chomsky in 1999 and 2001 for the Nobel Peace Prize. Cf. John Price, “Persistence of memory: Saburo Ienaga insists Japan remember an unsavory war and ensure dreams of peace,” *The Vancouver Sun*, March 7, 2001; Jonathan Watts, “Obituary Saburo Ienaga: One man's campaign against Japanese censorship,” *The Guardian*, December 3, 2002; Saburo Ienaga, *Japan's Past, Japan's Future; One Historian's Odyssey*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Akira Odani, “Japan, Korea and Textbook History,” Letters to the Editor, *International New York Times*, February 12, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Martin Fackler, “Japan to re-examine ‘comfort women’ apology,” *International New York Times*, March 1, 2014.

regime and recreate a renewed patriotism. [...] He also whitewashes the history of the war. [...] His government said [February 28] that it would re-examine and possibly rescind an apology to Korean women who were forced into sexual servitude by Japanese troops. [...] Despite clear signals from Washington to refrain from visiting the Yasukuni shrine, he went in December.”<sup>25</sup> As for South Korea, it reacted strongly, with its Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se saying at a United Nations Human Rights meeting in that week that Japan was “insulting the honor and dignity of the victims.” Abe’s insistence that he shared his predecessors’ “heartache” over the women’s plight did little to calm South Korean apprehensions. By revealing the consultations between the two governments at the time that the 1993 statement was being drafted was evidence to South Korea that Japan had never been sincere about the apology.<sup>26</sup>

Repeating once again the pattern of reassurance followed by denial followed by reassurance, Yoshihide Suga, the chief cabinet secretary, announced on March 10 that the Abe administration had no intention of changing the 1993 apology,<sup>27</sup> and indeed, in its release on June 20, 2014 of a Japanese report on the sex slaves, the Abe administration admitted for the first time that thousands of women from Korea and other countries had been coerced.

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The Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, the largest-ever event of its kind, was held in London on June 10-13, 2014. Nobuo Kishi, Japan’s parliamentary senior vice-minister for foreign affairs, told participants from more than 140 nations: “Anyone who has been charged with these crimes ought to stand trial in accordance with international law. There is also an urgent need to provide assistance for the victims of sexual violence.”<sup>28</sup>

The summit was almost completely ignored in Japan. Ironically, the public and the media were much more preoccupied at the time by picking apart the results of a government-ordered review of the 1993 Kono Statement.

In September 2014, at the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe referred to sexual violence in time of conflict: “We intend to make the 21<sup>st</sup> century a world with no human rights violations against women. Japan will stand at the fore and lead the international community in eliminating sexual violence during conflicts.”<sup>29</sup>

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The work of Park Yu-ha, a professor of Japanese literature at Sejong University in Seoul, now gave rise to a major controversy. In 2013, she published *Comfort Women of the Empire*. In researching the book, Park claimed that, apart from holding interviews with surviving comfort women, she had combed through rich archives in South Korea and Japan that had convinced her that the “sanitized, uniform image” of the Korean comfort women “did not fully explain who they were and only deepened the most emotional of the many disputes between South Korea and Japan.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> “Mr. Abe’s dangerous revisionism,” *International New York Times*, March 3, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> “Japan’s Historical Blinders,” *International New York Times*, June 24, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Martin Fackler, “Japan won’t revise apology for forced sex,” *International New York Times*, March 11, 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Kayoko Kimura. “Stance on ‘Comfort Women’ Undermines Fight to End Wartime Sexual Violence”, *The Japan Times*, March 4, 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Choe Sang-Hun. “Taking on Korean History”, *International New York Times*, December 21, 2015.

Not all the comfort women were Korean, a fact that Park Yu-ha overlooked. Korea was nevertheless special, as we have seen, since it was under Japanese domination from 1912 and was logically the first to suffer from the system imposed.

