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Author/s:

McGregor, K

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Japanese War Memory and Transnational Activism for Indonesian Survivors of Enforced Military Prostitution During World War Two

Katharine McGregor

In this chapter, I analyse activism relating to survivors of the so-called comfort women system, enforced military prostitution, during World War Two. The term ‘comfort women’ is highly problematic and considered offensive by many survivors, yet it continues to be the most commonly used term to describe survivors. The most well-known example of national-based activism from affected countries is the activism of the Korean

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K. McGregor (✉)
School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, Faculty of Arts,
University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
e-mail: k.mcgregor@unimelb.edu.au

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Council.¹ The second most active national group is probably ASCENT from the Philippines (Medoza, 2003). In recognition, however, of the transnational nature of activism on this issue, scholars have studied cooperation between Japanese and Korean activists and between Japanese and Chinese activists, and the role of the Korean diaspora in activism in the United States and Australia.² In these studies, the authors have variously reflected on the bases of these transnational partnerships and the different positions of activists within them in relation to their national affiliations and new potential alliances that transcend the nation.

Indonesian activism has, however, not been studied in detail yet. It is an interesting case because it has been constrained by limited domestic support due to issue of lasting stigmas attaching to the women's experiences and more ambiguous attitudes about the occupation in Indonesia (McGregor, 2016). For this reason, I argue Japanese transnational support has been critical. Here, I would like to examine why, at the micro level of personal history, Japanese activists have provided such support.

Some key questions I am interested in are as follows: Why do people engage in transnational activism? To what extent are they motivated by their own experiences and connections to cases of violence? The reason I ask these questions is that Japanese activists on this issue frequently face ire at home (Morris-Suzuki, 2007). Their activism carries with it risks. One long-time Japanese activist on this issue, for example, received a razor blade in the mail and was told he could 'use it to cut his neck'. Another chooses to use a very discrete office location to disguise her workplace due to the fact others in Japanese society object to the negative light that the

¹One of the most detailed and critical studies of the Korean Council is provided by Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

²One of the most prolific writers on transnational activism on this issue is Vera Mackie. See for, example, Vera Mackie, 'Dialogue, Distance and Difference: Feminism in Contemporary Japan', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol 21, No 6, pp. 599–615; Vera Mackie, 'The Language of Globalization, Transnationality and Feminism', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 2001, 3 (2): pp. 180–206 and Vera Mackie, 'In Search of Innocence: Feminist Historians Debate the Legacy of Wartime Japan', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 2005, 20 (47), 207–217. On Sino-Japanese activism, see Karl Gustafsson, 'Transnational Civil Society and the Politics of Memory in Sino-Japanese relations: Exhibiting the 'Comfort Women' in China', Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies, Lund University, Sweden, Working Paper No 41, 2014. On the activism of Korean diaspora see Hyun Yi Kang, 'Conjuring Comfort Women: Mediated Affiliations and Disciplined Subjects in Korean/American Transnationality', *Journal of Asian American Studies* 6 (1) (February) 2003: 25–55.

Japanese army is presented in her work. So I wanted to think about why particular activists are willing to advocate for survivors of violence inflicted by the Japanese army on members of other nations. To begin to answer these questions, I examine how the positions of three Japanese activists who have supported Indonesian activism are connected to their personal histories.

THE HISTORY OF THE SYSTEM IN THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

The system of Japanese enforced military prostitution is rooted in the history of Japanese imperialism and state-endorsed prostitution. Long before the creation of Japan's formal and informal empire, Japanese entrepreneurs established brothels throughout Asia in which Japanese women worked (Mihalopoulos, 2011). The Japanese government established a licensed prostitution system in Japan in the late nineteenth century, and this system was replicated in its colonies following, for example, the annexation of Korea in 1910 (Soh, 2008, pp. 9–10).

The Japanese army institutionalised the system of enforced military prostitution during the fifteen-year war in China (Tanaka, 2002, pp. 9–10). The system, which was extended throughout the empire, was based in part on the belief that the provision of women was necessary to satisfy the 'sexual needs' of soldiers (Enloe, 1983, pp. 19–20).

