

Special Issue: The ‘Comfort Women’ as Public History (Table of Contents)

Edited by Edward Vickers and Mark R. Frost

public debate over the "comfort women".

This special issue of *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* on “The ‘Comfort Women’ as Public History,” edited by Edward Vickers and Mark Frost, analyzes the turn since the early 2000s towards “heritagization” of this controversial issue. Papers include testimony from scholars involved in campaigns on behalf of comfort women, or in movements for their commemoration (Shin, Su, Norma); more conventional academic analyses of transnational efforts to secure recognition for comfort women, whether through litigation (Hao) or heritage activism (Vickers, Schumacher); and personal reflections by an academic educator (Heo) and filmmaker (Dezaki) who in different ways have sought to promote international understanding of this issue. An introductory essay by the editors, Frost and Vickers, examines how the reframing of this issue as “heritage” has been accompanied by increasing entanglement with the global politics of atrocity commemoration. Questioning any necessary equation between heritagization and reconciliation, they stress the need for representation of comfort women as public history to pay due regard to nuance and complexity.

A separate, supplementary special issue (“Five Letters,” edited by Alexis Dudden), published alongside this one, engages with an early 2021 intervention in the comfort women controversy by Harvard University Law Professor, Mark Ramseyer. This features a “Study Guide” by Tessa Morris-Suzuki that further underlines the importance of scholarly rigour in underpinning

1. [Introduction: The “Comfort Women” as Public History - Scholarship, Advocacy and the Commemorative Impulse](#) - Mark R. Frost and Edward Vickers
2. [Transmitting Knowledge and Gaining Recognition: Chinese “Comfort Women” Reparation Trials in the 1990s and 2000s](#) - Xiaoyang Hao
3. [Slaves to Rival Nationalisms: UNESCO and the Politics of “Comfort Women” Commemoration](#) - Edward Vickers
4. [Asia’s Global Memory Wars and Solidarity Across Borders: Diaspora Activism on the “Comfort Women” Issue in the United States](#) - Daniel Schumacher
5. [Reconstructing the History of the “Comfort Women” System: The Fruits of 28 Years of Investigation into the “Comfort Women” Issue in China](#) - SU Zhiliang, translated by Edward Vickers
6. [Voices of the “Comfort Women”: The Power Politics Surrounding the UNESCO Documentary Heritage](#) - Heisoo Shin
7. [Sexual Violence in Wartime and Peacetime: Violence Against Women in the 20th Century](#) - Seiya Morita and Caroline Norma

8. [When National Narratives Clash in Multinational University Classrooms: a Pedagogical Perspective](#) - Emilia S. Heo
9. [Debating Shusenjo - the Main Battlefield of the Comfort Women Issue: Director](#)

[Miki Dezaki in Conversation with Mark R. Frost and Edward Vickers](#)

This is the Table of Contents for the special issue: **The ‘Comfort Women’ as Public History.**

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

Please also see the supplementary issue, [Academic Integrity at Stake: The Ramseyer Article](#), edited by **Alexis Dudden**.

Edward Vickers is Professor of Comparative Education at Kyushu University, Japan, and (from April 2021) inaugural holder of the UNESCO Chair on Education for Peace, Social Justice and Global Citizenship. He researches the history and politics of education, and the politics of heritage, across contemporary East Asia. His books include [Remembering Asia’s World War Two](#) (2019, co-edited with Mark Frost and Daniel Schumacher); [Education and Society in Post-Mao China](#) (2017, with Zeng Xiaodong), and (as a co-ordinating lead author) the 2017 UNESCO report, *Rethinking Schooling for the 21st Century*. He is Director of Kyushu University’s interdisciplinary Taiwan Studies Program, and Secretary-General of the Comparative Education Society of Asia.

Mark Ravinder Frost is Associate Professor of Public History at University College London. He was previously Head of the History Department at Essex University, and previously worked at the Asia Research Institute in Singapore and the University of Hong Kong. He was educated at the University of Oxford, where he graduated with First Class Honours, and he completed his doctorate at the University of Cambridge in 2002. He is the author of [Singapore: A Biography](#) (2009; 2012) which in 2010 won the Asia Pacific Publishers Association Gold Medal and was selected as a CHOICE ‘Outstanding Academic Title’, as well as co-editor of the edited collection [Remembering Asia's World War Two](#) (2019).