

“Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War”: The Case for Retraction on Grounds of Academic Misconduct

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To Whom It May Concern:

We, the undersigned, are a transnational group of historians of Japan and its empire. Our research and publications cover the history of prostitution, the history of gender, the history of migration and empire, the history of the

Pacific War, and the history of colonial Korea. What is written here is our work, but it was made possible due to the efforts of a much wider network, including historians and colleagues around the globe, who generously contributed their expertise. We base our findings below on our experience reading and interpreting Japanese historical documents, as well as our common investment in producing responsible scholarship.

We became aware of Mark Ramseyer’s article - a revisionist account of the "contractual dynamics" of the comfort station system, published in the *International Review of Law and Economics (IRLE)* - when we encountered media coverage about it, based on a Japanese language article in the *Sankei Shimbun* summarizing the journal article.¹ Initially, coverage was confined to Korean and Japanese language media reports. In the process of our investigation, we also found and read Ramseyer's English language article about the Comfort Women issue in *JAPANForward*, “Recovering the Truth about Comfort Women,” which had been published on January 12th, two weeks before the *Sankei Shimbun* piece.² In his *JAPANForward* piece, Ramseyer asserted that “claims about enslaved Korean comfort women are historically untrue” and “pure fiction.” As historians of Japan and its empire, we were shocked by this claim, because there has been an overwhelming amount of academic work that supports survivors’ testimony that they were held captive in “comfort stations” (*ianjo*) that were patronized by the Japanese military during World War II.

When we turned to Ramseyer's peer-reviewed article in the academic journal *IRLE* to evaluate its argument, what we found further alarmed us: distortion, misrepresentation, misdirection, and omission of historical sources.³ As historians, we appreciate that scholars engage in different interpretations of the past, and we believe that well-grounded historical research, however unpopular, potentially offensive, or politically inconvenient, merits respect and thoughtful discussion. However, we contend that this article does not fall into this category. Its inaccuracies are more than superficial errors; they completely undermine the article's claims. Indeed, if the sources were portrayed accurately the argument would collapse. For this reason, we believe that the article should be retracted.

In this letter, we lay out the distortions and misrepresentations of sources that we have found in Ramseyer's article. While many of us also have problems with the framing and logic of the argument, which we and other concerned scholars have documented elsewhere, this letter is not intended to address those issues; it is about the use of sources and what we believe to be problems with academic integrity, not the merits of the argument or its political, legal, or moral ramifications.

Ramseyer's article argues that the "comfort station system" relied on a contractual framework through which brothel keepers and women agreed on the appropriate compensation for the women's work. The brothel keepers wanted to prevent women from "shirking" in a difficult and dangerous job. The women, meanwhile, were mindful of the reputational consequences of working in a brothel and wary that they might be cheated. The result, according to Ramseyer, was a system of "credible commitments" in which women were paid large sums of money upfront for short terms of service in brothels. Meanwhile, they were incentivized to "work hard" by the prospect of paying off those

substantial cash advances and leaving service early.

There are two factual claims that are fundamental to this argument. One is that there were contractual agreements between women and brothel keepers that paid women large cash advances. The other is that the women in brothels could leave early if they earned out by paying off their loans and debts. Neither is supported by the evidence Ramseyer uses; in fact, in some cases the evidence he cites directly contradicts these claims.

Below, we have categorized the problems we have found with the article under four headings: "Failure to Acknowledge an Absence of Evidence," "Use of Evidence from Primary Sources," "Use of Evidence from Secondary Sources," and "Miscitation." We have cited our sources in footnotes and an appendix to this letter. Unless we indicate otherwise, all translations from Japanese are ours.

Finally, in preparing this letter, we have consulted the American Historical Association's "Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct," which reads, in part:

Professional integrity in the practice of history requires **awareness of one's own biases and a readiness to follow sound method and analysis wherever they may lead**. Historians should document their findings and be prepared to make available their sources, evidence, and data, including any documentation they develop through interviews. Historians should not misrepresent their sources. They should report their findings as accurately as possible and not omit evidence that runs counter to their own interpretation. They should not commit plagiarism. They should oppose false or erroneous use of evidence, along with any efforts to ignore or conceal such false or erroneous use.⁴

Nevertheless, we understand that there can be a range of opinion about what constitutes academic misconduct, and we also know that standards are not always consistent between disciplines. We believe that some of the examples below -- including the mischaracterization of Osaki's and Mun Ok-ju's testimony, the failure to acknowledge the absence of relevant sample or actual contracts, and unmarked citations to nationalist blogs and historically revisionist websites -- transgress standards of scholarly integrity that are widely shared across all academic disciplines. Other examples may, for some readers, fall into a gray zone of irresponsible scholarship, the misuse of sources, or sloppy citation practices. We document those here for the record, but invite readers to come to their own conclusions.

The Evidence

1. Failure to Acknowledge an Absence of Evidence

Ramseyer argues that the “comfort station” system relied on contractual agreements between women and brothel keepers, much like the system of licensed prostitution in prewar Japan. There are extant contracts for work in prostitution going back to the Edo period (1600-1868), and there are also surviving examples from the Meiji (1868-1912), Taishō (1912-1926), and Shōwa (1926-1989) eras. All of these pertain to work in Japan before the war. However, Ramseyer produces no evidence of any *signed* contracts for work at “comfort stations,” whether for Japanese, Korean, or any other women.

Ramseyer does, on page 6, provide a citation to templates for contracts that would have sent Japanese women to work in overseas “comfort stations.” We discuss Ramseyer’s interpretation of that source -- which he cites as Naimusho, 1938 -- in a separate section below. But even in this case, the actual contracts, primary sources that would provide the most direct information about payments and terms of service, are entirely absent.

Further, Ramseyer provides no examples of contracts for Korean women, whether signed contracts or templates, working in licensed brothels or comfort stations. One of the sources Ramseyer cites, Kim and Kim, *Shokuminchi yūkaku: Nihon no guntai to Chōsen hantō* [Colonial red-light districts: The Japanese military and the Korean peninsula], provides indirect information about payment in the prewar Korean licensed system through newspaper and magazine reports and oral testimony. U.S. military records also document survivor testimony from comfort women who said they were held to contracts. (Ramseyer’s use of these sources is discussed below.) But there are no signed or sample contracts for Korean women cited, and Ramseyer’s article does not acknowledge this absence, nor does it lay out a strategy for making calculations or generalizations from scattered and indirect evidence.

Meanwhile, readers are asked to assume, with no justification, that the few cases Ramseyer cites are representative rather than outliers. At best, we can conclude, given fragmentary and indirect evidence, that some women were employed through a contract system. But we cannot confirm this for most, let alone for all, women. We cannot make claims about how much the women were paid, and we cannot say how long their terms were on average. We also know -- from the very sources Ramseyer cites -- that some women held to contracts had been deceived about the nature of their work and that some were not free to leave even when

their terms ended (see the section on Use of Evidence from Primary Sources below).

Without any evidence of signed contracts for either women in the “comfort station” system or Korean prostitutes in general, it is difficult to assess or credit an argument that is primarily about contracting for labor, which purports to analyze payments and terms of service, and which relies on a problematic comparison between the (well documented) domestic Japanese prewar licensed system, the colonial Korean licensed system, and the “comfort station” system. As our colleagues Andrew Gordon and Carter Eckert have written in a separate letter to the journal, “Any reasonable standard of academic integrity would require that Ramseyer state in his article that he does not have access to actual contracts or sample contracts concluded with Korean women in Korea, acknowledge how few third-party statements he has seen about contracts, and note the limits to what one can learn from those references.”⁵

2. Use of Evidence from Primary Sources

Mischaracterization of Yamazaki, *Sandakan hachiban no shōkan*

On page 4 of his article, Ramseyer relates the story of a Japanese girl named Osaki, who traveled abroad to work at a brothel in Borneo at the age of ten. He uses this example as evidence for his fundamental claims: that women agreed to contracts, that they were paid large sums of money upfront, that they had a chance to earn out early, and that they were free to leave during their terms of service.

For example, Ramseyer writes: “When Osaki turned ten, a recruiter stopped by and offered

her 300 yen upfront if she would agree to go abroad. The recruiter did not try to trick her; even at age 10, she knew what the job entailed” (4). But Osaki’s testimony, recorded in Yamazaki Tomoko’s book *Sandakan hachiban no shōkan*, which Ramseyer cites, reveals precisely the opposite.

