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Pyong Gap Min

Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York

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Introduction: A Critical Evaluation of Mark Ramseyer's Arguments for "Comfort Women" as Voluntary Prostitutes with Labor Contracts

By Pyong Gap Min¹

Introduction

J. Mark Ramseyer, Mitsubish Professor of Japanese Legal Studies at the Harvard University Law School, published an article entitled "Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War" in the internet version of the *International Review of Law and Economics* (hereafter referred to as *IRLE*) in December 2021. In his eight-page article, he claimed that Japanese and Korean "comfort women" (hereafter referred to as KCW) were voluntary prostitutes with labor contracts, rather than sexual slaves. Not surprisingly, *Sankei Shimbun*, a nationalist and conservative Japanese daily newspaper that has strongly supported historical revisionism, has widely publicized it, as if it had provided important new findings that contradict the sexual slavery interpretation.

I was curious how such an article, which was not much different from previous works by Japanese historical revisionists, had been reviewed positively and accepted for publication in a major international journal focusing on law and economics. Along with other scholars, I submitted my critical comments on Ramseyer's arguments, and we asked the journal to retract his unacceptable article and publish our critical papers. We also asked the journal to reveal information about how his eight-page article was accepted for publication by the journal. However, the journal has been reviewing the article for the possibility of academic ethics violations for more than one year. It has not taken any measure to reveal the processes of reviewing his paper and to retract the author's unacceptable article. Moreover, Ramseyer wrote a 65-page paper to respond to three of the submitted critical papers and published it in the Harvard John M. Discussion Paper Series. In the paper, he pretended to have successfully defended his arguments in the 2020 article from the three critiques. But Ramseyer's 2022 65-page responses to his critics' arguments exposed more distortions and mischaracterizations of not only the "comfort women" issue, but also the redress movement led by the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan (hereafter referred to as the Korean Council).

In early February 2022, I found several journal articles, papers, and public statements, critically evaluating Ramseyer's arguments, had been published or available on websites (Chwe 2021; Y.S. Lee 2022; Lee, Satto and Tadress 2022; Stanley et. al. 2022; Suk 2021). In March, I

¹ Pyong Gap Min is the Distinguished Professor of Sociology at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He also serves as Director of the Research Center for Korean Community at Queens College. The areas of his research focus are immigration, ethnic identity, ethnic business, immigrants' religious practices, and family/gender/women, with a special focus on Asian/Korean Americans. He is the single author of seven books. They include *Caught in the Middle: Korean Communities in New York and Los Angeles* (1996), the winner of two national book awards, and *Preserving Ethnicity through Religion in America: Korean Protestants and Indian Hindus across Generations* (2010), the winner of three national book awards. He published *Korean Comfort Women: Military Brothels, Brutality, and the Redress Movement* in 2021. His new book, *Transnational Cultural Flow from Home: Korean Community in Greater New York*, has been just published in October 2022. His 14 edited or co-edited books include *Encyclopedia of Racism in the United States*, 3 volumes (795 pages), which was selected as one of the 23 best books in the reference category published in 2005 by the Booklist Editors. He received the Distinguished Career Award from the International Migration Section in 2012 and the Contribution to the Field of Study Award from the Section on Asia and Asian America of the American Sociological Association. E-mail: PyongGap.Min@qc.cuny.edu

also obtained Yoshiaki Yoshimi's response to Ramseyer's original articles (Yoshimi 2022). These articles and papers have successfully shown how Ramseyer's 2019 original article was wrong in facts and logics through fact-checking of most important paragraphs included in his article.

However, we need to critically examine not only his 2021 article, but also his arguments given in his 65-page paper posted in the Harvard John M. Olin discussion Paper Series. Moteki Hiromichi, a Japanese historical revisionist, claimed that Ramseyer's 2022 paper "completely refutes all the critics to his former paper...". In particular, we need to critically evaluate his inadequate arguments about KCW and his unjustifiable criticisms of the Korean Council's redress activities.

At the end of February 2022, the Editorial Board of *The Crimson*, the Harvard students' newsletter, wrote editorials and suggested that we do not need to spend more time and energy in arguing with Ramseyer since the academic debates with him for two years had not produced positive results mainly due to his deflections of major points of criticisms by other scholars (The Crimson Editorial Board 2022). They also suggested that scholars should focus on "collective attention on the issues most urgently at stake," "a clear view of the horror these women faced...".

I fully understand the Editorial Board members' disappointments deriving from Ramseyer's tactics of deflecting main points. Nevertheless, I believe we need to continue critically evaluating Ramseyer's 2022 paper that includes many unsubstantiated arguments and unjustifiable criticisms of the redress movement led by the Korean Council. Otherwise, journal editors, Harvard Law School professors, and even Harvard students can be influenced by Ramseyer's historical revisionists arguments. He seems to have been motivated to publish an article in an English-language journal and his paper included in a Harvard Law School Center's Discussion Paper Series to spread the Japanese historical revisionists' propagandas that comfort women were voluntary prostitutes. In fact, "Ramseyer appeared as part of a video conference on comfort women hosted in Tokyo by Japanese historical revisionists during late April 2022. The author of the commentary reports that Ramseyer's comments in the conference "served to fill a crucial gap that has prevented the historical denialist community from obtaining the legitimacy they seek within and outside of Japan" (Curtis 2021, 4).

