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Set in Bronze:

Examining the Women's Movements and Politics of Comfort Women Memorialization

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Anthropology

by

Kelsey Cristina Kim

2018

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Set in Bronze

Examining the Women's Movements and Politics of Comfort Women Memorialization

by

Kelsey Cristina Kim

Master of Arts in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles 2018

Professor Kyeyoung Park, Chair

Apologies and reparations for comfort women, or sex slaves for the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II, are a contentious issue between the survivors, their supporters, and the Japanese government. After decades of silence, many surviving comfort women have publicly come forward to demand justice—yet the Japanese government has continued to deny responsibility. In response, comfort women supporters and activists have created public memorials throughout the world, particularly in the US. These memorials have caused Japanese diplomatic intervention and demands for removal, sparking a battle for recognition in the public sphere. In this thesis I explore the comfort women movement and the controversy surrounding the memorials, reexamining these memorials as a form of recognition, reparations and reconciliation.

The thesis of Kelsey Cristina Kim is approved.

Salih Can Aciksoz

Mariko Tamanoi

Kyeyoung Park, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

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I. Introduction

Amidst the lush greenery of Glendale's vibrant Central Park sits a bronze girl in traditional Korean dress, waiting beside an empty chair. Though visitors leave flowers in the chair beside her, or wrap her in scarves during the winter months, her expression is solemn, as if reminiscing a painful past. This is but one example of the public memorials dedicated to comfort women on US soil within the last decade.ⁱ

The term *comfort women*ⁱⁱ refers to the young women and girls from East and Southeast Asia—as many as 200,000 and as young as fourteen—who were forced into sexual slavery for the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II (Hicks 1994; Howard 1995; Soh 2008; Yoshimi 1995). These women were subjected to inhumane treatment throughout the war; while many did not survive the war's end, those who did suffered from long-term physical and psychological trauma. Fearing the social repercussions, they remained silent for decades. It was not until 1991, when South Korean survivor Kim Hak-sun sued the Japanese government for her coercion into the comfort women system, that others began to come forward as well.ⁱⁱⁱ With more survivors joining Kim Hak-sun's lawsuit and speaking publicly about their past, they demanded the Japanese government formally apologize and provide reparations for their involvement in the comfort system.

This coalition of elderly women and women's rights activists has gained the sympathy and attention of an international audience. As comfort women were recruited from several Asian countries with imperial ties to Japan, from China to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), their movement for recognition and reparations has garnered solidarity and support from those also affected by Japanese colonialism and occupation. And as approximately eighty percent of comfort women were from the Korean peninsula, this issue has become particularly salient for

South Koreans on an individual and national level. Every Wednesday since 1992, survivors and their supporters have demonstrated in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul, South Korea, to demand an apology from the Japanese government. Furthermore, the South Korean government has made comfort women reparations a key diplomatic issue with Japan.^{iv}

Because of Japan's annexation of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945 and the unresolved war crimes committed during this period, the postcolonial relationship between South Korea and Japan is wrought with tension. Comfort women, as well as other postcolonial issues (such as territorial disputes over the Liancourt Rocks^v) have strained their diplomatic relationship in the present-day. And with the US looking to both countries as East Asian allies—particularly with a growing North Korean threat--it has a vested interest in the two countries resolving these issues.

The US becomes further entangled in this issue with the involvement of Asian American-led comfort women activism. While Korean Americans have been particularly active and make up a majority of the American movement, this movement has also created pan-Asian solidarity amongst second- and third-generation Asian Americans. These grassroots organizations seek to create awareness of comfort women and pressure the Japanese government into a formal apology. In 2007, they helped push Congress's House Resolution 121, which expresses national acknowledgement of comfort women and urges the Japanese government to apologize and accept responsibility for its history (Congress.gov 2007). Following this resolution in 2009, Korean American Civic Empowerment (KACE), a non-profit organization based in New Jersey, constructed a comfort women memorial in front of the Palisades Park library. Simple and unassuming, it features a small boulder with a plaque engraving, asking visitors to remember these crimes against humanity committed by the Imperial Japanese Army.

The Palisades Park memorial was the first public memorial dedicated to comfort women. Since then, memorials have been created throughout the US as well as in South Korea. In Seoul, the bronze Statue of Girl (*Sonyeosang*) sits in front of the Japanese embassy to commemorate the 1000th weekly Wednesday demonstration in 2011; similar memorial designs are also featured in San Francisco; Glendale, California; Southfield, Michigan; and Brookhaven, Georgia. But with every memorial created, there has been a mix of diplomatic and civilian intervention from Japan. In 2012, Japanese diplomats visited the Palisades Park mayor to negotiate the memorial's removal, stating that its presence is an embarrassment to Japan's honor (Semple 2012). Similarly, a Glendale resident sued the city for its comfort women statue, arguing that it interferes with the federal government's diplomatic relationship with Japan (although the court upheld the city's right to keep the memorial in 2016) (Mikailian 2016). And in 2017, Osaka mayor Hirofumi Yoshimura threatened to cut sister-city ties with San Francisco if their comfort women memorial were to remain (Fortin 2017). While the US has officially stated its support for comfort women through House Resolution 121, these memorials show the complicated and entangled position the US has within these postcolonial East Asian relationships.

On December 28th, 2015, the US hosted a meeting between the two countries in an attempt to resolve the issue. They came to a "final" and "irreversible" agreement: The Japanese government would release a written statement of remorse, and pledge 1 billion yen (9 million dollars) of government funds towards medical and social welfare programs for South Korean survivors; in return, the South Korean government promised to relocate the Statue of Girl to a more remote area (Choe and Rich 2015). These terms, however, were negotiated without the input of the survivors themselves. For this reason, they have rejected the agreement, although neither country has enacted these plans to date.^{vi}

Since the 1990s, comfort women survivors have become visible and vocal activists, leading a decades-long movement against a powerful state. But despite these efforts, the Japanese government has yet to comply with their demands. Although seventy years have passed since the end of World War II, questions of adequate reparations and reconciliation remain. In this paper, I seek to review and analyze the scholarly literature^{vii} on comfort women, particularly through the lens of Korean, Japanese, and Asian American politics and narratives.

The first section of this paper critically examines the history of the comfort women system. While there is some debate amongst scholars regarding the total number of comfort women, the recruitment methods, and the conditions of the women's slavery, I examine their arguments and analyze how colonization and patriarchal structures allowed the comfort women system to capitalize on Korean women. This includes a brief historical overview of Japan's colonization of Korea from 1910 to 1945. I also discuss the postwar societal stigmatization of comfort women survivors, which had prevented them from publicly coming forward for decades.