Osaki recalled, “Although I had some idea of what a prostitute was, no one explained it and we [i.e. the girls who had yet to be initiated as prostitutes] didn’t ask. We didn’t really know anything.”⁶ Later, describing how she and the other girls resisted when the brothel keeper first demanded they have sex with customers, she described them saying, “You brought us here without ever mentioning that kind of work, and now you tell us to take customers. You liar!”⁷ “After our first night,” she remembered, “we were terrified. We hadn’t realized this was what men and women did. It was so horrible, we could hardly believe it.”⁸

Ramseyer writes that Osaki was happy during her first three years at the brothel, before she was initiated, because the brothel keeper’s family “fed her white rice and fish every day” (4). Osaki did say this, but Ramseyer omits the full context of the sentence. Osaki recalled, “So this was the kind of life we led until we were initiated as prostitutes, and we weren’t unhappy about coming to the South Pacific. *This was partly because we didn’t fully understand our sister’s work*, but the main thing was that we were able to eat white rice morning, noon, and night.”⁹

Other aspects of Osaki’s testimony contradict Ramseyer’s contention that “the recruiter did not deceive her” (4). Osaki testified that she told her friend what the recruiter had told her: “If you go abroad, every day is like a festival, you can wear nice kimono, and every day you can eat as much white rice as you want.”¹⁰

Meanwhile, though Ramseyer describes the recruiter offering Osaki money, she said that

the recruiter discussed the matter with her brother and offered *him* the money, and she only agreed after the fact.¹¹

Another of Ramseyer's claims is that women could save money by "working hard," which would allow them to earn out and leave the brothels before their contractual term expired. He writes of Osaki, "She found that if she worked hard, she could repay about 100 yen a month" (4). Osaki did testify that she worked hard and repaid 100 yen a month, but she also testified that there seemed to be no relationship between how hard she worked and what she was paid:

At the end of every month the boss would pull out his abacus and calculate our earnings. Calling out our names one by one, he would announce, 'Osaki, your earnings are such and such, and your debts are such and such.' He only revealed the results of his calculations. Oyae could read a little, but because Ofumi, Ohana, and the rest of us were totally illiterate, we didn't know how he came up with these figures. The boss could manipulate the accounts as he saw fit. Even so, if we received the same salary on months when we had an unusually high number of customers as on months when we hadn't done very well, even we couldn't help but feel that things were amiss.¹²

She continued, "even though I worked hard without discriminating among customers and paid back one hundred yen a month, the interest on my loan kept adding up. Things just didn't work out the way I had hoped."¹³

Finally, Ramseyer describes how Osaki was transferred to a brothel in Singapore after her first employer died. (Curiously, given that Ramseyer is describing a contract system, he

refers to the employer as Osaki's "owner.") Osaki disliked the new brothel keeper and escaped by boat back to Borneo. Ramseyer contends that this is evidence for an important point: "even overseas, women who disliked their jobs at a brothel could -- and did -- disappear" (4).

In fact, there was more to this story. Osaki said that she and two of her "sisters" at the brothel boarded the boat to Borneo, but they knew their new employer would come after them. They threw themselves on the mercy of a woman brothel keeper in Borneo, Okuni, but Okuni told them that one of them would have to return; otherwise, the brothel keeper in Singapore would be angry to have completely lost out on his investment. They drew straws, and one of the women had to return.¹⁴ In other words, the women could not -- and did not -- "disappear."

A full and accurate portrayal of the evidence from Osaki's testimony contradicts every one of the contentions that is central to Ramseyer's argument. Osaki was deceived by the recruiter, she had no idea what the job of prostitution would entail, she could not earn out by working hard, and she was not free to disappear if she was unhappy.

It is important to note that Osaki's story is used as evidence for claims about the prewar Japanese contract system, which was supposedly, according to Ramseyer's argument, the pattern for what happened later in the comfort stations. But as we can see from the examples above, the evidence doesn't support his contentions.

Mischaracterization of testimony of Mun Ok-ju

In section 3.5 of the article, "Prostitute

savings," Ramseyer writes:

"Of all the Korean comfort women who left accounts, Mun Ok-ju seems to have done well most flamboyantly. She writes in her memoir (KIH, 2016b):

'I saved a considerable amount of money from tips... I knew that all the soldiers put their earnings in the saving accounts in the field post office, so I decided to put my money in the saving account. I asked a soldier to make a personal seal and put 500 yen in the account. . . . I became the owner of the savings passbook for the first time in my life. I worked in Daegu as a nanny and a street seller from the childhood but I remained poor no matter how hard I worked. I could not believe that I could have so much money in my saving account. A house in Daegu cost 1,000 yen at the time. I could let my mother have an easy life. I felt very happy and proud. The savings passbook became my treasure. . .

It was fun to go shopping by rickshaw. I can't forget the experience of shopping in a markets in Rangoon. There were lots of jewelry shops because many jewels were produced in Burma, and ruby and jade were not expensive. One of my friends collected many jewels. I thought I should have a jewel myself, so I went and bought a diamond.

I became a popular woman in Rangoon. There were a lot more officers in Rangoon than near the frontlines, so I was invited to many parties. I sang songs at parties and received lots of tips.' " (6) [italics added]

earned and saved significant amounts of money. The block quotation takes up half of the section. However, Mun's own testimony, cited by Ramseyer, states that she saved this money from tips, not from payments from the comfort station owner (see italicised sections above). Citing Mun's testimony about buying jewels in Burma, and from tips rather than earnings, does not support his overall argument, which is that comfort women were well compensated by brothel keepers themselves as an inducement to "work hard" at a difficult job.

Furthermore, Ramseyer's citation for Mun's memoir deserves scrutiny. It is cited parenthetically as (KIH, 2016b). When one refers to the Works Cited section, it is listed as "KIH, Apr. 20, 2016 2016b. Korea Institute of History. 2016. Former Korean Comfort Woman Mun Oku-chu."

The "Korea Institute of History" listed here is actually the name of an anonymous blog.¹⁵ It is not an "Institute of History" at all. The content of the website consists of 39 blog posts from April 2016, all connected to the comfort women "issue." Ramseyer's quotation of Mun's "memoir" is from this website's unpublished translation of excerpts of Mun's memoir, not the memoir itself, which has been published in Japanese and also in Korean translation.¹⁶ Why cite an anonymous, unpublished translation and not a published source? There are not even page numbers for the sections Ramseyer has quoted.

When we look at the excerpts from Mun's memoir translated on the blogpost, which Ramseyer cites, we can see that he has further cherry-picked his evidence. For example, note the first sentence of the excerpt on shopping that Ramseyer does not cite (italics added):

"(In Rangoon, Burma)

Page 106~107

This quotation by Ramseyer from Korean comfort woman Mun Ok-ju, is cited to support the article's argument that comfort women

*I was able to have more freedom in Rangoon than before. Of course, not completely free but I could go out once a week or twice a month with permission from the Korean owner. It was fun to go shopping by rickshaw. I can't forget the experience of shopping in a market in Rangoon. There were lots of jewelry shops because many jewels were produced in Burma, and ruby and jade were not expensive. One of my friends collected many jewels. I thought I should have a jewel myself, so I went and bought a diamond.*¹⁷

Mun Ok-ju's testimony is also discussed in many pieces of secondary scholarship, yet Ramseyer has chosen to cherry-pick quotations from an anonymous blog. What most secondary scholarship -- and her published testimony -- point out is the fact that Mun's transportation to Burma was the second time she had been trafficked across the empire for sexual labor, through force and deception. Contrary to Ramseyer's central argument, she makes clear that the first time she worked at a comfort station, in Manchuria, she was not working on contract.

In Mun's memoirs we find the following descriptions of her experiences working at the comfort stations. First, on her trafficking to Manchuria in 1940, Mun relates how, aged sixteen, on her way home from a friend's one evening she was stopped by two military police -- one Japanese, one Korean -- and a Korean plainclothes officer [*keiji*]. She was taken to a military police station, where she was held overnight with one other young girl.

"The next morning we were put on the train at Taegu station where we were handed over to another Japanese military police officer and a Korean plainclothes

officer."

After three days' travel, they arrived in Tōan Province, Northeast Manchuria. Mun was taken to a house run by an older Korean, where there were around twenty other Korean girls.

"I realised this was a house where men were serviced...and we would be forced to service them too. I cried every day. But as much as I cried, the men kept coming."¹⁸

Mun was forced to have sex with 20-30 Japanese soldiers and military police a day. She was sixteen, but some of the other girls, all trafficked from Taegu, were fifteen and fourteen.

"The soldiers brought tickets with them. I don't know how much they were worth...I collected them and once a week a soldier came to make a note of them. They told me this was because I would be paid when I went home. I collected as many tickets as I could...In the end though, I was forced to work for nothing. Aside from money to buy essentials, I didn't get any of it."¹⁹

Mun was able to escape by telling one military policeman, whom she had become friendly with, that her mother was sick. He got her identification papers to take the train.²⁰

Further, on Mun's transportation to Burma, she writes in her memoir how when back in Taegu, training at a school for *kisaeng* in 1942, girls she had known in Tōan province told her "let's

go work in military canteens - you can make a lot of money.” To Mun this sounded like a good plan: as she now wasn’t able to get married, she needed to earn her own money.

“If I worked in a canteen as a server or washing dishes I would have a steady income. I could even send money to my mother. It was a more dependable job than a *kisaeng*.”²¹

After travelling with her friends by train to Pusan, Mun joined other girls at an inn, waiting to travel to work in the tropics [*minami no kuni*]. She did not tell her mother her plans, because she “would definitely have been against it.”

