



EuroClio

Inspiring History
and Citizenship Educators

History Education
Beyond Borders IV
Sourcebook

2024

East Asia at War: Mobilization, Women, Refugees and Mobility

Disclaimer

Funded by the Northeast Asian History Foundation, the opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the North East Asian History Foundation, nor can the granting authority be held responsible for them.

Citation

Yang, D., Chatani, S. & Lawson, K. (s), *History Education Beyond Borders IV*, European Association of History Educators (EuroClio), 2024

Preface

Many of today's conflicts and tensions can be rooted in history. Similarly, how these conflicts and tensions can be resolved or sustained is rooted in how history is taught and learnt at schools and universities, perceived in public spaces and addressed in political discourses. This is the case in many parts of the world, such as Northeast Asia, where history is central in political and civil agendas to address territorial disputes, contested memorializations and agonistic historical narratives and interpretations. At the same time, history education has changed considerably in the last few years, especially with the advancement of digital tools. In this context, the use of textual, visual, and oral sources in school classrooms in many parts of the world has already become an essential part of teaching history.

Sources do not usually give direct access to the past, so they must be valued and interpreted. Critical inquiry into the sources is an important aspect of this reconstruction. That is, sources must not be taken at face value but rather engaged critically by questioning the phenomena they reveal and how they are revealed. Thus, throughout the sourcebook, you will find questions that will provoke students to read further and critically engage with the sources outlined.¹

There is a crucial distinction between primary and secondary sources. Primary sources can be considered “eyewitness” accounts of the time under study. Sometimes, they were not purposely made as historical sources, like private diaries or letters. Secondary sources date from a later time than the events they describe, like accounts from a historian, oral histories or monuments. They mediate between past and present as reconstructions of the past. Even if written after the events, they can also tell something about the authors and the context of when they wrote about the events.

But why use sources in the history classroom? There are some positive outcomes of using sources. The first one that might come to mind is that they give students a sense of historical sensation. Primary sources are direct witnesses of the past, giving students direct contact with the past by reading what people in the past made or thought. This way, they can raise curiosity and a sense of proximity, motivating students to learn more about historical events and figures.

However, another reason is that students learn and understand how historical narratives are made by critically engaging with and corroborating sources, comparing them, and conducting further research. They will understand that sources do not speak for

¹ To know more about working with sources in history education please see: Teacher's Guide: Working with sources in history education: <https://euroclio.eu/resource/teachers-guide-working-with-sources-in-history-education/>

themselves but are interpreted and that some interpretations might be more or less valid than others.

How was the sourcebook developed?

The sourcebook is the result of an ongoing collaboration between EuroClio and the Northeast Asian Foundation. The collaboration started in 2016 to sustain a comprehensive knowledge-sharing between experts in Europe and Northeast Asia on the needs, approach, impact and sustainability of cross-border history education initiatives, such as joint history textbooks and research. Such cross-border initiatives aim to reduce tensions over history and deepen mutual understanding and awareness of issues related to common history.

This sourcebook is the product of the History Education Beyond Borders IV project and the result of extensive collaboration and consultation with scholars and researchers on the regional history of Northeast Asia. It has been developed collaboratively with the project coordinators all experts on the content and methodologies. Furthermore, the toolkit has been reviewed by experts in the region who have considered the relevance and feasibility of using the sources selected in the classroom.

What are the Learning Objectives of the Sourcebook?

- Encourage teachers to implement a more transnational and multiperspective approach in the classroom.
- Empower history educators to engage in complex and sensitive historical topics with their students.
- Support using sources that will allow students to develop their historical understanding and critical thinking.
- Strengthen critical and historical thinking skills, crucial for historical inquiry and assessing evidence-based information on traditional and social media platforms.

How to Work with Sources in the Classroom?

When working with sources, historical thinking skills become tools to better understand the past and the world around us. By critically engaging with historical sources, students learn about the facts while improving their understanding of the complexity of causes and effects, how perspectives change over time, and how history is “made.” In turn, they enhance their skills to critically engage with disinformation on traditional news sources and social media. However, reading a source for evidence demands a different approach than reading a source for information. To use them well, they should be set within their historical contexts, and students should make inferences from them to help them

understand what was happening when they were created. For this, throughout the sourcebook, sources are interrelated with brief explanations of when they were created, by whom and possible motivations behind them.

Nonetheless, using sources in the classroom might pose some challenges. On the one hand, it can make history lessons more attractive and interactive for students. On the other hand, it might be challenging for students to read and understand some of the sources. Thus, there are some pedagogical recommendations to keep in mind when working with sources in the classroom:

- **Reading Skills:** Students will work primarily with written sources. Thus, they need to be reasonably confident readers to do the work. To make the sources more available, less confident readers could be paired with more confident peers, and/or stories could be translated, reduced in length, read as a class, or turned into sound recordings to make them more accessible.
- **Conceptual understanding:** Student's prior knowledge regarding some of the events and figures included in the sourcebook might vary. Please consider that there may well be terms and concepts that need explaining or simplifying to make stories accessible to all. In addition, students may be guilty of a certain presentism when reading the sources. This means, for example, that they analyze past events through the lens of the present. These more naïve stances on approaching sources from the past and lack of contextualization hinder an understanding of the past. This can be avoided with a proper contextualization of the sources.
- **Difficult topics to be addressed:** Some of the sources address difficult topics. For example, when exploring the experiences of women during the War, there is a mention of the 'comfort women' who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II in those territories occupied by Japan. This topic might be challenging to address with your students; before delving into it, it is important to ensure a safe space where students can feel at ease when dealing with such sensitive and contested issues.
- **Personal or political views relating to the subject matter:** Some of the stories included in the sourcebook might include contested and complex legacies. Polarized and emotive responses likely appear within the classroom. In this case, it is important for an educator to moderate the debate and keep it to the topic at hand without allowing personal attacks or extremist views to be expressed. This can be a delicate balancing act, so you should remain cognizant of the classroom atmosphere and ensure that students, even if they disagree, do so constructively and respectfully.

Table of Contents

PREFACE	3
<i>Table of Contents</i>	6
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	7
1 MOBILIZATION: STATE AND INDIVIDUALS IN WARTIME EAST ASIA	8
Introduction	9
I. State Mobilization	10
<i>A. Japan and Its Colonies</i>	11
<i>B. China</i>	15
II. Personal Experience: Military Conscription and Cultural Work	19
<i>C. Japan and Its Colonies</i>	21
<i>D. China</i>	27
2 WOMEN’S WARTIME EXPERIENCES IN CHINA, JAPAN, AND KOREA	31
Introduction	32
I. Women in China	35
<i>Printed Materials</i>	36
<i>Women’s Testimonies</i>	38
II. Women in Japan	40
<i>Printed Materials</i>	41
<i>Women’s Testimonies</i>	43
III. Women in Korea	45
<i>Printed Materials</i>	46
<i>Women’s Testimonies</i>	48
IV. “Comfort women”	51
3 REFUGEES AND MOBILITY IN WARTIME EAST ASIA	55
Introduction	56
I. Mobility and Displacement in War	59
<i>A. The Refugee Experience</i>	59
<i>B. Migration and Forced Labor within a Wartime Empire</i>	65
II. “Returning Home” and Staying Behind	72
<i>C. Returns</i>	72
<i>D. Staying Behind</i>	75

General Introduction

This is a sample module for the Collaborative Digital *Sourcebook on Northeast Asian History*.

At the end of the 1920s, China officially was unified by the Guomindang government in Nanjing, but multiple warlords and political powers such as Communist forces continued to compete against each other. Japan, which counted Korea and Taiwan as its most important colonies, enjoyed extensive special treaty rights in China, as did Western powers including the United States. Much of Southeast Asia was under the colonial rule of European powers. In 1929, the whole world was plunged into unprecedented economic depression, with far-reaching implications. In September 1931, Japan's Kwantung Army stationed in China's northeastern region (also known as Manchuria) launched a premeditated attack on Chinese forces. Within a year, Japanese military occupied the entire region, which was rich in natural resources and was larger than the entire Japanese Empire. Japan went on to establish a puppet state, Manchukuo [or Manzhouguo]. Long-simmering tension between Japan and China finally culminated in full-scale war that broke out in the summer of 1937, after a local skirmish between their forces near the Marco Polo Bridge outside Beijing. Japan quickly occupied much of central and eastern China and set up pro-Japanese governments in those areas. By then, the Chinese Communists had joined the Guomindang government in a united front against Japan.

In September 1939, Japan's ally Germany ignited the war in Europe by first invading Poland. In December 1941, after moving into French colonies in Southeast Asia and faced with U.S.-imposed sanctions, Japan launched an all-out attack on the U.S. and its allies in the Asia Pacific. The two regional conflicts, in Asia and in Europe, became truly a global war, lasting till August 1945. World War II was a total war, involving not only the military but the entire economy and population of the countries involved. East Asia experienced this war from 1931 to 1945, albeit in stages and in a wide variety of ways. In this Module we present an in-depth examination of three inter-connected aspects of that experience—mobilization, women, and refugees and mobility. The focus is on the period after 1937. Starting from policies and programs of mobilization enacted by governments, we then turn to the impact of war and its aftermath as experienced by the people in China, Japan and its colonies.

Presenting selections from government and official publications, published literary or artistic works, private diaries and personal letters, and post-war recollections, we hope to familiarize students with primary sources in historical studies; we also seek to raise their awareness of the pitfalls and merits of different kinds of sources by paying attention to the intentions and backgrounds of historical sources.

1 Mobilization: State and Individuals in Wartime East Asia

Introduction

Instructor Guidelines

I. STATE MOBILIZATION

A. Japan and Its Colonies

A1 "On the National Mobilization Law"

A2 "An Appeal to The Nation-On the Occasion of the First Anniversary of the China Affair"

A3 "Implementation of Conscription and the Inevitability of Imperial Subjectification"

B. China

B1 "Spiritual Mobilization and Victory"

B2 Guerrilla Warfare and the Base Area

II. INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE: MILITARY CONSCRIPTION AND CULTURAL WORK

C. Japan and Its Colonies

C1 Excerpts from A Banned Japanese Novella

C2 Letter from a Japanese Student Soldier

C3 Testimonies about Draft Evasion in Colonial Korea

C4 Testimony of a Japanese Magazine Editor

D. China

D1 Memoir of a Female Chinese Military Nurse

D2 Letter from a Chinese Platoon Leader

D3 Mobilization via Cartoons

Introduction

Total War, an idea that emerged out of World War I, stipulates that future warfare between major powers would involve not just their armed forces but all of their available resources—both material and human—of the countries involved in the conflict. In other words, the entire society and the economy must be fully mobilized.

Governments in East Asia embarked on mobilization according to different timetables. As early as 1927, Japanese government established a cabinet-level Resource Bureau, to prepare for future general mobilization. Much of Japan's wartime mobilization had to do with resources, both for production as well as for daily consumption. Such policies affected not only the population at home, but also in its colonies and occupied areas in China and elsewhere.

State capacity to implement mobilization policies also varied greatly. While states and political leaders actively sought to mobilize material and human resources for war, they could not succeed without the participation of other actors such as civic and religious organizations, businesses, as well as individuals.

Part I of this Unit focuses on statements from government leaders or officials. Part II of this Unit focuses on the experience of two selected groups, with some overlap—those called to military service and those who contributed to the war effort through cultural work as writers and artists. Needless to say, these selections are far from being exhaustive, and are meant to provide glimpses into individual experiences under mobilization.

Instructor Guidelines

This Unit is divided into two parts according to themes and contains mainly Japanese and Chinese sources.

1. Part I is sub-divided in Section A (Japan and its colonies) and Section B (China). Students may compare Documents marked with A and B to see commonalities and differences. Likewise, they may do the same documents in Part II are divided into Section C (Japan and its colonies) and Section D (China). Students may compare documents in Section C and D.
2. While Part I is from government publications, Part II contains a variety of sources: most were private records or correspondence from the war period, although some were meant for publication during the war. Discuss among students how these different types of sources may affect their content.

I. State Mobilization

Wartime governments in Japan and in China embarked on a wide range of programs of mobilization, from material and economy to human labor and spirits. They not only passed laws, adopted policies, and implemented them, but also strove to appeal to their respective publics through mass media, including the newspapers and the radio.

Already in the mid-1930s, not long after its occupation of Manchuria, the Japanese government adopted measures to prepare the empire for the ultimate conflict with a major adversary—Soviet Union or the United States. It was not until 1938, a year into the full-scale war with China, that Japan formally adopted the National General Mobilization Law (source A1). With the development of mass society and means of media, government mobilization for war also embraced “spiritual mobilization” as a core component (source A2).

In 1938, Japanese government introduced the Special Army Volunteer system in its colony of Korea (and in 1942, in Taiwan) to recruit Korean youth into the Imperial Army. Six months into the Pacific War, Tokyo decided to introduce Conscription in Korea, albeit starting in 1944 (source A3).

After the loss of its northeastern provinces (also known as Manchuria) to Japan’s military in 1931-32, Republican China also began preparing for war with Japan. At the end of 1936, the rivaling Guomindang and the Communists agreed to form a united front against Japan. Soon after, full-scale war broke out in mid-1937, the Chinese government, under its leader Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) launched its own mobilization programs (source B1) even as it suffered losses in battles and lost control over a vast swathe of territory to Japanese occupation. Chinese Communist forces, on the other hand, were largely confined to the rural areas and came to place great emphasis on guerrilla warfare (source B2).



Questions:

- Who initiated mobilization and why? What aspects did government leaders emphasize in their messages about mobilization? How did they justify them?
- Who are the targets of mobilization?
- Compare and contrast the national mobilization policies of Japan and China. What are similar? What are different?
- What is “spiritual mobilization”? Compare and contrast Japanese and Chinese leader’s use of “spiritual mobilization.”

A. Japan and Its Colonies

A1 Significance of National Mobilization (1938) by Japan's Board of Planning

Full knowledge of the importance of general mobilization in time of war is the prerequisite for true understanding of the National Mobilization Law.

In view of the characteristics of a modern war, the State is required to have not only large military forces but also vast supplies of war materials to meet all emergencies. Supply of these materials should be promoted in time of peace; munitions industries must be mobilized so that the industrial activities of the nation may be systematically and swiftly shifted from a peace time to a wartime basis without loss of efficiency.

To meet the demand for war materials, it is imperative that various materials essential to the operation of defense industries should be supplied in adequate quantities. In this sense there exists little difference in importance between supplying direct war materials and supplying the so-called indirect war requirements such as raw materials, fuels, electric power, transportation and communications facilities and scientific knowledge.

Ensuring supply of these direct and indirect war needs only temporarily is far from sufficient. If general economic activities are dislocated to the extent that the minimum physiological and psychological requirements for existence as well as the necessities of life are not guaranteed, not only will the basic factors in supply of war materials be threatened, but also the whole nation will be demoralized, ultimately defeating the purpose of the war. This disastrous process was clearly shown in Germany's defeat in the World War. In view of the fact that modern warfare is waged on a large scale and over a long period of time, a nation at war must align all its productive systems in conformity with the objective of securing a vast supply of war materials and of assuring general stability in the economic life of its people. Likewise it is essential to control financial operations, rationalize labor distribution and to effect national spiritual mobilization in order to realize the purposes of war. In short, modern warfare is a struggle not between armed forces alone, but between the full strength of nations in which all the available mental and material resources are directed to the single objective of victory. Such is the significance of national mobilization.

Board of Planning, "On the National Mobilization Law," *Tokyo Gazette* (May 1938), pp. 1-2. This was a monthly publication by the Foreign Affairs Association of Japan.

A2 “An Appeal to the Nation - On the Occasion of the First Anniversary of the China Affair” (1938) by Japan’s Prime Minister Prince Fumimaro Konoe 近衛文麿

In modern war, the term battlefield cannot be applied only to the place where guns thunder and bullets shower, nor the term soldiers only to those who bear arms. Once hostilities have broken out, the whole territory of every belligerent nation should seriously be considered as the very battlefield, even if the armed conflict is taking place beyond its frontiers and across the seas. In our present case, therefore, the entire population, regardless of their occupations, age and sex must stand firm on the common consciousness of being soldiers, without which there can be no success in tiding over the present crisis. Modern war, again, cannot be won by armed conflict on the battlefield alone; economic and spiritual warfare form powerful factors in deciding the outcome. Consequently, achievements by the soldiers at the front, however significant they may be, cannot by themselves bring about the final victory should there be any slackening in the spiritual life of the “soldiers” at home.