There have been several studies of how the so-called comfort women system worked in the Netherlands Indies.³ Replicating patterns elsewhere and carrying over from traditions in the local prostitution industry, 'comfort facilities' were diverse, including 'movie theatres, bars, restaurants, hotels and comfort stations' across army- and navy-controlled areas (Horton, 2010, pp. 186–196). The Japanese initially 'recruited' from among Indonesian sex workers with encouragement from the nationalist leader Sukarno (Adams, 1965, pp. 220–221). Indonesian women were

³The key works are Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women*; William Bradley Horton, 'Comfort Women' in Peter Post et al. (Eds), *The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War*, Brill: Leiden and Boston, 2010; Budi Hartono and Dadang Juliantoro *Derita Paksa Perempuan: Kisah Jugun Ianfu pada Masa Pendudukan Jepang, 1942–1945* [The Sufferings of Forced Women: The Story of the *Jūgun Ianfu* during the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945], Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1997 and Hilde Janssen, *Schaamte en Onschuld: Het Verdrongen Oorlogsverleden van Troostmeisjes in Indonesië* [Shame and Innocence: The Repressed History of Comfort Women in Indonesia], Nieuw Amsterdam: Amsterdam, 2010.

also tricked into forced prostitution with promises of becoming performers, getting education or training as nurses in distant locations. Some were sent to far-off islands or even to other countries based on these promises, only to find themselves working in brothels. In the 1990s, an Indonesian organisation estimated there were 20,000 cases of abused local women.⁴ Not all were forcibly detained.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDONESIAN ACTIVISM

The public testimony of the Korean survivor Kim Hak Sun that was televised across the world in December 1991 in the context of a trial against the Japanese government, triggered new media attention to the so-called comfort women who in Indonesia are mostly commonly referred to locally by the original Japanese designation, *jugun ianfu*. In 1992, Indonesia's leading investigative magazine *Tempo* published several articles dedicated to the topic, including interviews with surviving women.⁵

It was not until the April 1993 visit of a group of Japanese lawyers, however, that Indonesian activism on this topic began. The lawyers from the Japanese Bar Association (*Nichibenden*) came to Indonesia to seek evidence of Indonesian victimisation during the war. The Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation, YLBHI (*Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia*, hereafter LBH), assumed responsibility for gathering evidence of women who had experienced abuse by the Japanese army and of mostly men who had been forced manual labourers (known as *romusha*). The evidence gathered by LBH was to be used at a symposium of the Japanese Bar Association to be held in October that year on war damages, with the potential for a legal case against the Japanese government.

Alongside these developments, former soldiers who had served in the auxiliary forces for the Japanese army (*heiho*) also began activism for compensation of unpaid wages. In doing so, they worked closely with Japanese activists (Prambadi & Okawa, 1992, p.15).

⁴Forum Komunikasi Ex-Heiho [Ex-Heiho Communication Forum], *Kompensasi Jugun Ianfu* [Compensation for Comfort Women], Forum Komunikasi Ex-Heiho, n. p., 1996, p. 10. For critiques of their activism see McGregor, 'Emotions and Activism', pp. 72–74.

⁵Selichi Okawa & ADM, 'Maaf, Kata Miyazawa' [Sorry, Said Miyazawa]. *Tempo*, 25 January 1992, p.82; Sri Indrayati & Seiichi Okawa, 'Kisah Kardawati yang Sebenarnya' [The True Story of Kardawati], *Tempo*, 25 July 1992, pp. 17–18; *Tempo*, 'Jeritan dari Rumah Bambu' [Screams from a Bamboo House], *Tempo*, 8 August 1992, pp. 51–60; 'Mereka Pun Tak Punya Pilihan' [They Had No Choice], *Tempo*, 8 August 1992, pp. 61–64.