Next, I examine how growing social movements in South Korea and Japan eventually led to Kim Hak-sun and other survivors publicly coming forward. This includes women's and labor movements in South Korea, as well as protests from Japanese human rights organizations during the 1980-90s. This section also examines the changing perception of women's rights and wartime sexual violence within the international community, and questions why comfort women recognition has become so controversial.

In the next section, I analyze the recent memorialization of comfort women through built monuments in the US. Throughout the decades, the Japanese government has offered various forms of reparations and apologies, from the 1965 Bilateral Treaty, to the 1995 Asian Women's Fund, to the December 2015 agreement. However, none of these efforts are deemed sufficient,

as the Japanese government has thus far failed to fully recognize their responsibility for the comfort system. The creation of these memorials thereby challenge their denial. The creation of public memorials is inherently political; by their creation, we are choosing what we remember and what we forget. Utilizing the vast body of knowledge on memorialization while focusing on several of the US-based comfort women memorials in particular, I invoke collective and public memory, and historical amnesia in exploring the politics of historicization. I also look to other forms of memorialization, including written history via textbooks, or print and visual media, which has also influenced the public's understanding of comfort women.

Finally, in my conclusion, I consider the future of the comfort women movement, and offer several possibilities of reparations and apologies, using examples from South African Apartheid and Japanese American internment, among others. Considering the involvement of many first- and second-generation Asian Americans in the creation of the memorials, this movement not only has the potential to mobilize Asian Americans into activism, but to create a transnational movement between the US and Asia.

As the comfort women movement has become one of the main factors of ongoing postcolonial tension between South Korea and Japan, it is my goal to analyze the issue from a range of perspectives, while offering my own contributions to the body of knowledge. With an in-depth understanding of the comfort women history and movement, I hope to aid survivors in their ongoing memorialization and reparation efforts.

II. Comfort Women: A Historical Overview

Throughout their history, Japan and Korea have had a long, often fraught diplomatic relationship with one another for centuries. With the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1910, Japan

formally annexed Korea and incorporated it into the Japanese empire. The Korean peninsula was seen as a strategic entryway into mainland Asia, making it ideal for military expansion into Manchuria (now Northeast China, Mongolia, and Russia). With Western powers such as Great Britain, France, and Germany expanding their spheres of influence to Africa and Asia, Japan sought to modernize and compete with these nation-states. Besides Korea, Japan spread its imperialist reach to Taiwan, Manchuria, and several islands in the South Pacific.

Korea remained under the Japanese colonial regime until the end of World War II in 1945. During this time, new laws sought to culturally assimilate Koreans into the Japanese empire, forcing them to adopt Japanese names and speak the language in schools and other public settings (Seth 2011). Students were also forced to worship at Shinto^{viii} shrines and pledge allegiance to the Japanese flag and emperor. Thousands of Koreans were mobilized and forced to move abroad as labor to Japan and Manchuria. Furthermore, Korean newspapers were banned and free speech suppressed. Although assimilation in theory would lead to Korean citizens eventually becoming integrated into Japanese society, in reality, the Japanese people and governmental policies showed discriminatory behavior toward Koreans (Caprio 2009). Japanese living in Korea maintained separate communities; there was relatively little intermarriage; and they attended different schools, similar to “separate but equal” policies in the US. Despite these discriminatory practices however, Japanese colonization also established “much of the infrastructure for a modern industrial society,” including “high standards of government efficiency” and “the foundations for a modern school system” (Seth 2011:297).

Japan’s annexation of Korea is important in understanding the establishment and procurement of women into the comfort system. Although military rape during colonization and war efforts is not a unique phenomenon, this system is unprecedented for “the number of women

involved, the international scope of the operation, the scale of the military-organized system required for procuring women, [and] the length of time over which the system operated” (Howard 1995:167). Furthermore, this system reflects Japan’s imperialist policies toward its colonized subjects. The women’s recruitment displays both ethnic and class discrimination, as recruiters mainly targeted lower-class, uneducated women from rural or impoverished areas-- women with no social or political power, whose disappearance and ill-treatment would cause little public criticism (Howard 1995; Yoshimi 2008). Comfort women were also viewed as performing their duty as imperial subjects, much like the colonized men enlisted in the military.

Comfort stations and recruitment

The Imperial Japanese Army established the first comfort station in 1932 during a failed military expedition in Shanghai. This prototype later served as the model for comfort stations used across Asia throughout the war. Although many of the official documentation on comfort stations were destroyed upon Japan’s surrender, scholars estimate that the system procured between 80,000 to 200,000 women throughout East and Southeast Asia, with the majority of women from the Korean peninsula, China, and Taiwan. Comfort stations were thought to prevent the spread of venereal diseases and reduce the occurrences of civilian rapes, which were not only shameful for the military, but also contributed to local uprisings (Tanaka 2002:14). According to Keith Howard (1995), the soldiers “undoubtedly viewed their [going to comfort stations] as honorable” (3). Yet, by taking part in this system, “they were completely unaware that their moral standards showed a profound lack of humanitarian concern for others and that the system they had set up would victimize others irrevocably” (Howard 1995:3).

Women were often recruited under the false pretense of becoming *chongshindae*, or wartime volunteers as factory workers or nurses, although in some instances, they sold by their

parents or forcibly kidnapped by soldiers (Howard 1995; Yoshimi 2000; Soh 2008). For years, the women were confined to small rooms under strict surveillance, and raped numerous times a day. While conditions of the stations varied, many of the women assigned to lower-ranking officers lived in squalor and were given little food, medical care, and clothing. Facing Japan's surrender in 1945, they were forced to take their own lives alongside the soldiers, while others were simply abandoned at the stations (Howard 1995). Those who survived were left with severe chronic health problems, venereal diseases and infertility, and psychological trauma (Howard 1995:24).

While most of the known survivors' testimonies confirm this ill treatment, some women reported having good relationships with soldiers—whom gave them food and clothing—and nicer facilities to live in. Scholars such as C. Sarah Soh (2008) and Yu-ha Park (2013) recognize that while many comfort women experienced hardship, the ones who reported good relationships with soldiers are left out of the current narrative. Y. Park (2013) in particular, using historical documents and comfort women testimonies, argues that the current comfort women narrative is selective in order to create a narrative of victimization. However, given the ubiquity of the comfort stations, varying treatment is likely to occur. The differential treatment may also be due to the particular station, as higher-ranking soldiers had nicer facilities. Furthermore, the camaraderie the women shared with Japanese soldiers should not take away from the women's coercion into sexual slavery.