The issue to be determined by war is victory or defeat. It follows, then, that we must have victory at all costs. In the history of Japan, an Empire which is characterized by a unique national polity firmly established under the Imperial Throne occupied by a single dynasty from time immemorial, not a single defeat has ever been recorded. If, therefore, we fail to win a victory in the present Affair we shall certainly be bringing dishonor not only on our forefathers who have created our glorious history but also on our posterity who will make future history. We are required to unite ourselves perfectly in thinking and action with our compatriots at the front – and to complete the mobilization and reorganization of all phases of national life, spiritual as well as material, with a view to gaining the final victory. Until this end is gained, hardships and privations may visit the life of the nation; in order to replete the fighting services with munitions, national life in general may be subjected to manifold inconveniences. We are requested to endure those adversities in remembrance of the fact that our fellow men on the China front are offering their lives for the national cause. Is it not then the duty of those at home to exert themselves at all costs in the task of consolidating the home front? The Government will not force the nation to make sacrifices blindly. What we desire is that by personal sacrifices we may prevent the recurrences of similar conflicts in East Asia and that by fighting to the finish we may eliminate the possible development of sinister designs of third Powers, thus laying the foundation for enduring peace in that part of the world.

Konoe Fumimaro 近衛文麿, “An Appeal to the Nation – On the Occasion of the First Anniversary of the China Affair,” *Tokyo Gazette* (August 1938), pp. 6-7.

A3 “Implementation of Conscription and the Inevitability of Imperial Subjectification*” (1942), Korea Association for Military Popularization

On May 11 at Fuminkan Hall in Keijō [present-day Seoul], the Association for Total War organized a meeting to celebrate the implementation of conscription, at which Army Colonel Isoya, a senior staff officer of the Korean Army, stated in his speech:

At this epoch-making event, it is clear how to express the gratitude of everyone on the peninsula the answer. Namely, to put it in one word, it is the fruit of further making imperial subjects.

[...] Furthermore, current Governor General Koiso, at the 23rd regular meeting at the Government General on June 29, stated further concerning this matter in roughly the following:

[...] “When each of you are asked this question in different localities—is this your true intention?—it would be no good if you reply “No. The Governor General told me to say so.” I would urge you to speak and behave in total synchronization with the Government General. To achieve this, spiritual unification based on a thorough understanding of the Cardinal Principle of the National Polity is required. According to *Nihon Shoki***, 1,792,474 years had passed between the descendance from Heaven to the establishment by Jinmu Emperor. Therefore, it’s not just the long 2600 years. It is the Empire of Japan with a much longer history. I heard that there are people who do not understand the self-determination of the Southern people, or the true, spiritual meaning of the East Asia confederation; these are the people who do not understand the National Polity of Korea-Japan sharing the same roots and ancestors. The annexation of Korea is not a union between two different peoples. Seen in this way, even such a phrase as Japan-Korea 内鮮 is already odd. One must say it feels like it has fallen behind the times. [Koreans] are fundamentally different from the Indonesian people. I hope each of you will fully consider this and provide guidance without any doubt.”

In summary, the acute pressure of the current situation calls for a further awakening of our ordinary compatriots, including certain Korean compatriots on the Peninsula who have not shown much concern. In particular, with the much-anticipated conscription to begin in 1944, needless to say, today we absolutely cannot allow a single person among the 24 million compatriots to fail to become an Imperial Subject. With the implementation of conscription, the historical inevitability of “Japan-Korea Unity” is taking a further leap forward. Therefore, all must swiftly become full Imperial Subjects, without leaving a single individual behind.

Korea Military Popularization Association, *A Preparatory Reader on Conscription in Korea* (May 1942), pp. 86-89; 朝鮮軍事普及協会『朝鮮徴兵準備読本』1942年5月、86-89頁

* **Imperial Subjectification** - a multi-faceted campaign Japan launched in its colonies of Korea and Taiwan from the late 1930s, in order to turn its colonial subjects into “imperial subjects” 皇民, namely, proper Japanese.

** **Nihon shoki** - also known as the *Chronicles of Japan*, was completed in 720 and was the second oldest classical Japanese history.

B. China

B1 Spiritual Mobilization and Victory (A radio message to the people of China by Chiang Kei-shek/Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石, broadcast from Chungking on April 17, 1939)

FELLOW-CITIZENS; Beginning from May 1, the entire nation is to observe in full the Outline for National Spiritual Mobilization and the Measures for its Enforcement promulgated by the Supreme National Defense Council on March 12. The very existence of our State and the fate of our nation depend upon this mobilization of our spiritual resources. I urge all citizens and especially all public leaders to promote this movement with all their strength and spirit.

Why must we strive to bring about a National Spiritual Mobilization? First, because spiritual strength is more powerful than material and armed force; and second, because we must make up for our spiritual deficiencies in the past. Dr. Sun Yat-sen has told us that the spiritual and material are complementary, not mutually exclusive. A person without spiritual life is not a complete or free person. A nation that loses its soul does not deserve to be free and independent. Spiritual force determines in the end the success or failure of any struggle. Visible material or military power does not completely determine victory or defeat. As Dr. Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 said, true strength must be nine-tenths strength of spirit.

That spirit is more important than material force has been amply demonstrated in many instances where a handful of Chinese soldiers have succeeded in routing many times their number of opposing troops, and where Chinese women have successfully defended themselves against the cruelties of the enemy. Our success in resisting the invader and in reconstructing our nation in the hinterland has been due largely to the strength of spirit and high morale of all our citizens. The closer we approach victory, the more difficult and dangerous will our task become, and the more necessary it will be to mobilize all the spiritual forces of the nation in order to achieve final success.

As for our spiritual deficiencies, we recall that a few months after the outbreak of the war opinion abroad constantly declared that China was not strong enough from either a military or spiritual point of view to resist a foreign foe. This criticism challenged us to searching self-examination. [...]

If a nation is deficient in material things and the deficiency cannot be remedied immediately, this cannot be considered a national disgrace. Material production requires manpower, resources, and time, and the replenishment of material deficiencies is a slow process. But it is different when we are deficient in spiritual things.

When the spirit fails, the possession of weapons and material resources is of no use. If a country is invaded by an enemy and lacks the will to resist, it does not merely suffer humiliation; it commits a great sin.

Remember that if we emerge victorious from this war and succeed in our program of national reconstruction, our history as a race will be unbroken and we may look forward to the establishment of a new China based on the Three Principles of the People.

On the other hand, if we do not possess the iron will to resist, our independence will be lost, and historians will hold us up to shame for a hundred generations to come. Now is the time when the country needs every citizen and when every citizen should give his best to the country.

Chinese Ministry of Information ed., *The Collected Wartime Messages of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek*, Volume One 1937 – 1940 (The John Day Company, 1945), p. 216.

B2 Mao Tze-tung/Mao Zedong 毛澤東 on Guerrilla Warfare and Base Areas

CONDITIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BASE AREAS

The basic condition for the establishment of base areas is that there should be an anti-Japanese armed force employed to defeat the enemy and to arouse the people into action. So the first problem in establishing base areas is the problem of an armed force. Leaders in guerrilla war must exert their utmost to build up one or several guerrilla units and, in the course of the struggle, develop them gradually into guerrilla corps and eventually into regular units and regular corps. The build-up of an armed force is the most fundamental link in establishing a base area; without an armed force or with one that is not strong enough, nothing can be done. This is the first condition.

The second condition inseparable from the establishment of base areas is that the armed forces should be employed in co-ordination with the masses of the people to defeat the enemy. All places under enemy control are enemy base areas but not guerrilla base areas, and it is evident that the former cannot be transformed into the latter unless the enemy is defeated. Even in guerrilla-controlled regions, if we do not repulse the enemy's attacks and defeat him, these regions under our control will become enemy-controlled ones, and then the establishment of base areas will also be impossible.

The third condition inseparable from the establishment of base areas is that all power, including the armed forces, should be employed to arouse the people to struggle against Japan. In the course of such struggles we must arm the people, i.e. organize self-defense corps and guerrilla units. In the course of such struggles we must form mass organizations; workers, peasants, youth, women, children, merchants and members of the free professions, according to the degree of their political consciousness. and fighting enthusiasm should all be organized into the various indispensable anti-Japanese public bodies which are to expand gradually. If they are unorganized, the masses of the people will not be able to demonstrate their strength in fighting the Japanese. In the course of such struggles we must proceed with the elimination of the forces of collaborators, in the open or undercover, a task which we can accomplish only by relying on the strength of the people. It is particularly important to arouse, through such struggles, the masses of the people, to establish or consolidate the local organs of anti-Japanese political power. Where the original Chinese organs of political power have not been destroyed by the enemy we must, on the basis of the support of the broad masses, proceed to reform and consolidate them; where the original Chinese organs of political power have been destroyed by the enemy we must, on the basis of the effort of the broad masses proceed to rebuild them. Such organs of political power must carry out the policy of the Anti-Japanese National United Front and must unite all the forces of the people to fight against our sole enemy, Japanese imperialism with its jackals—the collaborators and reactionaries.

A base area for guerrilla war can be actually established only when the three afore-mentioned basic conditions have been dually secured, i.e. the build-up of the anti-Japanese armed forces, the defeat of the enemy and the mobilization of the masses of the people.

Written and published by Mao with the title “On Strategic Issues in the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Warfare” in May 1938. Included in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Vol. II (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1954), pp. 140-141. 毛泽东、「抗日游击战争的战略问题」1938.

II. Personal Experience: Military Conscription and Cultural Work

Among the most directly impacted by any armed conflict were those in the military and sent to the front. Initially, Japan expected to quickly settle the “China Incident” or “China Affair” (so named as neither China nor Japan formally declared war for reasons related to foreign arms trade) but became tied down as the Nationalist China retreated further inland and traded space for time. Before December 1941, China was the battleground, and saw some of the fiercest fighting, accompanied by extensive aerial bombing and occasional use of BCW by the Japanese military. Even after the outbreak of the Pacific War, China saw some of the largest land campaigns in the entire war. Well over a million Japanese troops were in China, joined by the armies of the pro-Japanese puppet governments set up by Japan in occupied areas. On the Chinese side, central government army was joined by local armies under former warlords or the Communists that also engaged in guerrilla warfare, numbering in the tens of millions.

Cultural mobilization of the public for the war—through literature and art—was a major feature of the Second World War, in East Asia and elsewhere. Many writers and artists readily joined the effort.

Many Japanese writers and journalists were sent to the front, by their publishers and also by the army in what came to be known as the “Pen Corps,” largely to drum up support for the war effort. Ishikawa Tatsuzō (1905-1985), a prize-winning author, entered Nanjing within weeks of its fall, and published his account *Soldiers Alive* (source C1) in the March issue of *Chūō Kōron*, a respected popular Japanese monthly. Even though he had already redacted about one quarter of his prose due to concern of censorship, the printed magazine was banned by the authorities, and the author was arrested.

Japanese military established strict censorship for letters from or battle diaries kept by its soldiers. Some (e.g. Hino Ashihei), however, managed to turn their experience at the front into a literary success at home. The majority of these wartime personal records only came to light after 1945. In 1949, University of Tokyo published a collection of letters sent home by Japanese soldiers who had been students (source C2). Quite a few veterans and others, from Japan and from Korea—published memoirs or had their recollections recorded (sources C3 and C4), especially after the 1980s.

Compared to the Japanese, fewer rank-and-file in China’s military forces kept personal records, and even fewer survived the war (and subsequent civil war and internal turmoil). As in Japan, a few wrote about their experience for the public (source D1). By the far the majority of Chinese wartime writings were found and published only recently for the first time (source D2). A recollection of a Chinese involved in cultural mobilization at the front is the last source (source D3).



Questions:

- How did people in Japan, its colonies, and in China respond to state efforts of mobilization?
- In your opinion what could account for the variations in their responses? Are there anything in common?
- How did writers and artists mobilize for war efforts?
- What differences may exist between wartime accounts and postwar testimonies?

C. Japan and Its Colonies

C1 Excerpts from a Banned Japanese Wartime Novella (1938)

The battlefield appeared to possess an astonishing power to transform all combatants into men of identical characters, identical thoughts, and identical needs. It stripped Bachelor of Medicine Kondō of his intelligence as it did Katayama Genchō of his faith. All it left the priest were the knowledge of scriptures and funerals. The moment he removed his clerical robes to put on a military uniform, he lost the heart of a priest and acquired that of a soldier.

But army priest Katayama was not necessarily to blame for this. In peacetime his faith had been sufficiently broad to cross national frontiers. That it could no longer do so in wartime was not so much because religion had grown powerless but rather because those frontiers had grown insurmountably high. [...]

To Corporal Kasahara, killing enemy soldiers was no different than killing carp. The carnage he perpetrated did not affect his emotions in the least. The one emotion that did move him mightily was a virtually instinctive love for his comrades. He was truly a splendid soldier, the very epitome of a soldier. If he lacked Colonel Nishizawa's exalted military spirit, he was equally free of the unstable romanticism of First Class Private Hirao, Bachelor of Medicine Kondō's disoriented intelligence, and the delicate sentiments hindering the actions of Lieutenant Kurata. The magnificent steadiness of his mind persisted unshaken amid the severest combat and the most bestial slaughter. In short, he was unburdened by either oversensitivity or the intellectual's habit of self-criticism, neither of any use on the battlefield. It was precisely his type of courageous, loyal fighting man that the army wanted. During lengthy exposure to the battlefield, men like Hirao and Kondō would gradually grow to be like him, they could not do otherwise. Corporal Kasahara, before ever coming to the front, had been a youth cut out for war. His one flaw was that acting on his own authority, he was apt to become unpredictably violent. Violence was the other aspect of his bravery. By contrast, Lieutenant Kurata's bravery, though identical to his own, was backed by a kindly sentimentality.

First Class Private Hirao differed from both. His bravery was somewhat desperate and tinged with sadism, a courage verging on derangement. Behind it echoed a raging shriek that marked the disintegration of his romanticism. But even that shriek would subside if Hirao's life on the battlefield continued for long. He was bound to locate some point of compromise soon, something to stabilize his state of mind.

Ishikawa Tatsuzō, *Soldiers Alive*, translated with an introduction by Zeljko Cipris (University of Hawaii Press, 2003), pp. 103-104. 石川達三『生きている兵隊』1938.

C2 Letters from a Japanese Student Soldier

Meguro Akira was born November 10, 1916, Miyagi Prefecture. Entered Tokyo Imperial University, Department of Sociology, in 1937. Entered the barracks March, 1941. Died on October 10, 1941, in a military field hospital in Yuezhou, central China, of an illness contracted on the battlefield. He was twenty-four years old.

Letter, September 16, 1941

Dear Father:

Autumn is here. I was startled by the cool autumn wind after suffering from the well over one-hundred-degree temperatures we've been experiencing until now. The skies are beautiful too and are filled with stars. Insects are singing around us. In this alien land of China any insects—whether they are *kōrogi* or *matsumushi* (a kind of cricket), or just about any type of autumn insect that we used to hear in Japan— make us soldiers feel nostalgic about home. So, whenever we get together and talk, our conversations are always limited to the mountains and rivers of home, and also to the food we enjoyed at home.

Father, our Yamamori Squad is now in Hankou [major city in Hubei Province]. Our several months' training in that severe summer heat will now be tested, we hope successfully, during this autumn season[...]. It turns out that we are now about to embark on a ship, and with no idea of our destination. In any event, we really have no other choice than that of continuing to follow the imperial orders. [...]

Honestly, dear father, there have been so many occasions when I wanted to appeal to you and confide in you and mother as intimately as I did in the days of childhood. Perhaps these feelings were like those of a young bully who goes home to his parents to confess what he has done. There were so many times when I wished so very much I could have you hear me out about so many things—times when I felt so alone and lonely that at night I just went out quietly to look at the starry skies.

Sometimes I even felt jaundiced and sorry for myself, thinking that the only place where I could possibly live would be in a kind and gentle place and amid the company of the tranquil souls whom I longed for. But I believe that even this sort of bad dream will be blown away once I face my first battle.

Letter, September 17, 1941

[...] I am writing you, Father, because I have so many things, more than it is possible to write, I want to tell you. We arrived at Nanjing on day of month. And we spent about a week at Battalion's barracks here. It was located at the bottom of Lion Mountain, where some stubborn remains of gun-emplacements showed through. Hawks were wheeling around the sky as though they were dancing. I was seeing the Chinese people for the first time personally, and what really left a strong impression were the masses of coolies. When we

were ready to disembark from the ship, there were hundreds of them squirming around on the landing pier. They were all wearing rags so tattered that they defy description. There were old ones and young ones alike, all barefooted and walking this way and that way. They left an even stronger impression on me than had the numerous burned houses that I caught glimpses of on our way to the barracks. Things that will not be easy to forget are the scenes at Xingzhongmen. In the very early morning masses of coolies go into the castle there with empty tin cans on their hips, and then in the evenings they come out again through the gate.

Midori Yamanouchi and Joseph L. Quinn, S. J. trans. *Listen to the Voices from the Sea* (University of Scranton Press, 2000), pp. 22-24. This is the English translation of 『きけわだつみのこえ 日本戦没学生の手記』 published in Japan.

