

The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus

In-depth critical analysis of the forces shaping the Asia-Pacific . . . and the world. The Asia-Pacific Journal seeks to illuminate the geopolitics, economics, history, society, culture, international relations and forces for change in the modern and contemporary Asia-Pacific.



In addition to articles prepared for the journal, it offers translations from Japanese, Chinese, Korean and other languages. This peer-reviewed, open source journal is a fully indexed resource. Its website contains more than 2,000 articles. What's Hot is a special section on fast-breaking contemporary events. Subscribers receive a free weekly newsletter published each Monday, normally linking to four to seven new articles. More than 100,000 articles are accessed each month with readers from more than 180 countries on six continents. More than 6,000 people in 195 countries presently subscribe to APJ, including 2,700 who follow us through Facebook or Twitter, and their numbers are growing steadily. All articles are fully indexed by author, title and key word. Peer review process recognized by Ulrich's Global Serial Directory.

Subscribers to the [Newsletter](#) receive a weekly announcement with links to new articles. Facebook and Twitter subscribers receive immediate information about new articles as they are posted.

To Contribute to the Journal

To contribute an article to The Asia-Pacific Journal contact info.japanfocus@gmail.com

Coordinators

The coordinators chart the day to day operations of the journal, and, in consultation with the associates, shape its longterm editorial direction. The coordinators are

Andrew DeWit Rikkyo University, Tokyo, dewit@rikkyo.ne.jp

Geoffrey Gunn Nagasaki University, Nagasaki, nag-gunn@net.nagasaki-u.ac.jp

Laura Hein Northwestern University, Chicago, l-hein@northwestern.edu

Gavan McCormack Australian National University, Canberra, gavan@coombs.anu.edu.au

John McGlynn, Independent Political and Economic Analyst, Tokyo, jmcgl@gol.com

David McNeill Sophia University, Tokyo, davidaamcneill@hotmail.com

R.Taggart Murphy Tsukuba University, Tokyo, murphy@mbaib.gsbs.tsukuba.ac.jp

Matthew Penney Concordia University, Montreal, penneym@hotmail.com

Norimatsu Satoko, Peace Philosophy Center, Vancouver, info@peacephilosophy.com

Mark Selden Cornell University, Ithaca, mark.selden@cornell.edu

Yuki Tanaka Hiroshima Peace Institute, Hiroshima, tanaka-t@peace.hiroshima-cu.ac.jp

Associates

The Asia-Pacific Journal is made possible by the contributions of associates on four continents who recommend material to publish and translate, review manuscripts, provide translations, and contribute their own writing. The associates are

Nobuko Adachi, Yonson Ahn, Matthew Allen, Andrea Arai, Cemil Aydin, Tim Beal, Herbert Bix, Vivian Blaxell, Heather Bowen-Struyk, John Breen, Mark Caprio, Zeljko Cipris, Bruce Cumings, John de Boer, John Dower, Aya Ezawa, John Feffer, Norma Field, Ruediger Frank, Sabine Fruhstuck, Aaron Gerow, Andrew Gordon, Nanyan Guo, Kimie Hara, Peter Hayes, Julie Higashi, Linda Hoaglund, Jean Inglis, Sheila Miyoshi Jager, Rebecca Jennison, Paul Jobin, David Johnson, Eric Johnston, John Junkerman, Jeff Kingston, Victor Koschmann, Heonik Kwon, Adam Lebowitz, Douglas Lummis, Richard Minear, Jon Mitchell, Mark Morris, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Chris Nelson, Yoshiko Nozaki, James Orr, Emanuel Pastreich, Michael Penn, Roger Pulvers, Miguel Quintana, Steve Rabson, Lawrence Repeta, Sonia Ryang, Rumi Sakamoto, Peter Dale Scott, Philip Seaton, Kyoko Selden, Aaron Skabelund, David Slater, Gregory

Smits, David Adam Stott, Jae-Jung Suh, Akiko Takenaka, Mariko Tamanoi, Miyume Tanji, Richard Tanter, William Underwood, Andre Vltchek, Vanessa Ward.

