

Sexual Abuse and Education in Japan

In the (Inter)National Shadows

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Chapter 3

In the shadow of male hysteria

International status anxiety

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International status anxiety

We greatly regret that the uniform of our court has been established following the Chinese custom, and it has become exceedingly effeminate in style and character.

(Imperial court proclamation from the Meiji era,
cited by Dalby, 2001, p. 72)

Previous chapters have shown that sexual abuse is an extensive and serious problem for Japanese society, especially in the field of education. If we ask why the situation is as negative as it is, why so many women remain silent about abuse, and why cultures of impunity have gone unchallenged for such long periods of time, it may be helpful to go beyond the conventional fields of sociology, intercultural studies, and social psychology. A number of academic disciplines can provide insights that are helpful in understanding the complex sets of interrelated causal factors that keep female victims of sexual misconduct silent and fearful of pursuing justice against their perpetrators. This and the following chapter rely on insights and data from the fields of feminist international studies and of political psychology to shed light on these issues. One of the functions of political psychology is to illuminate issues of national identity and how pressures to form a narrative of national identity are subject to diverse and interacting forces, both from within and outside of the state. Each state has some degree of international status anxiety as physical or psychic borders can never be secured absolutely. In the case of Japan, perhaps the effect of international status anxiety has been more far-reaching than it needs to be, and to explain this, we need to consider what Butler (1997) refers to as the “psychic life of power.” The following sections will show that while many nations can experience international status anxiety, the influence of powerful ultra-nationalist factions in Japan who are often exponents of male hysteria allows for that anxiety to have social effects that are widespread and persistent.

Historical contexts of international status anxiety

Hertz (1983) details historical instances (such as the French Revolutionary period and the political unrest the French capital in 1848) in which political threats and sexual threats – which may have only a shadowy or pre-conscious existence – become intertwined in the minds and emotions of men who panic in the face of perceived “emasculating” threats. In her analysis of contemporary Russian politics, Novitskaya (2017) helps to explain why the feminist and non-heterosexual members of the punk rock group “Pussy Riot” were punished so severely by the Russian authorities for “criminal” acts such as the performance of the song “Putin pisses himself.” The author argues that the stigmatization of non-heterosexual individuals in Putin’s Russia reflects the hysterical anxieties of Putin himself. His construction of the Russian state as patriarchal and collectivist and his displays of macho bravado originate in an individual case of male hysteria that has projected its hostilities onto the popular imagination, thus promoting a state where “bad feeling” against “othered” individuals, such as the members of “Pussy Riot,” has become widespread.¹ Novitskaya’s analysis alerts us to the influence of “overcompensating masculinism” (p. 302) and the desire to hide inner fears and vulnerabilities as a factor that characterizes many styles of male political leadership across a range of social and cultural contexts. Russia, Turkey, and Japan are identified by Zarakol (2011) as former imperial powers that share a set of common characteristics based on the nature of their incorporation into a (Western-based) international system of sovereign states. Each one of these three states can be seen as a “frustrated great power”² as each one experienced demoted status on entering the international system and each one could never feel the full recognition they desired, either from East or West. Each one displays, to some degree, “a thirst for and obsession with international power-prestige, which is a constant for the populations of these semi-peripheral, insider-but-outsider countries with imperial pasts” (Zarakol, 2011, p. 195). Chapter 4 helps explain why the obsession noted by Zarakol has remained constant and it shows that certain nativist right groups in Japan, who can be identified with the “discourse of the hysteric,” play an important role in perpetuating anxiety about international status among ordinary citizens. Nativist right members persistently refuse to accept semi-peripheral status and seek ways to restore the old order in which an authoritarian Japanese state with fixed social hierarchies lived without the anxiety of comparisons with other states and a diminished sense of national identity.

Stigmatization of “unmanliness” and of China as the source of an emasculating process are combined in a Meiji-era imperial proclamation regarding the style of clothing for “modern” Japanese men: “We greatly regret that the uniform of our court has been established following the Chinese custom, and it has become exceedingly effeminate in style and character” (Dalby, 2001, p. 72). Implicit here is the meaning that criteria of masculinity must now be formulated from a Western perspective rather than an east-Asian one.

By positioning itself as the privileged interpreter of this perspective, the writers of the imperial text discursively constructed Japan as the superior power in hierarchical relations with Asian neighbors. Hooper (1998, p. 36) elaborates on the gendered aspects of the Western perspective that Japanese mandarins aimed to control when he describes attempts by British imperialists during the nineteenth century to code “Oriental” men (including Japanese men) as feminine or unmanly. While these adscriptions may have contributed to the phenomenon of “male hysteria” in the Japanese context, it seems clear that it was an emasculatory fear that played the more significant role over time. This fear protested the phallic posturing of protagonists of the discourse surrounding “The English Gentleman” of the Victorian era. Hooper (p. 36) describes this “gentleman” figure, who could point to vast territorial gains to position himself at the top of the international hierarchy. Within the bounds of a “foundational fantasy” (cf. Žižek, 1997), the gentleman of the West could be constructed as “... a self-disciplined, naturally legitimate ruler and protector of morals ... He regarded his sexuality as overlaid and tempered by civilization.” This claim resonated with another fundamental belief of the imperialist worldview of the nineteenth century: the interests of colonizing Western powers were both rational and moral. Many nationalists in late-nineteenth-century Japan, whether of the “soft” or “hard” masculinity variety (see below), saw the idealized *bushi* or samurai warrior as already possessing these sought-after qualities, so that Japan was justified in her desire to rule over east Asia in place of Western “gentlemen.” From this perspective, the evidence provided by “comfort women” of Japanese soldiers as morally reprehensible individuals strikes at the heart of a cherished fantasy of the hysteric subject position. This subject position can be said, then, to show a fundamental contradiction in this respect as it both rejects membership of the Western system and the denigrating criteria imposed by the West while also attempting to conform to those same criteria. This is the background that helps to explain a deep reluctance to acknowledge morally execrable behavior by wartime Japanese soldiers.

Even social subjects who have never experienced profound trauma may be psychologically primed by an irrational fear of forces of emasculation. These fears are discernible in public conversations regarding Article 9 of the constitution, which affirms the state’s pacifist stance and firm intention never to use force to settle international disputes. In recent years, some protagonists of political conservatism have campaigned to abolish the article. Suzuki (2015, p. 100) notes that the debates “were intimately linked to a persistent fear that Japan had a weak or subservient identity that allowed it to be dominated by foreign powers.” All social subjects live in the shadow of meaninglessness and organic disintegration and this is a cause of anxiety. A sense of identity (both individual and collective) is essential, therefore, in warding off these ontological threats. Individuals in the discourse of hysteric subjectivity keenly protest the ominous shadow of meaninglessness and find ways to dampen the sense of alienation it induces. The unfolding of this discourse in a patriarchal or masculinist cultural milieu increases the likelihood that this