In the introduction to what he called "rebuttals of his critics' arguments, he claimed: "By long-established academic norms, people who disagree with an article write critical responses which they then subject to their own refereeing processes as independent articles" (Ramseyer 2022, 3). His claim led me to realize that we need more critical articles published through a formal channel. I decided to contact women's studies journals to organize a special issue focusing on our critical evaluations of Ramseyer's arguments included in his 2020 article and his 2002 paper. But I believed it would not be easy to find even a women's studies journal whose editor would be willing to accept my idea of a special issue.

I contacted a few women's studies journals, and Prof. Diana Fox, the founding editor of *Journal of International Women's Studies*, enthusiastically accepted my idea to organize a special issue. I would like to appreciate Prof. Fox for making this special issue possible and helping me in different ways in the processes of publicizing submitted papers and publishing the special issue in December this year. Due to the accumulated several special issues and not enough papers collected for our special issue, it was scheduled to be published in March 2023. But, considering the importance of the timing of our special issue, Diana Fox helped me to push forward the date to December 2022. I also would like to appreciate the following scholars for helping me in the processes of organizing the special issue and locating qualified authors. I initially discussed with Prof. Jinhee Lee the idea of organizing a special issue focusing on critically evaluating Ramseyer's article and paper through a special issue of a journal. She strongly supported my idea. She also provided me with several files of others' criticisms of Ramseyer's article and his paper. Prof. Na-

Young Lee helped me find Sung Yeon Kang as a possible author of a critique of Ramseyer's paper. Kang completed an excellent critique of Ramseyer's arguments. Prof. Lee herself started her own critique of Ramseyer's article and paper. Unfortunately, the violent effort of the right-wing historical denialists to block the Korean Council's Wednesday Demonstration in Seoul and Berlin during recent months forced Lee, the leader of the organization, to stop writing the critique.

In this special issue, we use first names first and the last name second when we refer to authors' and other persons' names, following the Western style. But when we refer to "comfort women," we use their last names first and first names last, following the Asian style. My own two papers and Sung Yeon Kang's paper include many Korean, Japanese, and Chinese names of authors, redress activists, and local cities such as Busan and Seoul. In Romanizing these names, Kang used the McCune-Reischauer format whereas I used the 2000 Korean government's format.

Background Information

This section briefly introduces the "comfort women" issue² (referred to as the CWI) and the redress movement for the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery, the two interrelated issues which Ramseyer and other Japanese historical denialists distorted. During the Asian-Pacific war (1932-1945), the Japanese military forcibly mobilized 45,000-200,000 Asian girls and young women (estimated numbers) to sexually serve Japanese soldiers. These young women, detained in Japanese military brothels (hereafter referred to as JMB), were repeatedly raped and sexually and physically abused every day. A large proportion of the women are presumed to have died of venereal diseases, beatings, malnutrition, were killed by bombings or by Japanese soldiers, or committed suicide (Min 2021). Many other women came back home after the end of the war on August 15, 1945, but most Asian "comfort women" were forced to keep silent because of the stigma attached to the victims of sexual violence in Asian countries. Due to their venereal diseases, infertility and/or simply the loss of their virginity, many KCW could not get married, while many other married women got divorced due to their inability to bear children (Min 2021, 162-166). Many KCW left their homes when their parents insisted on getting married. During a time when most Korean women got married to men mainly for economic support, unmarried KCW faced severe economic hardships.

Enough information about the CWI was available in daily articles in South Korea (Min 2021, 35-41). But the political situation of South Korea, strong stigma attached to the victims of sexual violence, and other factors³ contributed to the issue being buried for almost fifty years. Korea was liberated from Japanese colonization immediately after the end of the Asian-Pacific War in August 1945. However, the ideological conflicts between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the struggles among Korean political leaders to control Korea led to its division into North and South Korea. Two political entities went through the Korean War between 1950 and 1953. They have continued to maintain military tensions since the end of the civil war, with approximately 50,000-30,000 U.S. servicemen stationed in South Korea to protect it in case of another civil war. Moreover, South Korea went through a rigid military dictatorship between 1960 and 1987.

² I need to indicate that the term "comfort women" used by the Japanese military is a demeaning term suggesting that women tried to comfort Japanese soldiers. But since not only Japanese scholars, but also English-language scholars have used the term "comfort women" to refer to sexual slaves, I follow their use of the term "comfort women" with quotation marks, as the major Korean redress organizations have also done.

³ The Japanese government's destruction of historical documents or failure to release them, and the Allied Powers' lack of attention to Asian victims of Japan's war crimes at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial (1946-1948) were two other major factors that had contributed to the burial of the issue until the redress movement started in Korea in 1987 (see Min 2021, 41-42).