After the war: Comfort Women and the Post-World War II Treaties

Although some right-wing extremists deny outright the existence of comfort women or label them as prostitutes, many conservative scholars accept the existence of comfort women but dispute the modern-day culpability of the Japanese government. With the San Francisco Peace

Treaty of 1952, the Allied forces formally ended their occupation of Japan, with the stipulation that Japan formally relinquishes all rights to Korea, and accept the International Military Tribunal for the Far East's (or the Tokyo war crimes trial's) verdict on Japan's war crimes. Then in 1965, South Korea and Japan agreed upon the Bilateral Treaty, which reestablished diplomatic relations and settled colonial reparations for South Korea. Those against comfort women redress argue that reparations for comfort women fall within these treaties, particularly the 1965 Bilateral Treaty. When foreign victims such as Kim Hak-sun have attempted to sue the Japanese government, "the plaintiffs in all cases lost the suit so far at the highest instance of the Supreme Court of Japan. Its reasoning is mostly related to the doctrine of state immunity, expiration of the damage claim due to the 20 years limitation, and renunciation of the war compensation in the bilateral agreements between Korea and Japan in 1965" (Kabashima 2015:81). As Gabriel Jonsson (2015) states, the Bilateral Treaty showed that "economic matters were far more important for the Korean government than the comfort women issue that it avoided... The contents of the treaty are the authority that Japan cites to support its argument that the comfort women do not have a claim at international law, [even though] they were not even mentioned in it" (493).

Although comfort women were not addressed in either of these treaties, their existence was an open secret, with several popular comfort women-related books even being published in Japan in the 1970s (Soh 2008). But the stigmatization of their role as wartime 'prostitutes' and fear of ostracization prevented them from coming forward. According to Robert Hayden (2000), "the honor of the group (in which males are the normative actors) is determined by the honor of its women and by the masculinity of its men" (31). Because female purity is inextricably tied to the honor of a nation (McClintock 1995), the colonization of Korea was emasculating on both a

state- and individual-level. With colonization, Korea was already emasculated through its inability to protect its people and sovereign government; openly recognizing the nation's inability to protect its women from sexual slavery would cause further embarrassment to the nation. And within families, it would have been shameful for fathers--the head of traditional Korean household--to have lost their daughters to sexual slavery. Unchaste, unmarried women were considered deviants, even in cases of rape; therefore, "any kind of sexual defilement"—consensual or otherwise—was "associated with promiscuity" (Mathur et al. 2003:54). These beliefs are related to the traditional Confucian and patriarchal ideals of women's chastity, as well as the "androcentric sexism and traditional elitist attitudes" (Jonsson 2015:494) which stigmatized 'impure' women (Kim and Lee 2017:103; Mathur et al. 2003:46, 47-9, 54; Soh, 1996: 1230-1231; Yoon, 2010:82, 183). It is also this strict adherence to chastity which had made Korean women desirable as comfort women in the first place (Soh 2008). These ideologies surrounding national and family honor undervalued females as property or commodities (Field 1997), which only served to exacerbate their postwar suffering.

As survivors of sexual slavery, the former comfort women faced several forms of structural violence during the war and its aftermath. As rural women from occupied or colonized countries, their status as low-ranking women in the eyes of the Imperial Japanese Army had made them particularly vulnerable to being recruited. While treatment of the women and conditions of their facilities varied, the majority were brutally treated and raped multiple times a day. Even after the war ended, comfort women survivors were left with physical and psychological wounds, as well as societal ostracization. While traditional Korean values regarding women's sexuality had prevented them from coming forward, the women were also ignored by the Japanese and South Korean governments, as both the 1952 San Francisco Peace

Treaty and 1965 Bilateral Treaty failed to address comfort women reparations. It was not until the latter half of the 20th century that survivors began to come forward, which I address in the following section.

III. The Controversy: The Late 20th Century Comfort Women’s Movement and Comfort Women Denial

Fearing stigmatization within their communities, comfort women survivors remained silent for decades. Then in 1991, Korean comfort women survivor Kim Hak-sun sued the Japanese government for her recruitment into the comfort system; with no family left to “shame,” then-sixty-seven-year-old survivor had nothing to fear in her publicly coming forward. Inspired by her courageousness, survivors began to follow her lead, joining her lawsuit and publicly announcing their past as a former comfort women. Growing women’s movements and changing perceptions of rape within the international community had in part contributed to an environment for comfort women to come forward. With similar cases of sexual violence throughout the world (in Bosnia and Rwanda for example), the international community began to view wartime rape and sexual violence as a pressing human rights concern; this is in stark contrast to how rape was perceived by the international community during the mid-20th century, during and after World War II. Throughout the 1990s, the growing influence of the comfort women redress movement is a reflection of the changing perception of women’s rights—both on a local and international scale—and a greater recognition of women’s rights as *human* rights. But even with survivors speaking out against the Japanese government, the government nonetheless has evaded responsibility for their war crimes, denying or minimizing their involvement, in an effort to maintain a sanitized version of their history.

Changing perception of rape within the international community

Since the mid-twentieth century, the notion of rape as a serious crime has changed significantly. Rape was considered a private issue, and within much of the West, laws on rape were outdated and narrow in scope. For example, in English and American law, violence could be used as proof of non-consensual sex, but “did not qualify as rape simply because of the violence”—this allowed cases of “marital rape” to go unchecked for decades (Hayden 2000:27). Mass rape was also not considered a war crime within the international community in the mid-twentieth century. Consider the war tribunals held to prosecute the Axis powers after World War II: For the Nuremberg trial held for German war crimes, “there was very little mention of ‘forced prostitution’ (another term for rape) ... When it was mentioned, it tended to be treated in the same way as looting and pillaging: naughty but hardly warranting formal prosecution” (Bourke 2011:330; Henry 2011). While the Tokyo tribunal had considered the Rape of Nanjing, in which Japanese troops raped and murdered thousands of the Chinese city’s residents, as a serious war crime, according to Nicola Henry (2011), “lawyers for the defence attempted age-old tactics of minimising the extent of sexual violence, and even diverting blame onto the women themselves” (Bourke 2011:330). However, soldiers who were involved with procuring Dutch comfort women were prosecuted, showing bias and inequality between non-Asian and Asian states when dealing with comfort women (H. Kim 2012:202). Meanwhile, either the Nuremberg trial for Germany nor the Tokyo trial for Japan adequately addressed wartime rape as a crime, and no rape survivors testified in either of these trials. (Henry 2011; Balockaite 2013). In 1949 (three years after the World War II tribunals), the Geneva Convention^{ix} condemned rape “as a crime against the ‘honor’ and dignity of women” (Soh 2008:41). This recognition, while meaningful in

its recognition of rape and sexual violence as a war crime, also fortified the perception of rape as an affront to the honor and purity of women.