discourse will be adopted from the subject position of “man.” Obsessions surrounding this subject position may lead to male hysterical subjectivity, which seeks to identify itself with a definitive source of meaning, such as the construct of “male honor.”³ In their account of “masculinity, and the fear of emasculation in IR theory,” Ashworth and Swatuk (1998) show that this fear can express itself in feelings of anxiety about society and the state losing their “masculine” traits (however these are defined) and the effect on the country’s interactions with other states. In her account of right-wing factions in Japan, Zarakol (2011, p. 200) asserts that “The Japanese right ... believes that Japan was robbed of its sense of national pride and emasculated by a hypocritical West ...” Emasculation fears are also relevant in consideration of how masculinist Korean men interpreted issues surrounding military “comfort women.” In post-war Korean society, men required former military “comfort women” to remain silent. Writing on the sexual violence of patriarchy, Ehara (1992, p. 30) describes a mentality that asserts that “the women of a nation belong to the men of that nation, and the rape of a country’s woman by those of another nation stains male honor ...” This “staining of male honor” invokes patriarchal dread of emasculation, which is relevant to explorations of “comfort women” issues, both in Korea and in Japan. As we shall see later, the animus of protest against perceived emasculation contributes to the refusal of conservative revisionists in Japan to acknowledge evidence regarding historical crimes of human rights abuses and atrocities. On the contrary, for these revisionists, the invasion and penetration of Korean territory and the sexualized subjugation of Korean women was their retrieval of the “lost object,” a powerful performance of “hard masculinity,” and a source of macho pride. However, by refusing to acknowledge or apologize for historical crimes, Zarakol (2011) shows that Japan alienates its Asian neighbors and so deprives itself of the more influential and higher status role it seeks within the international system. Following Butler (1997), who underlines the role of melancholy in psychic structures, we can also understand the protest of the nativist right as an attempt to mourn the loss of national identity which occurred with incorporation into an unfavorable international system. Their protest is perennial because they are mourning a psychic wound that can never be fully healed as the original integral identity they idealize never truly existed. Rather than reflecting conditions peculiar to Japan, this is the condition of all human organisms who have been transplanted into a fixed, alienating symbolic system (cf. Lacan, 1977). The following sections show that the animus of the nativist right has other negative influences, such as the (conditions of possibility for) reporting of sexual abuse.

Male hysteria and “hard” styles of masculinity

Zarakol (2010, p. 17) invites readers to ponder the question of Japan’s ongoing “quest for status” and its resistance to apologizing for historical crimes against “comfort women.” As mentioned, “international status

anxiety” can refer to the anxiety surrounding the quest adverted to by Zarakol. She refers to the shame that Japan felt in being forced to sign unequal treaties and to enter the international system later than other states that did not have to prove their credentials to “join the club” as Japan did (cf. Auslin, 2004). Many will wonder how and why a complex of emotions and beliefs that shaped policies in the late 1800s could still be influential today in the early twenty-first century. The cataclysmic defeat that was experienced by Japan in August 1945 provides part of the answer, but the dynamics and categories that framed that defeat were established decades previously. One possible avenue to explore contemporary resistance to acknowledgment of historical crimes regarding “comfort women” is to frame the relevant issues in terms of male hysteria. More specifically, the puzzling refusal of political leaders to acknowledge evidence regarding historical crimes can be understood through recourse to a Lacanian perspective on hysteria (Lacan, 1977; Bracher, 1993). Male hysteria involves the intense expression of complaint, protest, and resistance among those who often take up a (hyper)masculine subject position. The shame that Zarakol refers to is in fact the shame of men who fear being uncoded as men (cf. Weber, 1998, p. 152). Biological females can also identify with the subject position, “man,” and with male hysterical subjectivity. Indeed, a culture of masculinism may prompt them to do so. These issues are hinted at in a contribution from study participant Akiko [Interview No. 11] regarding LDP lawmaker, Mio Sugita: “It is not surprising that Sugita’s thoughts become extremely manly to survive in a political world, which is male supremacist.” Similar evaluations have been made of another prominent LDP representative who has a poor record on issues of gender, Takaichi Sanae. Novelist Nakajima Kyoko referred to her as an “honorary man” while journalist Mochizuki Isoko commented, “She’s more like a middle-aged man wearing a woman’s mask” (Brasor, 2021). Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fraser (2019, p. 2) place these issues in a neo-Marxist, global society perspective by suggesting that, as long as structural income inequality dominates global economies, it matters little if “it is a woman not a man who busts their union, orders a drone to kill their parent, or locks their child in a cage at the border.”

From a feminist perspective, which sees war itself as essentially criminal and irrational (cf. Ueno, 2004), many national heroes around the world may be re-imagined as participants in male hysterical subjectivity. On the level of the psyche, this subjectivity has found full and toxic expression in hate speech, threats and acts of violence, assassinations of perceived opponents, and acts of self-immolation. In fact, a psychosocial feminist perspective suggests that the male hysteria of extremists who rejected Japan’s incorporation into the international system with its concomitant acceptance of demoted status has found expression in a long series of male hysterical violent acts that promoted anxiety within Japanese society. For example, in the late 1850s, the Edo government representative who negotiated an unfavorable treaty with the United States was assassinated by a group of outraged samurai (Buruma, 2003, p. 16). Later, in 1873, Saigō Takamori and other political leaders left

the government to protest the decision not to carry out punitive expeditions to Korea. During the debates, in a possible demonstration of male hysterical subjectivity, Saigō proposed that he travel to Korea, where he would insult his hosts sufficiently to provoke assassination, thus justifying the invasion by Japanese Imperial Army forces (Ravina, 2004, p. 184). During the 1873 *Seikanron* (debate on punitive expeditions to Korea), violent threats were made against parliamentarians who opposed military action on the Korean peninsula to ensure that due respect be paid to the emperor and his representatives. In both cases, two territories, the home territory and the nearest geographical neighbor, were actualizing, on the level of the psyche, what Weber (1998, p. 151) refers to as “the lack of a feminine object.” Historically, Japan has been encoded in legend and myth as originating from the parents of a sun goddess, *Amaterasu ōmikami* (the great deity illuminating the heavens), who is venerated as the ancestress of the Imperial Household of Japan (Hadland Davis, 1912). To verify the conservative nationalist identification of Japan with the Imperial Household, one can consider the statement of a leading LDP political leader, Ishiba Shigeru: “When the Imperial household ends, that is when Japan ends” (Ishiba Shigeru, 2017).

During the 1930s, threats of and actualized assassination attempts (often successful) by army officers against politicians who stood in the way of Imperial Army plans to invade and possess new territories in Asia became frequent (cf. Henshall, 2012). In 1960, Asanuma Inejirō, a left-wing politician who promoted an alliance with China as a co-equal partner with Japan, was assassinated on live television by a young ultra-nationalist, Yamaguchi Otoyā. While some far-right ideologues would not have objected to Asanuma’s stance of greater security independence from the United States, all of them vehemently opposed his support for China as a co-equal partner, rather than a subordinate of Japan. The assassin, who took his own life after his arrest, was revered as a martyr by some extremist nationalists who held a commemoration ceremony on the 50th anniversary of the crime in 2010 (Newton, 2014). The commemoration was held in Hibiya Park, where Yamaguchi had carried out the assassination in 1960. The message that Yamaguchi’s actions were still laudable and repeatable in contemporary Japan cast a sinister shadow over those who idealize a society without violence. Yamaguchi was also lauded by the famous writer Mishima Yukio who committed *seppuku* (ritual suicide) at the Eastern Headquarters of the Japanese Self Defence Forces in 1970. He failed in his attempt to inspire insurrection by the army cadets who did not see Mishima as “A ‘man of anger’ who would fight for the recognition and salvation of the *yamato damashii*/spirit of Japan” (Frentiu, 2010, p. 71). A further example of the dangers posed by *uyoku dantai* (right-wing groups) to Japanese citizens is seen in the assassination attempt against the mayor of Nagasaki, Motoshima Hitoshi, in 1990. In 1988, the mayor suggested that Emperor Hirohito had responsibility for Japanese involvement in WWII, though he accepted that the emperor had come to play a helpful role under the constitution of Japan (Gamble & Watanabe, 2004, p. 295). Immediately, the Liberal Democratic Party