Korea's women leaders came to pay attention to the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery while they were fighting against Japanese businessmen's sexual tourism in Korea in the 1970s and 1980s, and Korean police officers' use of sexual interrogations of women college students who participated in the anti-government demonstrations against the military government in the 1980s (see Min 2021, 53-58). The end of military dictatorship in South Korea in 1987 helped women leaders start the redress movement for the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery. In November 1990, 37 Korean women's organizations established a coalition organization, *Chungshindae Moonje Daechaek Hyopuihe* (The Association for the Resolution of the *Chongshindae* Issue) to formally start the redress movement for the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery.

They have used the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan internationally to emphasize the term "sexual slavery." In July 2019, they further changed their name to the Korean Council for the Justice and Remembrance for the Issues of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. I will use the "Korean Council" to refer to the organization in this paper. In October 1990, just before they formally established the organization, Korean women's leaders made six major demands to the Japanese government (Hyun-Sook Lee, 1992, 314-315). Their demands included the Japanese government's acknowledgement of its predecessor's forced mobilization of many Korean women as military "comfort women," a sincere apology to Korea for the historical event and making reparations to the surviving victims.

The emergence of Hak-sun Kim, the first "comfort woman" survivor to emerge to society in Korea, and her international press conference on August 14, 1991 expanded the redress movement organized by Korea's women leaders to Japan, the United States, many other Asian victim countries, and many international human rights organizations (Coomaraswamy 2015 (1996), McDougall 2015 (1997); Dolgopol and Pranjape 1994). Following the lead of Kim Hak-sun, about 240 KCW survivors emerged to society to accuse the Japanese military government of their forced mobilization to JMB and brutal treatments there. Comfort women survivors in China, Taiwan, the Philippines, and other Asian victim countries also emerged to society to tell what had happened to them at the JMB. Leaders of the Korean Council took approximately 50 KCW to Japan, the United States, other countries, and international human rights organizations to give testimonies. Their international testimonies were enthusiastically accepted by participants in their testimonies probably because no victim of sexual violence had given a public testimony before them.

Several Special Rapporteurs of the UN Human Rights Commission interpreted the CWS as sexual slavery and recommended the Japanese government to take a number of measures to resolve the issue (Coomaraswamy 2015 [1996] and McDougal 2015 [1997]). The measures include acknowledging the CWS as sexual slavery, making a sincere apology and reparation to the victims, and include the history of Japanese military sexual slavery in Japanese high-school history textbooks to educate young Japanese citizens. Other human rights organizations (and the 2000 International Women's War Crimes Tribunal on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery made the judgements that the CWS was sexual slavery that violated several international conventions, including the 1926 anti-slavery law (Chinkin 2002). However, the Japanese government under the control of Liberal Democratic Party has consistently refused to acknowledge the CWS as sexual slavery and thus has not accepted its legal responsibility. It has tried to resolve the CWI twice, first using the Asian Women's Fund involving Japanese citizens' private donations during the period between 1995 and 2007, and the controversial agreements (political deals) between the Japanese and Korean governments in 2015. Both measures involve the Japanese government's effort to resolve the CWI with the compensation money alone without its acknowledgement of the CWS as sexual slavery and its sincere apology to the victims. Moreover, the Japanese government pushed

both measures despite the Korean Council's and KCW victims' strong opposition (Min 2021, 221, 223). Of course, international human rights organizations rejected these measures as adequate ways to fulfill the Japanese government's legal responsibility (Min 2021, 219, 225).

Theoretical Frameworks

Social scientists studying gender have often used the [intersectional perspective](#), combining gender, race, and class, since the early 1970s (Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1989; Jayawardena 1986; King 1988; Chow et al. 1996). Lower class black women have radically different experiences from white middle-class women. Thus, feminist scholars, especially Third-World feminists, have examined the effects of race and class, in addition to the effect of gender. In understanding Asian comfort women's sexual slavery experiences, we need to add another important explanatory variable, Japan's imperial war, to the intersection of the above three variables. Historically, girls and women have been easy target of random rapes or detention for prolonged sexual servitude by enemy soldiers in occupied areas or war zones. Women in the Bangladeshi territory occupied by Pakistani soldiers (Sarikia 1971), the Bosnia territory occupied by former Yugoslavian soldiers (Stiglmayer 1994), and the Iraqi territory occupied by U.S. soldiers (Enlore 2010) were repeatedly raped by the soldiers. Japanese soldiers raped local women in occupied areas in Asia and Pacific Islands. In particular, they raped and killed 20,000 Chinese women in the 1937 Rape of Nanjing (Chang 1997, 6).