As Indonesian activism progressed, Japanese activists continued to provide legal and sometimes material support for Indonesian survivors and activists. This included support for travel to regional conferences, including meetings in Korea and Japan, and legal support for preparations for the Indonesian team's participation in the iconic Women's International Tribunal of 2000 held in Tokyo. I would now like to look in more detail at who these Japanese activists were and why they were motivated to extend such support. Due to the limitations of space, I will only consider the personal stories of three Japanese activists here. I begin by positioning these activists in broader discourses about war responsibility within and outside Japan.

WAR MEMORY AND WAR RESPONSIBILITY: PROBING THE LIFE STORIES OF JAPANESE ACTIVISTS FOR INDONESIAN SURVIVORS

One reason for examining the complexity of Japanese views on the war is that there are persistent characterisations in the international media of the idea that there is one dominant view on the war and war responsibility in Japan. Philip Seaton is highly critical of what he calls the orthodoxy, especially across English-speaking allied countries, that the Japanese people do not know about or do not hold critical views about the war and that they have failed to adequately deal with war responsibility. He suggests that there is too strong an emphasis on the views of Japanese nationalists 'who justify Japanese war aims and deny or downplay Japanese atrocities', whereas the views of progressives who criticise the war are dismissed as atypical (Seaton, 2007, pp. 2–3). Greater attention to the views of progressive is critical I believe in order to break down simplifications about Japanese views on the war.

Kamila Szczepanska has usefully charted the development of 'progressive' civil society groups, providing rich profiles of particular organisations and their activities (Szczepanska, 2014). But Seaton encourages us to think more about Japanese people's personal connections to the war as one way to explain their positions on war responsibility. Taking up his suggestion below, I provide a preliminary examination of these connections through an analysis of the life histories of three Japanese activists who have assisted Indonesian survivors. In highlighting these three activists, I also highlight the diverse, although not completely unrelated, paths that have led Japanese people to become activists on this issue.

TAKAGI KEN'ICHI: A LAWYER

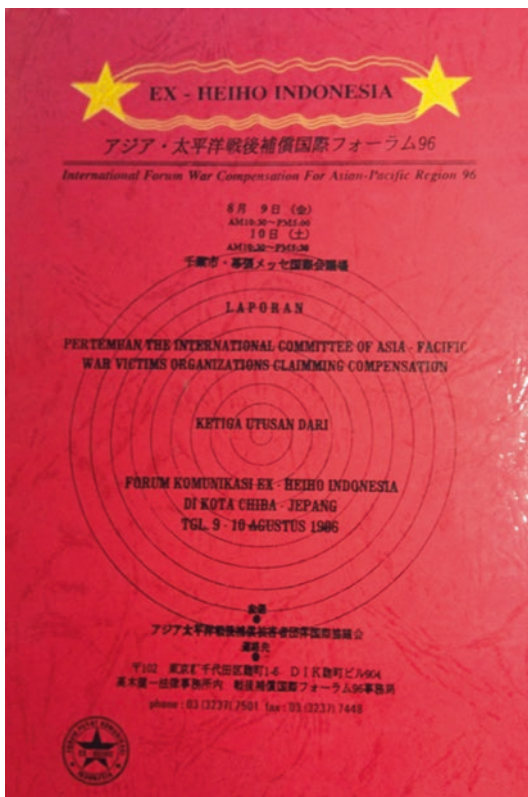
Takagi Ken'ichi was one of the first Japanese activists to work on behalf of those claiming damages from the Japanese government for their wartime suffering. His first case as a lawyer was a job pro bono case commencing in 1975 for compensation for Korean labourers abandoned in the Russian territory of Sakhalin for many years after the war (Takagi K., personal interview, February 20, 2015). His reputation from this case led to other claimants approaching him to help them seek wartime damages (Takagi K., personal interview, February 20, 2015). It was through this process that he became the lead defence lawyer in Kim Hak Sun's 1991 legal case. In the same year, he founded an organisation called the International Forum on War Compensation for Asia-Pacific, which was funded by donations from the Japanese public (Takagi K., personal interview, February 20, 2015).