Prefectural Committee demanded a retraction of the statement and removed Motoshima from his role as an LDP advisor. Pressure on the mayor mounted when, within days, large numbers of *uyoku dantai* filled the streets of Nagasaki. Citizens were deafened by the sounds of propaganda trucks blaring out their message of hate for the mayor and their “prayer” for divine retribution. A man tried to break into the mayor’s office to set it alight. In early 1990, a member of an extremist nationalist group shot the mayor in the chest at close range as he was leaving City Hall, but Motoshima survived the assassination attempt. “The shooting sent a chill through Japan, a seeming echo from the 1930’s when Tokyo was thrown into near-anarchy by a wave of assassinations by right-wing, military officers” (Sanger, 1990). The message was clear: extremist nationalists would use violence against those individuals whom they deem unpatriotic. If a mayor could be targeted, then ordinary citizens might be even more vulnerable. The more often ideological extremists act out their positionings from the discourse of the hysteric in an extreme manner, the less likely are ordinary citizens to take actions that might draw their (negative) attention. It should be noted, also, that the vision of Japan cherished by Mishima Yukio and his predecessors is one in that women can never hope for more than a symbolic and subordinate role. The long history of targeted destruction of human life by exponents of male hysteria from Japan’s ideological extremists still casts a shadow over participants in political life. For women who hope for support in the aftermath of sexual violence, the threat of psychological violence on social media platforms may prove equally or even more threatening than the threat of physical abuse.

One helpful source of insights on how the gender ideals of domestic culture and foreign policy have had a symbiotic relationship in Japan for many years is found in the work of Mikanagi Yumiko (2011). In her analysis of masculinity and Japan’s relations with the outside world, Mikanagi (2011, p. 19) does not rely on the concept of “hegemonic masculinity” (cf. Connell 2000; Connell & Wood, 2005) as the concept is grounded on observations derived from Western, mainly Anglo-American, cultural contexts and it focuses on global rather than local variation. While it is true that the gender ideals of hegemonic masculinity influence constructions of gender roles in Japan, Mikanagi (p. 3) prefers to focus on the style of masculinity that dominates locally over a certain period. This “dominant masculinity” is “the set of symbols, attributes, behaviors, lifestyles, and values agreed upon as manly and ideal by large numbers of people in a given society.” Mikanagi identifies five different types of dominant masculinity in the history of Japan since the late 1800s, all of which are strongly influenced by the political elite and its commitment to the maintenance of the present socio-economic order. The second half of the nineteenth century was the period when the “cult of domesticity,” by which a strict demarcation was made between men’s place in the public sphere and women’s place in domestic settings, reached its peak in the West, and this perspective of extreme gender subordination was part of the Western mindset that was embraced by early enthusiasts of “modern” thinking in Japan. The discursive power of the “cult of domesticity” is still

invoked today in Japan and in the West, when men sexually harass women in workplaces, universities, and other locales, so as to force women to return to their “natural” domestic sphere (cf. McKinnon, 1979). Each masculinist culture produced masculinist political figures, but those figures also promoted, sustained, and at times initiated the models of masculinity that would come to dominate social and cultural contexts. While the first style of dominant masculinity, *hai kara* (high collar), (an idealization of the Western “gentleman” as seen from a Japanese perspective) reflected and reinforced a cooperative foreign policy, two succeeding styles of dominant masculinity did the opposite. The first was *ban kara* (barbarian collar), a rough or uncouth style of masculinity that evoked samurai ideals and which dominated from the mid-1890s to the early 1900s. The second style became prominent during the 1930s. The “men as soldiers” style of masculinity dominated more and more throughout Japanese society until gaining complete domination during the early 1940s when the military controlled all political, economic, and social life in Japan (Mikanagi, 2011, p. 29). This gender style idealized samurai warriorship and promoted social relations that were competitive, hierarchically fixed, and militarized. Mikanagi (p. 115) notes that “One of soldier masculinity’s main characteristics was misogyny and the exclusion of women from men’s domain.”

It seems likely that male hysterical subjectivity underlay *ban kara* and soldier styles of masculinity for some exponents at least. After the Asia-Pacific War, a less belligerent model, the *sarariiman* (salaryman) style marked a return to cooperative foreign policy and the prizing of rational or literary qualities over martial qualities in men. Mikanagi notes, however, that the *sarariiman* model no longer remains dominant and the relationship between masculinities and foreign policy orientations remains in flux. She completes her work by asserting that nobody knows how or which competing discursive forces of the future will succeed in establishing their norms as the dominant style of masculinity. Each of the five styles of masculinity identified by Mikanagi can be categorized in terms of their proximity to the extremes of “hard faction” or “soft faction” masculinity (following sections). “Hard faction” masculinity can be aligned with the “masculine ethno-nationalist ethos” described by Benesch (2014) and Coates (2020), a re-invention of perceived samurai ideals that established itself as a gender ideal for Japanese men in the early twentieth century. The hyper-militarism and exaggerated masculinities of the samurai, which were idealized by “hard factions,” influenced the *Minpō* (Civil Code) of 1898, which idealized a family structure of pronounced gender subordination (Burns, 2005; Ueno, 1987). Militaristic and misogynistic elements of samurai culture found expression in *kōha* (hard faction) masculinity in the elite schools of imperial Japan. In terms of gender and sexuality, Mikanagi (2011, p. 32) notes that these styles of masculinity rejected the “softness” that was implicit in romantic relationships with women. They prized “Sexual stoicism, socialization among men, and rejection of fraternization with women ... the same men may boast about the number of women they have bedded. Taken to an extreme, some *kōha* men

may display misogyny.” A reasonable assessment of this complex of meanings might be that such a culture of masculinity encourages men to sexually objectify women rather than form intimate relationships with them. Devaluing women and communities of predominantly female membership is likely to promote high levels of sexual harassment of women who inhabit or try to inhabit traditionally male spaces.

A number of scholars have pointed out the similarities between contemporary cases of *ijime* (psychological harassment and bullying) and practices that are associated with pre-war Japanese militarism. Kawai (1996) and Azuma, Nada, Ogi, and Yazaki (1986) write of systematic bullying in the military that would target the male recruit who did not sufficiently conform to hegemonic norms of masculinity and who was seen as a threat to the *esprit de corps* of the unit. The basic military unit itself is relatively powerless within a hierarchical structure. It claims its stake to viability by its act of conformity to the present order and in the process, the group solidifies its own hierarchical structure for each member. Interventions from outside to appeal to individuals within the group have little chance of success as the fundamental problem, which is the rigidly hierarchical nature of social institutions on a broader level, remains unchanged. While the militarized style of masculinity that dominated society during the 1930s did not continue to dominate in post-war Japan, various influences include a militarized style of group bullying within elementary and high schools which often functions with the majority of classroom students as bystanders. The links between politicians and extreme nationalists who promote “hard faction” masculinity in contemporary Japan may have a chilling effect on two groups that are relevant in discussions of sexual harassment. One is school authorities who are loath to initiate policies that draw the ire of nativist right groups. The other is women who have been targeted for unwanted sexual attention. They are much less likely to speak out about their ordeal when they believe that powerful groups in society will be unlikely to give them a fair hearing. In both cases, individuals are held back from taking appropriate action in particular situations due to an anxiety that has its ultimate source in the male hysteria of powerful factions outlined in this chapter.