However, changing values for human rights became “a defining value in the emergent new world order”, particularly after the horrors of the Holocaust (Soh 2008:41). With the creation of the UN in 1945, the international community’s outlook shifted from one of observed sovereignty and noninterference, to one of international security and eventually, humanitarian intervention (Barnett 2011:163). Within the US, the civil rights and feminists movements in the 1960s and 1970s contributed to a changing outlook of civil rights and human rights abuses (Balockaite 2013). Furthermore, with humanitarian crises taking place internationally—the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the genocide in Rwanda in the 1990s as two such examples—there was “a broadening understanding of trauma, [and] society became increasingly aware of sexual violence” (Balockaite 2013:115). While there was still criticism with how the UN handled these crises (particularly in regards to the UN’s inaction in Rwanda), their handling of sexual violence and mass rape in both these cases contrasts drastically with the case of World War II sexual violence. Wartime rapes became more of a publicized issue during the 1990s; unlike the Nuremberg or Tokyo tribunals, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia allowed rape survivors to testify. And with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, they made “a ground-breaking decision by declaring wartime rapes both a crime against humanity and a crime of genocide” (Balockaite 2013:115). Furthermore, these two war tribunals also focused on power in relation to sexual violence, conceptualizing it as: “any act of a sexual nature which is committed on a person under circumstances which are coercive... not limited to physical invasion of the human body, and may include acts which do not involve penetration or even physical contact” (Hayden 2000:28). With this changing perception of wartime sexual

violence, the perception of rape shifted from a private and peripheral experience to a public and politicized one (Balockaite 2013:115).

Despite the increased exposure, in these cases it is also easier for Westerners to perceive wartime rapes as “happening outside the ‘imaginary West’, conducted by *others* towards *others*”, casting aspersions to the Other without looking critically at the West’s own actions and discretions (Balockaite 2013:115). Hayden (2000) also argues that these tribunals may also undermine reconciliation, by exploiting women’s horrific stories in order to raise emotions, creating more hostility between the survivors and the perpetrators^x (Hayden 2000:34).

But this changing view of human rights and sexual violence within the international community was but one aspect which led to comfort women survivors coming forward. The women’s movement in South Korea was also a contributing factor, which I discuss below.

The comfort women movement in South Korea

Within South Korea, the women’s movement, characterized as “organizational activities for the improvement of women’s social status”, their rights, and interests, had evolved throughout the 1960s-80s to challenge the current patriarchal structure (Y. Kim 2002:168). After two attempts at a republican government following independence from Japan in 1945, South Korea entered a military regime in 1961 (Seth 2011). Throughout the 1960s^{xi} a 1980s, the women’s movement focused on middle-class efforts such as “a gender equal approach to the education, the employment, and the politics within the patriarchal society, instead of directly challenging the fundamental causes of gender inequality” (Y. Kim 2002:166). While working towards an improvement in women’s everyday lives, this discourse also fails to address the underlying cause of structural oppression towards women (H. Kim 2012:201).

However, as South Korea democratized in the 1980s, these movements also began to diversify their ideologies and objectives (Y. Kim 2002). They sought to challenge “the patriarchal society, the dichotomy between the public and the private domains, the stereotypes of gender division...and the regulations on women’s identity as general women or specific class women” (Y. Kim 2002:166). Feminists and women’s organizations began to address issues of sexuality and sexual abuse, sought to unite women of all social classes, and rejected traditional, gendered division of labor (Y. Kim 2002). The broadening of their movement also lay the groundwork for activists and human rights advocates to question and reexamine Japan’s World War II crimes--particularly comfort women. In 1989, women’s groups in South Korea protested the Korean government’s plan to send an emissary to Emperor Hirohito’s^{xii} funeral, due to his direct contribution to Korea’s colonial suffering (K. Park 2000:585-6). Christian human rights and progressive feminist groups in Japan also stood in solidarity with their South Korean counterparts, protesting Japan’s lack of acknowledgement of its crimes (K. Park 2000:586).

The Comfort Women Controversy

In 1990, thirty-seven women’s organizations formed The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (*Chongshindae-munjae Taechaek Hyopuihoe*), a NGO created to advocate for comfort women reparations and recognition (K. Park 2000; Soh 2008). They demanded the Japanese government acknowledge and repent for the comfort system through the following steps: “1. Reveal documentations and investigate the truth, 2. Admit the crime, 3. [Give an] Official apology, 4. [Make] Legal reparation, 5. Erect memorial tablets and build historical museum, 6. Record in textbooks and educate” (Yoon 2013:63). The Korean Council later added a seventh demand—to punish the perpetrators—to emphasize that the issue cannot be resolved with money, or without admitting wrongdoing of the past (Yoon

2013). In a call for international solidarity, The Korean Council also took part in the 2000 Women's International War Crimes Tribunal, in which Japan was found guilty of human rights violations. Although the trial was not legally binding, as it was held between private organizations rather than governments, the verdict was important in recognizing "unpunished crimes of violence against women's human right during war" (Yoon 2013:67).

Following the creation of the Korean Council, Hak-sun Kim became the first comfort women to publicly come forward and sue the Japanese government for her involvement in the comfort system. Survivors Mi-ja Sim and Kum-ju Hwang later joined her lawsuit, while others began to speak out and file suit as well^{xiii} (K. Park 2000:588; Soh 2008). In 1992, the Korean Council began a weekly demonstration outside the Japanese embassy in Seoul (Soh 2008). Every Wednesday, comfort women survivors and their supporters rally outside the embassy to protest the Japanese government's lack of recognition and responsibility for them; it is now the oldest ongoing weekly protest on a single theme.

Due to the survivors' and Korean Councils' dedication, the comfort women plight entered international discourse, gaining publicity and support through their concerted efforts. The Korean Council raised awareness throughout SE Asia and Asia-Pacific, eventually taking their case to the UN in 1992. In 1996, UN special investigator Radhika Coomaraswamy found comfort women to be a crime against humanity, the comfort system unacceptable under international law (K. Park 2000:596; Soh 2008). She urged Japan to compensate victims, apologize to survivors, and incorporate comfort women into public education.