“The next day, July 10th 1942...led by Matsumoto we went to the wharf reserved for military use. There were between 150-200 women gathered there, with one or two middle-aged men assigned to each group of 15-20 women. A soldier gave orders in a loud voice and we were put on the ship.”²²

The cargo ship that Mun and the other girls were put onto was in convoy with six other military vessels. They docked in Taiwan, then Saigon, then Singapore, before arriving in Rangoon.

“I was told I was in Rangoon, in Burma. A city and country whose name I had never heard before...The seventeen girls from Taegu were told we were going to Mandalay. It seems they drew lots to

decide where we all went.”²³

According to Mun’s memoir, it was only when the girls reached Mandalay that they became aware of what they had been brought for:

“Among the soldiers there was a Korean, who told us quietly in Korean, ‘you’ve been tricked into coming here, you poor things. You’ve made a mistake: this is a *pi-ya*.’”²⁴

Mun was around eighteen, but some other girls were sixteen. Lots of the girls didn't know what a *pi-ya* [comfort station] was, or what was done there.

“I was a little different. Of course I was surprised, but that moment, I remember thinking that of course, it made sense. From everything that had happened up to that point, Matsumoto’s attitude, the way the soldiers treated us... Of course I came because I thought we would be working in a canteen. But after my experience in Tōan province, my reaction was different to the girls who didn’t know anything about what the work of a “comfort woman” entailed. Their shock was indescribable.”²⁵

Only when they had been trafficked to a foreign country were the girls told the conditions of their work:

“It was only then that Matsumoto stood in front of the weeping girls and told us that this was a comfort station. ‘If you service the soldiers you’ll make money, so grit

your teeth and get on with it. Take the tickets brought by the soldiers, and when you go back to Korea the money will be added up and you'll get 60%, so work hard."²⁶

In neither account above is there evidence that Mun was aware of what the work would entail. There is no indication that she chose to work in a comfort station or that she signed a contract. In the case of Manchuria, she states clearly that she never received payment. Both accounts point to force and deception.

On the topic of Mun's savings, many secondary works make clear that although Mun saved tips totalling around 25,000 yen in a post office account, she was unable to access this money after the end of the war. In fact, she died without receiving it:

"Mun Ok-chu was one of several Korean 'comfort women' who could not get back the money she deposited in the Shimonoseki post office during her sexual servitude. During her testimony tour to Shimonoseki, Japan in 1993, a Japanese supporting group tried to assist her in getting her deposit money back from the post office.^[13] However, the Shimonoseki post office refused to give the money back to her on the grounds that she was no longer a Japanese citizen after the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty."²⁷

A responsible use of this testimony would not only provide a correct, full, and verifiable citation to a published source, it would also mention both of Mun's experiences as a comfort woman. It would not omit her fellow

travelers to Burma, who had no knowledge and did not consent, and it would include the detail about how she was forced to service thirty men per day (something Ramseyer euphemistically describes elsewhere in the article as "hard work").

Osaki and Mun Ok-ju are the only women's stories that Ramseyer addresses in the article. Even if his renditions of these stories were accurate, it would be difficult to generalize the conditions under which all women came to work in overseas brothels. But Ramseyer's renditions are not accurate; they are distortions. Both directly contradict his characterization of overseas prostitution and comfort station "contracts," respectively. Ramseyer's claims regarding these cases are based on mischaracterizations of the evidence.

Selective Use of Evidence from U.S. Military Sources

As discussed above, Ramseyer uses evidence from U.S. military sources to support his claim that Korean women in comfort stations worked on contract. It is true that these sources state that Korean women were held to contracts. However, a full reading of these sources contradicts Ramseyer's larger claim about the nature of the contracts: i.e., that women at the comfort stations were held to short terms, offered substantial upfront payments, provided with the incentive to work hard and earn out, and permitted to leave when their terms of service were over.

For example, the U.S. army's report of an interrogation of former Korean "comfort women" in Burma, which Ramseyer cites as evidence for the existence of contracts, says,

Early in May of 1942, Japanese agents arrived in Korea for the purpose of enlisting Korean girls for ‘comfort service’ in newly conquered Japanese territories in Southeast Asia. The nature of this ‘comfort service’ was not specific but it was assumed to be work consisting of visiting the wounded in hospitals, rolling bandages, and generally making the soldiers happy. The inducement used by the agents was plenty of money, an opportunity to pay off the debts, easy work, and the prospect of a new life in a new land - Singapore.²⁸

This directly contradicts the claim that women agreed to contracts for sex work.

Meanwhile, another US Army report from Burma, which Ramseyer cites on the hygiene regime in Military Comfort Stations, states:

Every ‘comfort girl’ was employed on the following contract conditions. She received fifty percent of her own gross takings and was provided with free passage, free food and free medical treatment. The passage and medical treatment were provided by the Army authorities, the food was purchased by the brothel owner with the assistance of the Army supply depots. The owners made other profits by selling clothing, necessities, and luxuries to the girls at exorbitant charges. When a girl is able to repay the sum of money paid to her family, with interest, she should be provided with a return passage to KOREA and then considered free. *But owing to war conditions, no one of prisoner of war’s group had so far been allowed to leave; although in June 1943, 15 Army Headquarters had arranged to return home those girls who were free from debt, and one girl who fulfilled these conditions*

*and wished to return was easily persuaded to remain.*²⁹

This contradicts Ramseyer’s claim that the women were free to leave.

Mischaracterization of Japanese Home Ministry Documents

In section 3.3, “Contract Prices,” Ramseyer references a collection of documents from the Japanese Home Ministry, which he cites as “Naimusho 1938.”³⁰ Ramseyer does not provide exact page numbers or more specific references. He uses this source to make factual claims about how much Japanese women were paid for contracts to work at “comfort stations”: “Women from Japan were paid 600-700 yen on two-year terms” (6).

As we discussed in the section above titled “Failure to Acknowledge an Absence of Evidence”, this collection contains template contracts that stipulate two-year terms and a range of payments which match some of Ramseyer’s claims, although he provides no page numbers to allow confirmation. But the concrete examples he cites are either missing (we cannot find an example of a woman being paid 700-800 yen), or they are indirect reports that do not support his conclusion in the section. For example, a document in this collection does report that two women were sent from a restaurant in Mito to a brothel in Shanghai. There are values attached to the loan agreements here, which Ramseyer correctly states as 600-700 yen. However, there is no term attached (this is not an actual contract, but a description of a minor scandal). There is also no reference to the women consenting to go at all, or even any reference to them

speaking to the procurer - the conversation referenced is between the procurer and the restaurant proprietor.³¹ The description of this incident is followed by blank template contracts.

Moreover, the problem at issue in this case -- and all of the cases mentioned in this collection -- was civilian officials' concern that recruiters who claimed to be working for the military were deceiving women into signing contracts for work in prostitution in China. In another case in the compendium, which Ramseyer relies on for a yen figure attached to a contract, officials in Wakayama reported that three "suspicious men" were "hanging around" recruiting women who worked at a restaurant. According to the report, they promised ignorant women (*muchi naru fujoshi*) that they would receive good money, that they would only service military men, and that the military would supply their food.³² Officials themselves found this problematic, in part because "ignorant women" might not be aware of what they were getting into, and in part because the recruiters had stressed their ties to the military. This is why they raised the issue.

In sum, there are three problems with Ramseyer's use of these documents. One is that template contracts are not actual contracts, and that the numbers he produces as being attached to contracts are taken from indirect reports that do not include specific information about contractual conditions. Another is that some of the numbers are not verifiable from this source. Finally, Ramseyer uses this source to make an argument about the transparency of contracts, when the source indicates the opposite: even civilian officials worried that the women involved hadn't properly consented.

Mischaracterization of Shina 1938 and Gun'ianjo 1938 on Recruitment

In section 2.4, Ramseyer makes the case that the "comfort stations" were carefully regulated and managed, and that the Japanese government was determined to prevent the deception and exploitation of women who worked in these facilities. To support this argument, Ramseyer cites a famous piece of guidance from the Japanese Home Ministry, which was issued in 1938, and which regulated the recruitment of Japanese women headed to work in restaurants, "cafes," bars, brothels, and other brothel-like establishments overseas.³³ The problem with Ramseyer's use of the source is that it is selectively translated and presented so that the context is unavailable to the reader.

Ramseyer provides a partial translation of these regulations, beginning, "a) For women traveling for the purposes of prostitution, approval shall be granted only to those women heading to North and Central China who are currently working as licensed or effective prostitutes, who are 21 years old or older, and who are free of venereal and other infectious diseases . . ." (5). As the ellipses in the original article indicate, Ramseyer has omitted a clause here.

A full translation of this passage would read: "For women traveling for the purposes of work in prostitution, *for the time being we will tacitly permit this* only in the case of women heading to North and Central China who are currently working as licensed prostitutes or in other professions which are, in reality, prostitution; who are 21 years of age or older; and who are free of venereal and other infectious diseases. Identity documents will be issued to these women by the Foreign Ministry pursuant to Foreign Ministry Classified Instruction No. 3776, dated August 31st 1937 ["On the Restriction of Travel to China by Undesirable Elements"]." (italics added)

The full translation presents a problem. Why would the Japanese Home Ministry feel the

need to “tacitly permit” (黙認 *mokunin*) the trafficking of women to overseas brothels if the regulations it established -- the age minimum, the restriction to sex workers, the disease regulations, and the issuing of permits -- ensured that recruitment was transparent and lawful?

