

When Women Perform Hate Speech: Gender, Patriotism, and Social Empowerment in Japan

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Abstract:

Triggered by globalization, internationalization, and multiculturalism, Japanese ultra-nationalist groups spread hate targeting Zainichi Koreans and other minorities. The focus of this paper is not the traditional manifestation of hate speech between the socially powerful and the seemingly powerless, but women who openly perform hate speech in the name of love of country. It examines Japanese women's groups whose objective is to nurture patriotic awareness under the guise of sustaining culture and tradition. They discover a sense of legitimate social empowerment aiming to restore "historical truth" and uphold their country's honor and dignity for their children's sake.

Keywords: Hate Speech, Comfort Women, Zainichi, Nihon Josei no Kai Soyokaze, Aikoku Josei no Tsudoi Hanadokei, Nadeshiko Akushon (Action)

I. "Patriotic" Women's Hate Speech: For the Sake of the Children and Japan's Future*

A global rise in neo-nationalism partly exacerbated by a migration and refugee crisis and increasing immigration is triggering a wave of xenophobic, anti-immigrant, nativist sentiments in the EU, U.S., and across the world. Likewise in Japan since late 2000 ultra-nationalist groups have been conducting hate speech targeting Zainichi Koreans, one of the country's largest ethnic minorities whose

ancestors stem from Japan's former colony, and other minorities. Up to now, the dominant faces of hate speech in the Japanese media and general public have mainly been the ultra-right group Zaitokukai, short for Zainichi Tokken o Yurusanai Shimin no Kai (Citizens Against the Special Privileges of Zainichi Foreign Residents)¹, and a xenophobic, nativist movement promoting nationalistic views on education, history, and politics on the Internet.² A particularly climactic moment occurred at a February 2013 event organized by Zaitokukai in Osaka's Tsuruhashi District, known for its historically high concentration of Korean inhabitants and businesses. A 14-year-old female junior high school student shouted into a microphone calling for the expulsion of Koreans from Japan (figure 1). On this particular afternoon³, unlike the usual hate speech rallies where older male group members bellowed out their anti-Korean slurs, the young girl, a daughter of a far-right nationalist, tapped into historical memory by referring to the Nanking Massacre, in which the Japanese army murdered hundreds of thousands of Chinese citizens, and threatened that a similar slaying could happen in Tsuruhashi in what she called the Tsuruhashi Massacre. As she spoke, older, male Zaitokukai members and her fifty-two year old father, a locally well-known activist of the "ethno-nationalist faction"⁴ (*minzokuha*), cheered her on. The girl sometimes accompanied her father to other demonstrations where she participated as one of the main speakers. Her father was idolized by the young participants as a kind of father-figure. He said in an interview with journalist Yasuda Kōichi that his

daughter's outburst calling for a massacre is not a big deal and that people should actually consider what pushes a junior high school student to brood over such matters. "Isn't South Korea the one who is always trying to pick a fight with our country? [...] They [those Koreans] took Takeshima⁵ by force, at times they burn our flag and repeat extreme hate against Japan. In the midst of this, young people are wholeheartedly fighting it. Why does the media not recognize this?" (Yasuda, 2013b, 133-134). The disquieting incident drew wide attention in Japan as well as abroad concerning the proliferation of hate speech in Japan.⁶

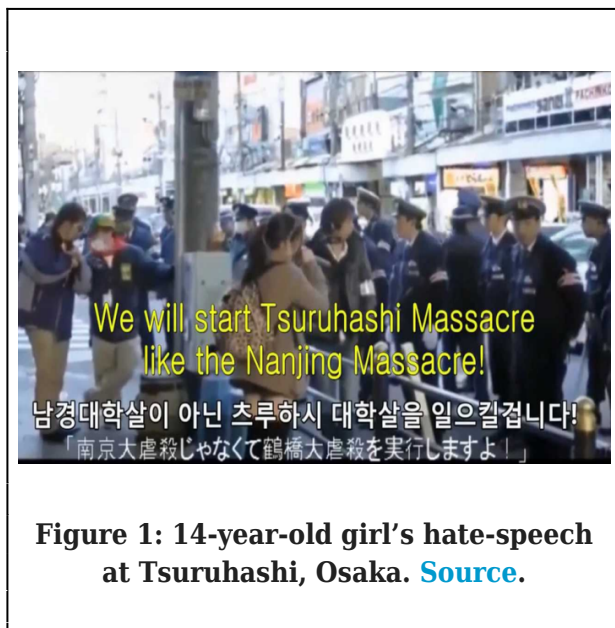


Figure 1: 14-year-old girl's hate-speech at Tsuruhashi, Osaka. [Source](#).

A video of this young girl – her hair pulled back in a pony-tail, wearing a cat-ear headband, mini-skirt and long knee-socks – shouting her hate for Koreans, was promptly uploaded to YouTube and Niconico dōga, and presently has been viewed more than 600,000 times in Japan alone.⁷ Her words awakened painful memories in the minds of many Zainichi Koreans throughout Japan. For the first generation, who migrated from colonial Korea before or during WWII and the Asia-Pacific War, and their Japan-born descendants, the subject socially constructed within the locution “Chōsen⁸” and the derogatory slur “Chonko,” which this young

girl utilized, had been long established within a historical collective memory that continues to be a part of Zainichi existence. Zaitokukai's expression of contempt for Koreans symbolizes a reawakening of exclusion and rejection reminiscent of a colonial past. Its demonstrations calling for the “killing” or “expulsion” of Koreans is a retaliation against Zainichi Koreans who have fought for and have gained considerable improvements in social status and mobility, which the hate group criticize as unfair “special privilege” provided by the Japanese government.⁹ The legacy of colonization and all its symbolic implications were resurrected in Zainichi Koreans by the girl's hate speech. But why did her words strike such a chord with the general public? Because of her age? Her gender? The uncensored rawness of her venomous message? Or perhaps the intersection of her gender and the open and explicit vitriolic attack? Or was it the taboo-breaking act of a young Japanese female brazenly speaking her mind loudly in public space? Until that moment, such open hate speech had been a predominantly “male” activity. The young girl, however, presented a shocking, confrontational image that revealed the growing extremities of hate speech in Japan. Her performance shed a major spotlight on an emboldened female who spoke out against those she deemed unwanted outcasts in her country. Her impetuous outburst is in stark contrast to a growing community of self-proclaimed “ordinary” women whose tactics are not vitriolic and aggressive like the aforementioned girl, but instead softer and more feminine, emphasizing the need to nurture pride and loyalty in their culture and tradition, in order to defend Japan against “Korean People's Lies.” As an expression of their patriotism, they gather to speak out against Korean “comfort women” and Zainichi Koreans who rekindle the historical past of displacement and forced labor. Although China and many other Asian countries had also suffered due to Japan's military aggression, Koreans are specifically targeted because they

have been the most consistently vocal critics of Japan's colonial oppression and wartime atrocities.