Park Yu-ha began writing the book in 2011 “to help narrow the gulf between deniers in Japan who dismissed comfort women as prostitutes and their image in South Korea.”<sup>31</sup> The gulf widened under President Park Geun-hye of South Korea and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, both of whom were accused of trying to impose their governments’ historical views on their people.

In her book, she emphasized that it was profiteering Korean collaborators, as well as private Japanese recruiters, who forced or lured women into the “comfort stations,” where life included both rape and prostitution. There is no evidence, she concluded, that the Japanese government was officially involved in, and therefore legally responsible for, coercing Korean women. While conceding that the women were held in a “slave-like condition” in their brothels, and brutalized, Park pointed out that the women from the Japanese colonies of Korea and Taiwan were also treated as citizens of the Empire and were expected to consider their service patriotic. They forged a “comrade-like relationship” with the Japanese soldiers and sometimes fell in love with them, she wrote. She cited cases where Japanese soldiers took loving care of sick women and even returned those who did not want to become prostitutes.<sup>32</sup>

Park Yu-ha said in subsequent interviews that she had no reason to defame comfort women. Instead, she was “trying to broaden discussions by investigating the roles that patriarchal societies, statism and poverty played in the recruitment of comfort women.” She said that unlike women rounded up as spoils of battle in conquered territories such as China, those from the Korean colony had been taken to the comfort stations in much the same way poor women in any age enter prostitution. After Korea’s liberation in 1945, she said, former comfort women tried to forget much of their experiences, such as “their hatred of their own parents and Korean recruiters who sold them.” Instead, she wrote, they were expected to serve only as a “symbol of a victimized nation,” a role foisted on them by nationalist activists to incite anti-Japanese feelings and accepted by South Koreans in general. “Whether the women volunteered or not, whether they did prostitution or not, our society needed them to remain pure, innocent girls,” she said in an interview. “If not, people think they cannot hold Japan responsible.”<sup>33</sup>

Park Yu-ha wrote in the book that she felt “a bit fearful” of how the book might be received, since it challenged “the common knowledge” about the wartime sex slaves. In fact, the book sold only a few thousand copies, but it stirred uproar. Even she was not prepared for the severity of the backlash, proving that the aging women remained an inviolable symbol of Korea’s suffering under Japanese colonial rule. A total of 238 former comfort women had come forward in South Korea, but in 2015 only 46 were still living, most of them in their 80s and 90s. They were all held as sex slaves, they insisted, raped by dozens of soldiers a day, in the most hateful legacy of Japan’s 33-year colonial rule that ended only with Japan’s defeat. Nine of them now filed lawsuits (civil suits, for false information) and criminal suits (for personal defamation) and called for Park’s expulsion from her university. Researchers called Park an apologist for Japan’s war crimes, and on social media she was vilified as a “pro-Japanese traitor.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

In Japan, news of the book dropped like manna from heaven, and in no time at all Park found a publisher. The Japanese edition, which appeared on November 7, 2014, quickly won awards, and in 2015 could boast that the only full and unexpurgated edition currently on sale was the Japanese!

The unexpurgated edition found other support. Fifty-four intellectuals, not only from Japan but also from the United States, issued a statement in November 2015 criticizing South Korean prosecutors for “suppressing freedom of scholarship and press.” Among the signatories was the former Japanese chief cabinet secretary, Yohei Kono, who had himself in 1993 issued the landmark apology admitting to coercion in the recruitment of the comfort women. He added the proviso that the recruiting of the women had been conducted mainly by private agents working at the request of the Japanese military rather than by the military itself.

The influential Japanese journalist Kayoko Kimura sought to deflect the criticism, reminding France that the minor war crimes trials conducted by the French military had never dealt with the suffering inflicted on the local population in Indochina.<sup>35</sup>

Although Park’s book was never banned outright, a South Korean court in February 2015 ordered redactions in 34 sections. Among the redactions was the remark: “Korean comfort women were victims, but they were also collaborators as people from a colony.”