Based on introductions mostly from a Japanese Indonesianist, Mizuno Kōsuke, who had been studying World War Two, he met former *heiho* in Indonesia in an effort to document wartime damages (Takagi K., personal interview, February 20, 2015). He tried to assist them with compensation for unpaid wages during the occupation. These former soldiers were more easily identifiable than say former so-called comfort women because the men were organised in the Ex-Heiho Communication Forum. Because of rising attention to the issue of former 'comfort women', Takagi Ken'ichi encouraged the Forum to gather data on surviving women, leading to a report published in 1996 (Fig. 1).⁶ The International Forum on War Compensation for Asia-Pacific tried to advocate for compensation for surviving women by using this report.

In contrast with many other activists, Takagi Ken'ichi felt that if some improvements were made, the Asian Women's Fund, a private organisation with partial support from the Japanese government created in 1995, could have been a viable way of attaining compensation for women given the Japanese government's refusal to directly compensate the women (Takagi K., personal interview, February 20, 2015). Unfortunately, however, the Indonesian government signed a deal with the Asian Women's Fund, according to which the Ministry of Social Affairs would instead build or renovate nursing homes where survivors could live (Asian

⁶Forum Komunikasi Ex-Heiho [Ex-Heiho Communication Forum], *Kompensasi Jugun Ianfu* [Compensation for Comfort Women].

Fig. 1 Cover of the 1996 report of the Ex-Heiho Communication Forum for the International Committee of Asia-Pacific War Victims Organisations Claiming Compensation



Women's Fund, n.d.). Many Indonesian and Japanese activists including Takagi Ken'ichi were very disappointed with this outcome.

Throughout the 1990s, especially Takagi Ken'ichi became a prominent speaker on the case for redress for surviving women. He recalls giving around fifty public talks a year in Japan on this topic, thus further socialising the idea of why he felt compensation should be paid (Takagi K., personal interview, February 20, 2015). His position, however, was to try to advocate for all wartime victims including, for example, Korean survivors of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki who had been neglected alongside Japanese survivors.

So why was Takagi Ken'ichi moved to support multiple cases of wartime compensation and to extend support to claimants from many afflicted

countries? Was it something about his background as a lawyer, or was it connected more intimately to his personal story? Takagi Ken'ichi was born in 1944 in Manchuria during the war when his father was working there as an architect in a private company and then in an iron factory. At the end of the war, however, his father was detained by the Russian army and his mother and two siblings experienced great difficulties during that time living in Manchuria, while the families of those in the Japanese army were quickly repatriated. He suggests that his antipathy to the Japanese army as an institution stemmed from this experience and a perception that the army was extremely reckless even with regard to its own citizens (Takagi K., personal interview, February 20, 2015).

Takagi Ken'ichi was also, however, shaped by political movements in post-war Japan. He became a student activist in the late 1960s at the University of Tokyo when he was undertaking his studies in the law school. He recalls that, along with fellow student activists at this campus, he was highly critical of the contradictions in Japanese society (Takagi K., personal interview, February 20, 2015). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the New Left student movement in Japan was focused on negotiations over the renewal of the 1958 US–Japan Joint Security Treaty which allowed US bases in Japan including full control of Okinawa Island and which also meant that Japan was becoming an important part of the US-led war in Vietnam (Steinoff, 2012, pp. 63–66). He remembers being influenced by a popular phrase in student activism at the time adapted from Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao: ‘to rebel is justified’ (Takagi K., personal interview, February 20, 2015). This phrase was articulated in a June 1966 June directive from Mao at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (Lu, 2004, pp. 57–59). Steinhoff suggests that Japanese students adopted ideas from the Cultural Revolution mostly as a way of ‘overcoming traditional status barriers’ to confront persons in power in Japan (Steinhoff, 2012, p. 66). She further observes that the student generations that experienced this period continue to participate in high number in political activism and civil society (Steinhoff, 2012, p. 72). This certainly fits with the life trajectory of Takagi Ken'ichi.