An example of male hysteria over “comfort women” issues can be discerned in events in California in 2013. In spite of opposition from the Japanese consulate in Los Angeles, citizens of the city of Glendale supported the Korean American Forum of California (KAFC) when they unveiled a “statue of peace,” a bronze statue of a “comfort woman,” which is intended to honor the memory of women who were forced into sexual slavery during the Asia-Pacific War. 40% of citizens in Glendale are of Armenian heritage and many see Japan’s denials of evidence regarding “comfort women” as similar to the denials of evidence by the Turkish government regarding the “Armenian genocide” during World War I (Yamaguchi, 2020a). The “comfort women” memorial was unveiled in a park in front of the city library and close to an installation titled “Landscape of memory: Witnesses and remnants of the Armenian genocide.” The event might not have gained much

public attention had it not been for the disproportionate reaction of ideological extremists. They claimed that children of Japanese heritage in the Glendale area had been bullied in school due to the presence of the statues. No evidence was ever presented to support the assertion, either in lawsuits in the United States or in Japan where the politically left-leaning newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* was sued by various ultra-right organizations. They claimed that the newspaper had damaged Japan's international reputation with its coverage of "comfort women" issues, thus facilitating the construction of "comfort women" memorials around the world. Yamaguchi notes that all of the lawsuits "emphasized the damage to Japan's reputation in the international community and Japanese people's great suffering in the United States" while some demanded written apologies to be published by the Asahi newspaper company in major US and UK newspapers (Yamaguchi, 2020a, p. 9; 2020b, p. 47). Three Japanese lawmakers visited the Glendale area on a "fact-finding mission" and lawmakers in the Diet spoke out in defense of Japanese-American citizens who were being bullied because of "peace statues." Evidence of maltreatment was not produced, however, by the small, historical revisionist organization Global Alliance for Historical Truth (GAHT), which filed lawsuits in the federal court and later in the California state court against the city of Glendale. They lost their lawsuits in the district and appeals court, and the California State court ordered them to pay damages. In February 2017, the Supreme Court denied their petition to review the circuit court ruling. Surprisingly, Japanese officials from the government of the third-largest economy in the world found time to file an *amicus curie* brief to the US Supreme Court to support GAHT's petition. Taken in its entirety, then, the reaction to the inclusion of a "comfort women" statue near a small "landscape of memory" installation in Glendale can be seen to typify an incipient male hysterical subjectivity, particularly in the desire of the nativist right to demonstrate authorship power of control over the narrative of how Asian women's bodies were used in the past and in their over-reaction to a perceived emasculating slight.

Japan's self-image shadowed by male hysterical subjectivity

Mikanagi (2011) notes that over the course of Japanese history since the foundation of the state, one constant theme can be discerned: a preoccupation with the country's hierarchical position on the international stage. The extent to which this preoccupation is affecting contemporary gender relations seems worthy of closer examination. Speeches and comments from Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers from the 1890s right up to the early twenty-first century illustrate a preoccupation with the objective of achieving equal status with Western powers. There is a determination, especially among the more conservative political factions, for Japan to gain a more pre-eminent place on the world stage, as would be demonstrated, for example, by a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. To achieve this goal, it would be necessary for Japan to be able to provide soldiers to fight in UN military

intervention campaigns. However, countries such as South Korea and China, which bore the brunt of Japanese belligerence during the Asia-Pacific War, have expressed deep concern about the possibility of Japanese soldiers going to other countries to engage in military campaigns. They fear, perhaps, that militarists in the shadows would extend the supposedly peaceful purpose to achieve more nefarious objectives, as was the case in Manchuria in the early 1930s with the inauguration of the puppet *Manchuko* state. Drawing attention to disputes about historical crimes, such as “comfort women” atrocities, will hamper efforts to gain sufficient trust from foreign nations to allow Japanese soldiers to fight abroad. Thus, the resistance against comprehensive admittance of wrongdoing regarding “comfort women” will likely remain intense as will the antipathy toward women who are associated with “comfort women” albeit in shadowy or ambiguous terms. Zarakol (2010) notes that Japan could gain much on the international stage if it were to take responsibility for historical crimes and to educate young people about wartime atrocities, such as the sexual slavery involved in the “comfort women” system. The reluctance to take full responsibility remains puzzling. She accounts for this reluctance, ultimately, in the shame that Japan was forced to experience when it was labeled as an “uncivilized” nation upon initial entry into international society during the late 1800s. Still today, retractions of apologies to “comfort women” are rooted in attempts to achieve “ontological security” by rejecting Western society’s negative labeling of Japanese identity (p. 20).

The relationship with the other is vital in the formation of a sense of national identity – as Oguma (2002) asserts regarding the Japanese historical context, “The discourse on the self-image of the Japanese in modern Japan was inseparable from the discourses on the West and on various Asian countries and on the minorities within Japan herself” (xviii) – and the anxiety that is induced by the perceived lack of recognition from the other may be intense. In more recent history, events surrounding the first Gulf War in 1990–1991 may constitute an example of male hysteria in the Japanese context. In March 1991, the Kuwaiti government took out a thank-you advertisement in the *Washington Post* to thank governments that had supported efforts for their liberation. Even though Japan had contributed 13 billion yen to support the coalition efforts, Japan was not mentioned in the advertisement’s list of coalition countries. Mikanagi (p. 94) notes that this incident “is often referred to as a *torauuma*/trauma and it lingers in the minds of policymakers even today ... policymakers attributed the lack of appreciation by the international community to Japan’s inability to send troops overseas.” Mikanagi also notes that the financial contribution made during the military conflict went to the US government for their use, and the Kuwaiti government may not have been aware of the Japanese contribution. In addition, Japanese policymakers failed to fully explore the possibility of sending in personnel such as diplomats or well-placed intermediaries during the military campaign. If this avenue had been explored, Japan could well have been included in the final thank-you list, and its omission from the list was not necessarily as significant as was

supposed. The policymakers' knee-jerk reaction was that only a military force could provide a contribution that would gain international appreciation and political leaders such as Abe Shinzō (2006, p. 136) were still writing of their profound disappointment at not being included in the *Washington Post* thank-you advertisement 15 years later. Mikanagi notes that the gendered impact of the incident was to further weaken the popularity of the *sarariman* model of masculinity, which idealized the white-collar male company worker as both "corporate warrior" and exemplar of rational, economic prowess. Mikanagi (pp. 96–98) notes a rise, from the late 1990s of a new discursive thread in Japanese society, especially from the Japanese right, which harshly critiques young people either as being "idle, isolated, and purposeless" or "violent, dangerous, and uncontrollable." Chapter 4 makes connections between this discursive strand and Kinsella (2014, p. 191) who writes of overheated media and political sources that stigmatized schoolgirls who engaged in *enjo kōsai* (compensated dating). The author notes that "The narrative of prostitute schoolgirls willingly selling their clothes or bodies to suited salarymen [who are] in turn also stereotyped as institutional soldiers, interacted ... with shocking disclosures in the news about the sexual slavery of 'comfort women'." Clearly then, these feverish denunciations of the schoolgirls' behavior helped to distract attention away from news stories regarding historical crimes against "comfort women." Later sections of this chapter elaborate on the significant implications of these public conversations in the context of justice for victims of sexual abuse.