C3 Testimonies about Draft Evasion in Colonial Korea

KIM P. [ANONYMOUS], (m) b. 1924: I received the military draft notice, but I really didn't want to go into the army. I was married and we had a child, but that didn't make any difference to the Japanese. They wanted all the help they could get. Somebody said, why don't you go to a fortune teller to get advice? So I went. He told me to run away because my lot as a soldier would be a very bad one. I took his advice and went to my aunt several villages away. I stayed in hiding for six months and twenty days and then the war was over. My parents got into trouble because I ran away. The police went to my house every single day, demanding to know where I had gone. Sometimes the police went, sometimes the township officials, asking the same things over and over. I didn't hide in the attic or in the woods, I just tried to stay indoors because the Japanese questioned any young man seen on the street. At that time, every young man should be in the army or on a work team. My fake document said I was on official travel, and I used that whenever I ran into a roadblock or had to show identification.

YI SŬNGBONG, (m) b. 1912, tailor, Kyŏnggi Province: The shop where I worked, Hasegawa tailor shop, was one of the few large ones in Seoul, large enough that the colonial government ordered uniforms from us. I was the supervisor under the Japanese owner but I never socialized with the boss. He just came in every day, sat around and swatted flies. Toward the end of the war, when many were drafted into the army and to the mines, we were spared. The owner of our shop found some way to protect us all from the forced military draft.

Hildi Kang ed., *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 130-131.

C4 Testimony of a Japanese Magazine Editor

By the time the Japan-China War began in 1937, of course, we couldn't really let our opposition to the military show on the surface, or we'd all have been taken away. We did, however, give those who were accused, imprisoned, then released under the Peace Preservation Law a chance to present their case. In order to deceive the authorities, we also carried some writings by military men. Had all our writers been leftist or centrists, *Chūō Kōron* would have been crushed far earlier. We called the military men our “magic shields,” as they were supposed to ward off bullets. Unfortunately, it didn't work. It just made us feel a little more secure a little while longer. Not once can I recall *Chūō Kōron* really agreeing with or supporting the military. Sometimes it did speak paradoxically, sounding as if it were going along, but only on the surface in an editorial or in a style which might have appeared to be right-wing.

We had a circulation of a hundred thousand at our peak, and censorship was always a possibility. In the early stages of the war, we submitted our magazine for approval only after distribution. If there was a problem, they'd tell us then. The editor responsible would be summoned. The issue was already at the bookstores when you faced the problem of having to delete something. The local police were responsible for collecting the magazines from the stores. They would be piled up in the office of the Tokkō—the Special Higher Police—at the local police station. They were the thought police. Then we had to go there and, holding a ruler against the so-called “bad pages,” tear them out. Everybody had to throw themselves into this—managers, printers, even the waiters in our cafeteria. You rented automobiles and raced to each police station. Once you'd got a seal of approval from the thought police showing that pages had been deleted, it was up to you to take them back to the bookstores.

The most extreme example of this was our March 1938 issue. Ishikawa Tatsuzō's novel *Living Soldiers* [*Ikiteiru Heitai*] was censored. It described the soldiers' cruel behavior in China. Ishikawa had actually been dispatched to the front by *Chūō Kōron* to write for us, and had been there the previous December when the Nanking Incident occurred. More than one hundred pages had to be ripped from the issue, but the issues still sold out. I was really moved by that. You couldn't even lower the price, and the magazine was thinner on one side, so it was obvious that pages had been cut out, and, anyway, we had to affix a seal: Revised Edition. The cut-out pages were left at the police station as proof you'd done it. Yet, even without a discount, *Chūō Kōron* sold. [...]

Honestly speaking, nobody said openly that they opposed the war. If you said that you'd have been killed immediately, or taken away and killed later. The editorial division did what little we could. We met with the military, but they didn't listen to us. We argued that we honestly loved our nation, but that without convincing the intellectual class, victory would not be possible. They said that way of thinking was wrong. “Everyone must put

their minds to war” was their slogan. To them, that meant run up the flag, sing military songs, and cheer loudly! Even a nihilistic attitude toward war was wrong. They said they could tell if we were sincere just by looking at the color in our faces.

Hatanaka Shigeo, editor of the respected monthly magazine *Chūō Kōron* during the war until his arrest in 1944 by the policy, as told to Haruko Taya Cook & Theodore Cook, in *Japan at War: An Oral History* (The New Press, 1992), pp. 64-67.

D. China

D1 Memoir of a Female Chinese Military Nurse

ON THE BATTLEFIELD we drank muddy yellow water from the creek, ate coarse rice and cold food, and wore single-layered shirts and trousers. We used thin bedcovers donated by the Shanghai Women's Service Corps. We slept on the floor of a freezing parlor invaded by the north wind, on damp bedding. Even so, our life was extraordinarily happy. Our group of young women, accustomed to living comfortable lives, did not feel the least distressed. When they were ill, they were surrounded by nurses. When they were cold, seven or eight people crowded into a pile. When the cistern was empty, they carried the water with a pole on their shoulders. When the furnace was out of brushwood, they collected wood. As for washing clothes and sweeping floors and cooking meals, these were daily duties that they all performed. We had many talents among us. Two of us knew how to cut hair; three could sew; five could cook tasty dishes; some liked to write old style or modern poetry; some wrote novels or acted in plays or sang songs. Our lives were filled with joy.

When it was time to work, everyone lowered her head and worked hard. No one let slip her responsibility, even slightly. If a corps member was found to be negligent in her work, or failing to fulfill her responsibilities, or if she was heavy-handed while washing the wounds of an injured soldier, or if she talked to a soldier in a coarse voice and not in a gentle manner, then she would immediately be criticized by other corps members. In the meetings where we critiqued ourselves and our work, we did not stand on ceremony. We sternly examined and discussed everyone's words and actions. Sometimes the criticisms were so excessive that they actually made someone cry. But we did not treat this colleague leniently, just because she had cried. Instead, we reprimanded her, saying, "Revolutionaries do not shed tears, only blood."

When our work was finished, we all either read books or wrote diaries. We looked upon the battlefield as if it were our own home, and so we calmly passed our days.

Then came the night of November 12—a moment I shall never forget, for it was when we received orders to leave Jiading. On the previous day the local officers in charge of several organizations—the division for maintaining public order, the divisional office of instruction, the reserves, and the schools in the war zone—had held a joint conference with our four warzone service corps to discuss practical problems of collaboration between the military and civilians and to establish an office of joint affairs. Unfortunately, just a day later we had to leave those lovable civilians who had been baptized by our propaganda and the place so blessed with our fighters' blood and flesh.

We followed the military medical unit and retreated with our injured soldiers to Suzhou, where we encountered three days and nights of severe bombing. We went out every day to

nurse the wounded and never stopped working. We changed their dressings; we cooked their meals; we boiled their drinking water. We had absolutely no wish to leave them and retreat to a safer place, even though the head of the military medical unit asked us several times to retreat to Wuxi. [...]

WHEN I RETURNED to Hankou, many schools and civilian groups asked me to give speeches. I remember that when I gave a speech called “Returning from the Front Line” at Zhonghua University, not only was every corner of the large auditorium jammed with people standing but even the space under the platform was crammed with people. They quietly listened to the true stories written with our soldiers’ blood. When I finished speaking, I could not press my way through the crowd, so I let them carry me out.

I had lived on the battlefield for more than two months, and my spirits were unbearably weary. Just at this time the *Xinmin News* insisted that I come help out, and I had no alternative but to agree to go to Chongqing to edit a short-term supplementary edition called *Blood Tide*. I had trouble getting accustomed to life as it was lived on the home front. When I smelled the perfumed hair of the modern women, I would think of the rank odor of blood on the front line. When I passed a tavern or a restaurant and heard the noises of those inside drinking and playing games, I would think of the soldiers lying in the field hospital, bleeding and moaning. I knew that cultural work on the home front was important, perhaps as important as the tasks on the front line in this war of resistance, yet I wanted to return to the front simply because doing so was satisfying to my spirit. There were too many writers on the home front, too few who participated in work for the military. My third brother was in the fifth war zone, and he had sent a telegram asking me to go there to work. I did not hesitate. I went directly to Xuzhou.

Xie Bingying, *A Woman Soldier's Own Story: The Autobiography of Xie Bingying*, Translated by Lily Chia Brissman & Barry Brissman (Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 275-280.

D2 Letter from a Chinese Platoon Leader

Elder Brother!

Have you received the two letters that I sent recently? I did submit a petition (for release) to the Regiment headquarter but did not get approval from the regiment commander. He says this moment is particularly urgent, and he will not permit my long absence. Yesterday morning my unit already departed to take over advance positions. Yesterday afternoon the division commander himself came to inspect our position. He ordered me to defend the village on the northern shore of Liuyang River, and told my platoon to defend it till the end and never to abandon the position. He also said that if we could hold on for seven days, there will be a reprieve. Therefore, yesterday evening I led my platoon to the new position and built defenses and obstacles throughout the night. Fifty meters behind our position is the big river. It is wide and deep and there is no bridge or boat. This is really a battle with no retreat like the famous ancient general Han Xin*.

Today we received intelligence that the enemy had reached Muluo River, and we estimated that they would come here in 3 to 4 days. If our troops at the front would resist with all their strength, then whether Japanese could reach here is in doubt. Moreover, today we have the first snow this winter in northern Hunan, the enemy's advance might slow down. However, officers and men of all divisions in our Army are not afraid to die and are determined not to let the enemy across the Liuyang river. I told my soldiers "Never let them cross the river!" With this, if the enemy does come, we will have a fight. If nothing happens to me, you need not worry; if misfortune does strike, you need not be afraid. As the ancient saying goes "how many soldiers ever return from battles?" Please also tell our parents not to be sad. Matters of life and death are determined by Heaven. For sure I will look after myself and I hope you not to be worried. [...]

Have you received any letter from home recently? I haven't written to our parents for a long time. I hope you can write for me and tell them I am safe. I'm at the front and it is very inconvenient. Therefore I will not write more.

Younger Brother

ZHU Dinghou 褚定侯

December 27, 1941

Family Letters from the War of Resistance: Memories of War from Our Predecessors, (Beijing: Renmin University Press, 2015), pp. 92-93. 中国人民抗日战争纪念馆, 中国人民大学博物馆编、《抗战家书; 我们先辈的抗战记忆》中国人民大学出版社、2015.

* **Han Xin** - a Chinese military general known for his brilliant tactics. He won a battle in 204BC., when he deliberately made sure his troops had no place for retreat when fighting a numerically superior enemy.

D3 Mobilization through Cartoons

Like the drama propaganda campaign, the process of spreading patriotic sentiments to the people and bringing issues into focus through cartoons proved to be intellectually invigorating, involving constant movement and the creation of visual images comprehensible to country folk. Xuan Wenjie, a member of the corps, years later recalled the experience:

The corps left Shanghai in September and headed west. On our way to Nanjing, we joined hands with the drama corps to stage propaganda shows on the streets of Zhenjiang. The simultaneous appearances of cartoon shows and street plays created a furor in this centuries-old city on the banks of the Yangzi River. From Shanghai to Nanjing, the enemy planes tailed us and bombed trains and people, leaving seas of fire and a land of moaning. I will never forget these terrifying, tragic scenes. Zhang Ding and Lu Zhixiang joined us in Nanjing. We worked day and night to draw propaganda cartoons on pieces of huge cloth, recording enemy brutality that we had just witnessed. We put on "Anti-Japanese Cartoon Exhibitions" despite constant air raid sirens. These exhibits were received with enthusiasm, drawing a large crowd and reflecting people's interest [in cartoons] and their confidence [in us]. Despite enemy planes hovering overhead, they were engrossed in each and every cartoon on display.

When the Japanese troops occupied Nanjing in December 1937 we withdrew to Wuhan. [...] During our stay in Wuhan we concentrated on the following: First, drawing a large number of big propaganda cartoon posters and showing them in Hankou, Wuchang, and Qiaokou. This was our major assignment. [...] We also mobilized citizens to donate gold and money to help the war cause. Second, designing printed materials for anti-enemy propaganda. Many of us were involved, and the results were considerable.

[...] Third, editing Resistance Cartoons [Kangzhan manhua 抗战漫画]. The magazine, which was the official publication of the corps, published a total of twelve issues in Wuhan (three more issues came out in Chongqing, making fifteen issues in all). Besides paying tribute to the people's heroic resistance effort and hammering away at enemy brutality, a large number of pages were devoted to reporting resistance movements in other parts of the country.

Xuan Wenjie, "Cartoon Propaganda Corps during the war against Japan," 宣文杰,「抗日战争时期的漫画宣传队」 Quoted and translated in Chang-tai Hung, *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937-1945*, (Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 94-95.

2 Women's Wartime Experiences in China, Japan, and Korea

Introduction

Instructor Guidelines

- a. Discussion on writing a “women’s history”
- b. Comparison of sources
- c. Tips for instructors

I. WOMEN IN CHINA

Printed materials:

I.1: “Only Consumption: Urban Women Who Cannot Produce”

I.2: “How to Mobilize Chinese Women”

Women’s testimonies:

I.3: An oral interview of Li Shuhua, born in 1913 in Chongqing, Sichuan Province, the daughter of a poor peasant family.

I.4: An oral interview of Luo Fuhui, born in 1922 in Huban Province. The daughter of a private banker.

II. WOMEN IN JAPAN

Printed materials:

II.1: A Round Table on Marriage Problems for Young Women at the Time of War

II.2: Training for “Brides of the Continent”

Women’s testimonies:

II.3: An oral interview of Koshino Ayako, a dressmaker

II.4: Takahashi Akiko, “The War and I.” A woman living in Iwadeyama town, Miyagi, in Northeast Japan

III. WOMEN IN KOREA

Printed materials:

III.1: The Patriotic Golden Hairpin Society Formed in Seoul

III.2: Young Working Korean Women’s Roundtable

Women’s testimonies:

III-3: Park Wan-suh’s autobiography on a daughter and a mother under war mobilization

III-4: An oral history of Kim Pongsuk on a student life during the war

IV. “COMFORT WOMEN”

IV: Excerpts of the Transcript of Oral Judgment

Introduction

Women are an important category in wartime mobilization for any modern regime. During World War II, women across East Asia often expanded the scope of their work, from nurses and factory workers to activists and soldiers. Mothers were expected to be the bearers and nurturers of healthy families and tasked to manage extended families and local communities when their husbands were called up for military service. These new tasks were framed as part of “national resistance,” “imperial responsibility,” and “social reconstruction,” in the regimes’ propaganda, and their social participation was accelerated.

Women’s social networks also changed significantly as a result of mobilization. In many places, women typically had to (or were encouraged to) belong to women’s associations. These associations became the platform for state mobilization where women were taught the national spirit, the importance of frugality, and skills of sewing and cooking suitable for a time of material scarcity. Women reacted differently to the activities of these associations—they could obtain access to valuable information, emotional support, life skills, a sense of self-worth, and rationed foods, but on the other hand, these associations deprived women of time and energy and policed their thought and ideology.

As the war situation worsened, many women also experienced severe material shortages, city bombing, and encampment by the invading soldiers. They also experienced sexual violence, loss of their dignity and lives in attacks and abuse. At least tens of thousands of women were recruited or forced to offer sexual service for Japanese soldiers as “comfort women.” The trauma left a lasting mark on these women and their families.

The sources collected in this unit will show various aspects and experiences of women under wartime mobilization and life difficulties. Of course, women faced specific social and personal situations that differed from one another. Media messages, educational opportunities, access to food, their status in the family and society were often starkly different, for example, between urban and rural areas, countries, and economic classes. By reading multiple sources together, we can explore many questions: e.g. How did women survive—or thrive—during the war? What experiences and viewpoints were unique to women? Did generations matter? What were the similarities and differences in their experiences? Whose history do we know the most and why—how should a history be written? Why was women’s history considered “irrelevant” for centuries, and when its importance was recognized (in the 1980s), why was it still considered “difficult” to write about women?

This unit is divided into four parts: China, Japan, Korea, and comfort women. Each part of the three places is then divided into “printed materials” and “women’s testimonies.” The “printed materials” are excerpts from a selection of wartime publications, and “women’s

testimonies” are either oral interviews or reflective writings produced more recently. Comparing and discussing these sources will hopefully help students develop multiple perspectives not only on women’s experiences, but also on imperialism, nationalism, and resistance, as well as foster an awareness of the merits and shortfalls of different types of historical sources.