Apart from these personal experiences, there are other reasons why lawyers are strongly represented amongst Japanese advocates for wartime compensation for those victimised by Japan during World War Two. All Japanese lawyers are required to join the Japanese Bar Association (JBA), the organisation that first sent a delegation to Indonesia to investigate war damages. Upon its founding in 1949, the Bar Association established an

Attorney's Act. Article 1 of that Act prescribes that a primary mission of the JBA is 'protecting human rights and achieving social justice' (Japan Federation of Bar Associations, n.d.). Further to this, the JBA has a Human Rights Protection Committee and engages in international human rights cases including studies of international treaties and standards (Japan Federation of Bar Associations, n.d.). Takagi Ken'ichi has conducted extensive comparative research on how Japan and Germany have dealt with war responsibility.⁷ Takagi Ken'ichi's work is thus consistent with a broader ethos amongst Japanese lawyers of a commitment to human rights. His primary entry point on this issue was a belief in war compensation, combined with a personal history that led him to be critical of the wartime Japanese army.

KIMURA KŌICHI: A PRIEST

Kimura Kōichi came to the issue of the 'comfort women' through a quite different process. At the time the story of Kim Hak Sun broke, he was living in Salatiga, Central Java, and working as a priest and theologian. The testimony of Kim Hak Sun moved one of his parishioners, Tuminah, to share her story first with her nephew who was a journalist at a local newspaper and then with her priest Kimura Kōichi (Kompas, 1992, p. 16). Tuminah was the first Indonesian woman to go public with her story.

Tuminah (born in 1927) reported that she was a sex worker prior to being forcibly 'recruited'. In her account to *Kompas* newspaper, she revealed that her father had sold her virginity to a Dutch man for five rupiah (gulden) (Kimura, 1996a, p.19). Tuminah was providing for her family when she was hunted down by the Japanese military along with other sex workers after their advance into Solo. She was then held at the Fuji Inn and not allowed to leave. Although Tuminah did not engage in extensive activism on the issue, her story was popularised by Kimura Kōichi (Kimura, 1996a, pp. 15–20) (Fig. 2).

⁷He has published the following books considering compensation: Takagi Ken'ichi, *Sabarin to nihan no sengosekinin* [Sakhalin and Japan's post-war responsibility], Tokyo: Gaifū Sha, 1990; Takagi Ken'ichi, *Jūgun ianfu to sengohoshō—nihan no sengosekinin* [The military 'comfort women' and post-war compensation—Japan's post-war responsibility]. Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1992; Takagi, Ken'ichi, *Ima naze sengohoshō ka* [Why post-war compensation now], Tokyo: Kōdan Sha, 2001, and Takagi, Ken'ichi, *Sengohoshō no ronri: bigaisha no koe o dō kiku ka* [The logic of post-war compensation: how to listen to the victims' voice], Tokyo: Renga Shobō Shinsha, 1994.



Fig. 2 Photo from the Collection of Kimura Kōichi of Tuminah (centre), her nephew left and Kimura Kōichi's daughter Okcho, taken in 1992 in Solo

It was Kimura Kōichi's meeting with Tuminah that prompted him to become an activist on this issue. There were other factors in his life, however, that predisposed him to being sympathetic to Indonesian survivors of the so-called comfort women system. First was his personal experience of the war. He was born in Tokyo in 1947, two years after the devastating aerial bombings and during the post-war US occupation of Japan. Largely following his mother's views, he was very critical of the war and the suffering it entailed. His father, by contrast, tended to glorify war (Kimura K., personal interview, February 17, 2015). Kimura Kōichi was also a strong opponent of sexual violence against women from a young age. This resulted from reading a confronting novel as a youth entitled *House of Dolls* by an Auschwitz survivor which centred on the sexual abuse by Nazi soldiers of Jewish women in concentration camps.⁸ He recalls feeling very

⁸This novel by the famous Polish Auschwitz survivor Yehiel Feiner was written under the pen name Ka-tzetnik 135633. The original title of the 1953 work in Hebrew was *Beyt Habubot*. Ka-tzetnik 135633, *House of Dolls*, Fredrick Muller, London, 1956, translated from Hebrew by Moshe M. Kohn. Kimura Kōichi read a Japanese translation of the work.

disturbed, almost physically ill, after reading this book and suggests it was central to his opposition to militarism from a young age (Kimura K., personal interview, February 17, 2015). The fact that he read this translated book at a young age reflects a relatively cosmopolitan upbringing and a developing orientation to thinking about the broader world.