To the attacks on her veracity, Park responded calmly. “They do not want you to see other aspects of comfort women,” she told an interviewer. “If you do, they think you are diluting the issue, giving Japan indulgence.”<sup>36</sup>

Park Yu-ha found little overall support. In December 2015, 380 scholars and activists from South Korea, Japan and elsewhere accused her of “revealing a serious neglect of legal understanding and avoiding the essence of the issue: Japan’s state responsibility.” The group maintained that official agencies of Japan, like its military, were involved in “the hideous crime of coercing tens of thousands of women into sexual slavery, a view shared by two United Nations special rapporteurs in the 1990s.”<sup>37</sup>

In ruling on the criminal suit on January 13, 2016, the Eastern District Court in Seoul ordered Park to pay each of the nine women a fine of 10,000,000 won (about \$8,500) for making “false, exaggerated or distorted” claims in her book. Park said she would appeal.<sup>38</sup>

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There was undoubtedly a general desire to reach a conclusion on the question of a full apology before the end of year 2015. On the books was the “heartfelt apology [for Japan’s] colonial rule and aggression” given in 1995 by the socialist Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and endorsed by the conservative Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. All this was cast in doubt when Prime Minister Abe announced in August 2015 that he did not think that Imperial Japan “did much wrong that other warring nations did not do.”<sup>39</sup> In the same month Abe showed a starkly different attitude to the German principle of “inherited guilt” when he said: “We must not let our children, grandchildren, and

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<sup>35</sup> Kayoko Kimura, *The Japan Times*, March 4, 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Choe Sang-Hun, “Taking on Korean History,” *International New York Times*: Seoul, December 21, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> “Professor is found guilty in ‘comfort women’ case,” *International New York Times*, Editorial, January 14, 2016.

<sup>39</sup> “Apology Diplomacy the Hardest Word,” *The Economist*, Tokyo, August 15, 2015.

even further generations to come who have nothing to do with the war, be predestined to apologize.”<sup>40</sup> On the question of the comfort women, Shinzo Abe’s constantly changing position was being carefully tracked.

President Park had repeatedly urged Japan to address the grievances of comfort women before its neighbors could improve their ties, and she refused to hold a summit meeting with Prime Minister Abe until the latter agreed to address specifically the grievances of the comfort women. From spring 2014 no fewer than 12 rounds of negotiations were held before a meeting was convened in Seoul between the two Foreign Ministers, Fumio Kishida and Yun Byung-se. Finally, on December 28, 2015, South Korea and Japan reached a landmark agreement to resolve the dispute, one that they called “a final and irrevocable resolution” of the issue. In admitting that Imperial Japan had “severely injured the honor and dignity of many women,” Foreign Minister Kishida announced at a news conference in Seoul on the same day that the Japanese government would give \$8.3 million to a foundation that the South Korean government would establish to offer medical, nursing and other services to the women. That Tokyo would provide money directly from the national budget was a significant departure. A previous fund, the Asian Women’s Fund, created after the 1993 apology, relied on private donors and for that reason had never been fully accepted in South Korea. Although 60 South Korean former comfort women had accepted financial aid from the fund, many others had refused it.<sup>41</sup> Kishida added that Prime Minister Abe “expresses anew sincere apologies and remorse from the bottom of his heart to all those who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as ‘comfort women,’” and Abe later called President Park Geun-Hye to deliver the same apologies.

Japan won meanwhile an important concession from Seoul, a promise not to criticize Tokyo over the comfort women again. In the eyes of many, the caveat rendered the apology useless.

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In Japan, initial reaction to the deal was generally positive. Former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, who had made the historic apology in 1995 for Japan’s role in the Second World War that many conservatives opposed, said that Prime Minister Abe had “decided well.”<sup>42</sup>

In South Korea, the deal won praise from the governing party of President Park but was immediately criticized as insufficient by some of the surviving former sex slaves as well as by those opposition politicians whose anti-Japanese sentiments ran deep. It fell far short, it was said, of the women’s longstanding demand that Japan admit legal responsibility and offer formal reparations. A civic group, the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery in Japan, called the deal “shocking.” Hiroka Shoji, a researcher on East Asia at Amnesty International, said the agreement should not be the end of the road in securing justice for the former sex slaves. “The women were missing from the negotiation table, and they must not be sold short in a deal that is more about political expediency than justice,” she said. “Until the women get the full and unreserved apology from the Japanese government for the crimes committed against them, the fight for justice goes on.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Nagyong Kim, “Japan and ‘Inherited Guilt,’” *International New York Times*, January 6, 2016.