The answer to this question can be found in the introductory text of the order, which Ramseyer does not translate.

Recently, given the reestablishment of order in various parts of China, the number of emigrants to China has markedly increased. Among them are no small number of women who are traveling to work at restaurants, bars, “cafes,” and also brothels and related establishments. Moreover, in Japan, every region has seen an increase in cases in which recruiters of these women claim to be acting with the approval of military leadership.

Bearing in mind the situation in China, women’s emigration is surely necessary and unavoidable. The police have also given this careful consideration and recognize the need for taking steps that are based on real conditions on the ground. However, without proper regulation of these women’s recruitment, it will damage the prestige of the Japanese empire and tarnish the honor of the Imperial Army, and it will also exert an undesirable influence on people on the homefront and, especially, the family members of those drafted into military service. *It will also be difficult to guarantee that recruitment does not contravene international treaty agreements concerning the trafficking of women.* Therefore, with these considerations in mind, and taking into account the situation on the ground, we issue the following guidance:³⁴

In other words, allowing sex workers over the age of 21 to emigrate to work in brothels had to be “tacitly permitted” because it was in contravention of an international treaty agreement. This is likely a reference to the “International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Women and Children,” which Japan ratified in 1925.³⁵ This agreement did raise the legal age for brothel work to 21, as reflected in the Home Ministry regulations, but it also bound Japan to the text of an earlier treaty that prohibited the trafficking of women *even with their consent* if they were subject to an “abuse of authority.” Recruiters claiming ties to the military could be construed that way, and this is what civilian officials worried over in the case reports preceding the order.

To summarize briefly, what the Home Ministry regulations show is that the Japanese government was aware that Japan was contravening an international treaty in order to traffic women to military comfort stations in China. The way that Ramseyer selectively translates them obscures this context.

Ramseyer writes that “The government - the regulations imply - realized the political risks it was running. Reformers within Japan had been fighting for decades to ban prostitution. The last thing it needed were accounts of naive young girls duped by mercenary and dishonest recruiters into a multi-year stint in a Shanghai brothel”(5). The reference to “reformers” appears to be based on the other source he cites, Gun’ianjo, 1938.³⁶ Indeed this notice from the Infantry Bureau to the Northern China Area and Central China Expeditionary Armies indicates that officials were concerned about “misunderstanding by the general public,” although there is no mention of “reformers.” A full translation of this notice tells us that the warning was issued because of the widespread misconduct in recruitment of women to work at comfort stations, relaying the information

discussed in “Naimusho 1938,” and even going so far as to call the methods of recruitment in Japan similar to “kidnapping”:

In recruiting women employees and others in Japan proper for the establishment of comfort stations in the region around the China Incident [Beijing], there are those that act in the name of the military etc, thereby damaging the prestige of the military and inviting misunderstanding by the general public. There are also those that recruit [women] via war correspondents and visitors to the front, with no oversight, creating social problems. There are also cases in which the choice of people entrusted with recruitment was inappropriate and thus they were arrested and examined by police authorities due to methods of recruitment which resembled kidnapping. As such, no few cases require attention, and in the future women’s recruitment should be regulated by the Expeditionary Army. [This notice] orders that they carefully select the people to be entrusted with this, that the operation be conducted in close contact with military police [*kenpei*] and the police authorities of the relevant locations, that the prestige of the military be maintained, and that attention be paid to ensure nothing is amiss regarding social problems.³⁷

The reference to “kidnapping” is important because Ramseyer explicitly asserts that this rarely happened. Even domestic reformers, he writes, seldom made the case that women were tricked by recruiters or trafficked against their will: “Neither did many reformers complain that recruiters tricked young women into working for brothels” (5).³⁸ Meanwhile, in the document he himself cites in the next paragraph, the Japanese government admitted

that this had happened in “no few cases.”

In sum, Ramseyer uses these documents to assert that the Japanese were pressured by domestic reformers who were motivated by concerns about the exploitation of women. He also presents these documents as evidence of the Japanese government’s determination to prevent such exploitation. A full reading of these documents reveals that the government’s stated motivations were to avoid tarnishing the honor of the empire and the military, and to prevent damaging morale on the homefront. There is no explicit mention of “reformers.” Meanwhile, these documents also reveal that the government was concerned about recruitment that resembled kidnapping.

At the same time, full translations of these documents, especially “Shina 1938,” reveal repeated references to “the situation on the ground” and the unavoidable necessity of allowing Japanese women to travel to China to work in prostitution. This contradicts Ramseyer’s assertion that there was no need to traffic women for the purposes of sex because “The Japanese military did not need additional prostitutes; it had plenty. Prostitutes have followed armies everywhere, and they followed the Japanese army in Asia” (5). In their full context, these documents make clear that Japanese women were trafficked, not following the army on their own volition, and that the Japanese Home Ministry felt pressure to “tacitly permit” this trafficking, even though it contravened an international treaty, in order to fulfill the military’s demand for prostitutes in China.

Mischaracterization of “Korean Comfort Station Manager’s Diary”

Ramseyer uses the same anonymous website “[Korea Institute of History](#)” that he cites for

Mun Ok-ju to discuss a source that he cites as the Korean Comfort Station Manager's Diary. This "Manager" refers to Mr. Bak, a Korean employee who worked in comfort stations in Burma and Singapore in 1943-1944. His diary was recovered, and its modern-Korean transliteration was published by Ahn Byung-Jik in 2013.³⁹ Ramseyer does not cite this source directly. Instead, his citation leads to the anonymous "[Korea Institute of History](#)," which then directs us to a [PDF file](#) hosted by another historical revisionist website, the "[Society for the Dissemination of Historical Fact](#)."⁴⁰ This [PDF file](#) is purportedly an English translation of Chapter 5 of Ch'oe Kil-song's book on the diary, or "Choe, 2017a" in Ramseyer's reference.⁴¹ Ch'oe Kil-song's 2017 work, while it includes a number of quotes from the diary, is mainly an engagement with Ahn's argument, unlike Ahn's 2013 volume, which offers Bak's complete diary entries written in 1943 and 1944.

Based on these sources, Ramseyer claims, "Upon completing the contractual term or (if earlier) repaying the loan, the women could go home. A Korean receptionist for comfort stations in Burma and Singapore kept a diary for several years (Choe, 2017a,b)." "The receptionist with the diary noted that the comfort women kept savings accounts. He noted that he regularly deposited money on their behalf in them. And he noted that he regularly sent money back to their homes on their behalf, and received telegrams confirming receipt (KIH, 2016a; Choe, 2017a,b)." (6)

We had difficulty locating the relevant parts as there is no page number identified in Ramseyer's references. But even the [PDF](#) he refers to argues that there were a variety of cases:

"There were many recorded instances of comfort women quitting their jobs, being given leaves of absence, or returning home during Mr. Bak's time in Singapore, but

not very many from during his time in Burma."

"It appears that it was not easy to leave the comfort women business. 'Haruyo and Hiroko had worked at Mr. Murayama's comfort station, but they left in order to live with their husbands. Logistics ordered them to return and now they are working as comfort women at Kinsen House.' (Diary entry of July 29, 1943.)"

The [PDF file](#) indicates one instance of "remittance" for a comfort woman and makes no mention of "telegrams confirming receipt." This does not correspond with Ramseyer's claim at all.

One thing that the said file emphasizes is that comfort women had their own savings accounts and the receptionist made deposits on their behalf. It is already widely known that compulsory savings, taken out of wages and deposited by the employer into savings accounts, were used by Japanese employers of Korean wartime workers as a strategy to stop them from running away. Many never recovered these savings at the end of the war.⁴²

Because we could not obtain a copy of Ahn Byung-Jik's work in a timely manner due to the current global pandemic, we examined a Japanese translation of Ahn's work available digitally.⁴³ The Japanese translation was prepared and edited by Hori Kazuo and Kimura Kan, both well-established scholars in Japan on the history of comfort women. During the two years of 1943 and 1944 (Bak's years in Burma and Singapore), Bak made remittances for six comfort women, but all the cases were processed only when they were about to return home. Bak wrote about obtaining a permit to remit money for each woman except one, indicating this was their first time sending money home. The diary does show that these women went home from Singapore at least up

until 1944, but there is no mention of the presence of contracts or the reason for their return. With regard to Ramseyer's claims about telegrams, the diary shows Bak received three telegrams that said the women had not received the money. There was no telegram received which confirmed receipt of money sent on behalf of comfort women.

Mischaracterization of Primary Source from Takei 2012

In section 2.3, "Prostitution in Korea," Ramseyer argues that comfort stations "did not begin the practice of Korean young women working abroad as prostitutes. The young women had been working abroad as prostitutes for decades before." (4) At the end of the section, he writes that into the late 1930s and 40s, "Korean women continued to travel abroad to work as unlicensed prostitutes as well - again, for a wide variety of customers...while 12 Korean women worked in comfort stations in Shanghai in 1940, 527 worked as unlicensed prostitutes" (5).