With all documentation related to comfort women destroyed upon Japan's surrender during the war, the Japanese government was able to deny their involvement in the system. However, through mounting pressure from the international community, as well as the discovery

of documentary evidence of comfort stations by historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki (1995), they finally acknowledged the existence of comfort women and their remorse for the comfort system. In 1993, Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan Yohei Kono released the Kono Statement, in which the government recognized its involvement in the creation of the comfort system and its recruitment of women (Dudden 2008; K. Park 2000; Soh 2008; Yoshimi 1995). In 1995, the Japanese government established the Asian Women's Fund for monetary reparations to survivors. But these efforts were criticized by survivors, the Korean Council, and other supporters. For one, the Kono Statement, as well as subsequent apologies and acknowledgements made by various Japanese officials, express remorse or regret rather than culpability (Dudden 2008). Through this careful wording, the Japanese government is able to avoid legal responsibility, while still giving a semblance of an apology to quell opposing voices. These apologies also mean little to the survivors when conservative politicians continue to deny or minimize Japan's involvement in the comfort system (Dudden 2008). And while the Asian Women's Fund was meant to provide the monetary reparations the Korean Council sought, the money was collected through private donations--not public governmental funds--further circumventing responsibility. Further, the Prime Minister's letter of apology accompanying the disbursal was only given to those who accepted compensation, rather than to all known survivors (Yoshimi 1995). There was also no compensation given to the families of the deceased. Still, some women chose to accept the funds--the majority Filipino survivors, whose government has been less vocal of their support--with the Fund dissolved in 2007 (Soh 2008).

The mid- to late-twentieth century saw a development of views and stances on human rights, particularly in regards to women. Through war tribunals throughout the twentieth century, the international community challenged preexisting notions which "considers war rape

and violence against women as routine acts”, and that which normalizes rape as a weapon of war (Yoon 2013:70). Therefore, the comfort women issue should be considered a fundamental issue regarding individual human rights, or *jus cogens* (Min 2015:457), as well as an issue between states.

As the Korean Council stated, comfort women are seeking a sincere apology and government-funded reparations. Neither the Kono Statement or the Asian Women’s Fund has been acceptable is acceptable in these regards. Conservative politicians, scholars, and nationals argue these reparations^{xiv} are adequate—that survivors continue to demand more, despite the post-war reparations agreed upon in the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty and 1965 Bilateral Treaty. But these treaties were negotiated between states, not individuals (Price 2001). Regardless, comfort women were not recognized in either of these treaties, as neither the South Korean nor Japanese government sought restitution for them.^{xv}

Japan’s constant denials are based on their desire to portray a sanitized version of their history, in which they are seen as victims of World War II rather than aggressors. This whitewashed version of their past includes minimizing their involvement and responsibility for comfort women, phrasing any apologies in terms of remorse or condolences. But with the creation of comfort women memorials throughout the world and particularly in the US, the Japanese government is having increasing difficulties omitting comfort women from their historical narrative, for these memorials directly challenge Japan’s version of the past, inciting outrage in those who wish to preserve it. The following section looks into these US comfort women memorials, and how their presence challenges the Japanese government’s narrative.

IV. Comfort Women Memorials and the Politics of Memorialization

With the Japanese government's continued denials, the comfort women movement persisted at the turn of the 21st century, particularly in the US. In 2008, California Representative Mike Honda^{xvi} drafted (and backed by Korean American advocacy organizations) House Resolution 121, a resolution which recognizes the Imperial Japanese Army's recruitment and coercion of women and girls into sexual slavery. With its passing, it urges the Japanese government to accept historical responsibility for its involvement in their trafficking, issue an official apology by the Japanese Prime Minister, and work towards educating future generations on this war crime.

In 2010, the Korean American Civic Empowerment organization created the first comfort women memorial in Palisades Park, New Jersey (Semple 2012). The small plaque inlaid on stone sits in front of the Palisades Park public library (see Figure 1), where it went for the large part unnoticed for two years, until the Japanese government discovered its existence. The Japanese government sent delegates to the small New Jersey town; Mayor James Rotundo held a meeting to address their concerns. According to the mayor, the delegates offered to plant cherry trees and donate books to their library for the removal of the statue; during the meeting, they read aloud the Kono Statement and the 2001 letter from Prime Minister Koizumi as proof that Japan has already sufficiently apologized for comfort women (Semple 2012). In subsequent meetings, a second set of delegates from the Liberal Democratic party—a conservative political party—argued that the comfort women were never forcibly conscripted and the monument should be removed (Semple 2012). This ordeal brought national attention to a once inconspicuous plaque.

The Palisades Park memorial is not the only one of its kind. In 2011, the Korean Council commissioned *Sonyeosang*, or Statue of Girl (sometimes called Statue of Peace), where it

proudly stands directly across from the Japanese embassy in Seoul, South Korea. This monument caused immediate uproar within the Japanese community, as the government has repeatedly called for its removal—most recently with the 2015 agreement (Choe and Rich 2015). The statue was created specifically to honor the 1000th weekly protest of the comfort women survivors. Other memorials include a plaque and stone tablets in Eisenhower Park in Westbury, New York, developed by the Korean American Public Affairs Committee; a Peace Monument similar in design to *Sonyeosang*, in Glendale, California’s Brand Park, conceptualized by the Korean American Forum of California (Mikailian 2016); a Comfort Women Memorial Peace Garden, developed by the Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues, in Fairfax, Virginia’s County Government Center (Olivo 2017); an ornate stone tablet in Liberty Plaza in Union City, New Jersey (again made by Korean American Civic Empowerment); a plaque in Southfield, Michigan at the Korean American Cultural Center and created by the Michigan Korean American Women’s Association; a memorial by the Atlanta Comfort Women Memorial Task Force in Brookhaven, Georgia statue (Emerson 2017); and a San Francisco monument in St. Mary’s Square, backed by the Comfort Women for Justice Coalition (Fortin 2017). All but one of these memorials are on public property; all were created by non-profit or advocacy organizations focused on Korean- and Asian American issues (See Table 1); and most—if not all—were met with opposition after their creation. Besides the Palisades Park memorial, the memorials in Westbury and Union City faced similar pushback from Japanese diplomats. But the statues in Glendale and San Francisco in particular were the object of intense scrutiny: In 2014, a Glendale resident of Japanese descent, backed by the international organization Global Alliance for Historical Truth, sued the city for its memorial—arguing the statue “disrupted the federal government's foreign policy and relationship with Japan” (Mikailian 2016), while the

unveiling of the San Francisco statue in 2017 caused Osaka Mayor Hirofumi Yoshimura to announce he will cut ties with San Francisco—including their sister-city relationship (Fortin 2017).