We can apply the intersectional perspective focusing on race, gender, and class to explain the forced mobilization of many Asian women to JMB and their sufferings under custody there (Lee 2014; Min 2003). But, if we add another important variable, the imperial war, we can better explain them (Min 2021, 21). We can classify Asian "comfort women" mobilized to Japanese military brothels into the following three categories in terms of their home countries' relationships to Japan: (1) women in Japan, (2) women in Korea and Taiwan colonized by Japan, and (3) women in other Asian and Pacific countries occupied by Japan during the Asian-Pacific War.⁴ For understanding Japanese "comfort women's" experiences accurately, we can use the intersection of only three factors: Japan's imperial war, social class, and gender. For the other two groups of comfort women (Korean Taiwanese comfort women), we need to add another important variable, colonization, or occupation. For the other Asian and Pacific groups of "comfort women", Japan's occupation of their countries is an important variable. The Japanese military took Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese women to China and other Asian and Pacific countries occupied by Japan. In contrast, it forcibly took women in Asian and Pacific occupied countries to comfort stations located in their local areas in the same country.

Gender is the most important variable for Japanese military sexual slavery because, as pointed out in the above paragraph, soldiers raped women during the war or in occupied areas. But gender hierarchy is important for JMSS especially because of the long tradition of patriarchal norms and sexual abuse of women in Japan. Seigle (1993) reports that Japan maintained the government-license prostitution system even before the 16th century and until the mid-1950s. Most Japanese comfort women were recruited from commercial prostitution houses (Hayashi 2015, 110). Gender hierarchy in general and strong stigma attached on the victims of sexual violence in Korea played a key role in shutting down Korean victims' voices for about fifty years. Even after many KCW came forward to society to tell what had happened to them at JMB, some of their family members tried to avoid meeting them because of the shame attached to sexual victims (Min 2021, 164-167).

⁴Asian countries include China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Pacific countries include East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Micronesia and Paleo.

Japan's colonization or occupation of Asian countries was one of the major contributing factors to the forcible mobilization of ACW. Japan forcibly drafted large numbers of young people from the Korean colony to support its war efforts in China and other Asian and Pacific countries (Kang and Suh 19906; Yeo 1993). Scholars estimate that KCW comprised the largest national group (Suzuki 1991, 44; Yoshimi 2000, 108). The Japanese military seems to have drafted a large number of Korean girls and young women to JMB mainly because the Japanese Government-General in Korea with its police officers, soldiers, military police officers and Korean village heads, could easily locate and draft Korean girls and young women. The Japanese military also forcibly mobilized girls and young women in Taiwan, another Japan's colony at that time. But their number was much smaller than that of KCW.

The Japanese military used girls and women in its occupied areas as more or less short-term "comfort women." Of course, Chinese women comprised the largest group of "comfort women" located in an occupied country, since a large number of comfort stations were located all over the large Chinese territory, followed by "Filipino comfort women." Many European women settled in Asian colonies were subjected to rapes or sexual slavery to Japanese soldiers for a short period of time when Japan invaded and occupied these Asian colonies. Dutch women settled in Indonesia, a Dutch colony, comprised the largest European "comfort women" group. Many of the women were forced to serve Japanese soldiers when Japan invaded Indonesia in 1941. Dutch women could have been detained to provide sexual services to Japanese soldiers for a longer period of time. However, when the Dutch government warned the Japanese Army that its practice of sexual slavery was a grave violation of international treaties that the Japanese government signed, the army quickly released the women (Yoshimi 2000, 175). In this way, the Japanese government showed racial discrimination in its treatment of Asian and European women. The Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts (2014, 38), a Dutch advocacy organization, estimated that about 400 Dutch women were forced to provide sexual services to Japanese soldiers. But, according to Haruki Wada (2015, 182), only 80 Dutch women were found to be eligible for the compensation of the AWF. Many Dutch women were raped for a short period of time. Since the AWF eliminated them from the compensation money, only 80 Dutch women received the compensation money.

Social class was a very important contributing factor to the mobilization of Japanese women to JMB because most JCW were recruited from commercial prostitution houses in Japan (Hayashi 2015, 110). Since lower-class Japanese women usually had been trafficked to public prostitution houses, many JCW were older than other ACW. But Japanese scholars consider that most of them were involuntarily taken to JMB, just as they had been brought to public prostitution houses in Japan involuntarily (Akane 2022; Yoshimi 2022). The Japanese military did not want to mobilize Japanese unmarried virgin girls because it was not acceptable to Japanese society, especially to Japanese soldiers (Yoshimi 2000, 102). In contrast, the Japanese military preferred to mobilize young virgin girls from other Asian countries regardless of their class background. Thus, parents' social class was much less important in mobilizing non-Japanese ACW. Their country's colonial status or occupation by Japan was a more important contributing factor to their forced mobilization to JMB and brutal treatments by Japanese soldiers than their class background.