Instructor Guidelines

After the students understand the basic political background of wartime East Asia (see the general introduction), this section can be used to serve different purposes, such as 1) discuss the characteristics of “women’s history,” 2) compare discourses and personal accounts, 3) compare different kinds of testimonies, and 4) compare across different locations. Instructors should choose a set of sources to meet a specific goal and a time constraint. Some suggested questions are:

a. Discussion on writing a “women’s history”

- Is “women’s history” generally different from “men’s history”? Why or why not?
- Would work of history focusing on women be fruitful? How different would it be from the history offered in a textbook?
- Which sources would you use if you are to write a women’s history and why? How would you compensate the shortcomings of these sources?
- Is there any topic (schooling, cooking, motherhood etc.) you would like to know more about in the field of women’s history? What kind of sources would you look for that would tell you more about it?
- Are there other categories of people that are underrepresented in historical studies? How can we write a history from their point of view?

b. Comparison of sources

- Who wrote (or might have written) each source, for what purpose, and who was the target audience?
- How did each source discuss women’s characteristics, women’s duties, and women’s goals?
- In women’s testimonies, what life events of these women were affected by the war situation?
- How would the women who offered these testimonies have responded to the printed materials if they had read them?
- How would the writers of the printed materials think about the women who offered the testimonies?
- If someone writes an “East Asian women’s history of the war,” what would be the difficulties, and what would be highlighted?

c. Tips for instructors

The personal stories are more relatable, and the printed materials are easier to criticize. But ask the students to reflect on the shortcomings of interviews and memoirs in the same way as they might the printed sources, emphasizing that no source is perfect. For example, memories are fluid and reflect the situations and discourses of the time of writing or interview. Personal reflections also do not capture the wider structure of the mobilization or wartime experiences. It is useful to remind students of how research integrity can be achieved only through a cross-referencing of sources while respecting people's testimonies and carrying out a process of deep contextualization.

I. Women in China

In a large country like China, the political and social circumstances and the reality of people's lives varied widely. It is important to always bear in mind the diversity on the ground and the limitations of the sources when generalizing the experiences of one nation (the same goes for any country). The two testimonies here come from one particular place, Chongqing. After the fall of China's then capital Nanjing, and later the provisional capital of Wuhan, Chongqing will become the Nationalist (Guomindang) wartime capital of China until Japanese surrender in 1945. This transformed Chongqing and created a new flow of people and a new dynamic of cultural and economic activities. Chongqing thus witnessed a fascinating mix of local provincial people and migrants from urban centers. Chongqing residents witnessed the construction of new infrastructure and schools, while it suffered severe bombing by the Japanese, housing and food shortages, inadequate government assistance, and so on. As you read the following sources, pay attention to the social backgrounds that were reflected in these sources, and imagine the kinds of social pressures, personal excitement, and political movements that women experienced.



Questions:

- How did each source discuss women's characteristics, women's duties, and women's goals?
- How did political leaders perceive the possibility of mobilizing women? Why did women participate in mobilization in your opinion?
- In women's testimonies, what life events of these women were affected by the war situation? What radically changed in their lives, and what remained the same?

Printed Materials

I.1: “Only Consumption: Urban Women Who Cannot Produce”

Despite the name of its section, “Lin Loon Ladies’ Magazine” was part of another magazine, Movietalk, when this article was published. [Lin Loon Ladies’ Magazine](#) was originally a pioneering women’s magazine of its own published in metropolitan Shanghai between 1931 and 1937. Later, a section in Movietalk (published by the same company) was dedicated to continuing women-related content, and the section was named “Lin Loon Ladies’ Magazine.” The author of this article is unknown.

I am a woman, and I will be discussing women’s problems from a female perspective; that should grant me more intimate knowledge [into this issue].

I approve of rural women. They have strong physiques, joyful spirits, and moreover are content with a meagre existence while being capable of work. They are nothing like the modern women who resort to blackmail, coercion and female treachery. I cannot stand urban women; they only know how to indulge, not how to produce, living a contradictory life day in and day out.

Many urban women are frail and emaciated, sometimes reduced to a set of skeletons. Every [urban woman’s] face, caked with layers of makeup, is riddled with spots, failing to conceal their haggard expressions. The flesh of urban daughters has long withered away. Despite spending exorbitant amounts buying imported perfumes and powders, desperately applying them to their face and bodies, visiting doctors for nourishing injections and taking supplements, they are caught between the lure of material goods and the systemic abuse of their own bodies. They neither sleep well at night nor eat properly during the day, indulging in endless pleasures. In the end, they added to the trend of the “greasy and damasked” people, exhausting their spirit, earning the notorious label of “Courtesans ignorant of national crisis,”* which perfectly reflects the conundrum of urban women, doesn’t it?

“Women’s Discussion: “Only Consumption: Urban Women Who Cannot Produce,” Lin Loon Ladies Magazine Section, *Movietalk* (Shanghai) vol. 9, no. 6 (1939): 45. 「妇女评论：社会消费不事生产的都市女性、玲珑妇女杂志、《电声(上海)》第九年第六期.

* The first half of an excerpt of a famous poem by Tang dynasty poet Du Fu. The poem highlights how courtesans (women who ‘sell’ their song & dance), seemingly unaware of the impending fall of the dynasty, continue to sing their ballads along the winding river, while the country collapses around them.

I.2: “How to Mobilize Chinese Women”

The author of this text, Hu Ziying (1907-1982), was a well-known revolutionary who participated in labor movements, organized a patriotic association of women in Shanghai, and fought in Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Chongqing. This piece, “How to Mobilize Chinese Women” appeared in different volumes. The link is to a volume, Women in the War of Resistance (1944).

Women in cities who have organizational training opportunities are mostly career women, female students, and a small number of female workers; housewives, who make up the largest number of women, are almost entirely unorganized, so we must make every effort to organize housewives. However, because the daily lives of housewives are trivial (concerned with trivial and scattered things) and busy, they have lost interest in organizational life.

Therefore, when we are organizing housewives, it is not appropriate to use the method of holding regular meetings, nor is it appropriate for them to be outdoors, on the roads [while doing the work]; we can only make use of their living environment, deploy some weaker means of conducting regular conversation; as for the work, we can only rely on what they can do on top of their daily business, and what can be done in the home.

[These people] have encountered all kinds of problems in their daily lives, such as the problem of escaping from the disaster, the problem of obtaining coal and rice (daily necessities), and the problem of securing their children's education. If we start by solving these problems, and we become the tools of the housewives we wish to organize, we will surely gain a lot of success. We must first make housewives perceive the benefits of an ‘organized’ life, and then give them the proper political training so that they can use their own strength to relieve and reform [the broader problem].

Huzi Ying, “How to Mobilize Chinese Women” in Women in the War of Resistance, edited by Song Qing-ling et al. (1944) pp. 72-76. 胡子婴,「[怎样动员全中国的妇女](#)」见 宋庆龄等『妇女与抗战』(战时出版社, 1944), 72-76页。

Women's Testimonies

The author of the compilation of oral history, Echoes of Chongqing, is Chongqing-born Danke Li. She conducted interviews from 1999 to 2007 after noticing that there were no women's voices included for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the victory of China's War of Resistance against Japan in 1995. Together with three American students, she interviewed fifty women living in the city.

I.3: An oral interview of Li Shuhua, born in 1913 in Chongqing, Sichuan Province, the daughter of a poor peasant family.

Ever since May 4, 1939, through the rest of the war years, we struggled to find a permanent place to live, and we failed repeatedly. After the big fire caused by the bombardment on May 4, 1939, the government did not provide any relief assistance to us, and we were all on our own. [...]

After the May. 1939 bombing the municipal government sent out police to crack down on illegally constructed flammable shelters and houses in the city. We did not have money to rent a room or build a place that would meet the minimum requirement for fire safety by the government during the war. We joined thousands of other poor families to become the "guerrilla residents" of the city, which meant that we would build a bamboo shelter illegally in a place until we were discovered and driven away by the police. [...]

From 1939 to 1942 we were semi-homeless and moved at least fifty times. [...] In the midst of bombing and constant moving around the city, I became pregnant twice and gave birth to two more children. Being a pregnant woman during the war was not an easy life to live. I had to keep working as hard as I could to bring food to my family. I also kept a vegetable garden whenever I could or salvaged edibles from other people's garbage. With skyrocketing food prices, we never had enough to eat. [...]

After giving birth to my second son in 1939, I gave birth to six more children. Most of these six pregnancies took place during the war. Each time after the birth of my child, I could afford to rest for one or two days only and then went right back to work. Several times right after the birth of a new baby, we had to move again. The hunger and anxiety took a toll on the babies and me; only two out of the six babies survived as a result. Back in those days, I did not know anything about birth control. A woman's body was just a machine for giving birth to babies, even though we had to bury most of them.

Danke Li, *Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime* (University of Illinois Press, 2010), pp. 85-87.

I.4: An oral interview of Luo Fuhui, born in 1922 in Huban Province. The daughter of a private banker.

In 1938, I graduated from middle school and entered Fudan high school. [...] Most of the teachers at Fudan were *xiajiang* [downriver] people* who had moved to Chongqing with the university. At Fudan the curriculum was much more rigorous than that of the local schools I had attended before. [...] We did interesting lab experiments, which I found to be very eye-opening. [...] Because many *xiajiang* teachers had lost their homelands to the Japanese, they were more vigorous about propagandizing for the War of Resistance against Japan. However, regarding women's position in society, most of them were still conservative. My science teacher was from Manchuria and was a brilliant teacher and very passionate about the war against Japan. However, he had a very low opinion of female students' ability in science. He did not believe that female students could be as good as the male students. [...]

As a young girl, I noticed that after many *xiajiang* people came to Chongqing, the local social atmosphere began to change. New people brought new openness to our everyday lives in the region. For example, before the *xiajiang* people's arrival, women, including young girls, hardly wore skirts in the Chongqing region, despite the fact that it was a very hot place in the summer. The *xiajiang* women not only brought skirts to our lives but also introduced ballroom dancing and social dancing. Even the style of qipao was altered. The side slits of the qipao were opened much higher toward the hips to reveal more leg when walking. The popular style of women's permed hair was also introduced by the *xiajiang* women[...]

After the Japanese advanced into central China, [my father]'s business was completely destroyed. [...]

I saw that the war destroyed millions of Chinese homes and completely changed their and my family's fortunes. I was angry at the Japanese invaders. Although I was an ordinary person who did not have information about the overall development of the war, the intensive propaganda for the War of Resistance in the Chongqing region made me firmly feel that China would eventually defeat Japan. To be honest, although during the war years I participated in school-organized war efforts, I was more concerned with my own life, given my family's sudden change of financial situation.

Danke Li, *Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime* (University of Illinois Press, 2010) pp. 52-54.

* **Xiajiang** people indicate those who migrated from wartorn cities to Chongqing once Chongqing became the wartime capital.

II. Women in Japan

In studying women's experiences in modern Japanese history, one notices that we have access to a wide range of written sources, both printed materials and personal writings. This comes from the fact that the schooling and literacy rates increased rapidly in the late nineteenth century, reaching near full national literacy by 1910. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, magazines and books targeting women audience and their own writings in the form of diaries, letters, and opinions to these publications flourished. During wartime mobilization, too, women and children wrote many letters to encourage soldiers on the battlefield and to express their devotion to the national cause. After the war, women's ability to write and read well led to another wave of women's writings, many of which chronicled the wartime experiences, such as material shortage and rationing, loss of their husbands and fathers to the war, and spiritual mobilization.

It is also noticeable that the obvious fact that Japan was a colonial empire that invaded a large region of Asia tends to go without comment in many of these women's early postwar writings. Much later, in the 1990s, women began writing their experiences of colonialism, however.



Questions:

- In what ways were Japanese women victims and aggressors?
- What was women's place in Japan's war effort?
- What was men's place in addressing women's issues in women's magazines and groups?
- How was "marriage" connected to war effort?
- Do people's memories change, and if so, how and why? What type of information can be trusted in people's postwar reflections?

Printed Materials

II.1: A Round Table on Marriage Problems for Daughters at the Time of War

This was part of a roundtable discussion by three mothers who had young daughters and Hasunuma Monzō, a well-known male moral educator. One of the women participants, Mrs. Kikuchi Takeko, was the wife of an army captain, with two married daughters. Shufu no tomo (主婦之友; Housewife's Friend) was a popular women's magazine that was known for its practical advice, educational information, and visual materials. The magazine was published between 1917 and 2008.

Kikuchi: One more reason for the difficulty of finding a marriage partner has been, I heard, that parents postpone their daughter's marriage because her husband might be conscripted any time, and that would sadden her [...] But just as men's real wish is to devote their lives to the nation, I think women should have a determination to follow him when something happens to her husband [...] I was moved by a beautiful story. When a young man was conscripted while he was engaged, his family proposed the cancellation of the engagement, thinking of the young woman's future. But the woman's family did not accept it, and he entered the military. They still had a while before he would leave Japan, so they had a serene and simple wedding ceremony at the shrine near his military camp on his day off. Because he cannot stay outside overnight, they can only meet occasionally on Sundays. But they said their mentalities are calm and feel that they were glad they had a wedding. In a time like this, they should act accordingly only when something happens [i.e. the husband dies]. I do not recommend that they postpone a marriage thinking just in case.

Hasunuma: They do such a thing because they consider marriage as a pleasure. Marriages in foreign countries are for pleasure, but Japanese marriages are marriages for consolidating the foundation of the divine nation. Since the first day of marriage, the wife needs a determination to devote her filial piety to the in-laws, work with her spouse to build a future good home and endure any hardship. It is especially important for mothers to teach their daughters this attitude.

“A Round Table on Marriage Problems for Daughters at the Time of War” *Housewife's Friend* 24, no. 1 (1940) pp. 305-306. 「事変下の娘の結婚の問題座談会」『主婦之友』第24巻1号 (1940): 305-306.

II.2: Training for “Brides of the Continent”

The northeastern region of Japan became a major source of armed agricultural migration to Manchuria, where the Japanese established a puppet-state Manzhouguo in 1932, over the course of the 1930s. Young men were the first to be mobilized, and young women were selected as brides. Kahoku shinpō (河北新報) has been a major regional newspaper in the northeastern region, based in Sendai, Miyagi.

Higashi Ōsaki village, Tamatsukuri county (Miyagi prefecture), is proceeding with the plan to establish a branch village in Manshūkoku (Manzhouguo) and sending as many villagers as possible the next three years. Corresponding to this migration movement, the young women’s group of the same village has begun training “brides of the continent.” This aims to teach and train seventy young female members of marrying age everything about becoming a housewife and to polish them to become confident brides to be sent to warriors colonizing the continent. As a first session, they had a three-day lecture series. On the first day, they listened to “Things to Know as Pregnant Women” by Mr. Anzai, the head of Furukawa health center, and “The Significance of Brides for Manchuria-Mongolia” by Mr. Onodera, the head of the Migration Association. On the second day, they received lectures on meal nutrition and child rearing. On the third day, they finally had an on-site experience. Under the supervision of group leader Ōnuma, they participated in the reconstruction project of Eai River and offered volunteer labor of carrying gravel and sand as collective labor training. They sweated during this precious experience and came back in the evening. They will continue with a lecture series on housekeeping, sewing, hygiene, cooking, and manners, three days every month.

“Training for ‘Brides of the Continent,’” March 3, 1939「『大陸の花嫁』養成」河北新報 1939年3月3日.

Women's Testimonies

II.3: An oral interview of Koshino Ayako, a dressmaker

This is an excerpt from a large collection of oral histories conducted by Haruko Tara Cook and Theodore F. Cook in 1988 and 1989. The majority of the interviewees in the volume are men, but it also includes some testimony from women, of which this is a part.

During the war, everything was National Defense Color. That was the army's color, the color of uniforms. Today, if I recommended khaki to a woman who went through those years, they'd hate it. They say it brings back those times. They don't want to remember. But then it was the safest color, fine anytime, anyplace. The streets were full of army color. [...] Anything with any sense of elegance at all was forbidden under the prohibition regulations, even a single line of gold-embroidered thread in a kimono. [...] I kept my shop open through the whole conflict. I'd take apart good kimonos in order to make *monpe* [work trousers]. I also made Western clothes from old fabric. There wasn't much to wear.

My husband was called up and died of illness overseas in the army in February 1944. A placard emblazoned with 'A House of Honor' was put up by the entrance to our house. Because of that, even if I'd fancied another man, it was useless to love. I was low-key and discreet. You had to be afraid of the Kempeitai [military police] all the time. I never did anything wrong, but I felt my partner was worried about the military police. Marriage was out of the question.

Haruko Taya Cook & Theodore Cook, in *Japan at War: An Oral History* (The New Press, 1992), pp. 185-186.

II.4: Takahashi Akiko, “I and War.” A woman living in Iwadeyama town, Miyagi, in Northeast Japan

Seventy-one years after the end of the war, Ōsaki city officials, Miyagi, Japan, called for submission of wartime memories. To encourage young people to “learn about the wartime experience and think about peace,” [the city website](#) continues to present the selected memoirs. Such projects are popular among municipal governments in Japan.