Some of the statements on "comfort women" made by prominent political leaders reflect a masculinist gender ideology that ignores evidence of historical crimes. While, during the early 1990s, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kōno Yōhei had acknowledged the role of the Japanese government in sexual exploitation during the "Comfort Women" era, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō effectively reversed this policy with public statements in March 2007 about his belief that "comfort women" had not been coerced to work in "comfort stations" during the Asia-Pacific War (Joyce, 2007). March 2007 was also the month in which Abe joined with other conservative revisionists to alter the "Fundamental Law of Education" so as to promote "love of country" in schools. While the sentiment is not blameworthy in itself, Chapter 2 showed that the assertion of nationalistic discourse in educational contexts tends to weaken the likelihood of history lessons that acknowledge the evidence on historical crimes such as sexual violence in Nanjing in 1937 or the "comfort women" system. Ueno (2004) elaborates on copious amounts of historical evidence that indicate that large numbers of women were coerced into prostitution under the "comfort women" system. Yet in 2007, Abe told reporters that credible evidence of coercion by the Japanese military did not exist (No government coercion, 2007). In 2013, Abe opined that it might not be correct to say that Japan was guilty of "aggression" toward other countries during World War II. He suggested that he might not support the wording of an apology to "comfort women" that had been made by a previous Prime Minister in 1995 (Japan WWII "comfort women," 2013).

Since then, the ruling LDP has basically denied the need for official apologies and has adopted nostalgic social policies that idealize the “Beautiful Japan” of the past, which must be protected from its present-day detractors. While in power at an earlier date, Abe wanted local mayors to determine which history textbooks are used in public schools. This has caused high levels of concern that historical evidence about sexual violence and other atrocities in Nanjing in 1937 would be ignored in favor of misleading accounts of Japanese history (Chang, 2012; Fackler, 2013). However, on the international stage at least, the Japanese government has not been able to prevent the widespread recognition of the Nanjing Massacre. When China submitted relevant documents in 2014 for inclusion in UNESCO’s “Memory of the World Register,” the government failed in its efforts to prevent inscription, which occurred the following year (Memory, 2015; Mizohata, 2016 p. 8). Neo-Conservative groups such as the *Atarashii kyōkasho o tuskurukai* (Japanese Group for Orthodox History Education) insist that the oral testimony of former “comfort women” cannot be trusted. Only documentary sources will suffice (Ueno, 2004, p. 110). This insistence may lessen the resolve of victims of sexual harassment to pursue justice when the main evidence they can offer is their own testimony. The social atmosphere that is created by the victories of neo-conservative groups to suppress historically accurate textbooks also needs to be considered.

Conceptual connections have been generated between issues surrounding “comfort women” and the issues surrounding young women who sell sexual favors to older men in a phenomenon known as *enjo kōsai* or “compensated dating.” This association of ideas seems implicit in an analogy made by conservative social commentator Sawada Kantoku (1997, p. 25). He suggested that by funding US military bases in Japan, the country was surrendering its moral integrity and posed the rhetorical question, “Isn’t Japan America’s *enjo kōsai* partner?” In her work “Schoolgirls, Money, and Rebellion in Japan,” Kinsella (2014, p. 7) analyzes the phenomenon of the “cult of schoolgirls” with a particular focus on *enjo kōsai*. Kinsella notes that the number of young women involved in this practice was considerably smaller than many weekly magazine and newspaper articles suggested (p. 13) and Leheny (2006, p. 95) points out that only “a tiny percentage of Japanese schoolgirls” engaged in *enjo kōsai*. He analyzes *enjo kōsai* issues in the context of debate during the 1990s regarding sex tourism for child prostitution and the availability of pornographic materials in Japan that depicted mainly children from backgrounds of extreme poverty in Southeast Asia. International opprobrium prompted the adoption of laws against the sexual exploitation of children. However, these domestic laws seemed designed to have the eradication of *enjo kōsai* in mind more than the elimination of sexual abuse by groups of male tourists (Leheny, 2006, p. 92).

Mackie (2005, p. 1) notes that researchers have succeeded in moving debates about “comfort women” and related issues out of the academy and into the field of “mass media and the spaces of civil society.” But subsequent events, especially under the second Abe administration, have tempered the optimism

of activists who witness persistently large numbers of victims of sexual abuse remain silent for fear of labeling as a *bigaisha-buru* (fake victim). The struggle between competing historical narratives will continue for some time to come while the need for a consistent, stable narrative remains (cf. Kinnvall, 2004). Concurrently, targets of sexual abuse and gender harassment continue to lack confidence that the rule of law will be applied in their favor and that perpetrators will be punished. While it is true to say that, for centuries, Japanese women lived in societies that were defined by “the law of the father,” it was still possible for them to resist, subvert, or even usurp that law and exercise a considerable amount of agency in their lives. It was only with the construction of the nation-state project in the late nineteenth century that the law of the father was formally codified in Japanese society in a way that aimed at constraining female agency within the symbolic positionality of “daughter” (cf. Copeland & Ramirez-Christensen, 2001). The “master narratives” of Japanese identity and its constructions of self-image for domestic and international audiences remain infused with the preoccupations of male hysteria and have not yet been replaced by new narratives of gender equality that encourage female victims of sexual violence to come out of the shadows.

International status anxiety and language

Anxieties regarding the tension between indigenous and Western identity pressures are evident, also, in the naming practices of certain organizations. In 2011, conservative revisionists set up the organization “Japanese Women for Justice and Peace” to show that former “comfort women” were not reliable witnesses and to hold counter-demonstrations against street rallies in support of “comfort women.” Yamaguchi (2020b, p. 48) notes that the name “Japanese women for Justice and Peace” seems to resonate with universal liberal values and notions of female solidarity. This is misleading. One face is being presented for Western consumption, and another for domestic audiences in Japan where the organization is called “*Nadeshiko Action*.” The word *nadeshiko* refers to the “dianthus, a pink flower similar to a carnation, used as a metaphor for traditional Japanese femininity” (Yamaguchi, 2020b, p. 48). The organization was founded by Yamamoto Yumiko, who was also a vice-president and secretary of *Zaitokukai* (*Zainichi tokken o yurusanai shimin no kai*) [Association of citizens against special privileges for *Zainichi*, i.e., people of Korean heritage in Japan]. The close links between the two organizations could contribute to the dissemination of an association of ideas in public perception between former “comfort women” and foreigners seeking “special privileges.” A typical Japanese citizen will know only that an organization of women set up to discount the oral testimony of former “comfort women” is named after a flower that personifies traditional Japanese femininity, with the implication that the former “comfort women” in question do not live up to the high standards of a virtuous style of feminine gender. On a more fanciful level, one can imagine busy instructors in language classrooms who support feminist values recommending to their

students a women's organization that is working for justice and peace (based on their quick reading of the organization's title), not realizing that the English language name is simply a screen for a more sinister reality.