One source for Ramseyer's statement, noted in footnote five, is Takei, 2012, tab 6. This source is listed in Works Cited as: "[Takei, Yoshimasa, available at: 2012. Nicchu senso ki Shanhai no chosen jin shakai ni tsuite \[Regarding the Korean Community in Shanghai During the Japan-China War\] \(Nicchu senso shi kenkyukai\).](#)"

When one goes to the web address above, we find an outline of a presentation, with no sources attached. To find the sources Takei referred to in his presentation, we had to find a document, previously available online, now only accessible as [a cached webpage](#).

The statistics which Ramseyer refers to on page 5 are located in Table 6 of Takei's

sources. In Takei's document they are cited as coming from Lee Kap Nyōng's report, "Shanghai Chōsenjin no jijō," in *Samchōlli/Sanzenri* v.13.4 (April 1941): 120-121. This is not cited by Ramseyer.

In Takei's Table 6, *shakufu* (literally 'barmaid,' but commonly used to refer to unlicensed prostitutes) is listed as the employment (*shokugyō*) for 527 of the Korean households (*kosū*) in Shanghai, and *ianjo* (Comfort Station) for 12 households. The problem here is that a) the statistics are for households not individuals, and b) we do not know that the 12 households working at *ianjo* are comfort women (*ianfu*), or even women rather than men.

From this source we cannot conclude, as Ramseyer does, that *shakufu* did not work in comfort stations. Indeed, primary sources (also cited by Ramseyer) show that the term *shakufu* was used in documents referring to the deceptive recruitment of women to work in Military Comfort Stations in Shanghai and elsewhere in China, which led to the issuing of the Home Ministry Order of Feb 23rd 1938, discussed above.⁴⁴

In conclusion, this source does not support Ramseyer's argument that the majority of Korean women working in the sex industry in Shanghai in 1940 were simply "unlicensed prostitutes," rather than women working in comfort stations.

Misrepresentation of Kitashina, 1938

On page 5, Ramseyer writes, "In 1937, for example, the Tianjin immigrants association reported 81 unlicensed prostitutes from Korea. During one month in 1938, 90 Korean women petitioned the (Japanese-controlled) Korean government for permission to travel to the Chinese city of Jinan to work as unlicensed

prostitutes (Kitashina, 1938)."

The source, Kitashina 1938, is about the number of travel permits issued in Tianjin for people heading to Jinan, granted between Jan 14, 1938 and March 1, 1938. It does state that 90 Korean *shakufu* received permits. But the rest of the source does not match Ramseyer's description. There is no indication of who applied for these permits, let alone "petitioned." Moreover, the travelers did not receive the permits from "the (Japanese-controlled) Korean government."

Again, the translation of *shakufu* is important in characterizing this source. Ramseyer translates the term as "unlicensed prostitutes," but as mentioned above in the case of Takei 2012, Japanese governmental documents often employed the term as a euphemism for "comfort women."

In sum, Ramseyer's representation of this document suggests that the women applied to receive permits, that they travelled to work as unlicensed prostitutes on their own volition, and that permission to travel was granted by the Japanese government in Korea. The source supports none of these contentions.

3. Use of Secondary Sources

Selective citations to Kim and Kim, *Shokuminchi yūkaku: Nihon no guntai to Chōsen hantō*

Ramseyer pulls facts from this source regarding the relative numbers of Japanese and Korean women in licensed brothels in Korea, their ages, their compensation, and how much brothel keepers charged for their services (4). These citations are accurate, but he ignores

what the book argues, and disregards some of its factual claims, in pursuit of an argument that asserts the opposite of the book's findings.

Ramseyer writes, "Although both Koreans and Japanese could use the new licensing system, the Japanese did so more readily" (4). He implies that the reason for this was that Japanese men had more money: "Japanese customers were generally wealthier than Korean customers, after all . . ." (4). This is probably true, but Kim and Kim argue that the impetus for creating the 1916 licensed system in the first place was *the presence of the Japanese military*. In fact, most of the patrons were Japanese military men and the special characteristic of the system in the colony, as opposed to the metropole, was that brothels belonged under the jurisdiction of the military police. To underscore this point, the subtitle of this book, which Ramseyer does not include in his citation, is *Nihon no guntai to Chōsen hantō (The Japanese Military and the Korean Peninsula)*.

This is important because Ramseyer concludes that the Japanese military was not responsible for the Korean licensed prostitution system or responsible for its recruitment methods: "It was not that the Japanese army worked with fraudulent recruiters. It was not even that the recruiters focused on the army's comfort stations" (5). But in a page Ramseyer actually cites in the course of his argument for this section, Kim and Kim point out that the Japanese military police issued the permissions required for women to work in all Korean licensed brothels, which entailed mediating between recruiters and brothel keepers.⁴⁵ In another page Ramseyer cites, Kim and Kim write, "In Korea, the Kenpei, which were the (Japanese) military police, featured alongside the civilian police [in the regulation of licensed prostitution]. Or, rather, the Kenpei *directed* the civilian police, and regulated the everyday lives of the people, which included managing their sexual practices. Here we can see the

distinguishing feature of the colonial administration of Korea, which was that it was essentially under the management of the Japanese army."⁴⁶

In other words, Ramseyer's article cites Kim and Kim selectively for facts while disregarding other factual claims that weaken his argument, ignoring the authors' argument, and, in fact, asserting the opposite of their findings.

Mischaracterization and selective citation of Hata, "Shōwa shi no nazo o ou" in *Seiron*, June 1992

Rameyer cites Hata (1992) at the end of section 3.6 on "The Closing Years of the War". Ramseyer's argument in this section is that "brothels went out of business" during the closing years of the war. He argues this to contradict scholars who argue that "those were the years [the Japanese government] most aggressively recruited comfort women" (7). Ramseyer's argument in 3.6 appears to conflate "brothels" and "comfort stations." The source Ramseyer cites actually shows a direct connection between the shutting down of brothels and the flow of women into comfort stations.

Let us look in more detail. The sentence in Ramseyer's article directly preceding the footnoted reference to Hata (1992) reads:

"Between the general austerity in the air and the loss of prostitutes to the factories, brothels steadily went out of business."(7)

To support this, Ramseyer cites pages 330 and 333 of Hata Ikuhiko's 1992 essay in the

magazine *Seiron*.⁴⁷ Looking at the source itself we find the following. The first citation, to page 330, appears to be a mistake: this page contains a discussion of the events of 1992, regarding Hata's visit to Jeju to try and find evidence of the claims of Yoshida Seiji, diplomatic relations between Japan and Korea over the issue, and a historical overview of "comfort women" from Napoleonic Wars until the Prostitution Prevention Law. There is no evidence on this page to support Ramseyer's argument above.

On pages 332-333 Hata produces police figures to show that from a peak in Shōwa 12 (1937) the number of women working as licensed prostitutes (*kōshō*) in the Japanese home islands steadily declined. He writes that "while it is not certain, a significant number may have turned to become *jūgun ianfu* [military comfort women]." Although this is about the Japanese home islands, it contradicts Ramseyer's overall argument in 3.6., which is that prostitution in general declined as the war intensified and Japan shifted resources toward manufacturing.

The following paragraph, in which Hata is still discussing the Japanese home islands, continues:

"From Shōwa 17 [1942] onwards, statistics such as those used above are missing, but with the intensification of the war, the numbers of both business owners (*gyōsha*) and licensed prostitutes (*kōshō*) who changed professions or closed their businesses increased. In February of 1944 they were all shut down. Newspapers from the time report 'all 37,000 geisha [J: *geigi*] from across the nation to be sent to factories in the 'Women's volunteer corps' [*joshi teishintai*]' . However in the Metropolitan Police Department's official history, there are accounts of emergency comfort stations [*rinji ianjo*] being set up near munitions factories, so these women

may have worked a day shift at the factories and a night shift at the comfort station.”⁴⁸

Again, this report focuses on the Japanese home islands. However both paragraphs in Hata (the only parts of the pages cited by Ramseyer that deal with the time period in question) posit a connection between wartime mobilization, the collapse of the prostitution industry, and the funneling of women into comfort stations, whether overseas or in Japan. This is in direct contradiction to Ramseyer’s overall argument in 3.6. Once again, Ramseyer cites a secondary source selectively for facts, while disregarding the author’s other factual claims and arguments that directly contradict his own.

Finally, if Ramseyer had read Hata Ikuhiko’s 1999 work, *Ianfu to senjō no sei* [Comfort women and sex on the battlefield], he would have found further contradiction of his argument, specifically related to Korea. In this, Hata writes: “In 1940, the wartime system was made stronger in Korea. Restrictions on entertainment districts were strengthened too. The prostitution business took a massive hit... their income was halved. It seems that this was a chance to impel the mass movement of comfort women to the battlefield.”⁴⁹

4. Inaccurate and Inappropriate Citation Practices

There are a number of problems with Ramseyer’s citation practices, including inaccurate page numbers, incomplete citations, citations to large page ranges or entire books without more specific information, missing sources, and citations to irrelevant sources. We have mentioned some of these above and are in

the process of compiling a more complete list.