When I was in the fourth grade, the Sino-Japanese War broke out. I will never forget the beginning of the war. I was made to carry a small Rising Sun flag in a flag procession as we were told we had won a battle, and I was also taken to a shrine to pray, and I spent my childhood at the mercy of my teachers, not knowing what was going on in my mind. I was living a normal life in the countryside with no planes coming, but in December 1941, when I was 16 years old, the Pacific War broke out. Why did the Japanese soldiers have to fight a life-or-death battle against a large nation? As a sixteen-year-old, I had no way of knowing, and I entered high school. At that time there were no buses, and the roads were bad, but I commuted two kilometers to and from school without missing a single day thanks to my youthfulness, and one year passed without incident. In the latter half of the second year, I commuted in *monpe* [working trousers], not in a skirt. People in their prime working age and the pillar of the family began to go to war with a single slip of red paper [a call-up notice from the military]. In my family, my brother was a schoolteacher, so we did not receive any red paper. We were often sent to the station to see conscripts off, and we began to feel the war close at hand. I can still hear the words of the head of the Women's Department sending them off, her high-pitched voice still ringing in my ears. I can imagine the tears in the hearts of the family members. [...]

When we were getting close to graduation, talk of the Female Student Corp came up, and even the headmaster and other teachers started talking about serving the country, and I somehow felt that I would become a non-patriot (*hikokumin*) if I didn't go. My mother, who had never disobeyed anyone before, told me that I should postpone it to the next year, but I decided to go with my friends. I don't know how the teachers decided, but I went to the Sendai Army Arsenal, and my good friends went to the Tagajō Naval Arsenal. [...] There were eight two-story dormitories, separated by a central corridor. One after another, students from girls' schools in the prefecture entered the dormitories and they became full. Fifteen people were placed in each room, working day and night shifts for a week at a time. I can't tell you how many times I wished I had become a non-patriot, instead. I kept regretting that I was a fool to have defied my mother.

Takahashi Akiko, “I and War,” Miyazaki prefecture Ōsaki city, [Wartime Memories](#) (2016), 宮城県大崎市『戦争体験記』2016年

III. Women in Korea

Japanese colonial rule over Korea reached its height of intensity during wartime. In 1938, the colonial government began recruiting volunteer soldiers (this program became extremely competitive, to the government's surprise), and vigorously propagated Japanization programs across the peninsula, trying to turn young people, in particular, into ideal Japanese subjects through education and various associations. Although there was no major bombing, people were recruited or forced into wartime factory and agricultural production. Due to severe material shortage, many daily goods were rationed in 1940 and 1941.

The colonial setting affected women in Korea. Even compared to that of another long-standing Japanese colony, Taiwan, the schooling rate for Korean children remained very low. At the time of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which brought full scale war to China in 1937, only 50 percent of school-age boys and less than 20 percent of girls were receiving primary education. In other words, illiteracy was the norm for Korean girls and women. By the end of the war, the schooling rates went up to about 70 percent and 35 percent, respectively. It is easy to imagine how difficult it was for the Japanese colonialists to reach many Korean women for mobilization. But when they could mobilize them through associations and schools, the experience was intense. Cases of deception and lure into the system of human trafficking (to serve at the Japanese military's comfort stations) were widespread also because of low illiteracy among young women. Through reading the following sources, imagine whose voices we can hear and whose voices we cannot hear.

Questions:

- What were Korea-specific and women-specific experiences of wartime expressed in the sources?
- How did colonialism affect their experience of wartime mobilization?
- Whose voices are represented in these sources? How can we study the women whose voices are not being represented?



Printed Materials

III.1: The Patriotic Golden Hairpin Society Formed in Seoul

Dong-a ilbo (동아일보) was one of the Korean-language dailies founded in 1920 after the colonial government relaxed the ban on Korean-language publications. It carried news from various leftist groups, youth groups, and independence movements during the 1920s. Once the war started in 1937, the censorship and restrictions from the colonial government intensified.

In response to the state of the time, the Government-General gathered 500 women at the Keijō Women's High School auditorium to promote the movement to donate golden hairpins and to convene the Patriotic Golden Hairpin Society.* The meeting unanimously passed the following proclamation, urging women to actively participate in the establishment of the Japanese empire's time of emergency.

Proclamation:

The wind clouds of East Asia rise up in northern China as the imperial forces punish those who are lawless and immoral. Men are standing in a holy war with the sword of righteousness. How can women like us, even with fragile bodies, sit idly by? In this regard, we, Korean women encourage each other and establish the Patriotic Golden Hairpin Society. Through the Japan-Korea Unified Body and solidarity, we will assist the actions of the imperial army, thereby return even the ten-thousandth part of the benevolence of the nation. Even though it may be nothing more than a poor person's lamp**, our pure loyalty is solid. May women of the entire city be eager to agree.

"Five Hundred Women Rose: The Inauguration of the Patriotic Golden Hairpin Society," *Dong-a ilbo*, August 21, 1937, evening edition, p. 2. 「五百婦人이奮起『金釵會』發會式」동아일보 1937年8月21日夕.

* "Golden hairpins" symbolized elite women.

** A **poor person's lamp** refers to a Buddhist teaching that the merit of a poor person offering a single lamp with a sincere heart is greater than that of a wealthy person offering ten thousand lamps.

III.2: Young Working Korean Women's Roundtable

This was part of a roundtable conversation by seven young Korean women from various professions in Seoul. It appears to have been conducted in Japanese. Shufu no tomo (主婦之友; Housewife's Friend) was a popular women's magazine in Japan known for offering practical advice, educational information, and visual materials. The magazine was published between 1917 and 2008. This roundtable text was published in the same issue with Source II.1 above.

Question: Since the China Incident [the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in 1937], the consciousness of “the time of urgency” has spread across Japan and Korea. How do you see it?

Pak: I had a habit of drinking a coffee every morning, but since the Incident, I struggled to quit it. I have invented an alternative at last [...] I dry ginger, jujube, and apple peels, and chop them up before boiling them together. It tastes so good. If you add dried chestnuts, it become sweet and wonderful!

Jeon: That must taste great. I will try it soon. After visiting many places, I also think about the volunteer soldier. Everyone has a good understanding about it these days, and they say that if they have three sons, they want to turn at least two of them into volunteer soldiers for sure.

Park: Everyone gets excited watching news documentaries. I wish I were a man, too. I would also like to shout, ‘thank you!’ when I read about the accomplishments of volunteer nurses in newspapers.

“Young Working Korean Women's Roundtable,” *Housewife's Friend* 24, No.1 (1940) p. 267. 「朝鮮の若き職業婦人の座談会」『主婦之友』第24巻1号 (1940): p. 267.

Women's Testimonies

III.3: Park Wan-suh's autobiography on a daughter and a mother under war mobilization

Park Wan-suh, born in 1931, established herself as a writer in the early 1970s. Who Ate Up All the Shinga, originally written in 1992, is her autobiographical novel depicting her childhood under Japanese rule and the family separation during the Korean War. The English translation came out in 2009.

I entered middle school during the waning hours of Japanese imperialism. Regular classes lasted for only a few days; almost immediately, we were mobilized to help with the war effort. After two hours of study in the morning, our classroom became a workshop. We sewed buttons on soldiers' uniforms, but our major project involved taking mica and scaling its surface with sharp knives. Pieces came to us by the boxful. They were translucent and in shaped like hexagons, pentagons, or rectangles that made them easier to peel.

No one told us how the mica was used, but we weren't curious [...]

Hardship reached a zenith. Brass bowls were collected from every house, supposedly to make cannonballs. One bitterly cold day, we were sent out to gather pinecones. I remember wandering a hill in Shinch'on, eating frozen rice and shivering with cold. [...]

One day I returned home to find Mother blanched with fear. Brother's draft warrant had arrived at long last. His assurances that he wouldn't be targeted because Watanabe Ironworks [where he was employed at] was manufacturing munitions had come to naught. Mother was beside herself. She talked of having Brother run away, and then stealing off with me in the dead of night. [...]

He simply said there was nothing to worry about and went off to bed as though everything were normal [...]

The next day, Brother announced that everything was taken care of: his company had issued a draft exemption certificate for him. Apparently, the matter had been officially settled. [...] Mother repeatedly expressed her amazement at Watanabe Ironworks and its clout. She found it hard to believe. Just what did the Japanese boss see in my brother, who stubbornly refused to change his name?*

Mother's thoughts jumped all around. The violence of her remarks as we sat idly in the dark during blackouts made me nervous; I was afraid that someone might overhear her say, for example, how she wished she could see the Jap bastards collapse even if it meant we all had to die in an air raid. At the same time, she could hardly have been prouder of the esteem Brother was held in by his Japanese employer. I'm sure she wanted to brag, but the situation meant that she had to keep it all to herself.

Park Wan-suh, *Who Ate Up All the Shinga?* (Columbia University Press, 2009) pp. 135-138.

* The Japanese imperial and colonial governments promoted a policy to change Korean names to fit the Japanese registry system. Colonial officials and schools often forced Koreans to adopt Japanese-sounding names.

III.4: An oral history of Kim Pongsuk on a student life during the war

This excerpt is from Under the Black Umbrella. The author, Hildi Kang, and her Korean husband interviewed fifty elderly Koreans who had migrated to the San Francisco area. She compiled them into this book in 2001.

When I was about twenty, the local Neighborhood Association—the watchdog group, spy network, channel for government rules and dictates—came to verify my age and marital status. I had no choice but to acknowledge that I was young, single, and living at home. The next thing I knew, the local police came and summoned me to appear at the elementary school yard on a certain date.

A lot of other girls got called also, all about the same age, and the Japanese told us that we would serve the Emperor and the great cause of the Japanese empire by becoming nurses and taking care of the Imperial Japanese soldiers. They told us that the pay would be very good, and we would be well taken care of. Some girls were really very excited about doing this.

We were to be sent to the front, but to do that we needed training. They gave each of us a wooden rifle and we had to practice. I kept thinking, I'm a woman. Why do I need this rifle? The rifle had a pretend bayonet, and we had to plunge it into a straw "person" on the ground, again and again. I hated this! I didn't want to do it. My parents decided I should get married, and then I wouldn't have to go. So I obeyed my parents and got married, and it turned out to be a fortunate thing. [She thinks these women were forced to become comfort women.]

Hildi Kang ed., *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 134.

IV. “Comfort women”

The expression, “comfort women,” refers to the women who were recruited, deceived, or forced to provide entertainment and engage in sexual labor for soldiers in the Japanese military stationed and fighting across Asia during World War II. Soldiers commonly referred to the buildings where these women worked as “comfort stations” and the women inside as “comfort women.” After the war’s end, the existence of these women was no secret, but the women maintained long silence about their experiences to avoid being shamed. It was only in the early 1990s, when former comfort women began to speak out, that the issue of human rights violations and the scale of human trafficking obtained a new spotlight. Since then, “comfort women” became a hot-button diplomatic issue, particularly between Japan and South Korea. Although rightwing Japanese (and Korean) politicians avoid admitting it, various documents and testimonies show that the Japanese military promoted and aided the recruitment and trafficking of the women and the operations of the stations. For more information on the history, read [a summary in Education About Asia](#) hosted by the Association for Asian Studies. [The website of Comfort Women Education](#) offers lesson plans, videos, testimonies, and documents as well.

It is also important to remember that sexual violence was common even outside of comfort stations. The justification for comfort women stations was to prevent rape and sexually transmitted diseases, but this reasoning shows how prevalent rape cases were in the Japanese-occupied territories. Even outside of the war and occupation zones, harsh living conditions made many women more vulnerable to sexual abuse and violence in general. These stories tend to be buried deep in historical memories.

The original Tokyo Trials (which judged war crimes committed by Japanese political and military leaders between 1946 and 1948) did not address sexual abuse. (The Batavia war crimes trial was a rare exception in which sexual abuse against interned Dutch women was examined). In 2000, NGOs organized The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal, where high-profile legal professionals heard witnesses’ testimonies and delivered a verdict.

The following text is an extract from the oral judgment. Read more of the full text if you can.

Note: Please note that source below includes reference to sexual violence.



Questions:

- Why did NGOs decide to take the legal-based procedure, as opposed to memoirs, speeches, or documentary films? What is the difference in your impression between reading legal documents and reading personal memoirs?
- Why was this People's Tribunal important for the former comfort women? What did this tribunal achieve?
- Why could they not have a similar tribunal with the governments?

IV: Excerpts of the Transcript of Oral Judgment

([the full text here](#))

[...]

36. Lin Shen-Chung was 16 when she was forced to become a "comfort woman". With three others acquaintances with whom she worked at the factory, she was interned by the Japanese in a nearby house without being allowed to go home, on the pretext that Japanese bosses were afraid of them arriving late to work. Lin Shen-Chung testified:

After working nearly three months [in the factory], one day, the deputy captain, Nalida, Gunsho took me to the entrance of a cave, and told me to wait there. A Japanese soldier turned up and asked me to provide sexual service. I firmly resisted. But the Japanese soldier said "since you came to work here, this is part of your work too." He forced me to subject to his sexual request without payment. Everyday, the six of us would be taken to this cave one by one for this, serving as much as five soldiers each night. After each time, we got to rest for half an hour. The six of us were forced to provide sexual service in turns on a bed ten meters from the entrance of the cave [...] All I can do to such ordeal was to weep everyday.

37. During her ordeal as a comfort woman, she got pregnant three times. She was required to report them to the Japanese army doctor, and each time she was given an abortion. She returned to her community after the Japanese army left.

39. Kim Bok-Dong from Korea, told how in 1941, at age 15, the village headman forced her family to send her away to work in the Volunteer Corps, ordering her mother to put her seal on some documents. She testified that the Japanese took her to Guangdong to a hospital building in an army truck. They put her to work in a "comfort station". She stated:

Fifteen soldiers usually came each day, but on the weekend the number often exceeded fifty. The enlisted soldiers came between noon and 5pm on Saturdays and from 8am to 5pm on Sundays. They had to be gone by 5pm when the military police came to check on the station. Officers arrived after 7pm, many of whom slept there and then left. If my vagina was swollen and it was hard to penetrate, the soldiers put an ointment on the condom and forced themselves in. If I didn't know that my menstruation had started and a soldier saw the blood, he would get angry, and slap my face and hit me.

40. Although the soldiers were supposed to use condoms, most of them did not and thus many comfort women became pregnant as a result of the repeated rapes. The women who got pregnant were still not allowed to refuse sexual demands.

[...]

44. In August 1944, at age 15, Maxima Regala de la Cruz, a survivor of the "comfort" system from the Philippines, testified through a video before the Tribunal that a Japanese soldier forcibly seized her and her mother from the streets of their town and took them to a nearby house. There they were locked in a room and separated each night, whereby each of them was repeatedly raped. Maxima Regala de la Cruz described her experience in the following words:

[A] Japanese soldier entered my room. He told me to lie down on the bed. I refused and he forced me to lie down. I screamed and struggled until he drew his saber and pointed it at me. I was so scared that I fell silent. He then pushed me to the bed and raped me. I cried for help and pleaded with the soldier to stop but he did not listen to my pleas. Since that first time I was sexually abused, I became extremely nervous. Every time a Japanese soldier armed with a saber would enter the room and touch me, I would faint. That is why I cannot recall the exact number of times that I was raped. I knew that I was raped though because I felt aches and pains all over my body especially in my private parts.

45. Both her and her mother remained in the "comfort station" for three months. One day in October 1944, when the soldiers did not lock their door. Ms. Regala de la Cruz and her mother escaped and they found help for the mother, who was very weak. They were also assisted in returning to their family home where they were reunited with their family. [...]

58. The Judges find that the system of Japan's military sexual slavery was a standard and integral part of Japan's aggressive war throughout Asia-Pacific. The Judges also find that girls and women throughout the region were taken either by abduction, conscription or coercion, or through deceptive means, and forcibly made part of the military sexual slavery system. Once enslaved, the girls and women were subjected to continuous and sometimes gang rape and other forms of sexual violence and torture. They lived in miserable conditions, with poor food, no privacy, and a lack of hygiene. [...]

STATE RESPONSIBILITY

111. In addition to the Common Indictment filed against the individual accused, an application has been submitted which claims that the state of Japan is responsible under international law for the internationally wrongful acts -the rapes and sexual slavery -committed by the Japanese army and seeks restitution and reparation for the women victimized by these crimes. Article 4 of our Charter authorizes this Application and provides that state responsibility arises from both the commission of crimes and acts and omissions which violate other obligations of the state flowing from the original wrongful acts.

112. The Tribunal finds that the applicants have standing before the Peoples' Tribunal established to consider claims of civil society, and that the failure of claimants before Japanese domestic courts shows the futility of their continuing to seek domestic remedies. We find that the remedies under domestic law are unreasonably prolonged and that the survivors are entitled to bring this Application under Article I of the Charter.