Table 1

Location (listed in chronological order)	Year	Organization or Coalition Involved
Palisades Park, New Jersey	2010	Korean American Civic Empowerment
Seoul, South Korea*	2011	The Korean Council
Westbury, New York	2012-3	Korean American Public Affairs Committee
Glendale, California	2013	Korean American Forum of California
Fairfax, Virginia	2014	Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues
Union City, New Jersey	2014	Korean American Civic Empowerment
Southfield, Michigan**	2014	Michigan Korean American Women's Association
Brookhaven, Georgia	2017	Atlanta Comfort Women Memorial Task Force
San Francisco, California	2017	Comfort Women Justice Coalition

*Though this statue is not based in the US, I have included it in the timeline as it has been an important factor and influence for the US memorials.

**This is the only memorial listed which was not constructed on public property, but at the Korean American Cultural Center in Southfield, Michigan.

Those who oppose these memorials often argue along similar lines: Japan has already adequately apologized to comfort women; the memorials create a tense relationship between Japan, the United States, and their peoples; they move us backwards, not forwards, detracting from any reconciliation efforts; or they are one-sided propaganda meant to shame Japan (Choe and Rich 2015; Emerson 2017; Fortin 2017; Mikailian 2016; Semple 2012). While the Japanese government has made some accommodations to former comfort women, their refusal to give

publicly funded reparations or incorporate the extent of their World War II crimes into compulsory education proves the extent to which they have accepted responsibility for their crimes. After decades of silence, survivors have incorporated the memorials into their ongoing struggle for recognition. This bottom-up approach allows them to tell and reclaim their history and experiences, challenging the Japanese government's narrative on comfort women and increasing awareness of their plight.

Collective and Public Memory

Our physical surroundings bear our and others' imprint. ...The place a group occupies is not like a blackboard, where one may write and erase figures at will. No image of a blackboard can recall what was once written there. The board could not care less what has been written on it before, and new figures may be freely added. But place and group have each received the imprint of the other.

(Halbwachs 1950:128)

The Japanese government's attempts to remove public comfort women memorials is an ongoing struggle to control the narrative of their World War II crimes. While memory can be an individual experience as well, public memorials, education, media, and other means have the capacity to alter or reform the collective and public memory of current and future generations. It is through these mediums that both the Japanese government and comfort women survivors and supporters are vying to influence. According to Maurice Halbwachs (1992), collective memory is a non-fixed form of memory which exists outside of time and space, altered to suit the needs of society. Rather than existing in any one individual, it lasts through generations. But Peter J. Verovsek (2016) distinguishes between collective and public memory, conceptualizing Halbwach's (1992) collective memory as "simply the production and transmission of common memories within the narrow framework of 'intermediate groups' (families, churches, etc.)"

(530). He differentiates public memory as one which disrupts, those that “publicly problematise a memory and identity ‘trouble’” (530). He argues that public memory should “publicly [expose] a dissatisfaction, a trouble, a sentiment of injustice, a denial of the current state of their memory (unlike groups who simply cultivate their common memories for themselves, with no desire to make them public), and tries to develop procedures to resolve



Figure 1: The comfort women memorial plaque outside the library in Palisades Park, New Jersey. The inscription reads: “In memory of the more than 200,000 women and girls who were abducted by the armed forces of the of Imperial Japan. 1930s-1945. Known as “comfort women,” they endured human rights violations that no peoples should leave unrecognized. Let us never forget the horrors of crimes against humanity.” Photograph taken by author.



Figure 2: The bronze Statue of Girl, *Sonyeosang*, in Seoul, South Korea, outside the Japanese Embassy. Photograph taken by author.



Figure 3: A replica of Statue of Girl (*Sonyeosang*) in Glendale, California. Photograph taken by the author.

them”; the outcome of utilizing public memory should ideally lead to official recognition (Verovsek 2016:530).

When considering the US comfort women memorials, I must refer to Pierre Nora’s (1989) concept of *lieux de memoire*, or sites of memory. According to Nora (1989), *lieux de memoire* is a place, idea, or object with great significance in the collective memory; it is often formed by governments, in the form of museums, archives, cemeteries, and treaties, giving the illusion of eternity--as something that *was* and always *will be* (12). Despite this illusion, it is

nonetheless malleable and constructed; it is “a bond tying us to the eternal present...Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it” (Nora 1989:8). Similar to *lieux de memoire*, Mariko Tamanoi’s (2009) concept of memory maps “reflect the idea that memory never exists in isolation from historical, social, geographical, and cultural contexts” (19). In cases of genocide or tragedy, memory maps indicate how places once looked; they are maps of destroyed places, remaining in the collective memory of Holocaust survivors, or displaced Palestinians (Tamanoi 2009). These memories simultaneously take place both within the individual and the collective (or social); because memories can exist outside the individual through spoken or written form, individuals can “remember” an event they did not personally experience.

In the U.S., first- and second-generation Korean- and Asian-American activists have utilized built memorialization (via comfort women memorials) to affect public memory. Though they were not directly traumatized, the second generation and beyond have a unique relationship with their parents’ and grandparents’ traumatic experiences. According to Marianne Hirsch (2008), these generations have *postmemory*, or memories that preceded their birth yet still affects them and constitutes their own memories and experiences. One of the greatest examples is that of the Holocaust, in which the second generation “mourn what their parents lost,” while also feeling “doubt, curiosity, and guilt” as those who did not directly experience it (Chu 2008:97; Hirsch 2008; Baer et. al 2003; Chu 2008). In the Korean American context, Seo-Young Chu (2008) conceptualizes what she calls “postmemory han.” The Korean word *han* has no immediate English equivalent, but is best characterized as grief, longing, despair that can be expressed as both an individual and a country (Chu 2008). Chu (2008) calls postmemory han “at once virtual and real, secondhand and familiar, long ago and present” (99). Using postmemory

han, she asks the second generation how to “grieve for an uncle who disappeared in North Korea long before she was born,” or what it means “to feel personally degraded by the soldiers who raped thousands of comfort women during WWII?” (Chu 2008:98).

The construction of built monuments and memorials in particular can allow them to interact with memories they did not directly experience. Yoo-Hyeok Lee (2015) witnesses Seoul’s *Sonyeosang* as a place of gathering--a site of weekly demonstrations for activists, as well as a point of interest for passersby to take photographs. Compared to the memory-making of a museum, which he describes as “closed and protected”, the Seoul statue is open and inviting (Y. Lee 2015:167). He further argues that the memorial is a site of “learning and unlearning”, meant to “generate mind-change...[for] meaningful political engagements” (Y. Lee 2015:163). It is a dynamic space meant to challenge, shape, or reinforce one’s belief on the comfort women issue (Y. Lee 2015:166). While memorials and monuments are often used as a sign of distinction, to recognize individuals for superior accomplishments (particularly war heroes), in this case, the memorials challenge the version of the past which is “recollected by the powerful” and allow the disenfranchised control over their own history (Nora 1989:12; M. Kim 2014:93). This marks a shift in “[t]he usual historiographical practice of keeping records” to one of “individual- and group-based recollections” (M. Kim 2014:85). These statues prevent the dead from becoming a mere statistic; the memorials offer a sense of permanence, their stories finally told (Santino 2006:12–13).