Kimura Kōichi attended a Salvation Army kindergarten and became attracted to Christianity. He became a Christian after high school and began work for the Japan Baptist Convention (JBC), which was founded in 1947 (Melton & Baumann, 2002, p. 720). JBC leaders became highly critical of Japan's wartime actions. In 1988, for example, the JBC leadership produced a 'statement of faith concerning war responsibility', and it has also worked to address what it terms 'the Yasukuni Shrine Problem'.⁹ The JBC's rejection of official shrine visits is presumably based on the fact that the shrine houses all the spirits of Japanese soldiers, including the spirits of those deemed war criminals. On this basis, it views shrine visits as disrespectful to those victimised by the Japanese army.

Kimura Kōichi's compassion for Indonesian survivors was also a product of his growing awareness of oppressed communities. Before moving to Indonesia in 1986, at age thirty-nine, Kimura Kōichi worked in India with the dalit community which is one of the most marginalised groups in the Indian society. When he returned to Japan, he became increasingly conscious of Japanese minority people who also faced discrimination, such as the Burakumin community. When he moved to Indonesia, he carried with him this new social consciousness of the most oppressed members of society, who are indeed the target of the JBC's missionary work (Kimura K., personal interview, February 17, 2015). He came to realise that persons who suffered during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, in particular survivors of enforced military prostitution, were sometimes also marginalised members of society. This is especially true if their histories were known in local communities due to lasting stigmas surrounding their experiences of sexual enslavement (Hindra & Kimura, 2007, p. 199). Hearing directly from parishioners, such as former forced labourers and Tuminah, about their experiences of the occupation, he felt moved to address these injustices (Kimura K., personal interview, February 17, 2015).

Kimura Kōichi worked together with advocates from Indonesian Legal Aid, other NGOs and the Ex-Heiho Communication Forum to help

⁹ Pamphlet, The Japan Baptist Convention, March 2010.

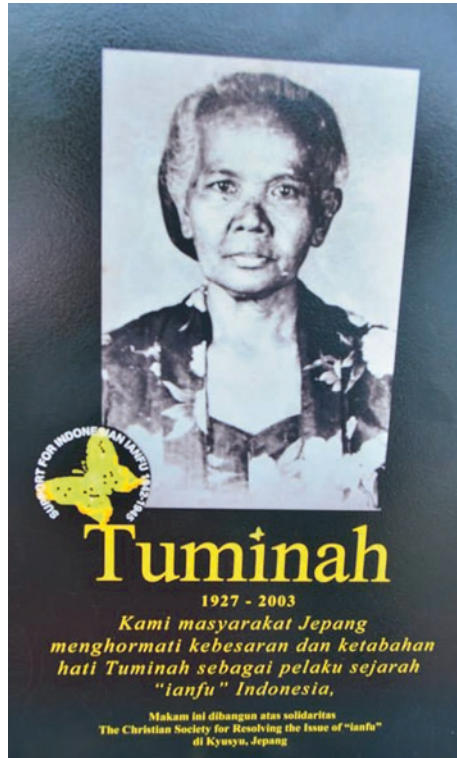
collect information on wartime experiences and to provide translations from Japanese to Indonesian (Kimura K., personal interview, February 17, 2015). He notes that, similar to the case of Takagi Ken'ichi, after he wrote about Tuminah's case, more groups contacted him for help (Kimura K., personal interview, February 17, 2015). He continued to write about this case in Japanese in church journals and secular publications (Kimura K., personal interview, February 17, 2015).