I draw attention to women's voices of hate speech in Japan conducted by members of Japanese patriotic women's groups - Nihon Josei no Kai Soyokaze (Japan Women's Group Gentle Breeze), Aikoku Josei no Tsudoi Hanadokei (Patriotic Women's Gathering Flower Clock), and Nadeshiko Akushon (Action)¹⁰ Japanese Women for Justice and Peace. I closely examine the women's narrative discourse within their advocacy by observing their rallies and analyzing the groups' various publications, archival sources, blogs, posted comments, and uploaded videos. I argue that their activism reveals two prominent aspects: 1) The groups' "patriotic" message under the guise of women's role of nurturing and sustaining culture and tradition belies a subtle but insidious interjection of hate that resurrects and employs Japan's historically embedded stereotypes of Koreans. 2) By surrounding themselves with like-minded patriotic women who feel they have a duty to defend and restore "historical truth" and to uphold their country's honor and dignity for their children's sake, the members of these groups discover a sense of legitimate social empowerment, believing that they are contributing much needed women's voices to male-dominated conservative, nationalistic movement.

II. The Patriotic Women's Groups Soyokaze, Hanadokei, and Nadeshiko Action

In 2007, Prime Minister Shinzō Abe attempted to backtrack from the 1993 Kono statement that had acknowledged Japan's responsibility for the comfort women system, by denying the Japanese government's involvement in the coercion of young women (Dudden and Mizoguchi, 2007). A comfort women memorial

was erected in the same year in Kyōngsang Province of South Korea, followed by a stone memorial in Miyakojima Okinawa in 2008, and the most controversial in Seoul, the Statue of Peace - a bare-footed young girl, wearing a Korean dress, sitting and gazing at the Japanese Embassy - installed by a Korean civic group in 2011. Statues, memorials, plaques, and museums have been commemorated in various cities across East Asia, U. S., Australia, and Canada (Lee, 2016). The passing of Resolution 121 in July 2007 within the United States House of Representatives calling for a formal apology by the Japanese government for its involvement in the systematic recruitment of comfort women received wide media attention, further energizing ultra-right groups (Yamaguchi, 2018, 198). Japan's nationalist women's groups, referring to themselves as "patriotic," soon began to emerge, some branching out on their own from organizations such as Zaitokukai, and launched their activism with the slogan "Comfort women are liars." Most prominent are Nihon Josei no Kai Soyokaze, established in 2009, Aikoku Josei no Tsudoi Hanadokei, founded the following year, and Nadeshiko Action, established in 2011. These "patriotic" women's groups believe that defending their country using verbal ammunition makes them patriotic. Patriotism, an emotional attachment and a show of loyalty and dedication to one's land, entered Japanese political vocabulary through influx of and encounters by intellectuals and political leaders with Western thought following the 1868 Meiji Restoration (Matsuda, 2015, 66).¹¹ Patriotism means love of country, and those who distinguish themselves in this may be called "patriots." One interpretation of patriotism is an unwavering love characterized by loyalty and devotion to the political institutions and values that sustain the political community (Parker 2010, 99). According to Judith Shklar, however, loyalty must be differentiated from commitment, because the former is deeply affective, not primarily rational, and evoked by nations, ethnic groups, doctrines, causes, and

ideologies (quoted in Parker 2010, 99). The patriotic women’s groups feel that they are demonstrating both emotional loyalty to the country they love, as well as commitment to their sense of Japaneseness. Parker argues that patriotism is both symbolic and blind; the symbolic is an affective attachment to one’s nation and its core values, while blind patriotism emphasizes a relationship between an individual and his or her nation when the unconditional support of its institutions and policies is the norm (Parker 2010, 97). In that sense, Japanese patriotic women’s groups and their unwavering love and devotion to an idealized image of their nation is symbolic but not “blind.” One of the most important missions in cooperation with other historical revisionist groups is to press the government to implement educational policies that uphold a particular vision of Japan’s national culture, tradition, and pride in being Japanese. Within the women’s narratives, repaying of debt to the “splendid” country that they feel lucky to be born in, and specifically paying back the forefathers with affection and remembrance for their sacrifice, is a common thread that runs through their definition of patriotism or *aikoku* in Japanese, which literally means love of country. Inherent in this emotion, however, is the fact that they frequently utilize the goal of nurturing and preserving one’s “national character” as a means to justify blatant exclusion of others who do not fit into their construction of nation and people.



Figure 2: Male supporter recording a video. Source: Hanadokei 2015b.

Kitahara Minori and Pak Su-Ni (2014) provide one of the few extensive analyses of Hanadokei and Soyokaze. In 2013 on August 14, the same day the United Nations suggested should be designated a day commemorating the comfort women, Kitahara observed Soyokaze’s protest. “Everyone, there were no comfort women; they were simply prostitutes,” declared a group member who spoke at the demonstration. Male supporters at the event responded, “*Sō da!*” (“That’s right!”) (Kitahara 2014b, 88-89). The women referred to one another as *benshi* (orator) and displayed a talent for speaking. Unlike the majority of hate speech demonstrations where men stand in the front speaking into the microphone while women stay in the background, during the women’s group’s performance the men cheer the women on from the sidelines. In between supportive vocal affirmations, the men take photos and videos of the women as they speak, giving them a sense of significance (figure 2). Amid shouts about comfort women being liars and prostitution being a national product of Korea,

an older woman took the microphone and began to engage the audience, including the passersby: “Comfort station worker was originally an admirable profession. Those who degrade that work as sexual slavery, while crying so pitifully [...], are feeble old women” (Kitahara 2014b, 97). Another female orator repeatedly emphasized the words *futsū* (normal) and *jōshiki* (common sense):

Everyone, think normally and with common sense. To make a memorial day for prostitutes, isn't it laughable? There are prostitutes all over the world. To create a commemoration day for these people, normally, wouldn't something like this be strange? [...] (A past of being a prostitute) is shameful and not something to come forward with. That is the heart of a normal Japanese woman, I think. Even for Koreans, I think those who at that time really were prostitutes would not come forward. This is of course, naturally, because they feel ashamed. When thinking normally, it's understandable. (97-98)

Another female speaker said,

In short, it is propaganda by the failed country of Korea to wangle money from Japan. Apology and compensation, where is the money for such compensation going to come from? Isn't it money that all of you earned from your sweat and sometimes even your tears laboring? Is it acceptable to pay this money to people who are called lying Chōsenjin and former prostitutes? Even without this, our taxes are going up and up. (98)

Another woman claimed, “Japanese children have a hard time, because the image that Japanese are rapists and that they abused Korean women is now spreading throughout the world” (98).

Through the camaraderie found in these “patriotic” groups, women’s voices moved to the fore to take on the important role of rousing emotional sentiments among the general public to “protect” Japan’s children from defamation by countries like Korea. Rather than sitting around and complaining amongst themselves, women in these groups felt the urgency to gather courage to speak in public their version of truth in order to defend Japan’s standing in the world. They deem “safeguarding” their children’s honor and dignity as Japanese a patriotic act. Their expression of “patriotism” is distinct from their rightwing male counterparts because their gender is consistently emphasized. Specifically, as women, they believe it to be fair game to openly criticize other women such as the comfort women and their supporters who they feel are blaspheming Japan. Speaking out for the well-being and future of Japanese children allows them to continue to play the traditional role prescribed by Japanese society, but simultaneously it also provides an opportunity to collaborate with like-minded politicians, academics, organizations, and citizen’s groups that share a common agenda of defending Japan from what they see as fabrications, revealing their presence and influence within Japan’s nationalistic movement.