Techniques of the Redress Movement

The most convenient strategy the Korean Council has adopted since the emergence of Kim Hak-sun to society in August 1991 is Korean "comfort women" survivors' public testimonies. The first testimony provided by Kim Hak-sun accelerated the redress movement. Following Kim, many other Korean "comfort women emerged and gave their testimonies. Kim Hak-sun and other KCW were invited to Tokyo and other Japanese cities in December 1991 and after. Their active testimonies increasingly strengthened the nascent redress movement in Japan, leading to the

establishment of more and more Japanese redress organizations. Hwang Geum-ju gave the first testimony at a Korean Methodist Church in Washington, DC in November 1992. Her scream, “*ireobeorin cheongchun-eul dalla*” (give me back my lost youth), shocked many church members, leading to the establishment of the Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues. The WCCW invited one or two “comfort women” from Korea at a time who gave testimonies in many universities in the Northeast United States. Korean “comfort women’s” testimonies were widely disseminated to major universities and Jewish Holocaust centers in other parts of the United States. The participants in their testimonies in the United States enthusiastically accepted the testimonies, shedding tears and showing their respect to the “comfort women’s” courage and perseverance. Several KCW also gave testimonies at important international conferences and international human rights organizations. KCW’s testimonies were more enthusiastically accepted in Japan and United States than in Korea. Because of stigma attached to the victims of sexual violence, some KCW encountered their siblings’ and/or other family member’ rejection to meet them (Min 2021, 164-167).

Another important technique of the redress movement for the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery used by the Korean Council is the demonstration at noon every Wednesday in front of the Embassy of Japan in Seoul. The Korean Council started the Wednesday Demonstration on January 8 in 1992 to protest against Japanese Prime Minister’s (Kiichi Miyajawa) visit to South Korea. It has organized the demonstration every Wednesday, with the exception of only two weeks,⁵ since it started in January 1992. It has played an important role in educating Koreans, especially young Koreans, about rapes and other forms of sexual violence against women during the war or in occupied zones as an important women’s human rights issue. The Wednesday Demonstration is known to be the longest demonstration in the world. Not only members of the Korean Council, but also a dozen KCW and many Korean citizens participated in the Wednesday Demonstration. Even a few or several Japanese citizens participated in the Wednesday Demonstration to support the redress movement. In the post-pandemic era, the number of participants in the Wednesday Demonstration has significantly declined with no surviving KCW participating. Moreover, one or two dozen Korean right-wing anti-redress movement leaders have tried to block the redress activities every Wednesday in 2022.

The majority of KCW survivors had died or were too old to give public testimonies in the 2,000s. The Korean Council and Korean immigrant redress organizations in the United States and other Western countries used the installment of Korean “comfort girl” statues and KCW monuments⁶ as another important technique of redress activities. The Korean Council succeeded in getting the first Korean “comfort girl” bronze statue installed in front of the Embassy of Japan in Seoul, only fifty feet away from the front gate of the Embassy of Japan, in December 2011 with much difficulty. Late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe may have been most afraid of this statue than any other thing because the memorial reminded him of Japanese military sexual slavery that he had tried to conceal (Min 2021, 194-195). On December 28, 2016, another “comfort girl” statue was installed in front of the Japanese consulate in Busan, the second largest city in Korea. This memorial was installed after several hours of physical conflicts between Korean police officers and young Korean redress activists (Min 2021, 196). It is much easier to install CWM in other

⁵The two exceptions took place on January 18, 1995, and on March 9, 2001, because of massive earthquakes in Japan (Sohn 2011).

⁶ A “comfort girl statue” or a piece statue is a statue of a Korean girl at the time of her mobilization to JMB whereas a “comfort woman” monument is a statue of an elderly comfort woman survivor. The Japanese government is more afraid of comfort girl statues than comfort women monuments. But it is more difficult to install comfort girl statues than comfort women monuments because only a comfort girl architectural couple in Korea can design comfort girl statues.

public places in Korea than in front of Japanese diplomatic buildings. Korean local governments, young redress activists, and even women high school students continued to install comfort girl statues or CWM in other public places after the first one had been installed in front of the Embassy of Japan. Thus, the number of “comfort women” memorials in Korea had continued to increase since the first one was installed in 2011. As of 2017, the number of CWM built in Korea is likely to be more than eighty.

The Transnational Redress Movement

As summarized above, the Korean Council started the redress movement for the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery in Korea and played a leading role in turning the movement into the transnational movement by transplanting it to Japan, the United States and international human rights organizations. As a result, many Japanese civic organizations and Japanese citizens participated in the redress movement. The major Japanese women’s redress organizations have been VAWW-NET Japan (Violence against Women in War Network in Japan) established in 1998 and the Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace established in 2006. The other important Japanese redress organization is the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan’s War Responsibility. Prominent Japanese “comfort women” scholars, such as Yoshiaki Yoshimi, Hirofumi Hayashi and Puja Kim founded the organization in 1993 and have conducted research on the “comfort women” issue and put pressure on the Japanese government with historical documents to resolve the “comfort women” issue honorably by making a sincere apology and compensation to the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery. Many other Japanese citizens, mostly middle-aged and senior Japanese citizens, strongly supported the redress movement in the 1990s and 2000s by inviting Korean “comfort women” to deliver testimonies to Japanese citizens and donated funds to the Korean Council to establish the War and Women’s Human Rights Museum (Min 2020, 75). Many young Japanese citizens, mostly college students, participated in the Wednesday Demonstrations held in front of the Embassy of Japan in Seoul (Min 2020, 74). In addition, several Japanese lawyers participated in the redress movement by providing legal advice to the Korean Council and other Asian redress organizations in appealing the “comfort women” system to international human rights organizations and making lawsuits against the Japanese government (Min 2021, 211-212).