In our view, the most serious problem here is that in two cases -- the citation to Mun Ok-ju’s testimony and the citation to the “Korean Comfort Station Manager’s Diary” -- Ramseyer has cited translations of these sources that were posted or linked to on the anonymous KIH blog, even though the original sources are available. Both cases are discussed in more detail above. In principle, there is no problem with citing an anonymous blog in the course of historical research, but in those cases the citations should be clearly marked so that readers understand where the information originated. This is especially important if -- as in this case -- the blog has a specific ideological orientation. Meanwhile, it is inappropriate to cite fragments on an anonymous blog when the original sources exist and can be read and understood in a fuller context.

Finally, we also believe that the number of miscitations in Ramseyer’s article is indicative of the poor quality of the scholarship, which fails to meet disciplinary standards in history, but also falls short of academic expectations more generally. In order for readers to be able check the sources themselves, we have included below a long list of corrections to Ramseyer’s miscitations. Locating sources from Ramseyer’s original citations consumed a lot of our time as we tried to determine where his information originated.

The following is a dynamic list, which will be updated online. We have also included our own bibliography below.

Page 4

Park, 2014: 451. “Park, Yu-Ha, 2014. Teikoku no ianfu [Comfort Women of the Empire] (Asahi shimbun shuppan).” Page 451 does not exist as the book is 336 pages long.

Fujinaga, 2004. [citation at top of column two] Fujinaga's article (p. 147) shows different statistics to those cited by Ramseyer, who includes no page reference.

Footnote 4, Nihongun 2020. Works Cited reads "Nihongun, 2020. 'ianfu' kankei shiryō shusei [Collection of Materials Relating to the Japanese Military "Comfort Women"] (Akaishi shoten)." A similar title is listed under "Suzuki, Y., et al., 2006. Nihongun 'ianfu' kankei shiryō shusei [Collection of Materials Relating to the Japanese Military 'Comfort Women']. Akashi shoten, Tokyo). There is no similar title published in 2020. If this is Suzuki et al., it requires information on the specific location.

Footnote 4, Chosen 1906. Suzuki, et al. does not contain any document that resembles the title.

Paragraph with footnote 4: Because the two sources above do not exist, this paragraph has no supporting source or evidence.

Nihon yuran, 1932. The in-text citation says page "461," but Works Cited says page "858." Page 858 in Suzuki et al. is data from the Taiwan Government General on the entertainment industries in 1932. The source has no relevance to the Korean market. Pages around 461 of the same volume are military documents about comfort stations, not prostitution in Korea. **Nihon yuran, 1932** does not exist in Suzuki et al. Our best guess is *Nihon yūransha*, 1930. *Zenkoku yūkaku annai*. Tokyo: Nihon yūransha, 461, which discusses brothels in Korea. This source is available online through Japan's National Diet Library.

Nihon, 1994. This is: Song Yōn ok, "Nihon no shokuminchi shihai to kokkateki kanri baishun" [Japan's Colonial Control and the State Management of Prostitution], *Chōsenshi kenkyūkai ronbunshū* 32 (Oct 1994): 37-87. The said information appears on page 63. Ramseyer writes the statistics are about "one (apparently poorer) Korean community," but Song's article

specifies that it is Pyongyang.

Michiya, 1928. The numbers of licensed prostitutes who newly registered and quit that year appear to be based on the table on page 789. The numbers are slightly different.

Page 5

Kitashina, 1938. This is: Murota Torao, "Sainan yuki ryokaku no seigen teppai ni kansuru ken" [On Lifting the Limitation of Passengers Bound for Jinan], Mar. 1, 1938, in Suzuki, et al. (2006: 1-143). This source has no reference to "81 unlicensed prostitutes from Korea." On its interpretation problem see above ("**Misrepresentation of Kitashina, 1938**").

"The Tianjin immigration association reported 81 unlicensed prostitutes from Korea." Because the above source has no mention of "81 unlicensed prostitutes from Korea," this statement has no evidence or source cited.

Footnote 5, Takei (2012: tab. 6). The linked file does not provide the information cited. On mischaracterization of Takei's study, see above ("**Mischaracterization of primary source from Takei, 2012**").

"... Neither did many reformers complain that recruiters tricked young women into working for brothels. (Senda, 1973: 89)." The page cited has no information about reformers or recruiters. There is no supporting document cited for this claim about the Japanese home islands. Instead, pages 88-89 describe cases of comfort women pregnancy, desertion attempts, and the conditions under which Korean women travelled alongside troops in China. Senda writes at the top of page 89 that many of the young Korean women brought to comfort stations were "shocked."

Shina, 1938. This is: Naimushō keihokyokuchō, “Shina tokō fujo no toriatsukai ni kansuru ken,” February 23rd 1938 (JACAR: A05032044800; National Archives call number: 平9警察00286100). Available also in Josei v.1, 69-75. See above (“**Mischaracterization of Japanese Home Ministry Documents**” and “**Mischaracterization of Shina 1938 and Gun’ianjo 1938 on Recruitment**”).

Keijo nippo, 1918. The full bibliographic information is Keijō nippō, June 12 1918, evening ed. Quoted in Fujinaga Takeshi, “Shokuminchi Chōsen ni okeru kōshō seido no kakuritsu katei,” [The Establishment Process for the Licensed Prostitution System in Colonial Korea] *Nijusseiki kenkyū* 5 (Dec 2004): 33.

Senda, 1973: 89. [Second appearance on this page] Senda, 1973: 89 has no relevance to the said information.

Yamashita, 2006: 675. Yamashita discusses deceptive tactics of recruitment and refers to Tōa, 1939, around pages 687-690.

Page 6

Footnote 7, Shina (1942). Relevant page numbers are 13-15.

Footnote 7, SCAP (1945). Relevant page numbers are 141-154.

Footnote 7, U.S. Interrogation Report (n.d.). The document contains more bibliographical information than Ramseyer gives: Allied Translator and Interpreter Section South West Pacific Area, “Interrogation Report no. 573,” Serial no. 728, January 23, 1945. Josei v.5, 107-111.

Josei, 1997: 1-19. The citation gives no name for the source, and it is inconsistently cited compared with other references to Josei 1997. The indicated page number (19) leads us to

Gunma kenchiji, “Shanghai hakengun nai rikugun ianjo ni okeru shakufu boshū ni kansuru ken,” January 19, 1938. It is cited at the end of a sentence which claims “some comfort women in Burma worked on contracts as short as six months to a year.” This is an irrelevant source for this claim, and the only citation for Section 3.2. (If this source supports another claim in the section, it should be cited more clearly, and with correct information.)

Naimusho, 1938. This is: Naimushō keihokyoku, “[Shina tokō fujo no toriatsukai ni kansuru ken](#) (Chofuken)”, February 18, 1938 (Japan Center for Asian Historical Records [JACAR]: A05032040800; Japan National Archives call number: 平9警察00285100). This is a 54-page compilation of various reports and orders. The citation does not specify the location. On the mischaracterization of this source, see above (“**Mischaracterization of Japanese Home Ministry Documents**”).

Maree, 1943. Page numbers are 433-439. The relevant page is 437. The rate of women’s rates were applied after compulsory deposits were made.

US Office, 1944. This is: United States Office of War Information, “Japanese Prisoner Of War Information Report 49,” 1944, listed in Josei v. 5, 203-208. See above (“**Selective Use of Evidence from U.S. Military Sources**”).

KIH, 2016a. “Korea Institute of History” is the title of an anonymous blog. The blog leads to another website that has an ideological agenda. There is no mention of these websites’ backgrounds in Ramseyer’s article. The original source is Choe 2017a. See above (“**Mischaracterization of ‘Korean Comfort Station Manager’s Diary’**”).

Choe, 2017b. This is a *New York Times* article written by Choe Sang-Hun, and has no relevance to the Manager’s Diary.

Senda 1973 (26-27) The recruiter Senda

interviewed is discussing a group of around 100 Japanese and a few ethnically Korean women recruited from Kitakyushu in late 1937, who were sent to Shanghai. This is not evidence related to Japanese or Korean comfort women in the later (1941~) Asia-Pacific theatre of war.

KIH, 2016b. "Korea Institute of History" is the title of an anonymous blog which contains only revisionist blogposts on the comfort women issue. The blog entry specified shows a partial, selective, edited version of the English translation of Mun Ok-ju's testimony. The original source is available in Japanese: Morikawa Machiko with Mun Ok-ju, *Mun Okju: Biruma sensen tate shidan no "ianfu" datta watakushi* (Tokyo: Nashinokisha, 1996). See above ("**Mischaracterization of testimony of Mun Ok-ju**").

Page 7

Hata, 1992. This is: Hata Ikuhiko, "Shōwa shi no nazo o ou dai-37 kai: Jūgun ianfutachi no shunjū," *Seiron* (June 1992): 328-343. Page 330 is irrelevant to the paragraph. On the mischaracterization of this source, see above ("**Mischaracterization and selective citation of Hata, "Shōwa shi no nazo o ou" in Seiron, June 1992**").