<sup>41</sup> Choe Sang-Hun. “South Korea and Japan Reach Deal on Sex Slaves,” *International New York Times*: Seoul, December 30, 2015; *Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Pike, *The Closing*, op. cit., p. xliii.

<sup>43</sup> Choe Sang-Hun. “South Korea and Japan Reach Deal on Sex Slaves,” *International New York Times*: Seoul, December 30, 2015; *Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 2016.

Among the dissatisfied was Lee Yong-soo, aged 88. “The Agreement does not reflect the views of former comfort women,” she said at a news conference held after the agreement was announced. “I will ignore it completely. We are not craving for money. What we demand is that Japan make official reparations for the crime it has committed.” She said she also opposed the removal of a statue of a girl symbolizing Comfort Women that a civic group had erected in 2011 in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. During the negotiations, Japan insisted that South Korea remove the statue, and South Korea said on December 28 that it would discuss the matter with the former sex slaves. It was noted that the Prime Minister’s wife, Akie Abe, uploaded pictures of the Yasukuni shrine on to her Facebook page the day the apology was issued, announcing that she had visited the shrine that honors Japanese Class-A war criminals. A certain Nagyong Kim wrote to *The New York Times*: “This simply exposes the sheer insincerity and disingenuousness of the apology.”<sup>44</sup>

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As the year 2016 opened, Floyd Whaley in the *New York Times* reopened the estimate of the total number of sex slaves. It was at this point, after long years of study of the case, that he published his estimate of the total victims as between 80,000 and 200,000 of whom “most came from Korea.”<sup>45</sup>

The fact that the vast majority of the sex slaves were Korean explains why far less attention was paid to the other countries whose women suffered the same fate, but Whaley did not overlook the Philippines, estimating their number at “more than a thousand girls and women,” of whom some 70 were still alive in 2016. Their fate had been clearly overlooked, no doubt because Japan was the Philippines’ largest aid donor, providing more than \$20 billion in development assistance since the 1960s. Shifting the balance somewhat to the other side, the Philippines were Japan’s largest trading partner.

The news that in December 2015 Japan had offered a formal apology and an \$8.3 million payment to the Korean women who were forced into sexual slavery was met with resentment in the Philippines and elsewhere, since no official apology or compensation had been offered to the victims in other countries. That was the question asked by Rechilda Extremadura, executive director of the League of Filipino Women, an organization of the former sex slaves. “The Japanese government did something for the women in Korea, why can’t they do something for the women here?” Ricardo Jose, a professor of history at the University of the Philippines, explained why. “The delicate issues of Japanese sexual atrocities during the war often get buried by the broader contemporary issues facing the two countries,” he told the *New York Times*. He pointed out that the Japanese emperor was well positioned to address historical grievances between the two countries and could stand as a moral voice on the issue of the sex slaves. “He is deeply respected by his people,” Jose added. “If he would recognize this problem and express grave remorse that would be a major step forward.”<sup>46</sup>

It was the perfect moment for Rechilda Extremadura to ask her question. Japan was about to step into the second cauldron. On January 24, 2016, the Emperor, now 82, and the Empress Michiko embarked on a five-day visit to the islands to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of full diplomatic relations. It was his first visit to the Philippines since 1962. About 520,000 Japanese troops had died in the Philippines in the course of the Second World War, the highest number of Japanese