Yamamoto Yumiko, former vice-president of Zaitokukai, began a movement called “Comfort Women’s Lies Are Unforgivable! Nadeshiko Action 2011.” She is the founder of the group Nadeshiko Action Japanese Women for Justice and Peace, whose motto is “Passing on the correct history to the next generation.” The word *nadeshiko* is the name of a pink flower and is also short for *Yamato nadeshiko*, which means an ideal woman who displays the

traditional graces and feminine virtues of old Japan. Yamamoto expressed the view that men, such as Zaitokukai members, who criticized the comfort women were viewed by the public as misogynistic. Therefore, she believed that women should tackle this problem (Kitahara 2014a, 41). Women expressing dissatisfaction with the comfort women and their supporters in the name of patriotism averted this criticism and gained the kind of legitimacy and authority usually reserved for men within the conservative movement. What angered Yamamoto and her fellow members is that Japan's reputation was tainted on the world stage, while the comfort women and their supporters gained broad international support.

Beginning in 2010, Yamamoto and other women started writing emails and letters opposing the naming of a street in Queens, New York, in honor of comfort women and the establishment of a Korean Comfort Women's Day in Glendale, California as well as the erection of a statue that followed in 2013.¹² She and her fellow female activists viewed these memorials as defamatory against Japan. The Comfort Woman statue in Glendale and statues in various cities in the United States and other countries are symbols of peace and pursuit of justice for some, but for others they embody false accusations that maliciously attack the honor of a nation. Lisa Yoneyama (2016) in *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes* elucidates the complicated entanglement of emotions and loyalties concerning the question of historical knowledge and its conflicts that travel across borders and spaces. Within the contentious legal battles between Asian Americans, specifically Korean and Chinese against Japanese Americans and their allies in the respective countries involved, arguing over the statues' right to exist, we see the impassioned combat between ethno-nationals transcending borders in their aim to create a common unifying national memory, knowledge production, and dissemination to the general

public and subsequent generations (171-172). This conflict and the desire to right "wrongs" not only in Japan but also importantly abroad is what Yamamoto and her fellow members find to be meaningful. She believes that although their efforts probably will not stop the creation of comfort women statues or memorials abroad, the main objective is to make their opposing views visible as Japanese women disparaging the comfort women for the sake of their nation and their children. Yamamoto in her 2014 book *Josei ga mamoru Nihon no hokori* (translated on the cover as "The Pride that a Woman Keeps of Japan") describes herself as an ordinary woman, without extensive education¹³ or a remarkable career as a teacher, specialist, researcher, journalist, or activist (2014, 6). However, she felt a duty to launch her movement against comfort women and their defamation of Japan because of her gratefulness for being born in prosperous Japan that her forefathers sacrificed to build. Rather than only receiving this blessing of a great nation, she was obligated to pass on the pride of being Japanese to the next generation (6-8). This sense of gratefulness for being born in Japan and the duty and obligation one has towards keeping and defending it for the next generation is a common motto that the women's groups utilize to gather and mobilize their female members.

Similarly, Soyokaze's central idea is that "there is a crisis in Japan due to the press's biased coverage and the masochistic historical views in class lessons" (Soyokaze, n. d.). There are 570 main and 305 supporting members throughout Japan with the largest membership in Tokyo, Osaka, and Kanagawa.¹⁴ The founder, with an alias "Suzukaze (涼風 Cool Breeze) Yukiko,"¹⁵ and advisor, "Higashikaze (東風 East Wind) Umeko," feel they must defend and protect their country by telling the "truth" and making sure their children learn the "correct" history. Soyokze's manifesto states:

We no longer can leave it just to men!

To protect Japan, we women are standing up.

To not lose Japan, this wonderful country that our forefathers have given their lives to build up,

Isn't it that we, now, must do our best?

Talk alone will not change anything; we will act.

Soyokaze is a women's group that loves Japan. (Soyokaze, n. d.)

Although Soyokaze stresses an anti-foreigner stance – especially against Zainichi Koreans, Chinese, and illegal (im)migrants – it claims on its website's home page to be open to “anyone who loves Japan”:

At present, “Soyokaze” has women members from the teens to those in their 80s, not only in Japan but also overseas. Soyokaze does what can be done even as individuals, such as posting, blogging on the Internet, writing on bulletin boards, and street oratories. If you love Japan, anyone can join us. Men can become supporting members. (Soyokaze, n. d.)

Soyokaze utilizes its webpage to keep its members up to date on themes that they want to tackle, for example: comfort women “problem,” disseminating truth about Korea-Japan relations, correcting distorted history, reforming education and school textbooks, kidnapping of Japanese by North Korea, politicians and policies that harm Japan, naming and identifying “traitors” who cuddle up to Korea and China. These “traitors” could be anyone, but they often call out Japanese politicians, accusing them of “selling out” Japan. In 2017, their blog identified Sendai City

mayor Okuyama Emiko as one of these traitors “cuddling up” to Korea. Soyokaze criticizes Okuyama for not expressing a word of regret after Sendai City's sister city Kwangju City erected a comfort women memorial in 2015. They lament that she wore the traditional Korean dress *chōgori* instead of the Japanese kimono the same year, celebrating 50 years of establishing Japan-Korea diplomatic relations. “An image of the city's mayor wearing a kimono could not be found, but rather than a kimono, a *chōgori*!” (Soyokaze, 2017). The women's group finds it astonishing that the city bus is “wrapped” with the logos of Kwangju City and that Korea tour promotion posters with the K-pop group GBANG are advertised on public buses (Soyokaze, 2017).

Besides keeping a keen eye on politicians, they also advocate restoring the “truth” about the massacre of Koreans during the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake. The group has been active in organizing demonstrations calling for the removal of monuments remembering this massacre, forced labor conscription of Koreans during wartime, comfort women, and other “fabricated” historical commemorations throughout Japan. From 2012, they have played a vital role in demanding the removal of a stone memorial for Korean victims of forced labor in Takasaki City, Gunma prefecture. Their activism ignited other right-wing groups to join their campaign calling for its removal. In 2014, Gunma Prefecture asked the association responsible for erecting the stone to remove it, which resulted in a lawsuit between the prefecture and the association. The women's group looks upon these kinds of memorials as an example of “hate” that must be stopped. Under the title, “Now is the chance to stop hate speech against the Japanese,” Soyokaze's blog states, “Is there a monument that is jeering at Japanese people around you? Practically all of the [stone] works turned into a memorial display words such as ‘reflection,’ ‘victim,’ ‘mistake,’ ‘forced recruitment,’ ‘colonial rule,’ ‘harsh labor,’ ‘aggression,’ ‘friendship,’ ‘East

Asia for Peace,' 'memory.' A typical example is the memorial monument for Koreans in Gunma Forest" (Soyokaze, 2019b). The writer of the information blog, Suzuki, asserts that the Japanese have shown strong patience at such false accusations that have hurt their reputation, but recently the government, large corporations, and even the biased media have begun to move in the right direction of recognizing Korea's unreasonable demands (Soyokaze, 2019b). However, she reproaches the local government and Buddhist groups for continuing their support of Koreans and Chinese. She writes, "It is the very existence of Japanese within Japan who have allied with South Korea, North Korea, and China and look down at Japan with contempt that is the beginning of all the problems. Japan's real enemy is within Japan" (Soyokaze, 2019b). She continues by enlisting help from the readers to widely distribute a list that she will soon have in order to target all such monuments that are conducting hate speech against the Japanese.¹⁶