Elements of State Responsibility

113. Under general international law, a state is responsible for any international wrongful act that is attributable to the state that has damaged the legitimate interests of others. Such responsibility of a state is additional to and exists alongside the international criminal liability of the individuals guilty of crimes committed in violation of international law. A state bears responsibility for wrongful acts when a state, either through its own conduct or through the conduct of its agents or organs, acts in violation of an international duty and thereby commits an international wrong. It is a fundamental principle of international law that the breach of an international duty incurs an obligation to make reparation in an adequate form. The duty must generally have been incumbent upon the state at the time the act complained of was committed.

3 Refugees and Mobility in Wartime East Asia

Introduction

Instructor Guidelines

I. MOBILITY AND DISPLACEMENT IN WAR

A. The Refugee Experience

A1. Refugee Account

A2. The Refugee Song

A3. The Refugee Oath

A4. The Nanjing Safety Zone – Letters to the Japanese Embassy

A5. Nanjing Safety Zone Diary

B. Migration and Forced Labor within a Wartime Empire

B1. From Labor Conscript to Soldier

B2. Escape from Wartime Labor Conscription

B3. From Beijing to Japan to Build Airfields

B4. A Korean Woman in Hiroshima

II. “RETURNING HOME” AND STAYING BEHIND

C. Returns

C1. Korean Returnees as Refugees

C2. Returning to Taiwan from Northeast China

D. Staying Behind

D1. Staying in China

D2. Staying in Korea

D2. Staying in Japan

Introduction

The Japanese wartime conquests from 1931–1945 in East Asia displaced millions of people who fled in the wake of the conflict, from the early invasion of northeast China (Manchuria) and establishment there of a new Japanese occupied state of Manzhouguo/Manshūkoku/Manchukuo, to the full-scale invasion of China, especially from 1937 onwards. As Japan broadened its attention to a massive expansion of war in 1941 with further conquests in Southeast Asia and war against Western colonial powers, Japanese advances largely stagnated in China for several years. Despite this, in the areas under its precarious and porous occupations, continued Japanese attacks and Chinese resistance continued to generate flows of refugees searching for safety in quieter areas.



Wang Yun "Simple sketch of refugees waiting for relief." In *Kangzhan huakan* (抗戰畫刊) 25 Jan, 1938, p6.

Refugees are those who fled the violence of war, but an enormous number of people also moved for other reasons related to the war situation. Section I.A will focus on refugees in wartime China. A Chinese report from 1938, after roughly a year of full-scale Japanese invasion, estimated 1.3 million Chinese refugees, only including those found outside areas of Japanese control. However difficult it is to estimate exactly, the number of Chinese who became refugees at some point in the conflict may have been over 80 million. To this we may also consider additional both Chinese and Koreans who became refugees in Japan's earlier conquest of Manchuria in 1931.

Japan's wars in East Asia were imperial wars. Japan's own subjects as well as subjects of its colonies in Taiwan and Korea, not to mention people within areas of Japanese control moved in great numbers as part of the economic and military machinery of wartime. These include those sent as conscripted laborers, as well as others who found employment in Japan's colonies and occupied zones. Section I.B focuses on those who moved as a result of the hunger of Japan's wartime machine for labor. Some, including Japanese colonial subjects moved to Japan in pursuit of work opportunities, but three of our four cases focus on the experience of those directly conscripted, or as in one case, outright abducted for wartime labor needs.

Section II.C and II.D shifts to the early postwar. When the war ended in 1945, there was a huge number of Japanese, both civilians and military personnel, outside of the Japanese

archipelago, amounting to some 9% of the Japanese population. At the end of the war an estimated 1.5 million Japanese were located in Manchuria (over 2 million if you include military personnel), over 500,000 in the rest of China (over 1.5 million with military), over 720,000 in Korea (over 1 million with military), and 350,000 in Taiwan (over 500,000 with military). Most Japanese subjects were repatriated to Japan from occupied territories and former colonies such as Taiwan and Korea. There were some exceptions to this, including the retention of some experts and military personnel for a time, especially in China where a brewing civil war between Nationalist and Communist forces made their skills valuable. Others, an example of which we will meet here, evaded or were hidden from repatriation campaigns to stay on.

The case of Koreans and Taiwanese subjects in the Japanese empire was more complex. Many returned to their hometowns in the chaotic early postwar period, while others stayed where they were. For example, there were more than 2 million Koreans in Japan at the time of its defeat, but of these some 1.4 million returned home in the first year. Taiwanese were declared Chinese citizens by the Nationalist government of China, but only a minority of those who found themselves in mainland China in 1945 would stay behind. Many Koreans in mainland China, especially its coastal cities, were pressed to leave, as with Japanese citizens, but well established ethnic Korean communities, especially in northeast China, stayed and became a legally recognized minority of well over a million people today. In Japan, hundreds of thousands of Koreans, together with a much smaller number of Taiwanese, stayed behind and formed a long-lasting minority community there.

Instructor Guidelines

This unit is divided into four parts. In the course of a single class session, these may be a) approached together, or b) divided between students.

- a. In the former case, consider assigning the collection of texts to students for reading before class. Then, in class, divide the students into groups and ask them to reflect across the groups of sources: how does *place* (the battlefield, refugee camps, wartime factories, etc.), *timing* (wartime, aftermath of war), and *individual context* (of those whose experiences they are reading about) shape the differing challenges and choices faced by the people in these sources?
- b. In the latter case, there should be sufficient time for three or four groups of students (if only three groups, then group II.C and II.D sources together) to read and discuss the materials for a section during the space one-hour class session. Each section has its own question/s for discussion. In a plenary session after group discussion, ask each group nominate a member to share their findings.

A Sources - consider the experiences of refugees in wartime China. The opening account offers us a window into the difficult choices that refugees had to make with limited information about their surroundings. The refugee song offers us an example of how popular music and film could contribute to efforts to raise funds for relief, while the refugee oath shows us how refugees became not only a recipient of government aid, but were expected to reciprocate with loyalty and a contribution to wartime production. Through two sources on the particularly infamous example of the Nanjing Safety Zone, we are reminded that efforts to carve out spaces of safety in a warzone were often ignored by belligerents, especially those that were poorly disciplined.

B Sources - consider labor migration in the context of a Japanese wartime empire, especially coercive conscripted labor. Three of these cases are of Koreans, including two labor draftees and one Korean woman who only moved to Japan to join her husband working there, only to experience the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. In different ways these sources invite us to consider the differing degrees of agency of these workers, not merely reflect on the hardships they faced.

C Sources – offer two examples that explore the process of return (to Korea and Taiwan) after war as part of the history of the refugee experience. In the former case, we see how unprepared and already devastated (in this case southern) Korea was to receive thousands of refugees, but also how aid was framed as a unifying national project. In the latter case, students may or may not focus on the complexity of a case where Taiwanese returning from the northeast of China (Manchuria) where many of them worked for a regime in the context of occupation, could be seen as complicit with Japanese aggression.

D Sources – offer three examples of the phenomenon of staying behind. In one case, that of Japanese women being “disguised” and “hidden” in China, we are given only the perspective of a press report, and we encounter the challenges of multiple interpretations given an incomplete context from an isolated source. This is followed by an account by a Japanese woman, married to a Korean man, who remained behind in the Korean peninsula after the war. Finally, we turn to the case of a Korean woman in postwar Japan and encounter a fairly common example of the postwar dilemma faced by Koreans in Japan, who had been residing there for years by the time of Japan’s defeat.

I. Mobility and Displacement in War

A. The Refugee Experience

Japan's wartime conquests displaced over an estimated 80 million people in China. Most of these did not leave China and thus today would be referred to as internally displaced persons, even as Japan established new friendly Chinese regimes in areas of its occupation. These refugees, fleeing the conflict around them and seeking shelter, either moved to unoccupied areas of China or else in least to areas perceived as less dangerous areas of Japanese occupied territories. All of them may be seen as a class of forced migrants. These sources offer us only a glimpse into the challenges and choices faced by refugees in wartime China, but readers may also encounter how refugees are perceived by others, whether in song, or as an object of state mobilization for the war effort.

Note: Please note that sources A4 and A5 include references to sexual violence.



Questions:

- What can we learn from source A1 about the kinds of challenges faced by refugees fleeing the Japanese invasion? What must they take into account when they decide where to go next? How might you evaluate the decision to return home when it is occupied?
- Using sources A2 and A3, what can we learn about efforts to organize relief for refugees? How are refugees not merely potential recipients of relief but also perceived by the state as a resource for a wartime state?
- Reflecting on source A4, discuss what kinds of requirements would be necessary to successfully establish a 'safety zone' or refugee camp in an active war zone?

A1. Refugee Account

Most of us have seen images of the refugees in flight, moving away from the conflict and staying ahead of an invasion. If it can be done safely, however, many refugees will attempt to return to their newly occupied home community once the worst violence passed. This account is from an area with many waterways and lakes southwest of Shanghai, in Zhejiang province.

In 1937, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident* broke out, and the Japanese invaders made a frenzied invasion into eastern China [...] Japanese aircraft bombed Jiashan for the first time in the eighth lunar month [...] At the beginning of tenth month of the lunar calendar, the Japanese planes harassed more frequently and the situation became more critical. The number of those fleeing by train increased rapidly and even the roofs of the train cars were filled with people [...]

In such an emergency situation, my mother first led my siblings to take refuge in Yaozhuang town [...] Within two or three days the Japanese aircraft again came dropping bombs wantonly [...] destroyed many homes [...] My father and I also had to abandon our home and take shelter at Yaozhuang Bridge.

Three days later, on the night of the seventh or eighth day of the tenth month of the lunar calendar, we heard intense gunfire and flares were falling in the sky, illuminating the surrounding area. Seeing this the peasants panicked in fear and took refuge in their boats. My family also had to take a boat to escape. In the lake, we could only see the refugee boats connected end to end but many people did not know where it was safer to go. Whenever they encountered each other acquaintances would ask each other about the situation and the names of nearby places. By chance, we learned that the city was close to the small town of Jiaxing Nanhui, where things were said to be calmer and my family's clinic was also located in the town at that time, so the boat sailed to Nanhui for refuge.

At that time, the news reached us that Jiashan had already fallen, and that the Japanese army was killing, raping, and burning everywhere, with a massacre of countless people [...] Jiashan set up a "Maintenance Association [...] and the residents had wear the resident identification card issued by them on their chest to walk on the streets [...]

We were frightened and nervous, and it wasn't until February of the following year that we dared to return by boat. When we entered the house, we saw that it was all a mess, with the clothing and household items all looted. Only the heavier furniture remained. It was difficult to live there, so we temporarily stayed at a neighbor's house [...]

Li Genpan, "Observations on Seeking Refuge," *Jiashan Literary & Historical Materials* vol. 1, pp. 63-64. 李根盘「避难见闻」见《嘉善文史资料》第1辑 63-64页.

* **Marco Polo Bridge Incident** – A July, 1937 military clash between Japanese and Chinese forces near a bridge just southwest of Beijing often seen as the spark for the opening of the second Sino-Japanese war.

A2. The Refugee Song

This 1939 film song describes the refugee's experience as a 'sea of bitterness' and calls for donations to the relief effort. Shanghai at this time is only partly under Japanese control, with its semi-colonial international settlement surviving as a 'lonely island' surrounded by the Japanese controlled areas until late 1941.

I have a home but cannot return,
No money in my pocket, and it is hard to find a meal,
The pain of my family torn apart, I cannot bear
Fortunately we have a place to cross this sea of bitterness. [Ai ai ai ...]

The doors of the shelter are open,
Man and women, refugees from every direction come,
Taking shelter here from the wind, the rain, the hunger, and the cold
My gaze turns towards my hometown, my eyes are filled with tears. [Ai ai ai...]

Once Xiepu* was wealthy and esteemed,
Spending money like it was dirt to cast away,
Why not save a little of that money for wine and meat,
Donate to the refugees and live a long life [Ai ai ai...]

The Refugee Song (难民歌) sung by the popular singer and actress Zhou Xuan (周璇) in the 1939 film *Seventh Heaven* (七重天) Lyrics: Xu Zhuodai (徐卓呆)

* **Xiepu** – An old name for the area around Shanghai.

A3. The Refugee Oath

For most of Japan's war with China, until it fell in the final stage of the war, the city of Xuchang lay close to the front lines, not far from the southern bank of the Yellow River in central Henan province. This source comes from a Xuchang educational handbook for refugees. It includes general information such as China's republican flag, national anthem, as well as details on the war, wartime martial law, the needs for wartime production, and practical information on hygiene practices. The handbook includes an appendix with the following oath for refugees.

We are refugees who escaped from the war zone. We have received relief from the government. The government sees us as righteous people, not only providing us with food and shelter, but also providing us with new knowledge and raising our skills for production. We are grateful to the government and will certainly be loyal to the government. We will do our utmost to raise production; we will do our utmost to help the war of resistance. We know that victory in the war of resistance is certain, that we must build our country, that we must not passively submit [to the enemy] and not be used by the enemy.

This we solemnly swear.

Refugee Handbook for Knowledge and Action (Xuchang Refugee Training Committee Instruction Group, 1941), p. 78. 许昌难民组训委员会训导组「难民知行手册」1941.

A4. The Nanjing Safety Zone – Letters to the Japanese Embassy

In November 1937, just days before the then capital of China Nanjing fell to Japanese forces, an International Committee under the leadership of a German businessman John Rabe was formed to establish a Nanjing Safety Zone to provide relief for refugees. When Japanese forces entered the city from 13 December, there began a period of extreme violence, rape and pillage that took weeks to subside: the Nanjing Massacre. A significant proportion of the city's remaining civilian population lived in a network of refugee camps within the so-called Safety Zone, but it received only limited recognition from the Japanese occupiers. Below are just a few excerpts from some of the letters sent by the International Committee to the Japanese embassy in the city in the first week of the occupation.

Dec 14, 1937, We come to thank you for the fine way your artillery spared the Safety Zone and to establish contact with you for future plans to care of Chinese civilians in the Zone [...]

Dec 16 [...] it is advisable to have the city return to normal life as soon as possible. But yesterday the continued disorders in the Safety Zone increased the state of panic among the refugees [...] the International Committee respectfully suggests [...] have the guards at the entrances of the Safety Zone (proposed by the Mayor yesterday) to prevent any stray Japanese soldiers from entering the Safety Zone [...]

Dec 17 [...] If the depredations of the last three days continue, this relief problem is going to multiply rapidly [...] if the present situation continues, in a few days we are going to have large numbers of people facing starvation [...] ”

Dec 18 [...] We are very sorry to trouble you again but the sufferings and needs of the 200,000 civilians for whom we are trying to care make it urgent that we try to secure action from your military authorities to stop the present disorder among Japanese soldiers wandering through the Safety Zone [...]

Dec 19 [...] I am very sorry to have to present you herewith a continuation of the “Cases of Disorders by Japanese Soldiers in the Safety Zone” being cases numbered 16 to 70 [...] [The attachment includes details of these cases, mostly consisting of murders and rapes of civilians]

Dec 21 We come to petition in the name of humanity that the following steps be taken for the welfare of the 200,000 civilians in Nanjing: 1. That the burning of large sections of the city be stopped [...] That the disorderly conduct of Japanese troops in the city [...] be immediately stopped [...] The present situation is automatically and rapidly leading to a serious famine. We plead for the bare essentials of normal life: housing, security and food.

Timothy Brook ed. *Documents on the Rape of Nanking* (University of Michigan Press, 1999). Documents 1, 7, 9, 10, 14, 20.

A5. Nanjing Safety Zone Diary

When Nanjing fell to Japanese forces in December 1937, Tsen Shui Fang (Cheng Ruifang; 程瑞芳; 1875-1969) was the director of dormitories at Ginling College, a Christian women's college which was located inside the Safety Zone established for the shelter of refugees. She remained behind to provide aid to over 10,000 refugees at its peak, working closely with Minnie Vautrin, an American educator, missionary, and former acting president of the college. Tsen left us a rare Chinese diary account of the Japanese invasion and incursions into the refugee shelter in the Safety Zone.

13 Dec [...] Tonight, many refugees came to the college as the Japanese soldiers drove them out of their own homes, because the soldiers wanted to sleep there. Most of these refugees came empty-handed; the soldiers had taken their bedding. They were scared to death. This happened in the Safety Zone. People presumed that the Japanese soldiers would not enter into the Safety Zone.

14 Dec [...] Many more refugees came [to the college] today. All fled to here from the Safety Zone because the Japanese soldiers came to their homes to demand money and to rape. Quite a few people were bayoneted to death on the streets. The situation in the Safety Zone is [terrible] like this and it is even worse outside the Zone. Nobody dares to go out of the Safety Zone. [...] Now, Ginling has four or five thousand refugees.