Sustainers

Sustainers enable the Journal to publish, improve the quality of the website and circulate our weekly Newsletter. For more information about financially supporting the journal, see [Sustaining APJ](#) at the home page.

Contact us at info.japanfocus@gmail.com

We invite contributions and queries about the journal.

Comment on articles

Readers are invited to comment and discuss all articles at the site. To comment, go to the end of the article. This is a moderated list that welcomes discussion but eliminates flames. We ask those who wish to comment to give their full real name.

Recommended citation

All articles since 2009 contain a recommended citation at the end of the article in the following form:

Recommended citation: Author, "Title," The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol 8, Issue 51 No 2, December 20, 2010 where Vol 8 refers to 2010, issue 51 to the 51st issue of the year and No 2 to the second article. For earlier articles, the recommended citation consists of author, title and date of publication where noted.

Index/Abstracts

Directory of Open Access Journals, Asia-Studies Research, Ebsco Host Political Science.

Search engine

The Asia-Pacific Journal has a powerful search engine at the top left of the [home page](#). The top box allows you to search by author, the second box by title. Entering an author's surname or given name brings up all articles by the author. Entering a term such as China, Japan, Korea, or war, peace, or immigration, or a phrase like Battle of Okinawa or atomic bomb in the second box will bring up all articles whose title includes that word or phrase. To search within articles, click on keyword search and enter the word or phrase you are searching for such as atomic bomb, Korean War, mass suicide or worker rights. (do not put the word or phrase in "quotes".) This brings up a list of all articles which include the word or phrase. If you open any article on the list and do a search for the word or phrase, when you scroll down the item will be highlighted. Close the article to go to another article by clicking on the arrow at the top of the screen. You will be told "To display this page, Firefox must send information . . . etc." (Other browsers may use a different method.) Hit resend and you will return to the list of articles and you can continue to search. You can also use the Advanced Search function to search beyond our site using Google. For best results, use Firefox or Safari search engines. We welcome questions about the search engine and suggestions for improvement of our system.

The Asia-Pacific Journal is the recipient of The Ryukyu Shimpo's first Ikemiyagi Syuui Prize. The award recognizes that "Japan Focus has made an outstanding worldwide contribution to proposing solutions to problems confronting Okinawa."

Website Manager

Allen Schmaltz

Intern

Yayoi Koizumi

ISSN Number

1557-4660

Reprinting

Articles at The Asia-Pacific Journal are published under a Creative Commons license. Permission is granted to forward electronically to others and to post Asia-Pacific Journal texts for non-commercial purposes following Open Source guidelines, provided they are reproduced intact and the source indicated and linked. To publish Asia-Pacific Journal texts in electronic, printed and/or other forms, including course use, contact info.japanfocus@gmail.com

We welcome your comments on this and all other articles. Please consider subscribing to our [RSS feed](#), or following us via [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

Out With Human Rights, In With Government-Authored History: The Comfort Women and the Hashimoto Prescription for a 'New Japan'

Tessa Morris-Suzuki

Hopes and Dreams

They exist all over Japan, like tiny sparks of light, flickering and fragile, but somehow surviving against the odds: the peace museums, the reconciliation groups, the local history movements that work to address problems of historical responsibility neglected or denied by national politicians. As Kazuyo Yamane notes, according to a UN survey, Japan has the highest number of peace museums of any country in the world (Yamane 2009, xii). But the heritage created at the grassroots by ordinary Japanese people is constantly under threat from the hostility of nationalist politicians and sections of the media: and never more so than today (see Chan 2008; Morris-Suzuki, Lov Petrov and Tsu 2012).

Among the sparks of light is Osaka's Human Rights Museum, also known as Liberty Osaka.