<sup>44</sup> Nagyong Kim, “Japan and ‘inherited guilt’,” *International New York Times*, Letters to the Editor, Seoul, January 6, 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Floyd Whaley. “In Philippines, Former Sex Slaves Speak Out”, *International New York Times*, January 30, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

casualties outside of Japan. At the same time, anti-Japanese sentiment after the war had been rife, and many Japanese-Filipinos had gone through hard times.<sup>47</sup>

The imperial couple arrived in Caliraya (Laguna Province) on January 26 aboard a helicopter based on the *Akitsuushima*, a large Japanese Coast Guard patrol vessel. They met President Benigno Aquino III for a banquet at Malacanang Palace, where the Emperor referred to Japan's role in the war as "something we Japanese must long remember with a profound sense of remorse." He made no specific mention, however, of the victims of sexual slavery, and quiet protests were staged throughout the Imperial visit. The event that drew the most publicity, and the most controversy, was the visit on January 29 of the Emperor and Empress to the monument to the Japanese war dead in Caliraya.

Among the Filipina victims that Floyd Whaley interviewed was Hilaria Bustamante, aged 89 in 2016. She recounted the moment in 1943 when, as a girl of 16, she was walking along a provincial road when she was abducted by three Japanese soldiers who threw her into a truck and beat her. She was taken to a nearby Japanese military garrison and put into a shack with three other women. There, she washed clothes and cooked by day, and every night, for 15 months, she was raped by six or more soldiers. "I never told anyone except my mother about what happened to me," she said. "I was too ashamed. But now I want people to know." She added: "I was happy when I heard about the emperor's visit because I thought he could bring justice for us," she said. "But he never mentioned us."<sup>48</sup> She was right. During his meeting with President Aquino, the emperor expressed remorse for the atrocities of the Japanese military during the Second World War, but he did not specifically mention the victims of sexual slavery.

The closure that so many still awaited was nowhere in sight. On August 3, 2016, Shinzo Abe appointed Tomomi Inada to the post of Minister of Defense.<sup>49</sup> She became the second woman to head the ministry, Yuriko Koike having held the post between July 4 and August 24, 2007.<sup>50</sup> Inada was even less likely than Koike to show sympathy for the comfort women. A lawyer by training, she had been elected to the Diet in September 2005 and soon caught the attention of Shinzo Abe. A believer in the spirits of Shinto and a member of Nippon Kaigi, a right-wing openly revisionist lobby, she wrote in the Tokyo magazine *Will* in September 2006: "The Yasukuni shrine is not the place for the oath of peace, but the place for the oath to fight desperately against the aliens that threaten Japan." She supported the filmmaker Satoru Mizushima's 2007 revisionist film *The Truth about Nanjing*, which denies that the Nanking Massacre ever occurred.<sup>51</sup> Of the Tokyo Trial she wrote that the Tribunal was at variance with modern law,<sup>52</sup> and in August 2015 she expressed her intent to form a committee to verify the authenticity of the Tribunal.<sup>53</sup> In what she afterwards described as a misunderstanding, Inada was photographed smiling alongside Kazunari Yamada, leader of the National Socialist Japanese Labor Party (NSJAP), which has praised Adolf Hitler and the 9/11 attack on the World Trade

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<sup>47</sup> "Japanese Emperor to Honor World War II Dead in Philippines," *Inquirer Global Nation* (Manila), January 2, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> Floyd Whaley, "In Philippines, Former Sex Slaves Speak Out," *International New York Times*, January 30, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Mitsuru Obe, "Abe Names Nationalist to Defense Post," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 2016.

<sup>50</sup> Koike was now in 2016 the Governor of Tokyo. She was known to advocate changing Japan's constitution in order to remove the limits placed on Japan's military. On the question of the comfort women, where Abe had apologized to South Korea in late 2015, acknowledging Japanese government involvement and agreeing to support survivors with Japanese government funds, Koike was on record as writing, in a newspaper column in 2012: "There is no need for an apology or compensation to women who served Japanese soldiers sexually during the Second World War because the Japanese military and government did not compel the women to perform such services."