Since 2016, Soyokaze has joined forces with other right wing groups, lobbying politicians to remove the "Memorial Stone for Korean Victims of the Great Kanto Earthquake" at Yokoamichō Park in Tokyo. They claim that the unfounded fabrication of the Japanese people massacring "6,000 Koreans" will negatively impact Japanese children (Narusawa 2016, 5-6). In June 2016, Soyokaze met with Assembly member Koga Toshiaki of the LDP and Vice Chair of the Local Assembly Members' League of Nippon Kaigi, after which he raised this issue with the Metropolitan Assembly. Thereafter, Tokyo Governor Koike Yuriko, who incidentally also gave a speech at a Soyokaze gathering in 2010, refrained from sending the annual eulogy commemorating this event in front of the memorial stone, unlike in previous years (5-7). One of their recent movements against commemorating the massacre of Koreans during the earthquake is to circulate information opposing the screening of a film called "Kaneko Fumiko and Pak Yöl" scheduled

to screen in 2019 at Cinemart Shinsaibashi, Osaka. The movie features the anarchists Kaneko and her Korean lover Pak who were arrested and sentenced to death in 1926 immediately after the Great Kantō Earthquake for plotting to import bombs to kill the imperial family. Along with the couple's relationship and their radical activism against the government, the movie also elucidates the massacre of Koreans by Japanese civilians, police, and soldiers who believed the false rumors that Koreans were poisoning wells, starting fires, carrying bombs, and were planning an uprising. The "legitimized" killings played into the hands of the Japanese government seeking to curtail dangerous subversive activities by Koreans. Soyokaze endorsed the "Information Provision and Request Form" drafted by political activist Nishimura Hitoshi, chair of the Nippon Daiichi Tō (Japan First Party) Kyoto branch and former Zaitokukai Kyoto branch chair, which states that if there is any truth in what the movie claims, the film distributor Usumasa and the venue Cinemart Shinsaibashi must show official historical facts and documents as proofs. The petition letter ends with, "It is an important matter that affects the human rights and dignity of the Japanese people [...]" (Soyokaze, 2019c). By circulating this petition to its members, Soyokaze reaffirms what they deem libelous efforts by countries like Korea, in coordination with Japanese allies to propagate false history that defames Japan and brings shame upon the younger generation. They believe that such a film is evidence for the widespread propaganda against Japan. This "threat" is very real in the eyes of the women's groups who belong to a coalition called *Japan NGO Coalition against Racial Discrimination (JNCRD)*¹⁷, along with other members such as Academics' Alliance for Correcting Groundless Criticisms of Japan, Japan Association for Fostering the Seeds of Historical Truth, Society for the Dissemination of Historical Fact, and True Japanese Society. On July 2018, they submitted a report to the United Nation's 96th Session of the Committee

on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, claiming the untruthfulness of discrimination in Japan against indigenous groups and ethnic minorities and instead claimed rampant discrimination and human rights violation against Japanese in foreign countries due to historical fabrication. In November of the same year they drafted another report for the 97th session under the title “The Real Circumstance of Anti-Japanese Thinking in the Republic of Korea.” Therein they claimed Korea’s distortion of history, anti-Japanese textbooks, and anti-Japanese actions by government, civil organizations, and citizens. The members of the women’s groups feel that they must keep alert and vigilant to protect against conspiracies that attack Japan’s honor and reputation around the world.

Another recent collective action at the beginning of 2019 to have their voices reach the government was encouraging members to fill out a form against the on-set of a new immigration policy allowing labor migrants to enter Japan. “The government is seeking comments from the public. Please raise as many voices as possible! EU immigration policy’s failure is clear. Why allow Japan to go through the same failure now?! Please raise your voices to protect Japan. It is the last chance!” (Soyokaze, 2019a). On their webpage, step by step details on how to fill out the form were provided, even highlighting in bright yellow the address where the form needs to be sent. In this manner, they encourage the women to be politically active on issues not only pertaining to the past but also on future matters that threaten to disturb their vision of Japan for the Japanese. The group’s very active blog shares information and exchanges comments concerning newspaper articles, “biased” media coverage, TV news programs, and opinions by journalists, academics, and commentators who they deem anti-Japanese.

They also criticize events by activists, scholars, and intellectuals shaming them for distorting facts and history, as well as promoting meetings and symposiums with themes they believe are pro-Japanese.

Another women’s group, Aikoku Josei no Tsudoi Hanadokei claims 1,474 official members as of 17 February 2019 (Hanadokei, n. d. a). Its focus is on women in their 20s to 40s, such as housewives and mothers who are not involved with a specific political party or organization. Oka Makiko and Fuji Machiko in 2010 initiated the group at a women-only demonstration called Japanese Mothers’ Parade dressed in Japanese kimono contesting various political agendas. They oppose, for example, husbands and wives retaining different family names (*fufū bessei*) claiming that this goes against the traditional Japanese family and also has a negative effect on their children (Oka, 2018, 181–185). A mission that has especially energized the group is seeking information about taxes and benefits related to foreign residents. In a nationwide campaign in 2010, they petitioned local municipal governments to conduct a thorough inquiry concerning foreigners who may be receiving child allowance support (*kodomo teate*) even when their children are living abroad in their home countries (Hanadokei, n. d. d). In 2011, the group launched a campaign requesting local governments to release the percentage of foreigners paying municipal taxes, as well as those receiving welfare benefits, and whether or not a difference exists in the application process for a Japanese and foreign applicant (Hanadokei, n. d. e). The women began performing in 2012 regular women-only “street oratory” by the popular landmark and meeting point at Hachiko Statue in Shibuya to warn the Japanese public of “Korean people’s lies” and to expose the “truth” of the comfort women that the Japanese mainstream media does not cover (Hanadokei, n. d. b). Members are encouraged to join subgroups, such as the music group Hanaoto (Flower Sound), which performs

wartime military songs, including at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. To appeal to potential supporters, the group's web page says, "What? Women performing wartime songs? Some people may be surprised by this, but we hope to change such impressions. Japanese wartime songs are not just about bravery, they also have lively energy. There are many beautiful lyrics. We want to show the wonderful wartime songs that many people are forgetting" (Hanadokei, n. d. c). Other subgroups include Wabunka-han (Japanese Culture Group) and Chimu Wahaha (Team of Japanese Mothers). Women can also join the oratory group to make speeches on the street. The patriotic women's groups initially may seem limited in scope and insignificant in number compared to dominant neo-nationalist groups such as Zaitokukai whose members are mostly men. However, the women's groups who have developed their own style of delivering a common platform play a crucial role. They are strategically useful allies and collaborators to the prominent organizations and their common cause to recruit women by presenting a softer, feminine, and inviting image.¹⁸ Furthermore, the women's groups provide a place for gathering women to exchange thoughts, ideas, and sentiments - reaffirming and reinforcing their version of love of country.

During Hanadokei's demonstrations, well-dressed members holding up homemade posters stand on a small red flower-shaped carpet as a stage and elicit attention, not by speaking forcefully or harshly but in a soft, easy to understand manner, smiling and gently engaging with passersby. By connecting a difficult topic to everyday women's work, speakers can more easily attract the attention of passersby. After all the media coverage of hate speech demonstrators and counter-protestors attempting to drown each other out, the general public has begun to look upon the demonstrations with disapproval as bothersome noise and chaos, causing unwanted discord to the surrounding community. The counter-

protestors, *kōgi no kauntā* or simply *kauntā*, receive information on upcoming counter demonstrations, for example, through Racism Monitoring Information Storage (*Reishizumu kanshi jōhō hokan-ko*) blog¹⁹ or through Twitter messages posted by Counter Racist Action Collective (C.R.A.C), *NoHate Nettowāku* (Network) in cities such as Kawasaki and Osaka, Tokyo No Hate, Norikoe Netto (international network to overcome hate), Anti-Racism Project. They also gather as individuals who attend for the first time or in groups.