Founded in 1985, Liberty Osaka is Japan's only human rights museum. It features displays on the history of hisabetsu buraku communities (groups subject to social discrimination), the struggle for women's rights, and the stories of minority groups such as the indigenous Ainu community and the Korean minority in Japan. An important aspect of the museum is its depiction of these groups, not as helpless victims of discrimination, but rather as active subjects who have fought against discrimination, overcome adversity and helped to create a fairer and better Japanese society. By 2005 more than a million people had visited the Liberty Osaka. (See the museum's website (Japanese) [here](#) and (English) [here](#).)

Today, the museum faces the threat of closure. The Osaka city government has until now provided a crucial part of the museum's funding, but the current city government headed by mayor Hashimoto Taro, has decided to halt this funding from next year, on the grounds that the museum displays are 'limited to discrimination and human rights' and fail to present children with an image of the future full of 'hopes and dreams' (*Mainichi Shinbun* 25 July 2012)

The 'Restoration' of Japan

Hashimoto's own hopes and dreams for the future have recently been on prominent display. His *Åsaka Ishin no Kai* (generally known in English as 'One Osaka', though literally meaning the 'Osaka Restoration Association') has high hopes of gaining a substantial share of the seats up for grabs in Japan's impending national election, and Hashimoto is being hailed by many as a future national leader – even as a national savior. A relatively young politician with a successful career in law and the media behind him, Hashimoto has succeeded in winning popular support by projecting the image of an action man unafraid of taking the tough decisions.

Like Prime Minister Koizumi in the early 2000s, Hashimoto combines personal charisma, budget-slashing economic neo-liberalism and hard-line political nationalism. (Koizumi's insistence on paying annual visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, which commemorates Japan's war dead including executed war criminals, caused particular tensions with neighbouring countries.) But Hashimoto is Koizumi on steroids. His radical plans for reform would see Japan converted into a quasi-federal system with prime ministers directly elected in presidential style, along with massive reductions in welfare spending and creation of a voucher-based educational system. He is famous for remarking that Japan would benefit from becoming a dictatorship – a remark that most commentators have not taken as seriously as they should. His penchant for attracting attention by deliberately outrageous statements gives his role on the political stage an unstable and ugly edge that was lacking from Koizumi's cooler and smoother performances.

At a time when Japan's political system is mired in factionalism and indecisiveness and in which prime minister's rise and fall annually, bold words have popular appeal. Until recently, Hashimoto has shown considerable skill in mixing policies drawn from various parts of the ideological spectrum, so avoiding being easily pigeonholed in conventional political terms. Ever quick to spot an opportunity to boost his political appeal, he responded to mass demonstrations against nuclear power following the Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdown by hastily adding a call for reduced reliance on nuclear power to his agenda for a new Japan, though he then went on to support the reopening of two nuclear power plants in neighboring Fukui Prefecture (see *Asahi Shinbun*, English online edition, 1 June 2012).

But as the election draws nearer, Hashimoto's true colours become increasingly visible. He is now wooing the support of leading old-style nationalist Abe ShinzÅ, a scion of Japan's conservative elite and one of the rather crowded field of very short-lived former Japanese prime ministers. (Abe's tenure lasted precisely one year, from September 2006 to 26 September 2007). Abe, for his part, has expressed interest in working with Hashimoto to change Japan's postwar peace constitution (*Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, evening edition, 25 August 2012).

The 'Comfort Women' Revisited, and Revisited, Again and Again...

Amidst heightened international frictions in Northeast Asia, as both South Korea and China face significant changes of leadership, Hashimoto Taro has found it impossible to resist stirring the pot of nationalist divisiveness. On 10 August, outgoing South Korean President Lee Myung-bak paid a provocative and self-serving visit to the island of Dokdo/Takeshima, the first visit of its kind by a Prime Minister in office. The island's sovereignty is disputed between Japan and Korea. Two weeks later, Hashimoto responded in kind, playing the shop-soiled card of historical revisionism: a favoured weapon of right-wing politicians in need of some free publicity.

Using Twitter as his means of communication, Hashimoto chose this sensitive moment in Japan-Korea relations to denounce the KÅ no Statement: a key element in Japan's search for reconciliation with its Asian neighbours.