17 Dec [...] These several days, I have been frustrated to death, having no idea what's going on with the war, no communication with the outside world. Embassies have no Westerners left. Not many Americans are here, and they are helpless. The refugees come here to seek shelter and insist upon coming in. It really made me angry to death. It's better not to let them in than see them being dragged from here; it is better not to see what happens to them outside. Each night, outside, every place is burning. A lot of people at Hsia Kwan died. Why must Chinese people suffer like this? [...] I do not want to write any more. When thinking about the Chinese people, I cannot help but feel heartbroken. Another boy was born today.

18 Dec [...] These [Japanese soldiers] were extremely ruthless; they committed all kinds of crimes, killing and raping whomever they like, no matter young or old. One family has mother and daughter. The mother, over 60 years old, was raped by three soldiers consecutively, and daughter, 40-some years old, by two soldiers. Both of them are widows. It is simply inhumane! Now, Ginling has over 9,000 refugees. Outside and inside, walkways and hallways, people slept everywhere as if sardines packed in boxes. I'm worried that soldiers will come again tonight. The military police slept at the front gate. It's useless because soldiers do not enter from the front gate. People can come into this place of ours [Ginling] from anywhere.

Hu, Hua-ling, and Zhang Lian-hong trans., *Undaunted Women of Nanking: The Wartime Diaries of Minnie Vautrin and Tsen Shui-Fang* (Southern Illinois Press, 2010), pp. 34, 37-38, 48-49, 50-51.

B. Migration and Forced Labor within a Wartime Empire

The longer history of migration in the Japanese empire dates back to the late nineteenth century and includes decades of Japanese colonial rule in Korea and Taiwan, as well as territories such as Karafuto on Sakhalin Island. A particularly important period beyond our focus is the development of the unique space of Japanese controlled Manchuria after 1931 where migration of Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, as well as others shaped the development of northeast China.

Our module focuses more narrowly on the wartime period from 1937 onwards. We have already considered perhaps the most significant example of wartime mobility in the form of refugees in the wake of Japan's occupation of China. The second largest movement of people is that of the military forces in the war itself.

This section will focus on a third important category: the movement of labour into Japan to feed the insatiable production demands of a wartime economy. Three of these sources (B1-3) consider Koreans and Chinese workers conscripted in wartime and brought to work in Japan, often in terrible conditions. In the case of Koreans, forced recruitment of Koreans covers the period 1939-1945, with an evolving and increasingly coercive system, eventually bringing several hundred thousand workers to Japan. The scale of Chinese labor conscription was much smaller, but over 40,000 Chinese were forced to work in Japan between 1943 and 1945, including over 2,000 estimated to have died even before they reached Japan. Source B4 then turns to the case of a Korean woman who accompanies her husband to Hiroshima where, in the final days of the war, they would experience the atomic bombing and destruction of the city. Some 20-30,000 Koreans laborers would perish in the August 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



Questions:

- Reflect on the different reasons and circumstances that brought each of the four people in these accounts to wartime Japan. What are some of the different ways that Japan was able to supply its wartime production needs by using the labor of its colonial subjects or conquered populations when much of its own male population was directly engaged in fighting its wars?
- Besides exhaustion from the work itself, what other risks did workers face in wartime Japan as laborers, conscripted or otherwise?
- None of the people in these accounts were passive actors accepting their fate. How did they shape their own fates? If you were in their position, what kinds of factors would you have to consider when deciding what to do?

B1. From Labor Conscript to Soldier

Kim Ŭlsŏng was only an infant when he arrived in Japan from Korea in 1927. After living in rural Hyōgo prefecture and then in Osaka, during the war he was drafted into factory work in Kobe, later escaping the harsh conditions there by joining the Japanese military and serving in China. After the war he returned to Japan, joined the Communist Party and eventually made his way to North Korea. He later returned to Japan to reconnect with his family, but had to fight a long legal battle to stay.

[...] [Koreans arriving in Japan during the colonial period] relied on people from the same hometown or acquaintances, or followed rumors in their search for places with jobs or slightly better working conditions, migrating from place to place. Today, there is no town or village in Japan [...] where Koreans can't be found, and this is a result of such wandering. In addition, many Koreans are concentrated in large cities such as Osaka, Tokyo, Kobe, and Nagoya because there were many factories there [...]

I received my [labor] conscription notice at the end of 1943 [...] I was assigned to work in a submarine factory [in Kobe]. Next door at the Mitsubishi Shipyard, submarines were being built, and Mitsubishi Electric was responsible for installing the equipment and wiring inside the submarines [...] Submarines played a crucial role in protecting ships and supply vessels delivering weapons and troops, so the factory operated literally 24 hours a day without stopping [...] From morning till night, I was forced to work inside the cramped, cave-like interior of the submarines, drilling holes, welding, and fastening equipment to the walls. Looking back now, the work was unimaginably harsh. The smell of toxic gas from welding, combined with the deafening sound of drills, made me feel like collapsing multiple times. We were only allowed to leave the submarine twice a day, so we hardly saw the sun or breathed fresh air. When I was utterly exhausted and resting in the dormitory, a commanding officer would storm in, draw his sword, and yell, "What are you doing!" threatening us and forcing us back to the factory [...] My companions and I came up with various schemes to somehow get some rest. Some drank large amounts of soy sauce to induce a fever, others applied menthol ointment to their chests to cloud X-ray images and feign chest illnesses. There were even times when we took laxatives to cause severe diarrhea [...] Both the factory and the dormitory were under surveillance by officers and non-commissioned officers dispatched from the military, making our daily lives feel like we were trapped in a concentration camp or a prison [...]

Rather than endure such hardships under labor conscription, I thought it would be better to join the military. It was a simple thought—wanting to escape the gruelling labor and suffocating life under constant surveillance. When I told my parents, they fiercely opposed my decision to volunteer for the military. They cried and pleaded, saying, "It's like going off to die" and "Why go to war for Japan?" But I went ahead, completing the paperwork on my own and joining the military without their consent.

Kim Ŭlsŏng, *Father's History*. (Kobe gakusei sentā,1987), p. 4; pp. 23-25. 金乙星『アボジの履歴』神戸学生センター, 1987.

B2. Escape from Wartime Labor Conscription

Kim Yŏnggu was conscripted for labor in Japan from his Korean village in 1944. He eventually escaped to Nigawa district in Hyōgo prefecture and found other work until Japan's defeat.

I came to Japan in 1944 [...] [Koreans] being a colonized people at the time, the Governor-General ordered the counties and villages to “send so and so many people to serve in the Patriotic Labor Corps” and we had no choice but to comply [...] In our village, the quota was three people [...]

Yŏnggu was ordered to a ferry to Japan and then by train to the mountainous Nagano prefecture.

The work camp was for digging a water conduit for a hydroelectric power plant. We were tunnelling through the mountains to direct water from one mountain to another. The force of the falling water would then be used to turn some sort of machinery [...] As a laborer, I was to paid 2 yen and 80 sen per month, nothing more than pocket money.* They told us that we could collect the rest of our wages when we returned to our country after two years. It felt like a scam, but you couldn't say anything [...] To this day, I've never received that money. After working for a full year, the pocket money I got was around 30 yen, and that's all. [...]

There were no breaks at work [...] Since we were digging tunnels for the hydroelectric power plant, once you entered the tunnel, you couldn't tell if it was day or night, whether it was raining or windy outside, until you came back out. The camp was only about 50 or 60 meters from the worksite. We would wake up before 5 a.m., eat, and be inside the tunnel by 5:30 or 6:00 a.m. At noon, we would come out a little before 12:00, eat quickly, and immediately return to work with no time for a break. We worked as soon as it got light and went to bed when it got dark. By around 9 p.m., they would say, “Time to sleep,” and turn off the lights with a switch outside, leaving us in complete darkness [...] Again and again, rocks fell from the ceiling above, and people were often injured [...] Even if there were injuries or deaths at the site, we were not allowed to take time off work. [...] Two people died during one of my night shifts. Altogether, about seven or eight people died in that time. Seeing that made me never want to go back into the tunnel. [...] Next, I was sent to Ibaraki [to dig another tunnel] [...]

[When my fellow villagers said they were going to escape], I thought, “If they leave, what will I do by myself? I'll go too.” Three days later, payday came. We had worked for 40 days, and on the 10th of the month, we were supposed to get paid. But we abandoned

everything and ran away [to Nigawa]. [...] Although the work in Nigawa was a bit easier than in Nagano or Ibaraki, the food situation was worse [...]

Osaka Human Rights Museum, *Oral History: Life Histories of Zainichi Koreans* (Akashi Shoten, 1999), pp. 59-71.
大阪人権博物館『聞き書き 在日コリアンの生活史』明石書店, 1999.

* By Dec, 1941, the average male factory wage was estimated to be 3.39 yen *per day*. Japanese wartime cabinet statistics cited in The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Japanese Wartime Standard of Living and Utilization of Manpower* (1947), p. 58.

B3. From Beijing to Japan to Build Airfields

Ma Lin was one of over 40,000 Chinese workers from Japanese occupied China who was forcibly recruited and taken to Japan.

I am from Tongzhou Town. In the summer of 1943, police officers from the Tong County Police Bureau broke into my home to arrest my father. Since my father was not home, they took me instead [...] When the train arrived in Tanggu, we were taken, still under the watchful eyes of the military police, to a concentration camp near the station. We stayed in a large room that already housed more than 200 people. From their accents, it was clear they came from all over. During the first three months at the camp, each meal consisted of only one small piece of cornmeal bread and a bowl of watery vegetable soup, not enough to even half fill our stomachs. Hunger was unbearable [...] We were put onto a Japanese cargo ship, confined in dark and damp holds. The sea was rough with strong winds, and most people were seasick, vomiting and starving, with many falling ill. Those who couldn't hold on and died were thrown into the sea. After seven days at sea, we arrived at the port of Shimonoseki in Japan [...] Two days later, the train arrived in Shizuoka Prefecture [...]

[...] The Japanese gave us shovels, pickaxes, and small carts. Under the supervision of Japanese foremen, we began the grueling work of building the airfield. To prevent the tide from flooding the airfield, they had us build dikes along the shore, and later, we worked on constructing the runways and hangars. We hauled sand and rocks, pushed broken-down machines by hand, and worked more than twelve or thirteen hours every day. Even when we were sick, we weren't allowed to rest, and if we slowed down, the foremen would either punch and kick us or beat us with sticks. Some workers were beaten so badly they were covered in bruises. We ate two meals a day, consisting of coarse grain, black bread, and dried sweet potatoes. Each meal was either two small black steamed buns or a little cornbread with a bowl of soy sauce soup. The elderly and the frail couldn't endure this torment, and many died from illness and hunger. The dead laborers were dumped on the beach and burned [...]

After finishing the airfield [...] they split us into two groups. One group [...] went to a construction site near Mount Fuji to build another airfield, where the conditions were even worse [...] Once the work near Mount Fuji was done, we were transferred again, this time [...] to do stone and earth work. We weren't there long before we heard that the work was stopping, and the foremen were no longer as strict as before. Some laborers snuck out at night to investigate and learned that America had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japan was requesting to surrender [...]

During the two and a half years we were held as forced laborers in Japan, more than 500 of us were imprisoned, and over 100 died [...]

Oral history of Ma Lin, "My Memories of Being Captured and Sent to Japan," in He Tianyi ed., *Oral Histories of Chinese Laborers Abducted by Japan during World War II* vol. 4 (Qilu shushe, 2005) pp. 4, 23-425. 马麟「我被抓送日本的回忆」见 何天义编『二战掳日中国劳工口述史 第四卷』齐鲁书社 2005.

B4. A Korean Woman in Hiroshima

In addition to labor conscription, many Koreans moved to Japan to seek out economic opportunities or because colonial rule in Korea impacted their economic opportunities on the peninsula. All Koreans in urban areas of Japan were exposed to the massive bombing campaigns of the United States. They were also among the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Conversations about marriage came up when I was about twenty three years old and working in an agricultural laboratory. I yearned for Japan. At that time the Japanese were gods. Their authority was overwhelming. When we met Japanese we bowed to them. My husband-to-be came back to Korea from Japan for our *o-miai*, our first meeting. I agreed to it. In three days we were married. He was just an ordinary Korean, a simple, straightforward person. That's how I came to Hiroshima in 1937.

I'd believed that Koreans were living the good life in Japan, but that didn't seem to be the case. But my husband was a subcontractor, part of a subsidiary of Mitsubishi which was using Korean labor. I didn't have to worry. We were able to eat white rice. We had cash too. I was quite happy I'd come to Japan [...] [My husband] was one of the leaders of the Kyōwakai, a Korean people's group. I asked him to arrange for a Korean Women's Kyōwakai [...] I became its head. We did volunteer work and also civil-defense and air-defense training. I was occupied from morning to night.

We ate breakfast about seven forty that morning when the atomic bomb fell. Then a warning of an imminent air attack sounded. [...] From our window I noticed the cistern water was low, so I ran a hose out from our bathtub to fill it up. Suddenly, "PIKA!" a brilliant light and then "DON!" a gigantic noise. I looked up. But I couldn't see anything. It was pitch black. I heard Grandma's voice shouting. "Help, help!" "Where are you?" I called. "I'm in the living room. I'm suffocating!" Gradually, the darkness lightened [...]

[...] Along the street, I saw men and women all red, burned, someone still wearing a soldier's cap but with a body all scorched [...] My husband had only gotten a small scrape on his knee. I thought we were lucky. But from the twenty-fifth of August his hair started falling out. He went to the hospital and got some medicine, but his mouth turned black. We jumped on a freight train packed with soldiers and we reached Osaka that night. He looked as if he were going to die right then. A train heading away from Tokyo came by. I lied to him. I said that it was bound for Tokyo and I took him back to Hiroshima. The next morning he died. His body had turned black. Blood seeped from his skin. He smelled awful.

By then we were living on the one rice ball a day they brought on a truck. A month passed before the wife of a neighbor told me that if you went to city hall, they'd give you money for the ones who'd died of the atomic bomb. That was good news. I went to the city office. The clerk gave me a form to fill out. I put down our names and place of family registration. "You're a foreigner," he said. Until that moment I'd been Japanese. All I'd done was say my registration was in Korea. "We cannot give anything to Koreans," he replied. "Why?" I asked him. My husband and two children had died because we were Japanese. Who had suddenly decided we were aliens? "I don't know," he said. "The orders came from above."

Haruko Taya Cook & Theodore Cook, in *Japan at War: An Oral History* (New York: The New Press, 1992), pp. 388-391.

II. “Returning Home” and Staying Behind

C. Returns

The end of the war in 1945 found millions of Japanese and their colonial subjects quite suddenly “out of place,” from a postwar perspective. For some, “returning home” was a strange prospect if, as with many Koreans in Japan or Japanese in Korea, they may have spent years, decades, or even their entire lives “away” from their home. For others, such as Koreans returning from China or Japan, both those returning, and a broader Korean society viewing their return were deeply worried about their fate. How would they fare in a divided Korean peninsula under Soviet and American control that was struggling economically and unstable politically?

One thing that those who “returned” and those who stayed had in common was that the aftermath of war brought with it a moment of anxious reflection. Long assumed truths or questions of identity were challenged or re-affirmed in a new environment without a Japanese empire.



Questions:

- Are there significant differences between a refugee crisis in an active war zone, and one after a war is over, or are they broadly similar? What if the aftermath of the war is also one of significant social and political instability?
- Reflecting on the example of these two sources, what kinds of factors do you think can shape how refugees in or after a conflict are perceived?

C1. Korean Returnees as Refugees

After Japanese surrender in August, 1945, Koreans celebrated liberation from Japanese colonial rule but soon found themselves under American and Soviet occupations. After decades of migration as well as conscripted labor and military service, over three million ethnic Koreans were located in China and Japan. In both war-torn countries, repatriation schemes managed by the United States military, with the help of the Chinese government, brought hundreds of thousands of Koreans back to the new and uncertain divided peninsula of Korea. Many of those who arrived had few ties left there to turn for support.

Since last August, U.S. bombers have frequently flown over our skies. Although there have been warnings of destruction and protests from the provisional government in exile, there has not been any full-scale bombing, and we have fortunately not had to directly experience the effects of war on our youth. However, the misery of our people, scattered across Manchuria, North China, and various parts of Japan due to forced relocation, or conscripted into the brutal Japanese war machine and driven to the front lines as soldiers, brings forth a greater urgency to awaken our national love. Many of these compatriots, who have returned to the homeland, having narrowly escaped death, are wandering the streets of winter, separated from their families and unsure of where to go.

The relief efforts for our war-affected compatriots have been taken up by over a dozen war relief organizations, which are diligently working to provide assistance. However, even with the dedicated efforts and learning of these organizations, it is not enough to meet the needs of the millions of people who require relief [...] The scope of this relief work is vast, and the current temporary measures taken by the relief organizations cannot meet the expectations. What is truly required is a national policy to address this issue, but given the current administrative and political situation, it is unlikely that any such measures will be forthcoming. Even if national policies are established, we must not simply rely on them but instead must actively cooperate with these life-saving efforts through our shared love for our compatriots [...] Sympathy for our war-affected compatriots is not just an expression of ethnic love, but a national duty that we cannot afford to forget.