The majority of the counter-protestors are in their 20s to 40s. Similarly, members of the patriotic women's groups also try to engage the youth. Kitahara points out, after observing a performance in May 2013 by Hanadokei members in Shibuya, that as a method to attract the attention of the youth, one young speaker began her speech by mentioning her recent purchase of an iPhone. Then from a nearby baby carriage, she brought out a panel with a picture of a Korean woman wearing the traditional Korean *chōgori* dress with a hole where the woman's face would be. The speaker stuck her face through the hole, next to which was written "Comfort women are liars," smiled and said loudly, "What would happen if the Japanese do not believe the Japanese military? The Japanese have not done such cruel things. The women became comfort women because they wanted to earn money. These women are just making noise because they want money. [...] A few of the woman's male counterparts surrounded her, taking her photograph and continuously chiming, "Sō da!" ("That's right!") (2014a, 56).

Hanadokei's street oratory, in contrast to the young girl's vitriolic speech in Tsuruhashi, reveals the effectiveness of soft-power tactics its members use drawing on their gender, performing Japanese womanhood and combining messages about traditional culture with political critique (figure 3):



Figure 3: Hanadokei's performance in Nakano, Tokyo. Source: Hanadokei 2015a.

Hanadokei is a regular women's group and we do not have any affiliation with other groups or political organizations. We are just ordinary people. Today's theme is about being cautious concerning Korean people's lies. [...] What is *ianfu* [comfort women]? [...] How well do you know the nearby country Korea? Is it *yakiniku* (grilled meat)? There is kimchi. Also there are the cosmetics. Korean makeup is famous. Famous celebrities appear in advertisements. But today, I want to talk about the comfort women problem. The truth about comfort women is hardly featured in newspapers and on TV. (Hanadokei 2015a)²⁰

The woman in this particular video asserts that the comfort stations were necessary to protect ordinary civilian women from rape and that the comfort women's claim of having been forced is untrue, because they were paid prostitutes who voluntarily accepted the job.



Figure 4: Hanadokei's performance in Nakano, Tokyo. Source: Hanadokei 2015b.

In another video, titled "Let's Enjoy! Japan's Traditional Events," several members of Hanadokei emphasized the importance of Japanese traditional culture (figure 4). Confronting counter-demonstrators who tried to drown out their speech, they expressed the increasing need to set Japan on what they feel is the right path, because the country had reached the point at which simply wanting to talk about Japanese traditional culture, they are accused of discrimination. They again used culture and tradition to attract passersby who might share similar sentiments. By gaining the sympathy of those who see only this particular message, the speakers succeed in portraying the counter-demonstrators as anti-Japan troublemakers and a menace, threatening the Japanese people's culture, tradition, and way of life. One speaker said,

Everyone, isn't it unfair and discriminatory that there is such a reaction when we want to talk about Japan's traditional events? Look at the title. It says, "Japan's Traditional Events." But when we want to talk about Japan's traditional events, they disturb us like this. [...] Japan is a great

(*subarashii*) country. We must not be influenced by Western culture. We are in danger of forgetting our own culture. But we as Japanese must celebrate the wonderful Japanese culture, Japanese traditional culture, and be conscious of our ethnicity. (Hanadokei 2015b)

Utilizing a traditional Japanese day of thanksgiving on November 23rd called Niinameasai [新嘗祭, ceremonial offering of newly harvested rice to the deities by the Emperor], when eating new rice-harvest (*shinmai*) marks the beginning of Autumn, a speaker attempts to catch the attention of the ordinary passerby. The politics of Trans-Pacific Partnership or TPP repeatedly broadcasted on TV on a daily basis is smoothly brought into her monologue, tapping into the populist sentiment of the plight of the Japanese farmers victimized by the cut-throat foreign competition that threatens their livelihood. The emphasis lies clearly in the important undertone that is the crux of the message - the true characteristics of a Japanese are having a grateful heart, being conscious of recognizing debt and obligation to the ancestors and their sacrifice, and having pride in a unique culture and tradition that is like no other. As women whose role as nurturers and keepers of culture and tradition is not questioned by society but rather expected, they feel it their duty to fight to maintain these important values during an ominous time when neighboring countries, particularly Korea, want to cast a dark shadow upon their “great” nation. And gathering courage and participating in these street oratories and rallies demonstrate their patriotism.

III. Patriotic Women and Their Cause: Defending Japan’s Culture, Tradition, and Nation

The “patriotic” women’s activism is arguably a distinct branch of the ultra-right’s festering sentiments of contempt and resentment that have been silenced by political correctness resulting from Japan’s post-colonial/postwar self-reflection, accompanied by what Onuma Yasuaki (2002, 601-602) refers to as “apology fatigue.” This resentment against the Korean comfort women is depicted by sociologist Yamamoto Meyu’s (2015) discussion with Japanese female repatriates from the former colonies of Manchuria and Korea in the aftermath of Japan’s defeat. Many of these women endured sexual violence from Soviet soldiers as well as Chinese and Koreans. She problematizes the way the theme of sexually violated Japanese female repatriates is utilized in the internet as evidence to stir up hostility against Koreans and Chinese with phrases such as “Japanese were also raped by them” (44-45). Some internet posts even add exaggerated stories of Koreans forcefully taking the women to the Soviet soldiers. Internet articles and discussion forums portray fictional graphic descriptions of abortions performed at Futsukaichi Sanatorium²¹ in Fukuoka Prefecture on these Japanese repatriates without anesthetic and fetuses buried under a cherry blossom tree (45). In one of Yamamoto’s visits to an organization for former repatriates she spoke with a woman who showed her an article in a conservative magazine that featured female repatriates. The article highlighted a sentiment shared by some of these women who expressed a sense of sadness concerning what they deemed as the Japanese government’s subservient and self-deprecating manner in coping with the Asian neighboring countries’ accusations concerning the comfort women.²² The woman who showed her the article felt grateful that the magazine shed light on them who have for so long been ignored (45). Yamamoto argues that such feelings of gratefulness towards the conservative revisionist magazine and the sympathy that it extends evoke antagonistic feelings towards the former comfort women

who spoke up and have received “special attention.” However, she points out that neither the xenophobic hate groups nor the historical revisionists have singularly influenced the women’s resentful and hostile view, but rather it is a combination of both factions (46). The persistent protests by the comfort women and their supporters further strengthen the connection between these two entities. Another crucial factor that reinforces exclusionist and revisionist coalition are the participation of patriotic women who advance their common agendas with feminine, softer tactics emphasizing “rational” “logical” evidence, as they try to awaken the emotion of love and pride for the nation within the general public.