(left) and Abe

In 1993, after the government had collected and studied extensive documentary evidence over a two year period, Chief Cabinet Secretary KÅ no YÅ hei acknowledged that the Japanese military had been responsible for forcibly recruiting Korean, Chinese and other 'comfort women' to work in wartime military brothels where they were subjected to extreme sexual abuse. KÅ no's carefully worded statement of apology noted that brokers had often been used to recruit the women, but that in some cases Japanese soldiers or officials had carried out the recruitment themselves

Extract from the KÅ no Statement

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.

For the full text, see [here](#).

Fourteen years later, the Abe cabinet issued a partial retraction, denying that Japanese military or government officials were personally involved in forcible recruitment of 'comfort women'. This retraction was part of a broader, and loudly proclaimed, nationalist salvo, one of whose chief goals was the revision of the postwar constitution to allow more rapid military expansion.

The Abe resolution was flawed on two grounds. First, it completely ignored the substantial but inconvenient historical evidence that contradicted its premise. The 'comfort women' story, largely neglected until the 1990s, has now been very well researched by numerous Japanese and international scholars and international agencies including the International Commission of Jurists and two UN special rapporteurs on human rights (Radhika Coomaraswamy, who reported in 1996, and Gay McDougall, who reported in 1998 - see their reports: [here](#) and [here](#)). Despite the complexities of the issue, a relatively clear story has emerged from their work.

From the early 1930s onward, but particularly following the outbreak of full scale war in China, the Japanese army created a massive network of military brothels throughout its empire and occupied territories, to which hundreds of thousands of women were recruited. The brothels took a number of forms, including those run by the army itself, those run by brokers commissioned by the army, and temporary ad hoc brothels set up for short periods near the battle front. The official Japanese documents collected by the Japanese government, as well as the testimony of victims, former Japanese soldiers and the early 1990s provide incontrovertible proof of the role of the military and state in planning and running this system. They also provide incontrovertible proof that many (though not all) comfort women were recruited by trickery or abduction, and that they were commonly confined in brothels where they were subject to appalling treatment and drastic punishments if they attempted escape.

Recruitment, particularly in the earlier stages of the system, was often assigned to private brokers, colonial police and others, who operated at the request of the military. Particularly in the latter stages of the war, and in the case of 'informal' battlefield brothels, there is well-corroborated evidence of the direct forcible recruitment of women by Japanese soldiers. Japanese soldiers were, of course, also directly involved in keeping women forcibly confined in brothels, and subjecting them to sexual and other violence while they were there (see, for example, Yoshimi 2002; Tanaka 2002; Soh 2008; Totani 2008, 126-128 and 176-185; Wada Haruki, The Digital Museum: The Comfort Women Issue and the Asian Women's Fund [here](#); testimony of Jan Ruff O'Herne [here](#); the website of the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility [here](#).)

The Abe resolution discounted all testimony from survivors, even when it was detailed and corroborated by other evidence, as well as testimony from third party observe and oral testimony from former Japanese soldiers. In other words, it took the view that only official documents produced by the perpetrators could be acceptable as 'evidence' even as it chose to ignore those documents that survived official attempts to destroy all documentation. In particular, it ignored oral and written evidence (including official documentation) showing the intimate collaboration between Japanese military and police and brokers, and making clear the forced confinement and inhuman treatment of women by Japanese military and brokers in the brothels.

The second flaw in the resolution was that it also failed to answer the obvious question: how does the use of brokers (which no-one denies) diminish the moral responsibility of the Japanese state and army? Or, to put it more bluntly, even if we were to discount the clear evidence of direct involvement of the military in forcibly recruiting some of the comfort women, does employing others to do your dirty work make it OK?