One key argument in the following sections is that classrooms where Japanese students study Western languages with foreign instructors are loci of international status anxiety and that this affects behaviors, such as survey responses on sexual harassment issues. Attention to foreign language education contexts will prove helpful in contextualizing the results from survey data in the following section. The "Us/Other" national/international nature of identity in the language instruction context is reflected in the contrasting assertions of leading authorities. Some assert that English poses a threat to Japanese identity, while another group asserts the opposite (Turnbull, 2004). Students almost universally feel that their sense of identity as a representative of their particular ethnic or national group will be called into question when they become part of the global English language learning complex through formal instruction (cf. Norton, 1997). In his account of the use of English in Japan, Stanlaw (1992, p. 67) suggests that English language education in Japan might be a site of cognitive dissonance as English is "tied to crucial issues of self-definition, national identity, and Japan's place in the modern world." For McVeigh (2002, p. 83), schooling in Japan is constituted within a highly politicized context. Students at all levels experience immense "statist intervention" and they think of themselves as constantly under the official gaze of authority, which disciplines them in preparation for workplace life. In a section on the role that foreign language instructors are expected to play, McVeigh (2002, pp. 171–177) also shows that instructors from the West are often expected to promote an exoticized, "international" atmosphere that will be fun for students, without analysis of social problems or negative aspects of Japanese society. In their analysis of the teaching of North American culture in a postsecondary educational institution in Japan, Duff and Uchida (1997) underline the complex ways in which instructors negotiate their sociocultural identities along with implicit modes of cultural transmission in the classroom. The typical focus is on global citizenship and the value of intercultural communication. The students' expectations of instructors' concern for gender justice and other liberal values are likely to be high⁴. From this perspective, it becomes clear that the foreign language classroom is a locale where shadowy fears of labeling as "backward" by representatives of the West can come into play. Zarakol (2011) demonstrates that for Japan, Turkey, and Russia, the jibe of backwardness that characterized Western critique upon their incorporation into the Western-based international system still retains a discursive force that many feel they must overcome with demonstrations of sophistication. Hall (1998, p. 173) argues that the push for "internationalization" in educational contexts is often "profoundly anti-cosmopolitan" as it involves an anxious desire to protect a pristine sense of national identity without engagement with the outside world. While the internationalist orientation is often accentuated, McVeigh (2002, p. 155) writes of the likelihood of bullying of

students who have acquired communicative skills in English. “For some students, learning English well contaminates, or at least threatens, their ethnocultural and national identity,” and these students may be stigmatized by their peers for a deficient Japanese identity. This shows that, because of the particular conditions of the Japanese context and induced fears about the undermining of one’s sense of identity as a Japanese, students are often conflicted by the demands of presenting an image of self and country to Western instructors in language education contexts. In the context of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom with a Western instructor, students may experience the unnerving gaze of the West. Perhaps it is not so surprising, then, that the apparent “internationalism” of language classrooms often works to reinforce a sense of unique national identity and the strength of the “us/them” construct.⁵

Survey research

In 2018, we tested the hypothesis that young women have more awareness of the significance of sexual harassment issues in Japanese society (see Appendix for details). The survey indicated that no significant gender differentials exist on sexual harassment issues. While the results accorded with our observation that young women seem to have similar levels of awareness on gender equality issues as their male peers, questions remained about survey research findings from language classrooms. Engagement with texts on international status anxiety prompted us to question the accuracy of surveys conducted by Western instructors in language classroom contexts. This led to a change of approach for further use of the survey items. In 2019 and 2021, we conducted two surveys, each comprising 400 Japanese university students in various disciplines. The first survey (44% women, 56% men) carried out in foreign language classrooms produced seemingly positive results with large margins of support for victims of sexual abuse and overall rejection of myths about such abuse. The respondents overwhelmingly rejected victim blaming, supported programs to prevent sexual misconduct, and indicated high levels of awareness of the nature of sexual abuse. However, when the survey results were presented at a conference in Tokyo attended mainly by foreign educators in Japan⁶, the audience feedback was unanimous: In reality, students’ views are not so overwhelmingly progressive. Typical comments from the floor included “*They were influenced by their instructors,*” or “*They were saying what they thought you wanted to hear.*” This reaction prompted deeper probing on how conditions change survey respondents’ choice of items. Based on our reading of Zarakol (2010), of Kinsella (2014), and of news media sources, we conjectured that a more accurate picture would emerge in an altered context where preoccupations about critical perceptions by foreigners would be absent. This did in fact become evident in the results of the 2021 survey, which was carried out by a market research company with undergraduate university students (50% women, 50% men).

Table 3.1 Attitudes to sexual harassment issues and victims of abuse

1	Japan has fulfilled its international obligations regarding compensation for former “comfort women.” 2021 survey: FINAL RESULT: 61% agreed 39% disagreed
2	Japan has apologized enough for the “comfort women” issue. 2021 survey: FINAL RESULT: 66% agreed 34% disagreed
3	A significant number of high school girls are engaged in “compensated dating” or “daddy activities.” 2021 survey: FINAL RESULT: 45% agreed 55% disagreed
4	High school girls who engage in this activity [No. 3] spend too much money on luxury fashion brands and expensive cosmetics. 2021 survey: FINAL RESULT: 57% agreed 43% disagreed
5	A significant number of women who claimed to have been molested on trains and buses were “fake victims.” 2021 survey: FINAL RESULT: 42% agreed 58% disagreed
6 ^a	People who have been subjected to sexual harassment should not go to government authorities (such as the police) because it is hard to prove that it actually happened. 2019 survey 7% agreed 93% disagreed 2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 37% agreed 63% disagreed
7	People who engage in sexual harassment probably only do it once or twice, so there is no need to publicize the fact. 2019 survey FINAL RESULT 7% agreed 93% disagreed 2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 24% agreed 76% disagreed
8	People who have been sexually harassed should remain silent out of concern for their own families. 2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 5% agreed 95% disagreed 2021 survey FINAL RESULT 26% agreed 74% disagreed
9	Most Japanese women report sexual assault to government authorities. 2019 survey FINAL RESULT 6% agreed 94% disagreed 2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 24% agreed 76% disagreed
10	People who are sexually abused usually invite such behavior themselves. 2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 9% agreed, 91% disagreed 2021 survey FINAL RESULT 25% agreed, 75% disagreed
11	Women who are sexually insulted by men provoke them first by the way they speak, behave, and dress. 2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 6% agreed 94% disagreed 2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 28% agreed, 72% disagreed

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued)

12

Once you have a sexual relationship, you cannot file a sexual harassment complaint against that person.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 11% agreed, 89% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT 31% agreed, 69% disagreed

13

Topics related to sexual harassment are not suitable for jokes or variety show humor.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 79% agreed 21% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 60% agreed 40% disagreed

14

Sometimes men and boys are the victims of sexual harassment.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 96% agreed 4% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT 74% agreed, 26% disagreed

15

Women frequently encourage a superior's sexual interest to improve their situation.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 17% agreed, 83% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT 26% agreed, 74% disagreed

16

Sexual harassment is not a major social problem in Japan.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 8% agreed 92% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 28% agreed, 72% disagreed

17

Employers should ensure that sexual harassment does not occur in the workplace.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 96% agreed 4% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 68% agreed 32% disagreed

18

Employers and individuals in positions of power in the workplace should not expect sexual attention from their employees.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 92% agreed 8% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT 67% agreed, 33% disagreed

19

It is important to prevent sexual harassment in schools and universities.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 97% agreed 3% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 77% agreed, 23% disagreed

20

School authorities should provide programs to educate young people about sexual harassment.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 91% agreed, 9% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 76% agreed 24% disagreed

21

Being intoxicated is not an excuse for sexual harassment.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 92% agreed 8% disagreed

2021 survey: FINAL RESULT 77% agreed 23% disagreed

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued)

22

Every report of sexual harassment should be thoroughly investigated.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 92% agreed 8% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT 76% agreed 24% disagreed

23

An attractive person has to expect sexual advances and should learn how to handle them.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 60% agreed 40% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT 65% agreed, 35% disagreed

24

Organizations should do as much as possible to prevent sexual harassment.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 97% agreed 3% disagreed

2021 survey: FINAL RESULT: 77% agreed 23% disagreed

25

Sexual harassment happened frequently in my high school.