Many other “comfort women” in other Asian victim countries emerged for testimonies after Kim Hak-sun had held the first press conference in August 1991. One or two redress organizations were established in each of other Asian victim countries. These other countries include the Philippines, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and North Korea. Under the leadership of the Korean Council, these Asian women’s redress organizations held the Asian Solidarity Conference, beginning in 1992, usually every two years (Min 20021, 201-203). After a few invited “comfort women” survivors gave testimonies, several representatives from redress organizations in different countries gave presentations on redress issues in each conference. East Timor, a Pacific country, and the Netherlands⁷ participated in the Asian Solidarity Conference beginning in the early 2010s as victim countries. Korean and Japanese participants comprised the vast majority of the participants in each of the Asian Solidarity Conferences, as each of the other Asian redress organizations sent one or two representatives to the conference. Despite the other Asian/Pacific victim countries’ weak support, the Asian Solidarity Conferences have put additional pressures on the Japanese government, especially

⁷ The Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts, a Dutch advocacy organization for the Dutch victims of the Asian-Pacific War, estimated that approximately 400 Dutch women were forced to provide sexual services to Japanese soldiers in Indonesia, a Dutch colony, in the early 1940s.

because they sent out resolutions passed at the end of the conference to the Japanese government and other international human rights organizations.

The North Korean government established the Investigating Committee on Military Comfort Women and Pacific War Victims in May 1992 (Min 2021, 202). The committee received reports from 131 women who had been forced to provide sexual services for Japanese soldiers (Korean Council 2014, 163). Thirty-four of these “comfort women” responded to the interviews by the committee. Encouraged by two major leaders of the Korean Council (Chong-oak Yun and Hyo-chaee Lee), the North Korean committee held a two-day conference in Pyongyang in November 1993. Many Korean, Japanese and other Asian representatives of redress organizations participated in the conference. It was an encouraging sign that representatives of the redress organizations in South and North Korea coordinated in organizing a conference in North Korea at the time when two Korean governments had not established a channel of communication.

Moreover, North and South Korean representatives established a single working team made up of two North Koreans and eight South Koreans to prosecute Japanese criminals responsible for the “comfort women” system in the 2000 Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal (Min 2021, 203). Representatives from North and South Korea held several meetings in a third country to prepare the prosecution in the tribunal. The North and South Korean governments had a great deal of conflicts and tensions in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. Although there were few civilian channels for communications between the two Korean countries, representatives of redress organizations in North and South Korea coordinated the redress movement to resolve the most important issue related to Japan’s colonization of Korea.

The most important activity of Asian Solidarity was establishing and holding the Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery (WIWCT) in Tokyo on December 8-12 in 2000. This was a global citizens’ court to make legal judgements on the Japanese “comfort women” system to punish those responsible for the establishment and management of the “comfort women” system. The three representatives of the redress organizations in Korea, Japan and the Philippines co-represented WIWCT with each redress organization financially supporting the event with \$100,000. The WIWCT’s international organizing committee selected six judges with each of the nine victim countries sending seven prosecutors to the tribunal (Chinkin 2002). Over 70 “comfort women” victims representing different victim countries gave testimonies as witnesses. As will be summarized in my paper in this special issue, the judges found Emperor Hirohito guilty of charges based on compounded responsibility for sexual slavery and convicted nine other Japanese civilian and military leaders (Ibid.).

The redress movement has also spread to Korean diasporic communities in Japan, the United States, and other Western countries. Approximately 650,000 Korean residents are settled in Japan, with most of them being third- and fourth-generation descendants of the Koreans who were sent to Japan during the colonization period (1910-1945). The Korean community in Japan is the third largest Korean diasporic community, next to the Korean communities in the United States and that in China. As foreign residents⁸ of a former colonial country with a high level of gender discrimination, Korean women in Japan encountered a great deal of prejudice and discrimination. Given their double minority statuses, it is quite natural that Korean women in Japan were very sympathetic to KCW. Thus, they joined the redress movement immediately after Kim Hak-sun gave the first testimony in Korea. Korean women in the Kanto area (Tokyo and its surrounding area) established the Compatriot Women’s Network for the Comfort Women Issue in November 1991. At roughly the same time, Korean women in the Kansai area (Osaka and its

⁸ Because of legal discrimination, even most of Japan-born third- and fourth-generation Koreans remained as South-Korean citizens or belonged to the North Korean faction (Chongryeon) in the early 1990s.

adjacent area) established the Association for the Study of the Comfort Women Issue. These two redress organizations organized major testimonies by KCW and collected signatures from Japanese citizens on a petition urging the Japanese government to meet the Korean Council's six demands (Koh 1992). Puja Kim, a second-generation Korean woman living in Tokyo was one of the key members of the Compatriot Women's Network. As a university professor, she has made a significant contribution to studies of the "comfort women" issue in collaboration with Japan's War Responsibility Center and VAWW-Net Japan.