History by Government Resolution: Foreign Policy by Tweet

Hashimoto TÅ ru's analysis of this profoundly sensitive, painful and controversial issue is a long, rambling and uninformed tweet which runs in part as follows: 'In 2002 the Abe cabinet made a cabinet resolution that there was no evidence that comfort women were forcibly recruited by the military or officials. That is the view of the Japanese government. I am a Japanese, so I stand by the view of the Japanese government. Besides, I am not a historian, so I'm not going to do the work of collecting historical documents to deliberately overturn the Japanese government's cabinet resolution.' (For the full text and unofficial translation of the series of tweets, which is recommended reading for anyone interested in the current state of Japanese politics, see the text at the end of this article.)

Hashimoto's bright new Japan, it seems, will be a place where not only the country's future but also the events of the past are decided by government resolution. George Orwell would have loved it.

Even without being a historian, Hashimoto might have recalled that the 'comfort women' fiasco was one of the less glorious moments of his would-be ally Abe ShinzÅ brief tenure as Prime Minister. Having pushed through the cabinet resolution, which caused considerable damage to Japan's relations not only with South Korea and China but even with the United States, Prime Minister Abe then publicly backed down and repeatedly stated that his government intended after all to stand by the KÅ no Statement. In the context of debate surrounding the 2007 US Congress' House Resolution 121, which demanded an apology from the Japanese government to surviving former 'comfort women', he went on (bizarrely) to make a rather half-hearted apology, not to the victims themselves but to President George W. Bush, for any hurt cause (Okinawa Times, 27 April 2007). Equally bizarrely, Bush solemnly accepted the apology.



Hashimoto goes on to bitterly criticize Japanese bureaucrats who wish to argue that issues of war responsibility were settled by the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea. But his alternative diplomatic solution to the crisis in relations with Korea, as far as it is comprehensible from his tweet, would appear to involve overturning the KÅ no Statement, accepting the Abe cabinet resolution from which Abe himself subsequently retreated, drawing some arcane distinction between 'being forced' and acting 'contrary to one's own will', demanding proof from 'the Korean side' of something that has been historically documented many times over, and on this basis offering (or threatening) to rescind and renegotiate the 1965 Treaty with South Korea.

Hashimoto's politics poses a dilemma for his critics. This is not politics by persuasion but politics by performance. The object of the current performance is obvious. It is to provoke impassioned counter-attacks, preferably from those who can be labeled left-wing and foreign - best of all from those who can be labeled Korean or Chinese nationalists. This will then allow Hashimoto to assume the 'moral high ground' as a martyred nationalist hero assailed by 'anti-Japanese' forces. In response to Hashimoto-style politweets, it is important not to act out his predetermined scenario. But it is equally important that the considerable number of relatively sensible people who have seen Hashimoto as a possible beacon of hope for Japan should recognise his political agenda.

Another Future is Possible

Liberation Association members take part in an anti-Japan rally outside the Japanese Embassy in Seoul on August 23, 2012. The banner reads: "Demand an apology and compensation for the wartime sex slaves from the Japanese government." More broadly, the Hashimoto phenomenon can be placed in the context of the current political instability in Northeast Asia as a whole. A presidential election is imminent in both South Korea and Japan; a change of leadership is underway in China and an untested new leader has taken power in North Korea. All of this magnifies the uncertainties created by the massive disaffection from the mainstream parties in post-disaster Japan. It is from this context of change and anxiety that the resurgence of territorial disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and Takeshima/ Dokdo, as well as of nationalist rhetoric such as Hashimoto's, emerges.

This makes a careful and considered response to the Hashimoto phenomenon particularly important. Above all, this phenomenon should not be 'nationalised'. Hashimoto does not speak for Japan, and to condemn Japan because of his comments would only be to boost his demagogic appeal. The best reply from those who hope he never will speak for Japan is to allow his words to speak for themselves. Those outside Japan who are alarmed or offended by these words should seek out and lend support to the embattled peace, human rights and reconciliation groups in Japan which also seek a different future, so that their voices too may be heard at the national level.