Patriotic women’s group Nadeshiko Action does public outreach both at home and abroad by circulating “evidence” in Japanese and English. They write on their webpage that various documents prove their argument that the Korean comfort women became prostitutes on their own volition in pursuit of money, were treated well, and the Japanese government during the war even made efforts to protect women from malicious Korean brokers. “The term ‘comfort women’ refers simply to prostitutes in wartime. Koreans have long been promoting the ‘Discount Japan campaign’ with a false version of history that Japan abducted hundreds of thousands of Korean women and coerced them into sexual services for Japanese soldiers outside of Japan during World War II. This is, for practical and logical reasons, a fictitious version of history” (n. d.). This argument is also further reinforced in Hanadokei’s founder Oka Makiko’s new book *Nihon no teki o ima shiru tame no 150-mon 150-tō* (150 Questions and 150 Answers to Know Japan’s Enemy Now, 2018). In an attempt to reach younger women, she writes concise, easy to understand explanations for topics such as how Japan ought to be, Japanese spirit of bushido, reasons why a female not being able to ascend the imperial throne is not

discrimination against women, problems of education, Yasukuni shrine and its symbolic importance, the need for revising Japan’s constitution, Japan’s contributions to colonial Korea, opposing voting rights for foreign residents, threat of China, and more. In the section explaining the comfort women “problem” she writes that the women had the right to refuse customers and were free to go back to their country after paying off their debt but instead some chose to stay back and help soldiers and even married them, which proves that their lives as comfort women were not as bad as people are made to think (2018, 96-97). In this way, self-proclaimed patriotic women fall in line for the good of the nation and stand by the men who build and defend it. The romanticism of loyalty towards their nation and the men fighting on the battlefield risking their lives comes before allegiance or even empathy with those of the same gender who are victims of sexual violence, and thus they prefer to look the other way. Kitahara (2014b) also reflects upon the experiences of the Japanese female repatriates from the former Japanese colonies and their inability to raise their voices, writing, “Women who live in this country [Japan] perhaps find women who raise their voices to be unpleasant and abominable. The female repatriates who were sexually victimized remained quiet [because] this society is too weak in its environment to lend an ear to a woman who was victimized [and] to come together in pain for support. [...] In order to live alongside men, to live alongside the nation, a woman is supposed to hold her tongue” (103). Patriotic women, on the other hand, ironically feel that in order to defend the nation and the men who risked their lives to protect it, they as Japanese women must speak out. They point out that Japanese women were also victimized after the war but instead of showing weakness and portraying victimhood like the Korean comfort women, Japanese women drew upon cultural traits for strength to quietly bear their pain without complaint. A common theme that arises in their narratives is their pride of being

strong and displaying the Japanese character of “bushido” that defines strength, loyalty, honor, and obedience. Sanami Yūko’s *Joshi to aikoku* (Young Women and Patriotism) (2013) refers to this “unique” Japanese spirit that she considers to be the foundation of patriotism – politeness, kindness to others, valuing righteousness – qualities that one of her interviewees, a young woman, discovered to be the beauty of a true Japanese woman. Being proud to be born and raised in Japan, a country that the world respects, one should present the uniqueness of being Japanese inherently embedded with this spirit. Furthermore, the duty lies with women as mothers to nurture this Japanese spirit, to teach their children to love Japan. This is something that only women – not men – can do, because of the fact that they are women and mothers (233–257). Patriotic women’s strategy is not to silence the comfort women and their supporters but instead trigger doubt within the wavering minds, stir up empathy among those who share their sense of loyalty to the nation and pride in their tradition, culture, and identity, and evoke antipathy within the general public for the relentless demands for apologies and reparations.

“Strong” and “confident” women – characteristics that patriotic women pride themselves of – taking matters into their own hands are seen in Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) member of the Lower House Sugita Mio and Yamamoto Yumiko’s book *Josei dakara koso kaiketsu dekiru ianfu mondai* (The Comfort Women Problem that Can be Solved [by Us] Precisely Because We are Women) (2017). They claim that up to now men’s utterances concerning the comfort women issue has made the controversial problem worse because when men say that there is no proof of Japanese government’s direct involvement, they are severely criticized internationally, stirring up more opposition against Japan. Sugita and Yamamoto argue that as women who share the same vulnerabilities, they are in a better position to undermine the

credibility of the comfort women as mere victims. Also, when male activists and scholars supporting the comfort women criticize these female comfort-women deniers, they also risk being called misogynists. Sugita, an extremely vocal comfort-women denier, began making speeches at the United Nation’s Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Human Rights Committee, motivated by the current criticisms against Japan and the dissemination of what she believes to be dangerous and rampant anti-Japan movements abroad. She says “Recently, world-wide, it is propagated that Japan made women into sex slaves and that it is a crime that is equivalent to Nazi Germany’s holocaust. I want to declare in a loud voice that this is entirely contrary to the facts” (n. p.). The Anti Racism Information Database (ARID) compiled by a Japanese civic group called Anti Racism Information Center²³ that monitors hate-related statements by politicians ranked Sugita one of the highest for the frequency of racist and xenophobic comments (Ealey and Oka Norimatsu 2018, 1–2). Her co-author Yamamoto takes on the familiar “traditional” image of the ideal Japanese woman as her motivation to speak out. She writes, “As a *Yamato nadeshiko*, I want to connect the next generation to the splendor of Japan. With this thought, I am determined to fight the comfort women problem and its lies and fabrications that are now being spread around the world” (2017, n. p.). Patriotic Women’s groups have become an important and influential sector of the conservative movement.²⁴ Departing from the aggressive, confrontational-style of hate speech at the height of Zaitokukai rallies, the women’s groups make themselves visible by utilizing a combination of more subtle but more perpetual hate speech. Among their strategies, street activism and oratory continue to be important, but equally important is being internet savvy to reach a wider audience. They reach out through social network sites, blogs, online videos on popular sites such as Youtube,

Niconico dōga, and Channel Sakura/Japan Front Sakura, 2channel online forums, organizational websites, Twitter, and chat rooms. Furthermore, another extremely important method that the women’s groups are employing is lobbying politicians and like-minded civic group organizations nationally and internationally to widen their activism.



Figure 5: Young patriotic mothers marching with their children. [Source.](#)

The patriotic women’s groups believe that they are fighting to maintain Japan’s quintessential spirit, value, and virtue, propagating “correct” and “truthful” history and education for their children, instilling pride in their nation and its forefathers who died in battle, and helping set their country once again on the proper path. They feel their duty is to protect their country from groundless insults and defamatory claims and accusations, destructive foreign influence, progressive liberal views of history and education, biased and inaccurate media, left-wing politicians and their influence, and possible attacks from neighboring countries. Patriotic activism gives these women the opportunity to channel their time and energy into a cause that is meaningful to them, granting them a legitimate and authoritative voice and purpose in their community and society (figure 5). In their activism, they are in control and men play a supporting role. They legitimize

their actions by employing societally structured and encoded cultural understanding that a woman’s proper role is to work for the good of the family, community, society, and the nation. Under this premise, the props, stage, and scenery are set for a performance of “patriotic women.” Taking on the characteristics of “traditional” women, they engage their audience, employing what Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) calls the “myth” of a shared community of common culture, language, tradition, and values. Erving Goffman would describe the women’s groups’ performance as “ ‘socialized,’ molded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented” (1990, 45), and their script incorporates recognized values of society, reaffirming the community’s moral values. This “moral value” is reflected in John Stuart Mills’s concept of a “community of recollections,” which emphasizes national particularism and the uniqueness of a national polity (Matsuda 2015, 73). By being nationalized, patriotism is no longer just about commitment to public affairs but is redefined as a “historical and unique ‘national’ character” (73). Utilizing the shared rhetoric of “national character” while emphasizing Japan’s uniqueness that must be defended and protected, the women elevate themselves to the pinnacle of patriotism, which they feel legitimizes their speech. The feeling of righteousness, nurturing a sense of communion and community with those who share similar world-views, locates them not too far from other passionate grassroots activism and social movements. However, it is clear that in the name of “patriotism,” these women are seeking “moral” recognition while propagating discrimination, exclusion, and hate.