The Korean community in the United States makes up the largest Korean diasporic community with about two million Korean Americans. Most Korean Americans in the early 1990s were Korean immigrant adults who had strong emotional ties to South Korea. Thus, it was natural that several Korean immigrant women in the United States were engaged in the redress movement. Korean immigrant women's redress organizations invited KCW to give testimonies in many U.S. universities and colleges. Three major Korea redress organizations in the United States were the Washington Coalition for the Comfort Women Issues (WCCW) in the Washington DC area, the Korean American Voters Council (KAVC) in the New York area, and the Korean American Forum in California in Los Angeles (KAFC). Korean American Voter's Council was changed to KACE (Korean American Civic Empowerment) in 2012 whereas KAFC was changed to Comfort Women Action for Redress and Education (CWARD). In addition, A multiethnic group consisting of Asian and white Americans established the Comfort Women Justice Coalition (CWJC) in San Francisco. By virtue of its location in Washington DC, the U.S. capital, the WCCW has played the most important role in publicizing the CWI to important U.S. politicians, including U.S. congressional members, especially using KCW's public testimonies in the 1990s.

In 1998, the WCCW started lobbying members of the U.S. House of Representatives to get a resolution passed by the U.S. House to put pressure on the Japanese government to take responsible actions to resolve the AWI. Later, other Korean redress organizations in the New York (KACE) and Los Angeles areas (KACE) joined the same movement. They finally succeeded in getting the 121 House Resolution unanimously passed in July 2007 with much difficulty. The resolution included four strongly worded recommendations to the Japanese government. Korean redress organizations and Korean American politicians lobbied U.S. state legislatures in the late 1990s and the 2000s to get resolutions passed by state and city legislative branches to be sent to the Japanese government. As a result, they succeeded in getting nine state and city legislatures pass resolutions to be sent to the Japanese government for the twenty-year period between 1999 and 2019.

As indicated in the previous section, the Korean Council installed a Korean comfort girl statue in front of the Embassy of Japan in December 2011 as a strategy of the redress movement when only a few KCW survivors were healthy enough to participate in the Wednesday Demonstration. Korean immigrant redress organizations in the United States used the installment of memorials more effectively than the Korean Council in Korea for two major reasons. First, many American citizens accepted these memorials as an important symbol of sexual violence against women during the war or in occupied zones. The other reason is that these monuments were very effective for publicizing Japanese military sexual slavery to American and international human rights organizations (especially several Holocaust centers) and women's organizations in the United States. In fact, Korean American Voters' Council in the New York-New Jersey area succeeded in getting a KCW memorial installed in Palisades Park in New Jersey in October 2010, fourteen months earlier than the Korean Council installed a comfort girl peace statue in front of the Embassy of Japan in December 2010. Altogether, Korean redress organizations succeeded in getting eleven KCW monuments or Korean "comfort girl" statues installed in public places in the United States between 2010 and 2017 (Min 2021, 244). Only the comfort women statue installed

in St. Mary's Square in San Francisco City was the product the Comfort Women Justice Coalition, a pan-Asian and multiethnic coalition, (Mirkinson 2020). Japanese diplomats and Japanese historical denialist organizations (represented by Koich Mera) in the United States made all efforts to prevent redress organizations from installing comfort women memorials. But they failed to achieve their effort to conceal the Japanese military government's crimes (P. Kim 2020; Mirkinson 2020).

Korean immigrant women groups in three other Western countries (Germany, Canada, and Australia) organized the redress movement since the early 1990s. The Korea Verband located in Berlin has been much more active in the redress movement than the organization in either of the two countries. The organization invited a KCW several times for testimonies in the 1990s and 2000s. The organization donated a large amount of money to Korean Council for the construction of the War and Women's Human Rights Museum in the early 2000s. It installed a Statue of Peace (a "comfort girl" statue) created by a Korean architectural couple in September 2020 in a busy area in Berlin with much difficulty caused by the Japanese embassy (Mladenova 2022). There is a "comfort woman" statue installed in each of the other two countries.

Summaries of the Four Papers in the Special Issue

Two longer papers, one by me and the other by Kang, focus on critically evaluating Mark Ramseyer's unacceptable arguments, which is the main focus of this special issue. The paper by Mirkinson focuses on criticizing Japanese historical denialists' arguments. Since Ramseyer's arguments are not much different from Japanese historical denialists' arguments, most of Mirkinson's criticisms are applicable to Ramseyer's arguments. Yamaguchi is a specialist in the "history wars" of Japanese historical denialists and the Japanese government in the United States. Thus, her paper discusses Ramseyer's articles and papers focusing on "comfort women" and Japanese minority groups "in the context of the 'strategic communication' policy by the Japanese government and the right-wing effort to disseminate revisionist claims and politicians abroad."