Japan urgently needs political renewal and hope. But this is not going to be achieved by replacing the dull faces of traditional party politics with an egocentric would-be megastar who plans to conduct foreign policy by Twitter. Rather, it is at the grassroots level, in places like Liberty Osaka, that the real hopes and dreams for the future are still being quietly nurtured. The worst tragedy of all for Japan would be to allow the search for 'restoration' to extinguish the sparks that still burn bright in many parts of the country.

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF THE HASHIMOTO Series of TWEETS

Now we're being abused by the Korean media about the military comfort women problem, right? And if you try to argue back in the Japanese media you get in terrible trouble, but, ah well, it can't be helped. In the position of mayor of Osaka, a mere local government leader, I guess I shouldn't touch national foreign policy, but I will make a statement as representative of One Osaka (*Ōsaka Ishin no Kai*) who thinks about problems of national politics.

This time when the issue was raised what I clearly understood is that the Japanese government's logic about the 1993 KÅ no Statements needs to be sorted. In 2007, the Abe cabinet made an important cabinet resolution about the 1993 KÅ no Statement, which had admitted that military comfort women were subject to forcible recruitment (*kyōsei renko*) by the Japanese state. In 2007 the Abe cabinet made a cabinet resolution that there was no evidence that comfort women were forcibly recruited by the military or officials. That is the view of the Japanese government. I am a Japanese, so I stand by the view of the Japanese government. Besides, I am not a historian, so I am not going to do the work of collecting historical documents to deliberately overturn the Japanese government's cabinet resolution.

So what I'm saying is I want the Korean side to produce proof that they were forcibly recruited by the Japanese state. I'm not saying I absolutely don't accept the statements of the Korean side, I'm saying show us the proof. Then Korean media comes back and says the KÅ no Statement is the proof. That's complete tautology.

This is where Japanese nationals need to be properly aware, confront Korea and argue back. The 1993 KÅ no Statement ran away from this most important thing. That's what destroyed Japan-Korea relations. This is the real responsibility of politicians. Fight it out verbally until you foam at the mouth. We need to think seriously about what the real issue is, and how far we should respect the position of the other side.

In the 2007 cabinet resolution, the Japanese government determined that there was no proof to support the 1993 KÅ no Statement. But in spite of that Korea says the KÅ no Statement is the proof of forced recruitment. We can't leave the KÅ no Statement the way it is. It's true that the Japanese army was involved in running comfort stations. These institutions were instituted because it was wartime. In contemporary society too brothels are publicly regulated. It was natural that comfort stations were publicly regulated from the point of view of hygiene and maintaining order.

The problem is, were comfort women forcibly recruited against their will. That's the number one point. But there is no proof of that on the Japanese side. Even when the Jeju Island media did a survey they couldn't find anything to prove the fact that comfort women were forcibly recruited by the Japanese state. So I'm demanding that the Korean side provides proof. If there's proof then there should be an apology. Forced recruitment can't be justified by any arguments. But there isn't yet any evidence that the Japanese state forcibly recruited comfort women.

This is separate from the question of sympathy for the comfort women. You've got to feel sympathy for the suffering people who became comfort women in all sorts of circumstances against their own will and experienced mental and physical suffering. It's the same if you hear stories from Japanese people in the same circumstances. But [having to do something] against your own will and being forced is completely different.

The 1993 KÅ no Statement cheated us with the words 'against their own will'. That's the greatest responsibility of politicians. Does this mean it was against their own will, or does it mean that they were forced by the Japanese state? We have to make this clear. Of course we have to apologise if it was the latter. But now there isn't any proof of this. That's why I want the Korean side to produce it.

If it wasn't forced, how do we understand the comfort stations in the circumstances of the time? Japan wasn't the only place where there were comfort stations to protect military order, and the prostitution industry exists in every country of the world. It is certain that comfort stations and similar sorts of prostitution industry exist. The problem is, were the comfort women forcibly recruited. We have to confront Korea about that face to face.

Should the Japanese government leave things as they are when the Korean media says the KÅ no Statement is proof that comfort women were forcibly recruited etc.? How about the issue of reconciling this with the cabinet resolution of 2007 which said that there is no proof they were forcibly recruited? Japanese parliament and Foreign Ministry, get your act together!