2019 survey FINAL RESULT: 9% agreed 91% disagreed

2021 survey FINAL RESULT: 24% agreed, 76% disagreed

^a From no. 6, items from the 2019 survey are given and results contrasted with the 2021 survey.

In the 2019 foreign language classroom survey, underlying international status anxiety as a desire to avert international critique may have promoted an expression of progressive attitudes on issues of sexual misconduct. On reviewing results from the survey, one statistic seems to stick out: over 80% of respondents (322 out of 400) chose not to comment on sexual harassment. One reason accounting for this low response may be an unexamined assumption that such comments are written by those who identify as feminists. Nevertheless, the fact that over 80% of students had nothing to say about sexual harassment in the survey may indicate a high degree of apathy, lack of interest, or less commitment to progressive attitudes on sexual harassment than is suggested by item choices. The most popular theme for comments (15) was to refer to the difficulties involved in defining sexual harassment (e.g., *"In many situations, it's extremely difficult to say, 'This was sexual harassment/this was not sexual harassment'"*), what a subjective concept it is (e.g., *"Each person has different feelings about sexual harassment, so it is very difficult to have objective criteria about specific acts"*), and the difficulties that this can cause for others (e.g., *"The criteria about sexual harassment are very ambiguous (aimai), I think. This means I have to be very careful, so my actions are not misinterpreted"*). In contrast, no comments of this type were given in the 2021 survey and an overwhelming 95% of respondents made no comments. Results in the 2021 survey indicated that a quarter or a third of respondents (depending on the item) had negative attitudes toward sexual harassment issues. What can account for the contrasting results? In the

domestic context of the 2021 survey (survey items presented by a market research survey company with all items and instructions in Japanese only) and with the inclusion of preceding items that evoke schema surrounding “comfort women,” “fake victims,” and “compensated dating,” we predicted that the item results would be significantly less progressive. In the 2021 survey, the population and sample remained the same as in 2019: 400 Japanese undergraduate university students. Now, however, the first five items on the 25-item questionnaire evoked associative priming concepts such as “international obligations,” “(apologies to) comfort women,” “compensated dating,” and sexual misconduct “fake victims.” The results indicated attitudes that were less favorable toward victims of sexual abuse.

Anxiety about Japan’s status on the international stage helps to account for the changes that followed the intervention. This anxiety can be traced to the inordinate influence of a relatively small number of powerful groups who can be identified with the phenomenon of male hysteria. Their exaggerated anxiety regarding the country’s original incorporation into the international system still plays a role today regarding issues such as official apologies for historical crimes. This type of international status anxiety relates to the association of ideas between “comfort women” and women who pursue justice for sexual abuse as well as the sense that external demands for apologies for historical crimes indicate a lack of respect for Japan’s international status. Importantly, we also conjectured that, in the comments section, none, or few, of the 400 participants would express surprise or disagreement over the fact that a survey mainly about sexual harassment included items about “comfort women,” schoolgirls who engage in compensated dating, and women who falsely seek compensation for sexual assault. As expected, no such comments were made. While the lack of comments may simply be due to mental laziness or lack of critical thinking skills, it is reasonable to argue that the lack of such comments indicates that an association of ideas has been created between “comfort women” and women who falsely seek compensation for sexual misconduct. This association instills fear among victims of being labeled as “fake victims” if they choose to come out of the shadows and pursue justice. In fact, none of the survey participants commented that the first five items seemed out of place. One commented that they knew nothing about “comfort women” and should be able to indicate “I don’t know” as an answer. In all other cases, though, the first five items went uncommented on, which indicates that for the respondents, issues surrounding “comfort women,” young women who engage in “compensated dating,” women who experience sexual abuse, and women who falsely claim sexual abuse, can all be logically placed under the same rubric. This is not so surprising, perhaps, when one considers how often young people have been exposed to public conversations that characterize “comfort women” as women who have lied in their accounts of sexual abuse.

Individual and national self-image is at risk of critique, then, from the foreign “other” embodied in the non-Japanese instructor in educational settings. In the 2019 survey, of the five language instructors who administered

the survey in their classrooms, three of them were long-time members of an educators' special interest group in Japan named GALE or "Gender Awareness in Language Education." Even though each instructor administered the survey at the beginning of the term, it is possible that students had heard "on the grapevine" that the instructors were known as feminists or as self-identified progressives on gender issues. Even if this were not the case, the stereotype of "Western" language instructors – the five instructors were white and of North American or British provenance – likely ensured that expectations of progressive gender opinions were at play. While all students were told that responses were anonymous and confidential, the average classroom size was relatively small (around thirty students) and assurances that others could not match surveys to individual students might not have fully reassured all the respondents. With the 2021 survey, in contrast, respondents knew that no such danger existed. In this all-Japan context, the assumed audience of the survey was Japanese and the prevailing cultural milieu prompted attention to the protection of national identity from foreign denigration. In the survey, also, underlying international status anxiety, but now as a desire to reject foreign critique, promoted regressive attitudes on issues of sexual misconduct. The role of international status anxiety needs to be acknowledged as a significant factor in the construction of (inter)national self-image and in the formation of attitudes toward sexual misconduct issues and their protagonists. Becoming aware of the role that this form of anxiety is playing in shaping attitudes and responses may help to create a social environment that is more receptive to the women who emerge from the shadows to seek justice for sexual violence.

Conclusion

A strong tradition of progressive peace education has been a feature of schooling in Japan since the end of the Asia-Pacific War, and this tradition has not been eliminated in recent years. Additionally, scholars of global politics, such as Tom Phuong Le (2021) are optimistic that anti-militarist, peace-loving social movements will continue to constrain the power of ultra-nationalist groups to revive militarism and belligerent policies toward Japanese neighbors. While this optimism may be plausible, awareness of the dangers involved will help to maintain a situation that builds on and strengthens values of pacifism in the construction of Japan's (inter)national identity. Ideally, Japan's peace movement should fully integrate advocacy of key issues that would promote peace with the country's nearest neighbors: acknowledgment of historical crimes, apologies, and reparations for victims and forced laborers, including former "comfort women." Unfortunately, apart from a few exceptions, such as Ishikida Miki (2005), the protagonists of the peace movement focus almost exclusively on anti-nuclear weapons activism, and many young people who have heard countless accounts of the 1945 nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki think of Japan as the "victim country" of the Asia-Pacific War.