Pyong Gap Min: "My Response to Ramseyer's Effort to Defend Japanese Historical Denialists' Arguments"

My article consists of three major sections in addition to the Introduction and my concluding remarks. The first section summarizes a comprehensive literature review of scholars' academic interpretations and international human rights organizations' judgements of the "comfort women" system as sexual slavery. Based on the literature review, I indicate that rejecting the "comfort women" system as sexual slavery without a review of these past studies and judgments is analogous to Donald Trump's rejection of the selection of Joe Biden as the president of the United States in the 2020 presidential election: it is an intentional manipulation of the truth. Researchers can only add new pieces of information to the accumulated knowledge in a particular field of study. Since Ramseyer wrote a controversial article and a paper without reviewing the previous studies and judgments, I argue that his article and paper cannot be considered as academic ones.

In the second section of my paper, I critically evaluated Ramseyer's arguments for denying the CWS as sexual slavery by demonstrating the forced mobilization of comfort women" to JMB and their brutal treatments there mainly based on KCW's testimonies and partly based on Korean daily newspaper articles. Specifically, in this section I challenges Ramseyer's two major arguments: (1) "there were no historical documents such as newspaper articles, police reports, and personal diaries that demonstrated the forced mobilization of KCW (Ramseyer 2022, 19); and (2) he could not accept the major findings "based on testimonies of a small number of KCW who he claims were under the control of Korean redress activists." More importantly, I also show based

on the KCW's testimonies that they were sexual slaves because they were forcefully mobilized to the JMB and because they were brutally treated under custody at JMB by the Japanese military.

The third substantive section of my paper critically examines Ramseyer's unjustifiable attacks on the Korean Council and its redress activities. Like other Japanese historical revisionists, he has attacked the Korean Council, progressive "comfort women" scholars and redress activists in Korea and the United States as "anti-Japan "communists" and "Stalinists." However, the paper shows that several Japanese organizations and a large number of Japanese citizens supported the redress movement initiated by the Korean Council. It indicates that in the beginning of the redress movement Japanese citizens, especially older female Japanese citizens, supported the movement more enthusiastically than Korean citizens. I do not think Ramseyer considers many Japanese citizens who strongly supported the redress movement as anti-Japanese "communists." Both Korean and Japanese redress activists have tried to put pressure on the Japanese government to take responsibility for its predecessor's crime.

Sung Hyun Kang, "Ramseyer's History Denialism and the Efforts to 'Save Ramseyer': Focusing on Critique of 'A Response to My Critics 2022)"

Kang's paper is valuable for this special issue for the following two main reasons. First, as the only Korean scholar he is very familiar with the right-wing Korean history denialists' active effort made not only to help Japanese historical denialists, but also to save Ramseyer since the late 2010s. Second, he is very fluent in Japanese and English as well as in Korean. Using his linguistic advantages, his paper has critically evaluated Ramseyer's arguments based on Japanese and English historical documents.

Kang starts his paper with his indication that Ramsey's 2021 journal article and his 2022 long responses to his critics comprise part of Japanese historical denialists' activities in the United States, the main battlefield for the history war. He also indicates that Ramseyer's 2020 article was an extension of the historical denialists' actions in Korea and Japan, triggered by the book, *Anti-Japanese Tribalism*, written by Korean new-right history denialists, and that Korean history denialists tried to save Ramseyer when his 2021 article was subjected to severe criticisms.

In his introduction, Kang emphasizes that Ramseyer's major argument in his 2021 paper published in the IRLE is similar to the core arguments of his 1991 article (Ramseyer 1991), although he pretended to have used game theory (Ramseyer 1991). He indicates that Ramseyer's core arguments, shared by Japanese and Korean historical denialists, were that "the comfort women system was an extension of the state-licensed prostitution system" and that both systems were voluntary prostitution systems, not sexual slavery. He indicates that Japanese and Korean scholars have demonstrated how Ramseyer's analyses and arguments were wrong in interpreting both systems as voluntary based on labor contracts (Onozawa, 2022; Park, 2021).

Kang's paper consists of three major sections. He summarizes the content of Ramseyer's 2022 long paper responding to his critics and critically evaluates it in the first substantive section.

Tomomi Yamaguchi's paper is entitled "*Ramseyer, the Japanese Right-wing and the 'History Wars.'*" In her paper, Yamaguchi examines Ramseyer's claims and arguments for "comfort women" as commercial prostitutes with labor contracts in the context of Japanese historical denialism and Japanese historical revisionists' history wars in the United States. In her view, the major argument of Ramseyer "basically repeats the same claim made by historical denialists in 'Japan and Korea' since the 1990s."

I hope, together, these papers comprising this special issue constitute a comprehensive body of evidence and future reference to dispute any ongoing historical revisionist claims.

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