But hey, I don't think we should quarrel with our neighbours in nearby countries about this. If the root of it is the military comfort women issue, we should debate it face to face, and if there are facts we should apologise about, then we should apologise. If no facts emerge, then we shouldn't apologise. This is where the Foreign Ministry gets politicians to give a pathetic excuse of an answer. The 1965 Japan-South Korea Treaty of Basic Relations.

In times of problems like this, there's no reason to communicate with the other party by giving a bureaucratic reply like, this was all settled by the 1965 Japan-South Korea Treaty of Basic Relations. You know, when I was Governor [of Osaka] and my departments kept producing that kind of formulaic reply, I'd just hit it straight back to them all the time. That's the sort of formal logic that the law courts use when handing down judgments. Person to person communication is banned.

But bureaucrats just develop this sort of formulaic logic. If you say 'it was all settled by the 1965 Japan-Korea Basic Treaty!' you have no idea whether there was or wasn't forcible recruitment, right? A typical bureaucratic response. Whatever it says in the Basic Treaty, we should debate face to face whether there was forcible recruitment. Until persuaded. If there really was forcible recruitment, then we should debate whether it was settled by the Treaty of Basic Relations. There is definitely a legal principle that if you don't enter into discussion of topic of conflict to be reconciled, the search for reconciliation is ineffectual. So if you say it was all solved by the 1965 Treaty of Basic Relations, that's no solution. Politics is what corrects the logic of bureaucrats.

Whatever the 1965 Japan-South Korea Treaty of Basic Relations, we should confirm whether there was or wasn't forcible recruitment of comfort women. If we made a cabinet resolution in 2007 that there was no evidence of forced recruitment, then there is nothing for it but to revise the KÅ no Statement. And ask the Korean side for proof of forcible recruitment other than the KÅ no Statement. If proof emerges, then we will think of including the 1965 Japan-South Korea Treaty of Basic Relations in the frame. Bureaucrats find it easy to start with hair-splitting. That's why they start with the 1965 Treaty. Politicians should start with the real essence of things. Because

...ad "ad tald, ad tald e;Cald @ad "ad l ad ad ad ad 1965ad "ad @ae—YeY"ayae-aed jci, ad se\$fae+ae, "ad lad a, "ad lad , ad tad@afsc"ad a, ad — ad jci, ae%ad "ad @a, afYafYa, +af/a, af\$af/a, "ad "a, Ca, ad, ad "ad (Ead "ad , ac, cYaa"aeTM, a) fa, ad e/af+ad ca, %ad "ad tad , ad tad a/2ca/ad ci-

ad "ad "a, l ad Ea/2ae%oEad "ad @a/2ca/ad e-a, "a+e-ad TMa, ca, 1965ad "ad @ae—YeY"ayae-aed jci, ad se\$fae+ae, "ad lad ad "e-Cad lal Ya, % ad ad/4-a"feEe;Ead @a"ca@Yad (Ead , ad lal Yad @ad < ad "ad ad lal Yad @ad ca... "ad l a"tal ca, %ad "ad , ad "a, ad "ad , ad cae, ad "ad ad "ad @a"afsc-"ad/4 ad ae, aYae-aed jci, ad Ead @ad tad \$ad , a, Caedl cceYaeEel tal ca, %ae... "ad @a%a@ad @a/4-a"feEe;Ead @a"ca@Yad @a"ad la, "e-e-ad — ad Ya, % ad , ad , ad ae, ci l a/2— ad TMa, < ad "ad \$ae, ae-a/2"ad <a/4-a"feEe;Ead @a"ca@Yad (Ead , ad lal Yad "a, % ad ad ae-jad "1965ad "ad @aYae-aed jci, ad se\$fae+ae, "ad lad "ad ad lal Yad ad @ad tad lad @e-e-ad ad "a, cae, a"Ce\$Ead @a"ae+jad ad l ad ja, "ad "a... Yad lal lad , ad "ad ad lal Ya, %ad ad c"ad ad <a"Ce\$EeCe"e+c, jaS"ad "e-Cad tae+e-cil ta, ad , a, cae, ad ad ca, %1965ad "ad @ae— YeY"ayae-aed jci, ad se\$fae+ae, "ad lad a, "ad l e-Cad lal la, a/2ad @e\$fae+ad ca, "ad "a, %ad "ad , ac, a@afsal @afa, affa, "a, ad lal TMad @ad Ca"ae"ae,