“Let’s Provide Relief to our Compatriots affected by the Devastation of War,” *Dong-a ilbo*, December 13, 1945, p. 1. 「戰災同胞를 救恤하자」동아일보 1945年12月13日.

C2. Returning to Taiwan from Northeast China

Hong Qiongyin, born in Taipei in 1912 lived in Japanese occupied northeast China with her husband Huang Zizheng, who eventually served as physician to emperor Puyi, the leader of the wartime Manchurian state.

During the chaos [of Japanese surrender], some people from the northeast saw that we were living a good life and wanted to take advantage of the situation to rob us. They thought that the Taiwanese were Japanese and not Chinese. But the neighbors helped us out and said, “Don’t rob them, they are all Chinese.” These northeastern neighbors treated us so well [...]

[...] In the past, I never thought that Japan would be defeated [...] when the news of Japan’s surrender came, no one believed it. Taiwanese in the northeast were all salaried class. It turned out that the Japanese were rationing rice. After victory, all the Taiwanese would lose their jobs, have no salaries or rations [...] .I had a little money but didn’t know when I could return to Taiwan [...] .Seeing that the situation of the Taiwanese people was becoming increasingly difficult, Dr. Guo Songgen [dean of the medical school] negotiated with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration to secure the return of the Taiwanese [...]

[...] I arrived in Tianjin [...] at that time it was still peaceful [...] The following year the Communist forces attacked Tianjin and the city was put under martial law. Someone said, “The situation is critical, the Communist Party is about to enter the city!” So I took a boat back to Taiwan from Tianjin at my own expense.

1993 interview with Mrs. Huang Hong Qiongyin. Academia Sinica Institute for Modern History ed., *Oral History: The Experience of Taiwanese on the Mainland during period of Japanese Rule* (Academia Sinica Institute for Modern History, 1994), pp. 241-245. 黃洪瓊音女士訪問紀錄《口述歷史：日據時期台灣人赴大陸經驗》中央研究院近代史研究所 1994, 241-245頁.

D. Staying Behind

For populations that are seen as “out of place” after Japanese defeat in 1945, the postwar pressures to “return” exerted by host societies or new regimes, including the US occupation forces that controlled Japan and southern Korea, may seem to suggest that any act of “staying behind” as a Korean in postwar Japan or as a Japanese in China or Korea implies a deep attachment to the place where one is. This may be true in some cases, but far more commonly, individual circumstances place considerable obstacles in the way of any move away from their wartime homes. These reasons are very diverse, and may include family obligations, poverty, and fear of conflict or hardship at the destination.

As with the example of those “returning home” not moving at all does not mean that one’s life may remain the same. A new postwar context means that the rules often change as postwar Chinese and Korean societies confront the legacies of Japanese occupation and colonial rule, while in Japan, a Korean population once seen as integral, if often discriminated against community within the empire are now, suddenly, often viewed as unwanted outsiders.



Questions:

- Source D1 is a press report that makes claims about Japanese women “hiding” or in “disguise.” Without further evidence, what are *different* possible interpretations for what may be going on here? What would we need to know before we could make any conclusions?
- The Japanese woman’s account in D2 focuses on her experiences in southern Korea after the end of decades of Japanese colonial rule. As the Japanese wife of a Korean man, she faces hardship at the hands of Koreans, as do her children, but ultimately blames Japan. How do we interpret and evaluate a document like this, depicting the harsh treatment of a person who was identified as a (former) colonial oppressor? Does her position as a woman, or as the wife of a Korean change our interpretation? What about the treatment of her children?
- Reflecting on source D3 put yourself in the position of a Korean who has lived in Japan for years and who has work, a home, and a family in Japan. What kinds of things would impact your decision on whether to go back to Korea in 1945 or to stay (either temporarily or not)?

D1. Staying in China

After Japanese surrender in 1945, most Japanese and Koreans were repatriated from China. Some Japanese women and children, including some who had lost husbands in wartime, or who were longer term residents of China did not return. This is a 1946 newspaper report from the port of Qingdao, where American ships were picking up many Japanese for repatriation.

The 42nd repatriation of Japanese nationals via the American tank transport ship has arrived and anchored at the large port dock in Qingdao on the 2nd. This time, more than 300 Japanese nationals are being transported, making it the last group. Originally, the ship was scheduled to depart for Japan (Fukuoka) today. However, due to the question of whether the technical personnel staying in Qingdao should continue to be retained, a telegraph was sent to the National Government for instructions. It is expected that a reply will be received by the day after tomorrow. If retention is not approved, they will be ordered to return to Japan on this ship. Currently, negotiations are ongoing with the American side, and the ship is expected to depart again on the 7th. It is reported that the American side has already agreed in principle.

(Additional information) The last group of more than 300 Japanese nationals staying in Jinan consists mainly of technical personnel and their families. Recently, a telegraph from Commander Wang was received, stating that due to transportation difficulties, their departure for Qingdao has been temporarily delayed, and they will be repatriated once transportation is restored.

(Additional information) It has been reported that most Japanese nationals have been repatriated, but there are still more than 300 Japanese women who, disguised as locals, are hiding in the urban area by wearing Chinese clothing. As the police are responsible for public security and household registration in this city, they will closely cooperate with local ward heads to investigate and track down these concealed Japanese individuals. Those hiding Japanese nationals should report truthfully for strict handling.

“The Last Group of Japanese nationals Return Home; It is Strictly Forbidden for Chinese to Hide Japanese Women” *Pingminbao* (Qingdao) 6 July, 1946. 「日僑最後一批返國 嚴禁華人隱匿日婦」《平民報》1946年7月6日, 3頁.

D2. Staying in Korea

KATŌ Yoshi married a Korean man in Tokyo in 1932. Together they moved to the Korean colony in 1936 and had two daughters. Here she describes her postwar life after Japanese defeat.

I heard about the end of the war the evening after it happened. A village child was saying “Japan has lost the war!” [...] At first when I heard this, I thought it was a lie. Because it was ingrained in my mind that Japan would always win, I couldn't believe that we had lost. [...] After the war, my husband became a post office branch manager, but later he was naturally dismissed because he had a Japanese wife, and we had to move to the countryside. At that time, he was labeled as pro-Japanese, his family treated him harshly because he had a Japanese wife, the police always viewed him suspiciously as pro-Japanese, and friends grew distant. [...]

At the end of the war we were told not to use Japanese. At that time all Koreans were using Japanese so it wasn't inconvenient, but after Japanese couldn't be used anymore, I couldn't go outside at all. I stayed at home, but when the children started going to school, everyone would say “That's a Japanese child, don't play with them,” so no children would play with them. On their long walk to school, they would get hit and kicked, sometimes kicked in the side so badly they had to go to the hospital. My eldest daughter repeated first grade three times. I think the children suffered even more than their parents. [...]

My husband told me to go stay at his sister's house for a while, and when I went, it happened to be August 15th. This was two or three years after the war ended. At school they raised the flag and were shouting “Manse! Manse!”** Since I didn't have a Korean *ch'ima chōgori** [for the celebrations], I wore one that my sister-in-law had made by taking apart a Japanese kimono. But they could tell right away it was from a Japanese kimono, and my brother-in-law told me to come because the police were calling for me. My husband was with me then, but I stood by the roadside while only my husband went in. When he came out after talking to [the police], he scolded me saying I was an embarrassment to him wherever we went.

The older people were a little more understanding, but when young people saw me trying to run errands in the neighborhood, I would hear them from behind me say, “That's a Japanese person. How dare a Japanese person walk around with her head high?” It felt like my heart was being pierced with a hot iron rod. We didn't really understand the deeper things well. But naturally, for us to end up like this, we could only blame Japan. At first I thought we were being bullied because the Korean people were bad, but reflecting on it now, it was really because of those 36 years [of colonial rule] – the Japanese people did really terrible things to the Korean people, and that's why we were so hated.

Koyama Takeshi, “The Gasping Cries of Japanese Wives in Korea (Report)” *Modern Eye* 13, no.10 (1972), pp. 127-129. 小山毅「在韓日本人妻の息衝く叫び(ルポ)」『現代の眼』13巻10号(1972):127-129.

* **manse** – A cheer, similar to hurrah! Or “long live” – literally 10,000 years.

** **ch’ima chōgori** – A Korean form of women’s dress consisting of a skirt and top.

D3. Staying in Japan

This passage is the account of a Korean woman named Pak Hui-Sun (her Japanese name was Uehara Tamae), born 1927. She moved from a village in colonial Korea to the city of Shimonoseki, in southwestern Japan as a 12 year old child.

Well, I remember that when the war finally ended, all the Japanese were crying on the road, because they had lost, but we Koreans were so happy. My family and all of my neighbors were saying, “*Sara ta, sara ta* [...] — *We have been saved, we have been saved* [...]” Our neighbors the Kobayashis were crying, because they had lost their son in the war. But in my family, we were so happy, especially my mother, because my brother was saved from going to the war [...].

I remember that in the middle of August when the war had just ended, there were no ships going out, but by September the ships were running again. Many of the Koreans who were living in Shimonoseki, and others in the countryside, left everything they had or took whatever they could in sacks. My father too was saying that eventually Koreans were going to be chased out of Japan anyway, so we might as well go on our own [...] But for my husband and our family, there was my mother-in-law’s condition, and also we didn’t have enough money to buy the train tickets to take all of us to Shimonoseki from Fukuoka. There were nine of us, including me. We just didn’t have the money on hand then. My father-in-law used to always say, if only we had enough money for the train ticket to get to Shimonoseki, all we would have had to do was get on that ship to get back to our own country.

I remember that in the middle of August when the war had just ended, there were no ships going out, but by September the ships were running again. Many of the Koreans who were living in Shimonoseki, and others in the countryside, left everything they had or took whatever they could in sacks. My father too was saying that eventually Koreans were going to be chased out of Japan anyway, so we might as well go on our own. That was why my [parent’s family] left Japan to go back to Korea in November of that year. The government provided a ship to carry all the Koreans back to our country. If we applied, within three weeks we would be able to get the tickets to go on the ship. But for my husband and our family, there was my mother-in-law’s condition, and also we didn’t have enough money to buy the train tickets to take all of us to Shimonoseki from Fukuoka. There were nine of us, including me. We just didn’t have the money on hand then. My father-in-law used to always say, if only we had enough money for the train ticket to get to Shimonoseki, all we would have had to do was get on that ship to get back to our own country [...] He promised that we would all work hard and save enough money to go by the following year. So I took

his word for it. But you know, things are not as easy as that. As time passed, we heard all sorts of rumors from people who had gone to Korea but returned starving. They said there was no food, and that people would steal just about anything. We decided to take more time to consider whether we wanted to go back to Korea. Then while we were still trying to make up our minds, the Korean War started. After that we decided that it was best for us to stay put in Japan.

Jackie J. Kim ed., *Hidden Treasures: Lives of First-generation Korean Women in Japan* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), pp. 149-150.

Authors

Dr Daqing Yang | *George Washington University*



Daqing Yang teaches Japanese history at the George Washington University in USA. A native of China, he received his Ph.D. from Harvard University. His research interests include colonialism, science and technology, and memories and legacies of World War II. He is the author of *Technology of Empire: Telecommunications and Japanese Expansion in Asia, 1883-1945*. His edited books include: *Rethinking Historical Injustice and Reconciliation in Northeast Asia* and *Toward a History Beyond Borders: Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations*.

Dr Sayaka Chatani | *National University of Singapore*



Sayaka Chatani is an Associate Professor who teaches modern East Asian history, particularly Japanese imperialism and colonialism, at the National University of Singapore. She is the author of *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and Its Colonies* (Cornell University Press, 2018) and has published articles and chapters on youth, empire, emotions, and ideology in various journals and edited volumes. She is currently writing on the history of resident Koreans, their decolonisation, and the continuing presence of imperial structure in postwar Japan.

Dr Konrad Lawson | *University of St Andrews*



Konrad Lawson is a lecturer in modern history at the University of St Andrews. He is co-director of the Institute for Transnational & Spatial History. Recent publications include co-editing *Doing Spatial History* (2022) and *A Guide to Spatial History: Areas, Aspects, and Avenues* (2022) together with Riccardo Bavaj and Bernhard Struck. His research focuses on the aftermaths of war in East and Southeast Asia.

Peer Reviewers

Mr Keiichi Kawashima | *World History Teacher Doshisha High School*

Dr Michael Kim | *Yonsei University*

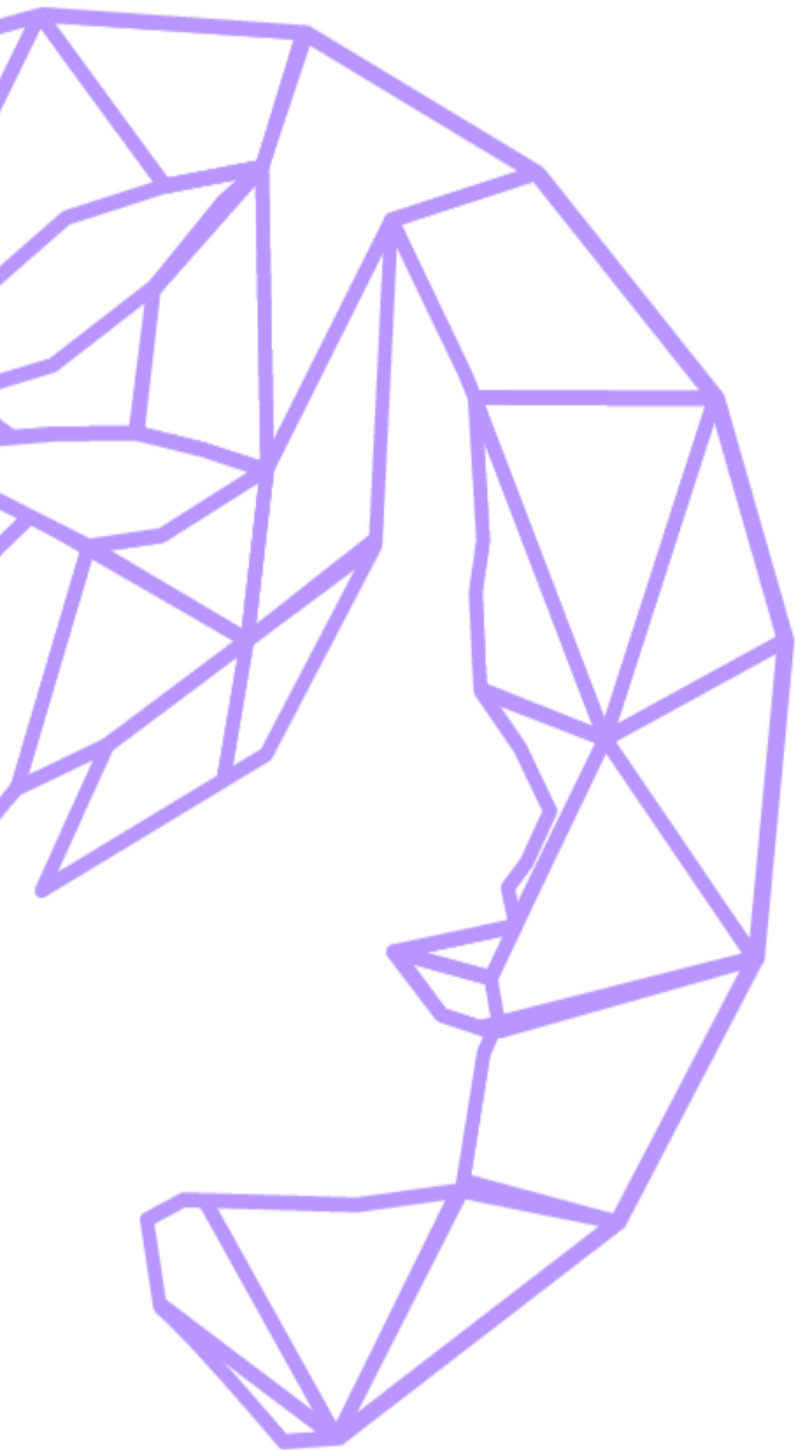
Dr Akihiro Yamamoto | *Kobe City University of Foreign Studies*

EuroClio Team

Mr Steven Stegers | *Executive Director*

Dr Paula O'Donohoe | *Project Manager and Research Coordinator*

Ms Elli Clerides | *Project Management Trainee*



euroclio.eu

[@euroclio](https://twitter.com/euroclio)

Bankplein 2,
2585 EV, The Hague
The Netherlands
+31 70 3817836
secretariat@euroclio.eu