IV. Conclusion: Hate in the Name of Love of Country



Figure 6: Hanadokei’s signature banner.
Photo by the author.

On January 31, I observed Hanadokei’s kick-off street oratory for the year 2019 at Nakano Ward in Tokyo. A handful of well-dressed, middle-class women varying in ages from mid 30s to 70s, took the lead taking turns on the microphone. Two women in their 20s wearing a pant-suit watched from the background as they took notes and periodically whispered with several men in business attire who were connected to the women’s group. The men were alert in case trouble arose from counter-demonstrators. Other members held up the large bright orange sign with the phrase written in bold black, “Beware of Korean People’s” and the Chinese character for “Lies” prominent in thick red against a white background (figure 6). The oratory began promptly at 12 noon, just in time for a big crowd crisscrossing the open space in front of JR station and the long shopping arcade near the intersection to buy lunch. There were about forty casually dressed counter-demonstrators, some wearing dark sunglasses, equipped with signs reading “Discrimination is unforgivable” or “Fuck discrimination” and many shouted and snarled into their small bull-horns, “Go back,” “You idiots.” One man with short cropped hair and dark sun-glasses held up a mid-sized mirror with a phrase “An embarrassment to Japan” to each of the speakers as they spoke. Periodically shrill sirens went off from the counter-demonstrators further drowning out

the voices of two women in their late 30s who smiled as they earnestly spoke into the microphone saying that the Japanese must be aware of Korean people’s lies. An older member paced back and forth next to the speakers, holding up a sign with a picture of the comfort women statue in Seoul, Korea. A woman in her early 70s stood nearby rhythmically clapping as she chanted, “Hanadokei, Hanadokei!” When I looked over at her, she smiled and said, “*Sugoi, deshō!* (They’re great, aren’t they!).”

Immersed in the noise and unable to hear, I drew closer to the speaker. A woman in her 30s with a shoulder-length bob locked her gaze with mine as she held my attention. The sections where the women spoke and the counter-demonstrators rallied were separated by long plastic dividers. Ten or more police men stood between the two camps. Every once in a while as the atmosphere escalated, a couple of counter-demonstrators jumped the divide and approached the women, yelling at them to stop their hate speech. The women did not flinch and instead smiled. The cleverness of women in the front-lines became obvious. If one was not aware and did not understand what was being said, the counter-demonstrators seemed like the aggressors. Immediately, men in suits connected to the women’s group blocked them with their shoulders and upper torso as nearby policemen quickly approached. A man holding up the large orange sign wearing a bandana smiled cheerfully and waved at the counter-demonstrators. Periodically he blew them kisses and loudly professed his love saying, “I love you!” in English (figure 7). When the founder Oka Makiko also referred to as the “Madam” spoke, she began her speech by first thanking the counter-demonstrators calling them her “gallery.” She delivered her standard speech about the anti-Japan movement taking place and Korea’s blatant violation against Japanese rights by refusing to remove the comfort women statue in front of the Japanese

Embassy. Every once in a while she laughed and teased the counter-demonstrators saying, “Is that all you can say - ‘go back home, go back home’? What we are saying is not hate speech.” Other times in between her monologue she admonished the counter-demonstrators for not acting like Japanese. “Do you call yourself Japanese? This is not how real Japanese behave. Are you sure that you are really Japanese?” The counter-demonstrators, some holding up the yellow placard “*heito supīchi o yurusanai*” (No hate Speech) distributed by the *NoHate Nettowāku* (Network)²⁵ and others waving self-made signboards, also had women in their 30s and 40s speak into a loud speaker. One of the main speakers who introduced herself and the others as “citizen-protest activists” apologized for the noise and then warned: “Everyone, please excuse the ruckus, but the women behind the large sign called ‘Flower Clock’ are spreading extremely poisonous hate speech.” It was a battle of words between women.



Figure 7: Male supporters. Photo by the author.

A younger member of Hanadokei stood beside Madam speaking on the flower stage and played the role of the side-kick, listening for cues from the older woman’s well-rehearsed speech. Periodically she nodded her head or applauded and sometimes when Madam laughed, she also clapped her hands and laughed along at the crowd. Another member held up Madam’s newly published book. When a man who seemed like a journalist zoomed his camera on to the book Oka / Madam enthusiastically said, “Oh, yes take a picture. Hey, which [media] are you from?” As boisterous vocals on both sides drowned each other out, making their words incomprehensible, I watched the reaction of the passersby. The counter-demonstrators held up their individual signs, some facing the

pedestrians and others facing the speakers. They stood side by side as if blocking the view of the speakers from the passersby. As countless people zigzagged quickly through the busy intersection, some ignored the ruckus, others in pairs or in small groups, obviously entertained, snickered and giggled, but many also discretely cranked their necks to see what was on the other side of the counter-demonstrators. Acoustically they could not comprehend what was being said, but the bright orange sign with the catch phrase “Beware of Korean People’s Lies” infiltrated the senses, making a subtle and subliminal impact. The subject – “Koreans lie” – is named and thereby formed, overshadowing ordinary people’s commonsense. As a result, stereotypes and stigmas born from a historical reality of colonial subjugation are dangerously resurrected in the minds of the seemingly nonchalant passersby.

Unlike the 14-year-old girl at Tsuruhashi spewing out cruelties of racist exclusion whose speech was openly hateful, the patriotic women’s discourse treads a fine line between love for Japan and hate for those who criticize it. Perhaps, the on-set of the patriotic women’s groups’ activities may have given the young girl the courage to speak out. At the same time, her vitriolic speech and the wide-spread criticism that followed acted as catalyst for the women’s groups to employ softer “feminine” tactics. But as these women, wives, mothers, and grandmothers speak in patriotic defense of their nation, tradition, and culture, their seemingly innocuous words simultaneously consist of another message – exclusion and hate in the name of love.

Related articles

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Notes

¹ When Zaitokukai was first founded in late 2006, it had only 30 members. By March 2007 it had 1,000 and by April 2011, this number had grown to more than 13,000 nationwide (Ito 2014, 435). Zaitokukai members demonstrate at events such as information-gathering meetings for Japan’s military sexual slavery system by preventing people from entering. The group also demonstrates in support of expulsion of foreigners. In October 2009, they entered the Chōsen Daigakō (Korea University) in Tokyo, spouting hate speech. In December of that year, Zaitokukai members gathered outside Kyoto Chōsen Daiichi Shokyū Gakkō (Kyoto No. 1 Korean Elementary School) and conducted the now infamous protest in the Kyoto Chōsen School Attack Incident. Maeda Akira (2013b, 11-12).

² This recent Japanese form of ultra-right nationalistic movement, known as the Action Conservative Movement (*kōdō suru hoshu undō*), emerged from no-holds-barred racist and

xenophobic comments made by *netto uyoku* (internet right-wingers) on internet platforms. See Gill (2018, 175-176).

³ During this time in Japan, the threat of North Korea's missile tests bombarded the news on a daily basis.

⁴ See Nathaniel Smith's (2018, 238-241) extensive discussion on different and conflicting rightist activisms and factions in postwar Japan and the emergence of the Action Conservative Movement (ACM).