1965ad "ad @ae—YeY"ayae-aed jci, ad Ead , a, l ad tad "a, ad ad ae... "ad @a%a@ad @a/4-a"feEe;Ead Ead ad lal Yad @ad ad @ad tad ca, ad — ad lal ca, Sal "ce "a@sad TMad "ad l ad ae, 2007ad "ad <a/4-a"feEe;Ead @e"ae< ad "ad "ad , ad "ad , ad tae-e-ae+ae@a@a, "a,, ad lal Yad "a, %ae+ae"Z-e-c"e-C+ad "e/c"ad — ad TMa, ad — ad "ad "ad , ad \$ad — a, tad tad ta, eY"ayae-aed "ad <ae+ae"Z-e-c"e-C+ad @a/4-a"feEe;Ead @e"ae< a, "ae+, a, l a, cae, a,, ad — ad l ad @e"ae< ad Ea"ad lad l ad Ya, ac"ae-jad "1965ad "ad @ae—YeY"ayae-aed jci, ad @a, c"ae, "ae, "e"fa l a, cae, a/2"ad "ce"ad "ad "ad tad "ad ca, %ad... Ya, cae, ad ad ca, %1965ad "ad jci, ad ca, %ad Ya, cae, ae"ae+ae"ad TMad "ae+ae"ad ca, %ad... Ya, ad "ad l ad ae, c"ae"ad" e;Cald \$ad "ad "ad "ad \$ae—YeY"ayae-aed jci, ad "ad "ad (Ea) "ae"ad @cyYa, ad "ad "a, l ad "ad ad lal Yac, ae "ad lal "ad @ae... "ad @e%a @c"ad e;Ea, "ae+cil Ead "ad "ad , ae+c"ad @af l afLa"fa, "ae, ad "a, Ead "ad l ae"ae"ad ad,

Sources

Chan, Jennifer. 2008. Another Japan is Possible: Social Movements and Global Citizenship Education. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Morris-Suzuki, T., Low, M., Petrov, L. and Tsu, T. 2012 (forthcoming). East Asia Beyond the History Wars: Confronting the Ghosts of Conflict. London and New York: Routledge.

Soh, C. Sarah. 2008. The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tanaka, Toshiyuki. 2002. Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution During World War II and the US Occupation. London and New York: Routledge.

Totani, Yuma. 2008. The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: The Pursuit of Justice in the Wake of World War II. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Yamane, Kazuyo. 2009. Grassroots Museums for Peace in Japan: Unknown Efforts for Peace and Reconciliation. Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller.

Yoshimi, Yoshiaki. 2002. Comfort Women. Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II, Asia Perspectives. trans. Suzanne O'Brien. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tessa Morris-Suzuki is Professor of Japanese History in the Division of Pacific and Asian History, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, and a Japan Focus associate. Her most recent books are Exodus to North Korea: Shadows from Japan's Cold War, Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era and To the Diamond Mountains: A Hundred-Year Journey Through China and Korea.

Recommended citation: Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Out With Human Rights, In With Government-Authored History: The Comfort Women and the Hashimoto Prescription for 'New Japan,'" The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol 10, Issue 36, No. 1, September 3, 2012.

We welcome your comments on this and all other articles. Please consider subscribing to our RSS feed, or following us via Twitter or Facebook.

Comments
Authors: [Tessa Morris-Suzuki](#) [Add comment](#)
For all articles by the author, click on author's name.