Mainichi shimbun (1944). The source is from the colonial government's Korean-language mouthpiece, the *Maeil sinbo*. (*Mainichi shinpo* in Japanese). By 1944 it was the only remaining Korean language newspaper. The source is not a letter from a woman, but a "dispatch" [tayori] from Pusan, which reads like (and indeed is) a piece of wartime propaganda. The source contains no expression equivalent to "Our country needs us," as Ramseyer quotes.

Conclusion

When Professor Ramseyer was contacted by the *Korea Herald* after the publication of his article in IRLE, he is quoted as saying he "will 'let the article speak for itself'...adding that 'this is a question about scholarship.'"50 As academic historians of Japan, we agree that this is a question about scholarship. For that reason, we have focused on assessing the article's claims and whether they are supported by the sources he cites. As the above evidence makes clear, we do not believe this to be the case. Ramseyer does not acknowledge the lack of historical evidence to support his argument; he mischaracterizes the testimonies of survivors beyond recognition; he provides no historical context to his use of key primary sources, and by doing so misinterprets them; he cites, as supporting evidence, historical scholarship which argues the opposite of his claims. For these reasons, we believe that an article containing this level of academic misconduct should not have passed peer review, or have been published in an academic journal.

Sincerely,

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February 18, 1938. Japan Center for Asian Historical Records [JACAR]: A05032040800; Japan National Archives call number: 平9警察00285100.

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Appendix

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Naimushō keihokyoku. “[Shina tokō fujo no toriatsukai ni kan suru ken \(Chōfuken\)](#),”

(translation). *Pōmajōnsōn ilbon'gun wianbu Mun Ok-ju: Mun Ok-ju halmōni ildaegi yōksa ūi chūngōn tubōntchae iyagi*. Seoul: Arūmdaun saramdūl, 2005.

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日本語抄訳: J.M.ラムザイヤー『太平洋戦争における性行為契約』

「慰安所」と呼ばれる戦時売春宿をめぐるの日韓の政治的紛争の長期化は、売春宿の主人と売春婦が契約を結ぶ際に働いた力学を不可視化している。それらの力学は初歩的ゲーム理論の基礎となる、「信憑性のあるコミットメント」についてのシンプルな論理を体現するものである。売春宿の主人と潜在的売春婦は契約を交わす際、売春宿の主人が両者の間の契約構造に確

実にコミットしなければならないという問題に直面した。すなわち、売春宿の主人は売春婦に対し (i) 売春業が売春婦にもたらす危険と名誉の毀損を相殺できるほどの対価を提供しつつ (ii) 非監視下での重労働であっても良好なパフォーマンスを維持するインセンティブを与える必要があった。

女性たちは、彼女らの将来の所得について売春宿の主人が誇張している可能性を見抜き、給与額のうち多くの割合を前払いにすることを要求した。また彼女らは戦地に向かうことに気付いていたため、最長契約期間が比較的短期になるよう要求した。そして売春婦たちの職務怠慢を予測した売春宿の主人は、彼女らが懸命に働くようなインセンティブを生み出す契約構造を必要とした。これらの一見矛盾して見える条件を満たすため、女性たちと売春宿は次の要件を併せ持つ契約を締結した。要件とは (i) 売春宿は売春婦に多額の前払い金を支払い、最長契約期間が1年から2年であること、そして (ii) 売春婦は十分な収入を得た後は最長契約期間より早く退職可能であること、の二つである。

女性と慰安所の契約における最長契約期間の設定、高価な前払い金、売春婦へのインセンティブ等のシステムは、慰安所開設以前の日本の公娼制下での売春産業が編み出したものであった。公娼制下で売春婦たちは、雇用主に不満があれば逃亡したり訴訟を起こすことが可能であった。業者が女性に売春業を強制させることはなく、本人の意思に反して売春業に従事するのは親が娘を売った場合に限られた。貧困を脱するため海外売春宿で日本人男性の相手をする「からゆきさん」となったおサキは、同じ経験をして帰郷した女性たちの話などから、業者が彼女に提案した契約が売春業であることを理解しつつそれに応じた。彼女はほとんどの期間、親切な雇用主に十分な衣食住と給与を支給され働き、引退後天草へ帰郷した。

慰安所は、日本軍兵士の性病予防のために作られた。従来内地や朝鮮で施行されていた公娼制に倣い、日本軍は軍の衛生基準に従う売春宿に免許を与え、慰安所と名付けて営業させた。内

務省は (i) 業者が慰安所へ女性を斡旋する際、すでに売春婦として働いたことのある女性を雇用する(ii) 女性自身が契約内容を理解していることを確認するため、警察は女性本人による申請でなければ渡航許可証を発行してはならない(iii)警察は渡航許可証の申請者に対し、慰安所での契約が終了した後は直ちに帰国しなければならない旨を伝える、という指令を出した。朝鮮半島では、女性が詐欺等の方法により強制的に売春業に従事させられたケースも存在した。しかしそれらのケースは日本軍や日本軍慰安所専門業者ではなく、現地の朝鮮人業者によって引き起こされたものである。

女性と慰安所の契約は通常2年であった。収入の2/3が借金に補填され、残りが給与として女性たちに直接支給された。女性たちは各自本人名義の口座を持ち貯金が可能であった。文玉珠の証言からは、彼女が慰安婦の中でも多額の収入を得て豊かな生活をしたのではないかと推測できる。(彼女は預金口座を持ちチップから貯金をすることができた。故郷の母親に楽な暮らしをさせてやることができ、幸せで誇らしく思っ

た。人力車に乗り買い物に出かけたのも楽しかった。ラングーンの市場にはマレーシア産の宝石が売られており、友達の一人は宝石を集めていた。宝石が欲しいと思った彼女はダイヤモンドを買った。また文玉珠はラングーンで人気の売春婦となり、多くの宴会に呼ばれチップをもらった。)

女性たちは債務履行が完了すれば家に帰ることができた。慰安所での勤務は他の買春宿で勤務する場合に可能である逃亡、出訴などが難しく、武力紛争の危険も大きい。そうしたリスクに鑑み、東京やソウル等の売春宿と比較し、慰安所の給与は高く、最長契約期間は短かった。

戦時中には慰安婦動員が激化したと一般的に言われているが、実際はその逆である。物資不足の中、朝鮮人は女性を含めて、徴兵された日本人の穴を埋めるため工場等に動員され、売春宿の営業は縮小し廃業していった。

This article is a part of the supplementary issue **Academic Integrity at Stake: The Ramseyer Article - Four Letters**, edited by Alexis Dudden, to the special issue **The 'Comfort Women' as Public History**.

We created a [zip file](#) for download containig all articles in this supplementary issue for your convenience.

Please also see "[Seeking the True Story of Comfort Women: How a Harvard Professor's Dubious Scholarship Reignited a History of Mistrust between South Korea and Japan](#)" by Jeannie Suk Gersen on *The New Yorker*.

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Notes

¹ Fukui Yoshitaka, "[Sekai ni hiromaru 'ianfu=seidorei' setsu o hitei: Bei Hābādodai J. Mark Ramseyer kyōju ga gakujutsu ronbun happyō](#)" *Sankei shimbun*, January 28th 2021.

² Mark Ramseyer, "[Recovering the Truth about the Comfort Women](#)" *JAPANForward*, January 12th, 2021.

³ J. Mark Ramseyer, "Contracting for sex in the Pacific War" *International Review of Law and Economics*, v.65, published online 1 December 2020

⁴ American Historical Association, [Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct](#) (2019). Bolded text in original.

⁵ Statement by Andrew Gordon and Carter Eckert concerning J. Mark Ramseyer, "[Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War](#)" February 17th 2021.

⁶ Yamazaki Tomoko, *Sandakan Brothel No. 8: An Episode in the History of Lower-Class Japanese Women*, trans. Karen Colligan-Taylor (Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe, 1999), 60; Yamazaki Tomoko, *Sandakan hachiban shōkan* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1972), 86-87.

⁷ Yamazaki, *Sandakan Brothel No. 8*, 62; Yamazaki, *Sandakan hachiban shōkan*, 90.

⁸ Yamazaki, *Sandakan Brothel No. 8*, 63; Yamazaki, *Sandakan hachiban shōkan*, 92.

⁹ Yamazaki, *Sandakan Brothel No. 8*, 60-61. Italics added; Yamazaki, *Sandakan hachiban shōkan*, 88.

¹⁰ Yamazaki, *Sandakan Brothel No. 8*, 53; Yamazaki, *Sandakan hachiban shōkan*, 76.

¹¹ Yamazaki, *Sandakan Brothel No. 8*, 52-53; Yamazaki, *Sandakan hachiban shōkan*, 76.

¹² Yamazaki, *Sandakan Brothel No. 8*, 65; Yamazaki, *Sandakan hachiban shōkan*, 93-94.

¹³ Yamazaki, *Sandakan Brothel No. 8*, 68; Yamazaki, *Sandakan hachiban shōkan*, 97

¹⁴ Yamazaki, *Sandakan Brothel No. 8*, 73; Yamazaki, *Sandakan hachiban shōkan*, 105-106.