Kimura Kōichi acted as an important trilingual intermediary between Indonesian survivors and Japanese activists assisting to translate for Japanese lawyers, investigators and journalists visiting Indonesia. He recorded many interviews with survivors and raised funds for and accompanied the most active Indonesian survivors including Mardiyem, Suharti and Suhannah to Japan on speaking tours (Kimura K., personal interview, February 17, 2015). He supported the Indonesian delegation at the 2000 tribunal in Tokyo. Later he helped to co-write in Indonesian language, with the Indonesian activist Eka Hindra, the first book-length account of the life story of Mardiyem (Hindra & Kimura, 2007). He also wrote many pieces in Japanese about Indonesian survivors (Kimura, 1992, 1996b, 1999, 2000a, b). Further to this, he teaches about the issue at Christian universities in Japan and has been involved in fundraising in Japan to support Indonesian survivors and related activism. In 2015/2014, he collected money from his local community to provide a substantial memorial headstone and plaque on the previously spartan grave site of Tuminah in Solo (Fig. 3).

MATSUI YAYORI: A JOURNALIST/ACTIVIST

The third activist I examine here is Matsui Yayori (1934–2002), who contributed extensively to building transnational bases of support for surviving women. She is most famous perhaps for her role in initiating the 2000 Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery held in Tokyo, which brought together sixty-four survivors from eight countries, each represented by a national legal team (Sakamoto, 2001). The tribunal was a response to the lack of success in legal cases against the Japanese government at that time. This people's tribunal focused on the legal responsibility of the Japanese government and former emperor to appropriately compensate and acknowledge surviving women through direct individual compensation in contrast to the proposed payments through the Asian Women's Fund. Using her links across the

Fig. 3 Photo from the Collection of Koichi Kimura Part of the Renovated Gravestone of Tuminah. The text reads: We members of Japanese society respect the greatness and determination of Tuminah as a historical actor, an Indonesian 'ianfu'. This gravesite was built based on the solidarity of the Christian Society for Resolving the Issue of the 'Ianfu' in Kyusyu, Japan



international feminist movement, Matsui Yayori specifically recruited the Indonesian human rights lawyer, Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, to lead the Indonesian prosecution team (N. Katjasungkana, personal communication, September 11, 2014). Nursyahbani recalls how significant Japanese support for her team was, especially the survivors. Meanwhile, Matsui Yayori faced significant pressure including threats to her life within Japan, due to her leading role in the tribunal (Yamane, 2010, p. 27) (Fig. 4).

Shortly after the tribunal when Matsui Yayori fell terminally ill, she advocated for a museum dedicated to the memory of the tribunal and of the survivors of the system. Using money donated from her estate and raised through fundraising, the Violence Against Women in War Network opened the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace Museum in 2005 (Women's Active Museum on War and Peace, n.d.). The Museum's mission is primarily to educate the Japanese public about survivors by keeping



Fig. 4a and b Photos from the Collection of Kimura Kōichi of the Indonesian team attending the 2000 Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery (featuring above: the Indonesian lawyers and Kimura Koichi meeting with Matsui Yayori in the centre, and below: four Indonesian survivors in kebaya and Kimura Kōichi and Eka Hindra)

them in memory.¹⁰ The museum features the stories of some of the most high-profile Indonesian survivors such as Mardiyem, Tuminah and Suhannah.

Looking across Matsui Yayori's life, there are several factors that might explain her compassion for surviving women. She was born in 1934 and thus possibly has some memories of life during the war. Her father, despite been drafted into the army in 1945 and sent to China, refused to kill Chinese people and spoke out strongly about the Japanese army's conduct during the war on his return to Japan. Working as a minister, he founded the Japanese Christian Peace Association that opposed nuclear weapons and ongoing wars. Matsui Yayori's mother also supported the anti-war/anti-nuclear movement (Yamane, 2010, p. 25).