But built memorials are not the only avenue for influencing public opinions or forms of memory. Compulsory education and the media are two such factors which have the power to influence public opinion, thoughts, and ideas. Japan’s attempts to alter collective memory through its textbooks, as well as Prime Minister Abe’s public disbelief of comfort women

veracity, “foregrounds a history of Japanese victimization; it is a way of remembering that entails the forgetting of Japanese aggression” (Field 1997:3). Textbooks which mention little of Japan’s war crimes were aimed to “free Japanese children from a ‘dark’ education about their nation’s past” (Field 1997:39).

In a recent study, Myung-hee Park (2017) found that due to media portrayals, South Koreans and Japanese hold negative views of one another. In a 2016 survey conducted in both countries, they found that 66% of South Koreans and 44.6% of Japanese held negative views or stereotypes of one another—with Koreans viewing Japanese as a conservative right, particularly in regards to the comfort women issue (M. Park 2017:490). However, Myunghee Park (2017) found that “a wide spectrum of views exists amongst the Japanese when it comes to controversial issues such as the comfort women”, and that forty-two city councils in Japan have adopted a statement calling for a “sincere response to the comfort women issue...They have also requested that the official compensation for comfort women be legislated, as well as have the subject be described in history textbooks (M. Park 2017:491). Despite this ideological diversity, it is the conservative, far-right media which has attracted the most media attention in South Korea due to their strong claims of denial, adding to Koreans’ negative view of Japanese. In other words, “Japanese liberal voices have not disappeared in Japan but simply cannot be heard in Korea” (M. Park 2017:510).

Hwalbin Kim and Claire Shinhea Lee (2017) also analyze how South Korean television dramas “have played an important role in reproducing the collective memory of comfort women” (88). They examine the dramas *Eyes of Dawn* (1991) and *Snowy Road* (2015), which both present unique perspectives on the comfort women issue. Both dramas seek “to acknowledge, reflect on, and remember comfort women in South Korea” (Kim and Lee 2017:100). *Eyes of*

Dawn (1991) portrays comfort women as victims of war; the message is one of morality--of good and evil, of victims and aggressors. *Snowy Road* (2015) portrays the survivors' complexities, including their struggle to reenter postwar society, their decades-long silence, and their eventual transition into transnational activists. Both dramas provide different colonial memories, ranging from patriotic to humanistic; both seek to present "how comfort women experienced a variety of hardships after liberation from Japan—lasting even to the present day" (Kim and Lee 2017:96). Through the "omnipresence of mass media", these dramas serve to inform the public and influence them to act (Kim and Lee 2017:90).

According to Nora (1989), "if what [we] defended were not threatened, there would be no need to build them" (12). Japanese history textbooks and vague apologies threaten to alter the collective memory of past war crimes, presenting them instead as unfortunate events. But collective memory is both fluid and malleable; in the case of comfort women, it is utilized to empower the voices of the marginalized. With the construction of built memorials and the influence of mass media, the survivors' narratives have persisted despite the attempts to silence them. And through the work of women's rights organizations, activists have worked to raise "public consciousness so that the problem could be recognized as a problem, rather than as an instance of normal male behavior exaggerated by wartime conditions" (Field 1997:23). It is through these women's and activist movements that comfort women survivors found the opportunity and platform to speak out against their abusers. In the following section, I provide future possible directions through an examination of past activist movements.

V. Conclusion

Over the past twenty-five years, comfort women survivors have protested the Japanese government for official recognition and reparations. Though up to 200,000 women were recruited, brutally raped and tortured through Japan's comfort women system, they have yet to receive an official apology which acknowledges the Japanese state's responsibility, despite the testimonies, evidence, and international pressure in their favor. Instead, the Japanese government has attempted to rewrite the historical narratives—through textbook revisions, outright denial, and other means to minimize the voices of the survivors. The comfort women survivors, however, refused to be silenced again. Activists in the US and South Korea have created public comfort women memorials to counteract the Japanese government's attempts to whitewash their history. These memorials have given survivors control over their own public narratives; no longer able to ignore comfort women claims, their stories and narratives are now physically represented in the public sphere, thereby disrupting Japan's attempts at erasure.

Mock trials, public testimonies, and other performances of human rights can be a meaningful form of redress and reconciliation, in addition to the seven steps for reparations listed above. What other methods can comfort women survivors utilize in their redress movement? Using past redress and activist movements as examples, I imagine other modes of recognition and reconciliation for the survivors.

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

With the 2000 Women's International War Crimes Tribunal, I am reminded of the reconciliatory efforts of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Here, victims of Apartheid's institutionalized racial segregation gave public testimonies, in which the survivors confirmed their experiences and expressed solidarity with one another (Graunebaum 2011). These testimonies were wrought with emotion and aired on live television, allowing individuals

across the country to share in this public form of healing. Perpetrators of the violence also gave their own testimonies, asked for amnesty, or reconciled with their victims. This mode of redress gave survivors a public platform to be heard, and set the foundation for a new, more inclusive government. Similar to the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal, comfort women survivors may find such symbolic reparations beneficial in reconciliation efforts, if conducted by the state rather than private organizations.

The Madres movement, Argentina

Similar to the comfort women survivor's weekly demonstrations in Seoul, the *Madres* have organized a decades-long political protest against Argentina's military regime, responsible for the kidnapping, torture, and "disappearances" of tens of thousands of people throughout the 1970s-80s (Taylor 1997). In 1977 in the Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires, the *Madres* held the first of what became weekly public protests: Mothers of the disappeared would march around the Plaza with photographs of their children, demanding the military *junta* to reveal their whereabouts. Dressed in slippers, robes, and white handkerchiefs tied beneath their chins, they performed a nonthreatening image of motherhood. By performing this nonthreatening yet familiar image, they became widely accessible to women regardless of politics, class, and social differences (Taylor 1997:300). This also created sympathy in the international sphere, and protected them somewhat against retaliation from the *junta*. However, Diana Taylor (1997) questions the effectiveness of this performance, as "[w]hat happens to other Argentine women who want to speak and act for themselves rather than for or through their children?" (204). She argues that these protests inadvertently reaffirm the women's passivity and powerlessness (Taylor 1997:196). However, I find this protest to be a powerful subversion of women's 'private' role as mothers, which they then mobilized in the public and political sphere. Both the

comfort women and *Madres* have challenged the expectations of elderly women, by refusing to remain in the private sphere.