¹⁵ See [here](#). Italics added.

¹⁶ Morikawa Machiko, with Mun Ok-ju "Mun Oku ju: Biruma sensen tateshidan no ianfu datta watakushi: rekishi wo ikinuita onna tachi" (Tokyo: Nashinoki sha, 1996) Part 22 of "Kyōkasho ni kakarenakatta sensō." Morikawa Machiko (Author) Kim Jōng-sōng (translation).

Pōmajōnsōn ilbon'gun wianbu Mun Ok-ju: Mun Ok-ju halmōni ildaegi yōksa ūi chūngōn tubōntchae iyagi (Seoul: Arūmdaun saramdŭl, 2005)

¹⁷ From [here](#).

- ¹⁸ Morikawa with Mun, *Biruma sensen* p.30
- ¹⁹ Morikawa with Mun *Biruma sensen* p.31-32
- ²⁰ Morikawa with Mun *Biruma sensen* p.36
- ²¹ Morikawa with Mun *Biruma sensen* p.45 *Kisaeng* in the Chosŏn period were a caste of entertainers. This system ended under colonial rule, replaced by the Japanese authorities with a school system to train *kisaeng*. In reality, for many their role changed, becoming closer to that of sex worker, due to *kisaeng*'s incorporation within the colonial sex industry.
- ²² Morikawa with Mun, *Biruma sensen*, 46.
- ²³ Morikawa with Mun, *Biruma sensen*, 52-53.
- ²⁴ Morikawa with Mun, *Biruma sensen*, 56. On Pi-ya [ピー屋], C. Sarah Soh writes "The Chinese slang term *pi* was coined by the [Japanese Imperial] soldiers stationed in China... 'Cunt' would be an appropriate English translation." C. Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (University of Chicago Press, 2008) p.39. Pi-ya can therefore be translated as "cunt shop".
- ²⁵ Morikawa with Mun, *Biruma sensen*, 56.
- ²⁶ Morikawa with Mun, *Biruma sensen*, 57.
- ²⁷ Yim, Sejung Sage, Chung, Thomas, and Min, Pyong Gap. *Japanese Military Sexual Slavery. The transnational Redress Movement for the victims*. (De Gruyter, 2020) p.79. Mun Ok-ju died in 1996.
- ²⁸ United States Office of War Information, "Japanese Prisoner of War Information Report No. 49" in *Josei* 1997 v.5, 203. Miscited by Ramseyer as "U.S. Office of War Information, 1944. Interrogation Report No. 49, Oct. 1, 1944, in *Josei* (1997: 5-203)." In our letter "Josei 1997" refers to *Josei no tame no Ajia heiwa kokumin kikin, Seifu chōsa 'jūgun ianfu' kankei shiryō shūsei* (Ryūkei shosha 1997) 5 volumes.
- ²⁹ Allied Translator and Interpreter Section Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Research Report Subject: Amenities in the Japanese Armed Forces, 15 November 1945 in *Josei* v.5, 152. Italics added. Ramseyer cites this parenthetically as SCAP 1945 (p.6 fn 7) and in Works Cited as "SCAP, 1945. Research Report: Amenities in the Japanese Armed Forces, Nov. 15, 1945, reprinted in *Josei* (1997: 5-139)."
- ³⁰ Ramseyer cites this parenthetically as *Naimusho* 1938, and in his Works Cited as "Naimusho, 1938. *Shina toko fujo* [Women Passage to China], Feb. 18, 1938, in Suzuki, et al. (2006: 1-124)." A correct citation to the original source would be: *Naimushō keihokyoku, "Shina tokō fujo no toriatsukai ni kan suru ken (Chōfukun),"* February 18, 1938. Japan Center for Asian Historical Records [JACAR]: A05032040800; Japan National Archives call number: 平9警察00285100.
- ³¹ *Naimushō keihokyoku, "Shina tokō fujo no toriatsukai ni kan suru ken (Chōfukun)"* (JACAR) p.32 (no.19 of 54 images), JACAR: A05032040800. Japan National Archives call number: 平9警察00285100.
- ³² *Naimushō keihokyoku, "Shina tokō fujo no toriatsukai ni kan suru ken (Chōfukun),"* pg. 49-50.
- ³³ Ramseyer cites this source parenthetically as *Shina* 1938 and in his Works Cited as "*Shina toko fujo no toriatsukai ni kansuru ken* [Regarding the Handling of Women Bound for China], Feb. 23, 1938, Home Ministry, Police Bureau, Hatsukei No. 5." A correct citation to the original source would be *Naimushō keihokyokuchō, "Shina tokō fujo no toriatsukai ni kansuru*

ken," February 23rd 1938. JACAR: A05032044800. Japan National Archives call number: 平 9 警察00286100.

³⁴ Naimushō keihokiyokuchō, "Shina tokō fujo no toriatsukai ni kansuru ken" February 23rd 1938 (JACAR). See nos. 17-18 of 28 images. Italics added.

³⁵ ["International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Women and Children"](#) (1921).

["International Convention for Suppression of the White Slave Traffic"](#) (1910)

³⁶ Ramseyer cites this parenthetically as Gun'ianjo 1938 and in Works Cited as "Gun'ianjo jugyofuto boshu ni kansuru ken [Regarding the Recruitment of Military Comfort Women]. 1938. Army Ministry Infantry Bureau Proposal, to North and Middle China forces, dated March 4, Riku shimitsu No.745, vol. 10, 1938, in Josei (1997: 2-5)." A correct citation to the original source would read: Rikugunshō heimuka, "Gun'ianjo jūgyōfutō boshū ni kansuru ken," March 4, 1938 (JACAR: C04120263400; National Institute for Defense Studies archival call number: 陸軍省-陸支密大日記-S13-6-115)

³⁷ Rikugunshō heimuka, "Gun'ianjo jūgyōfutō boshū ni kansuru ken," March 4, 1938 (JACAR: C04120263400 陸軍省-陸支密大日記-S13-6-115), nos. 2-3 of 3 images.

³⁸ Ramseyer cites no evidence to support this claim. See Section 4 below on Senda (1973).

³⁹ Ahn Byung-jik (An Pyōng-jik) ed., *Ilbon'gun wianso kwalliin ūi ilgi* (Seoul: I sup, 2013).

⁴⁰ The mission statement for the Society for the Dissemination of Historical Fact describes it as counteracting "China's powerful propaganda machine" by making "historical facts as they pertain to modern Japanese relations with neighboring countries, especially China, available to English speakers via literature to be posted at this site." The Society's president is Kase Hideaki, a member of the nationalist organization, Nippon Kaigi.

⁴¹ Ch'oe Kil-song (Ch'oe Kil-sōng), *Chōsen shusshin no chōbanin ga mita ianfu no shinjitsu: bunka jinrui gakusha ga yomitoku "ianjo nikki"* (Tokyo: Hato shuppan, 2017).

⁴² See William Donald Smith III "Ethnicity Class and Gender in the Mines: Korean Workers in Japan's Chikuhō Coal Fields, 1917-1945" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Washington, 1999) pgs.68, 297, 414, and Michael Kim "Industrial Warriors: Labor Heroes and Everyday Life in Wartime Colonial Korea, 1937-1945" in Alf Lüdtke (ed) *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship: Collusion and Evasion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) pgs.133, 135.

⁴³ Hori Kazuo and Kimura Kan, ed., "Biruma, Shingapōru no jūgun ianjo: Nihongo kariyaku ban" [Comfort Stations in Burma and Singapore, a tentative Japanese translation] (unpublished, 2013). Hori Kazuo explained that because of the unclear ownership of the diary and its copyright implication, this document could not be published in Japan, but translation was prepared to aid academic research.

⁴⁴ See "Shanghai haken gun nai rikugun ianjo ni okeru shakufu boshū ni kansuru ken (Gunma ken chiji Shōwa 13.1.19)". [On recruitment of "barmaids" for Military Comfort Stations by Shanghai Expeditionary Army, Governor of Gunma Prefecture, January 19th 1938]. Josei v.1, 11-22. Underlining added. (Cited by Ramseyer as Josei 1997 1-19.) Reports from Yamagata, Ibaragi, and Miyagi Prefectural Governors on the same issue also use the term *shakufu* or *ianshakufu* when discussing deceptive recruitment to Military Comfort Stations. See Josei v.1, 23, 47, 53.

⁴⁵ Kim Pu-ja and Kim Yǒng, *Shokuminchi yūkaku: Nihon no guntai to Chōsen hantō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2018) 18.

⁴⁶ Kim and Kim, *Shokuminchi yūkaku*, 21.

⁴⁷ Again, this source is miscited by Ramseyer, see section 4 below.

⁴⁸ Translation from p. 333 of Hata Ikuhiko, "Shōwa shi no nazo o ou dai 37 kai: Jūgun ianfutachi no shunjū" *Seiron* June 1992

⁴⁹ Hata Ikuhiko, *Ianfu to senjō no sei* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1999) p. 45

⁵⁰ "Harvard professor invites fury by calling 'comfort women' prostitutes" *Straits Times*, February 3, 2021