Matsui Yayori came to learn specifically about the issue of enforced military prostitution through her work as a journalist in the Asia-Pacific region and her interest in women's rights. She took up many issues relating to women's rights in her press articles and other publications. She followed, for example, issues such as the feminisation of migration, the impact of development projects on women and issues related to the trafficking of women, sexual violence against women and women's efforts to resist the sources of their oppression (Matsui, 1989). Upon learning about the impact on women in the region of the Japanese occupation, she became committed to pursuing historical justice for surviving women (Yamane, 2010, p. 27). As early as 1984, she published an interview in the *Asahi Shimbun*, the newspaper for which she was a foreign correspondent, with a Korean survivor who had stayed in Thailand following her relocation to Thailand during the war. Matsui supported early Korean feminist scholars researching this issue, such as Yun Chong Ok, whose work drew attention to patterns in military sexual violence by the Japanese army (Nozaki, 2005).

As Vera Mackie has detailed, Japanese feminist activism developed in the context of a history within the Japanese women's movement of rigorous critiques of Japanese imperialism and of women's implication in supporting the empire.¹¹ Their activism was thus based on an intense post-colonial critique of their privileged position in relation to other women across Asia, due not only to their connections to the wartime state,

¹⁰For more on the museum, see Watanabe Mina, 'Passing on the History of 'comfort women': the experiences of a women's museum in Japan, *Journal of Peace Education*, Vo 12, No 3, 2015, pp. 236–246.

¹¹On this point, see Vera Mackie, 'In Search of Innocence: Feminist Historians Debate the Legacy of Wartime Japan' pp. 211–212.

but also to Japan's post-war, Cold War alliances with the United States and the economic dominance of Japan in the Asian region (Mackie, 1998, pp. 601–602). Feminist activism on this topic thus reflected a deep understanding of how they, as members of contemporary Japanese society, were also connected to the legacies of the war.

It was in this context of ongoing demands for legal recognition, compensation and rehabilitation of survivors that Matsui Yayori worked together with other activists to find the Asia Japan Women's Resource Centre in 1994 and the Violence Against Women in War Network (VAWW) in 1998.¹² The Resource Centre and the Network formed crucial bases of support for transnational 'comfort women' activism. Its members helped organise the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery. In formulating the idea for a people's tribunal, activists were inspired by developments in international law that indicated growing attention to sexualised violence. This included the United Nations' International War Crimes Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and the International Criminal Court, all of which prosecuted crimes of sexual violence (Sakamoto, 2001, pp. 49–50). In holding the tribunal, they attempted to transcend national differences and to advocate for further recognition from the Japanese state for surviving women.

CONCLUSIONS ON TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM FOR THE SURVIVORS OF ENFORCED MILITARY PROSTITUTION

This brief survey of the life experiences and pathways to activism of three Japanese activists helps explain why different people became crucial supporters of transnational activism on behalf of survivors of enforced military prostitution. For each activist, their motivations seem to be connected to particular family experiences of the war, including experiences of neglect by the Japanese army, direct suffering through the US bombing campaigns of 1945 or of resistance to fighting with arms. It seems that their parents' experiences particularly shaped these three activists, all of whom were born just before, during or after the war, between 1934 and 1947.

¹²An earlier precedent of Japanese solidarity with Asian women came in the form of the Asian Women's Association, which Matsui co-founded in 1977. Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan, Citizenship, Embodiment and Sexuality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 202–204, 217–218.

Further to this, however, are other factors such as the particular views on war of the groups to which they belonged such as the Japanese Bar Association, the Japan Baptist Convention or the feminist activist organisations, Asia Japan Women's Resource Centre and the Violence Against Women in War Network. Each group adopted a slightly different position on the war and Japanese responsibility.

Across the life stories, something striking is a shared cosmopolitan outlook by which I mean each person had the 'ability to stand outside having one's life scripted by any one community' (Hall, 2002, p. 26). They each read and thought about the historical experiences of other countries and developed connections with people outside Japan.

For Kimura Kōichi and Matsui Yayori in particular, it was also their experiences of living in countries in Asia occupied by Japan during the war and hearing direct testimonies from survivors that moved them to act. Both expressed a sense of deep reflection on their implication as Japanese people in the suffering of others.

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