Other factors also prompt concern about the future of pacifism in Japan. Writing of conditions in east Asian regional politics in the mid-2000s, Samuels (2007) argued that the United States seemed like a more unreliable guardian from hostile neighbors, China's rise to regional preeminence seemed unstoppable, and the North Korean nuclear weapons program seemed more ominous than in the past. Based on these factors, which have only been accentuated in the intervening years, dissatisfaction with the present hierarchy dyad (US–Japan) has become intertwined with ultra-nationalist desires for protection from perceived enemies, nostalgia for Japanese preeminence in east Asia, and a more general aspiration for a return to an idealized past. A narrative of enforced sexual slavery, such as the accounts of former “comfort women,” does not harmonize on any level with the desires of the political bearers of international status anxiety. As we shall see later, this anxiety is not confined to protagonists of foreign policy in Japan but has been disseminated at a broader societal level. In addition to such explanations, psychosocial feminist theory points to the power of misogyny on the level of the psyche as a factor that explains the reluctance to apologize to “comfort women” as such heartfelt apologies would involve recognition and celebration of the female other as fully human. It seems clear that the association of ideas between “comfort women” and “bad girls” in general has a noticeable effect on attitudes toward women who report sexual misconduct, and commentators need to take this into account to fully understand issues of sexual abuse in Japan.

This chapter has highlighted the degree of continuity in the history of extremist nationalism in Japan, an ideology that simultaneously sets itself against the West while seeking the approval of the West. As Doak (2007, p. 216) notes: “Rightwing ethnic nationalists in contemporary Japan also trace the history of their nationalism to those opponents of the *bakufu*'s (Tokugawa shogunate's) policies of Westernization (*Oka*)...” We noted the significance, both in terms of gender normativity and of nationalistic storytelling, that the Imperial court of the Meiji era stigmatized the “effeminate” fashion styles which the Imperial court itself had followed only a short time earlier (Dalby, 2001). By pinning the blame on Chinese influence and by stigmatizing signifiers of femininity in biological males, the message for citizens was clear: the dominant masculinity of the new order would accept the critique of the West, intensify male dominance over women, and more explicitly assert Japanese dominance over its neighbors. If we apply the concept of International Status Anxiety to Mikanagi's classifications, the *bai kara* (high collar) style can be said to reflect an anxiety that finds expression in imitation. The hope is that hostile reactions by the other can be warded off by displays of accommodation and similarity: “*We are similar. We are your equals.*” A contrasting response is expressed in the succeeding *kōha*/hard faction styles of dominant masculinity; *ban kara* (barbarian collar) masculinity styles in the late nineteenth century sought to embody severe samurai ideals, imperviousness to female allure, tough self-reliance, and disdain for foreign practices. The anxiety induced by potential hostile actions from the

other is dealt with by displays of belligerence and autonomy: “*See how strong we are. We follow our ways not yours.*” A synthesis of these two orientations, with elements of both “hard” and “soft” masculinity seems evident in the style of masculinity that dominated in the late twentieth century, *sarariiman* (salaryman) masculinity. The Western Enlightenment tradition approves of the efficient, rational lifestyle of the typical salaried worker, but this worker can identify with a narrative of self as a corporate warrior who embodies all the unique and essential traits of an authentic Japanese man. This style hopes to deal with the anxiety induced by critique from without (the international system) or from within (from authoritative exponents of national identity). A synthetic perspective also predominates for the general population when consideration is made of intractable issues such as dealing with sexual misconduct or acknowledging historical crimes surrounding “comfort women.” The male hysterical subjectivity of powerful men (and women who take up the male symbolic position) in Japanese society has engendered an atmosphere of fear in which female victims of sexual violence sense, rather than consciously conclude, that they will be associated with “comfort women” and “bad girls” if they pursue justice (see Chapter 4 on retaliation anxiety). While this sense may remain unarticulated, it will function when women “read the atmosphere” of their surrounding social environment.

This chapter also drew a picture of a social environment in which hyper-attention to criticism of national identity from foreign sources skews results in particular contexts, such as a foreign language classrooms with non-Japanese instructors who are likely perceived as “Western liberals” or as *say-oku* (left-wind ideologues), who will only value opinions that reflect their own view of the world. We asked, “What can be learned if we assume that the male hysteria of the nativist right has been a factor in the development of political and social events in the Japanese context?” Based on the work of various authors who focus on the international system as a social reality, we surmised that male hysteria has remained a dominant influence among powerful groups in Japanese society, particularly among members of the “nativist right.” This complex of emotions, concepts, and impulses hinders these groups from acting in empathetic or rational ways when issues surrounding historical crimes are raised. It has interpreted calls for official apologies regarding historical crimes committed against “comfort women” as attacks on the moral authority and phallic power of the nation. It has promoted those styles of masculinity that evoke militaristic values while denigrating those which do not. In addition, male hysteria in the Japanese historical and social context denigrates those women who have been “tarred with the same brush” as “comfort women.” This hysteria, which can be seen as a persistent feature of far-right ideological extremism, has engendered anxiety at a more diffuse level so that many members of society feel concerned about projecting a high-status image for Japan on the world stage. We invoked a political psychology approach by coining the term “international status anxiety” to refer to this reality. Final sections of this chapter detailed results from two survey questionnaires (from 2019 and 2021, respectively), which indicate how this

anxiety is part of a nexus which associates “comfort women” with all women who seek restitution for sexual abuse. Evocation of the concepts and feelings surrounding “comfort women” controversies at the beginning of the 2021 survey was enough to significantly diminish the high levels of support for victims that had been expressed in the 2019 survey. In addition to the international status anxiety, which undermines efforts to establish strong support for female victims of sexual abuse, another form of socially generated anxiety influences women who fear the consequences of reporting sexual abuse. This fear of retribution or “retaliation anxiety” is explored in the following chapter.

Notes

- 1 This resonates with Kinsella’s (2014) work on the stigmatization of schoolgirl rebels in the Japanese context.
- 2 Phrase used by Suzuki (2008, p. 49) in reference to Japan.
- 3 In the field of extreme nationalism, this subjectivity may be fixated on the threat of “national castration” (cf. Bracher, 1993, p. 121 on speeches by former US president Ronald Reagan that elicited anxiety about the identity of “America” as a signifier of ultimate meaning). Also note Ehara’s (1992, p. 30) work on war-time sexual violence and the patriarchal mindset’s construct of “stains on male honor.”
- 4 Yoshihara (2017, p. 92) provides examples of foreign (and Japanese) language instructors in educational institutions in Japan who experienced an “incompatibility between feminist identity and EFL classroom practices.”
- 5 Students of English in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore often choose to use an “Anglo” name in the classroom, but Japanese students rarely do so (See Sun-Mi-Kim (2019) for deeper analysis). This relates to an issue explored by Gardner and Lambert (1972). They found that Francophone speakers in Quebec were more likely to be successful in learning English if they had positive attitudes toward English-speaking people (as opposed to simply having instrumental motivation). It seems plausible that international status anxiety translates into low integrative motivation and Japan’s consistently poor results in evaluations of communicative competence in English.
- 6 36th Annual Conference of SIETAR (Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research (www.sietar-japan.org/en/our-activities/annual-conference)).

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