<sup>51</sup> "Nanjing Massacre, 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary," *The Japan Times*, December 6, 2007.

<sup>52</sup> *Sankei Shimbun*, June 3, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> *Sankei Shimbun*, August 15, 2015.

Center.<sup>54</sup> As for the comfort women, Inada was a signatory to an advertisement in the *Washington Post* that there is no proof that the Imperial Japanese Army ran a system of comfort women during the Pacific War,<sup>55</sup> and she recommended to Prime Minister Abe that he counter these “false allegations.”<sup>56</sup> In her overall view of Japan’s role in the Second World War, and its antecedents in Manchuria and China, she said in a television interview: “There is no need for Japan to express the word remorse.”<sup>57</sup>

“No need to express remorse.” None of this bodes well for the comfort women. For them, the appointment of Tomomi Inada is likely to set back the clock by years. The South China Sea, the whole Western Pacific is now broiling with antagonisms. America’s hands are tied. It needs Japan’s support as never before, while Japan is similarly placed: it has no friend in Southeast Asia. It is still at war with the Soviet Union, hence with Russia, over the Kurile Islands.

With so many larger problems in the region, the comfort women dispute should be closed, once and for all. How to do it? Japan might try thinking of Germany, its erstwhile Axis ally, that faced up squarely to its past and now enjoys the admiration of the world. The Japanese Parliament could declare an official apology to the comfort women, admit that the use of comfort women had been sanctioned by the Japanese Army, and offer to every surviving comfort woman compensation out of state funds. What impedes it? What is the root cause of the delay? The answer is to be found in the factor known as shame, which lies at the heart of Yamato culture. Western culture carries the burden of guilt, but guilt can be expiated. Shame is of a different order: it requires exorcizing. Perhaps the problem could be approached differently, and more easily, by adopting a simple formula of cost-benefit analysis: weighing the cost of saying sorry ... against the cost of not saying sorry.

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### JAPANESE PRIME MINISTERS AND FOREIGN MINISTERS (1990-Present)

Prime Minister	Year entered office	Year left office
Toshiki Kaifu	1990	1991
Kiichi Miyazawa	1991	1993
Morihiro Hosokawa	1993	1994
Tsutomu Hata	1994	1994
Tomiiichi Murayama	1994	1996
Ryutaro Hashimoto	1996	1998
Keizo Obuchi	1998	2000
Yoshiro Mori	2000	2001
Junichiro Koizumi	2001	2006
Shinzo Abe	2006	2007
Yasuo Fukuda	2007	2008
Taro Aso	2008	2009
Yukio Hatoyama	2009	2010
Naoto Kan	2010	2011
Yoshihiko Noda	2011	2012
Shinzo Abe	2012	Present Day

<sup>54</sup> *Japan Times*, September 8, 2014; *The Guardian*, September 9, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> *The Washington Post*, June 14, 2007.

<sup>56</sup> *Sankei News*, July 18, 2015.

<sup>57</sup> BS Fuji Television, August 11, 2015.



Foreign Minister	Year entered office	Year left office
Taro Nakayama	1989	1991
Michio Watanabe	1991	1993
Kabun Muto	1993	1993
Tsutomu Hata	1993	1994
Koji Kakizawa	1994	1994
Yoshei Kono	1994	1996
Yukihiko Ikeda	1996	1997
Keizo Obuchi	1997	1998
Masahiko Komura	1998	1999
Yohei Kono	1999	2001
Makiko Tanaka	2001	2002
Junichiro Koizumi	2002	2002
Yoriko Kawaguchi	2002	2004
Nobutaka Machimura	2004	2005
Taro Aso	2005	2007
Nobutaka Machimura	2007	2007
Masahiko Komura	2007	2008
Hirofumi Nakasone	2008	2009
Katsuya Okada	2009	2010
Seiji Maehara	2010	2011
Yukio Edano	2011	2011
Takeaki Matsumoto	2011	2011
Koichiro Genba	2011	2012
Fumio Kishida	2012	Present Day

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