Japanese American Redress Movement

But perhaps it is the Japanese American redress movement which is the best and most relevant comparison to the comfort women movement. In the 1970s, second- and third-generation Japanese Americans sought redress from the US government for their (or in this case, their parents' and grandparents') internment during World War II. To raise awareness, Japanese Americans in Seattle held a "Day of Remembrance" to publicly commemorate and reenact their evacuation into internment camps. Participants gathered at a former temporary internment camp, wore replicas of the internees' numbered name tags, and participated in a Fun Run of 9,066 steps—representing Executive Order 9066, which had authorized internment (Takezawa 1995:42). According to Yasuko Takezawa (1995), "The reenactment proved profoundly effective. For the old it brought back long-repressed memories of shame and injustice [while] the young were made to realize just what their parents and grandparents had experienced" (44). This reenactment sparked other communities in the US to hold internment-related events as well. This was crucial in gaining official recognition and compensation for former internees. In 1988, the federal government offered an official apology for Japanese American internment, as well as monetary reparations for internees and their descendants (Takezawa 1995:56). But for those who received the funds, it was not the monetary compensation which constituted the apology, but the open acknowledgement of their past (Takezawa 2008). According to Takezawa (1995), "In the early 1970s, redress and even camp experiences were taboo subjects. [But] today, to say 'Let's just forget about camp' has become unacceptable" (59).

Eunjung Lim (2011) notes the comparisons between the Japanese American redress for internment and the Korean American comfort women movement. She credits the Japanese American redress movement as that which “lit a torch in the history of Asian-American social movements” (Lim 2011:103). While the second and third generations did not directly experience internment, Lim (2011) believes these protests allowed the younger generations to express their identity and ancestral heritage in the US: It challenged the notion that Japanese Americans were not part of American society, and brought them in touch with their parents’ and grandparents’ experiences. Just as internment was the key issue to mobilize the Japanese American community, Lim (2011) views the comfort women issue as one which has united Korean Americans—as well as other Asian Americans affected by these war crimes—into civic action. Commemorative events, acts, and objects, such as The Day of Remembrance or the comfort women memorials serve to educate the public, while allowing survivors to reconcile with their once-silenced past.

While my work can be further strengthened by ethnographic fieldwork and a more expansive look into the current literature (particularly from texts written in Korean or Japanese), I hope to nonetheless provide an introduction for those unfamiliar with this topic. I would, however, in future research, incorporate more literature and conduct fieldwork which looks into the transnational activism that has taken place at the turn of the 21st century. While in the past, scholars have focused on this controversy in terms of the history and politics within East Asia, the comfort women memorials in the US prove that this movement has taken on a transnational scope that can be further assessed.

The work of comfort women survivors and activists have influenced the human rights discourse on wartime sexual slavery throughout the past few decades. But with only thirty-seven

known comfort women survivors left (Sala 2017), there is a greater sense of urgency to pressure Japan into an apology and reparations. With the inadequacy of the 2015 agreement, activists may look to past redress movements as sources of inspiration. Through their dedicated and relentless work, these survivors are one step closer to receiving the meaningful and sincere compensation they deserve.

ⁱ This beginning anecdote is from my own fieldnotes and experience visiting the Glendale's Statue of Peace in 2017.

ⁱⁱ This is not a legal term, but one that has been used colloquially since the 1930s to describe women such as barmaids or courtesans. Japanese have used the term *jugunianfu*, meaning military sex slaves, while Koreans have used the term *chongshindae* (*teishintai* in Japanese), which refers to Women's Voluntary Corps during the war. However, women recruited as *chongshindae* had a variety of roles which could include sex work—thus the terms have become interchangeable (K. Park 2000:568-9).

ⁱⁱⁱ I revisit Kim Hak-sun's lawsuit in the section titled, "The Controversy: The Late 20th Century Comfort Women's Movement and Comfort Women Denial."

^{iv} I further elaborate on the South Korean government's involvement (or lack of involvement) on comfort women reparations—including the 1965 Bilateral Treaty and the 1951 Peace Treaty of San Francisco—in later chapters.

^v The Liancourt Rocks—known as *Dokdo* in Korean and *Takeshima* in Japan, are a small group of islands located in the Sea of Japan, or East Sea.

^{vi} The 2015 agreement was made under South Korean President Park Geun-hye's term. With her impeachment in 2017, her successor Moon Jae-in has questioned this deal in an official statement, saying "'the two sides should work together based on understanding of the emotions and reality of the people'" (Griffiths 2017).

^{vii} While I recognize the work of many Korean and Japanese scholars on the subject, I focus my review on English and English-translated texts due to my limited proficiency in Korean and Japanese.

^{viii} Shinto refers to a traditional Japanese religion which focuses on communication with *kami* or spirits; the name Shinto comes from the Chinese characters *Shen* ('divine being') and *Tao* ('way') to mean 'Way of the Spirits' (BBC Religions 2007).

^{ix} According to Article 27, second paragraph, of the 1949 Geneva Convention IV: "Women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault" (International Committee of the Red Cross, Nd.).

^x I will continue this conversation when discussing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

^{xi} This military regime existed from 1961-3.

^{xii} Emperor Hirohito was the reigning emperor during Japan's colonization of Korea and World War II.

^{xiii} After years of appeal, the court finally sided with the survivors. The plaintiffs were awarded 300,000 yen, or \$2,500 each (K. Park 2000:599)--although by this time, Hak-sun Kim had died a year prior to the verdict.

^{xiv} Other conservatives argue the South Korean government should reckon with its Vietnam War crimes before seeking justice for comfort women survivors. During the Vietnam War, South Korean soldiers massacred and raped thousands of civilians, leaving 800 rape survivors awaiting justice today (Kwon 2017). While I agree that South Korea should work with Vietnamese survivors for reparations, Japan's apologies and reparations should not be contingent on another one. In any case, comfort women survivors also stand in solidarity with Vietnamese survivors, and in March 2018, South Korean President Moon Jae-in apologized for the massacre of Vietnamese civilians by Korean soldiers (Park and Sohn 2018).

^{xv} The reason for the South Korean government's initial lack of involvement in comfort women reparations is multi-faceted. For one, comfort women survivors had not come forward at this time out of fear of stigmatization. Secondly, Japan, as Korea's former colonizer, wielded structural power against its former colony. Finally, comfort women were simply not seen as a pressing issue at the time.

^{xvi} Congressman Honda is a third generation Japanese American (or *sansei*) who was also interned at a Japanese internment camp in his youth (Honda 2011). He makes parallels between (comfort women and internees—apologies and reparations), which I will address in the conclusion.

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