⁵ Takeshima (jp.) or Tokdo (kor.) is a cluster of islets located between Japan and Korea whose sovereignty continues to be contested, fueling nationalistic emotions and activism in both nations. See APJ articles: Dudden and Selden's (2005) [Takeshima/Tokdo and The Roots of Japan-Korea Conflict](#); Wada (2005) [Takeshima/ Tokdo - A Plea to Resolve a Worsening Japan-Korea Dispute](#).

⁶ Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (2013) lists the following English media reports: Japan Times, Mainichi Shimbun, Christian Science Monitor, Huffington Post, and Japan Daily Press. Other media outlets that covered the incident include: The Economist, CNN iReport, Canada's Digital Journal, The Vancouver Sun, TCA (Tribune Content Agency) Regional News Chicago, De Morgen (Belgium), Xinhua News Agency, Hong Kong's AM 730 and Taiwan's ETtoday, Daily Mail Online UK, and Al Jazeera America.

⁷ See [here](#) and [here](#) for viewer count. The English translation of the same video lists above 11,000 views on YouTube, and UK's Daily Mail Online reports more than 40,000. See [here](#) (retrieved April 23, 2019). The short clip can also be seen on YouTube Korea and Korea's 24 hour news channel YTN News.

⁸ The word *Chōsen* appears often in instances of hate speech in Japan. Written in Chinese characters (朝鮮), the word refers to the once-unified Korean Peninsula that was colonized by the Japanese (1910-1945). But written in Japanese katakana (チヨセソ), the word takes on a derogatory meaning that encompasses stereotypical ideas of filth, ignorance, poverty, under-handedness, mistrust, danger, and violence (Harajiri 1998, 14-15).

⁹ Zaitokukai's main objective is the abolition of the 1991 revision to the immigration law that granted Zainichi Koreans with special permanent resident status wider access to social benefits. Zaitokukai claims that such "unfair privilege" granted to Zainichi Koreans is discriminatory against other foreigners. See Gill (2018, 179).

¹⁰ The group's official name in Japanese is "Nadeshiko Akushon," however in their activities abroad they use the English equivalent "Nadeshiko Action." I will use the latter throughout the paper.

¹¹ Nishi Amane (1829-1897), a Meiji period intellectual who studied in the Netherlands and became an advisor to the Meiji government, defined the concept of patriotism as a "natural affection to the community rather than a rational evaluation of political institutions or a sense of duties of citizens" (as quoted in Matsuda 2015, 68). Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), another Meiji period intellectual who was heavily influenced by the writings and thoughts of contemporary Western political sociologists, used the term *hōkoku*, taken from the Chinese word for "reciprocate" or "to repay moral debts," which has come to mean "to repay the debt given by the country" (68). Fukuzawa was also aware, as his Western counterparts suggested, that patriotism could pose a danger by being used to nurture bias and hostile attitudes toward others who do not fit the clear delineation between one's own country and other countries (70-73).

¹² Despite strong objection from Japan and local Japanese residents, the comfort woman statue, a bronze monument of a young girl wearing the Korean dress *chōgori*, sitting next to an empty chair, was unveiled in Glendale, California, on August 2, 2013. Similar memorials were to follow in other parts of California, New Jersey, and New York. See Yamamoto and Culross (2013). In August 2014 a lawsuit against Glendale to remove the statue from the city park was dismissed.

¹³ Yamamoto, a daughter of a Japan's Self-Defense Force official, graduated from the elite Sophia University in Tokyo.

¹⁴ This is the total number of members in the main and sub-branches throughout Japan as of February 12, 2019. See Soyokaze (n. d. a).

¹⁵ Her real name is Suzuki Yukiko. See Yamaguchi (2018, 204).

¹⁶ The main branch of the Zainichi Korean ethnic organization Mindan is compiling a list of all Korean memorials and monuments throughout Japan to protect them. However, Soyokaze credits itself for the initiation of such a list, which they feel is an indirect result of the lawsuit.

¹⁷ The coalition's aim is to counter-argue claims of Japan's discrimination and injustice against Okinawans, Ainus, Zainichi Korean schools, foreign residents' right to suffrage, and comfort women, while emphasizing that the Hate Speech Act of 2016 is a violation of Japanese people's human rights to freedom of speech.

¹⁸ The appeal to women, especially young women, is evident in right wing-controlled media attempts to propagate historical revisionist agendas. For example, the controversial program *Nyūsu Joshi* (News Girl) employs young, attractive, well-dressed women for a conversation with a panel of mostly male conservative authoritative figures such as journalists, academics, and commentators who routinely misinform without any correction or counterargument. The show is produced by DHC Television Company, whose founder is notorious for racist statements against Zainichi Koreans. The show was broadcast by Tokyo Metropolitan Television Broadcasting Corp. (MXTV), but after a reprimand by The Broadcast and Human Rights Committee of the Broadcasting Ethics and Program Improvement Organization (BPO) for airing an episode that was deemed a human rights violation against Norikoe Netto's founder Shin Sugok, MXTV cancelled the program. DHC continues to air the program on the internet. See Shin (2019).

¹⁹ See the blog at [here](#).

²⁰ Previously these videos could be seen on YouTube. However, since early 2018, they have been removed and now Hanadokei's uploaded videos of their activities can be seen on its webpage or at [Niconico dōga](#).

²¹ Also known as Futsukaichi Rest Home, the clinic was established after WWII by Japan's Ministry of Welfare to conduct abortions and treat sexually transmitted diseases for Japanese female repatriates who were sexually violated. Lori Watt (2009) describes the discrimination that Japanese returnees from the colonies endured from their fellow countrymen in the aftermath of Japan's defeat and their return home. For example, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) ordered the Japanese government to build repatriation centers to sanitize the returnees in case of diseases they may bring into the country, further exacerbating growing stigma.

²² Lisa Yoneyama (2016) points out that one of the key factors within Japan's postwar, post-colonial redress involves the central role of the United States and its allies' continuing

influence on a large part of Asia and the Pacific region through neocolonization and the perpetuation of institutional and epistemic structures of the U.S. Cold War foreign policy (2016, 29-30, 148). The controversial 2015 agreement between Japan and South Korea concerning the “final and irrevocable solution” to the issue of comfort women through Japan’s one billion yen payment to South Korea is an example of U.S. intervention to further strengthen the geopolitically crucial trilateral security alliance. See Yoneyama’s discussion of Obama’s Asia-centered diplomacy and his 2014 visit to Japan and Korea with the intention of solidifying the region’s military-political-economic security vis-à-vis North Korea and China (2016, 174-175).

²³ The Anti Racism Information Center (ARIC) is led by Zainichi Korean Ryang Yong-Song and brings together academics, activists, and students to fight against discrimination and hate speech in Japan. It conducts surveys, provides consultations and education, and maintains a database identifying racist politicians. The website is in Japanese and English. See [here](#).

²⁴ Yamaguchi (2018) writes that utilizing the power of lobbying politicians, women’s groups such as Yamamoto’s Nadeshiko Action initiated a movement that led to 34 local municipalities to pass right wing resolutions on the comfort women issue and petitioning the Japanese government to propagate “correct” historical knowledge and history (206-207).

²⁵ Most active “NoHate” networks are *NoHate Kawasaki Shimin Nettowāku*, *NoHate Osaka Netto* and *Tokyo NoHate*.