



Australian
National
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Workshop on Japanese military sexual slavery and women's lives in the Asia- Pacific region today

Report on outcomes

Gender Institute Grant | 01/02/2019

Contact:

tatum.street@anu.edu.au

School of Culture, History and Language

The Australian National University

Canberra ACT 2601 Australia

www.anu.edu.au

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Grant details

The workshop was envisaged as an opportunity for student engagement with specialists to consider issues of feminist interest in Asia today, and how the history of Japanese military sexual slavery in the region might manifest in current-day social movements and in political trends among young women. With the support of the Gender Institute, the workshop gathered specialist researchers from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, with expertise on issues of gender in the Asian and Pacific region. ANU postgraduate students, in particular, benefited from this opportunity to engage with specialists during the workshop to learn about historical and contemporary perspectives on military sexual slavery, and to discuss issues related to their own research fields. Other members of the ANU community also participated in the workshop, enriching discussions with diverse perspectives from a range of diaspora, namely from the Asian and Pacific region.

Event details

Title: Workshop on Japanese military sexual slavery and women's lives in the Asia- Pacific region today

Dates: 21 November, 2018 – 10:00am to 5:00pm

Description:

This one-day workshop examined women's lives in Asia and the Pacific today in light of the history of Japanese military sexual slavery (i.e., the 'comfort women' system) during the wartime 1930s and 1940s. Speakers and participants discussed how this history continues to animate feminist movements in a number of countries, and explored how activism by young people in Asia and the Pacific today reflects considerations of war, militarism and sexual slavery.

With the support of the ANU Gender Institute, the workshop hosted five specialist Australia-based researchers of the history of the Japanese military 'comfort women' scheme of sexual slavery during the Second World War. The workshop comprised five formal paper presentations by Dr Mohita Roman, Dr Yuki Tanaka, Associate Professor Kate McGregor, Dr Emma Dalton, and Dr Caroline Norma, in addition to a briefing on an international conference held in Tokyo on 10 November 2018 about the submission of 'comfort women'-related materials to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, delivered by Dr Yujie Zhu. Representative of the Melbourne Comfort Women Memorial Task Force (MCWM), Christine Kim, delivered a presentation on the work of the MCWM during the workshop lunch break. Time for discussion was set aside at the conclusion of

each presentation, facilitating participant discussion on issues of contemporary legacies of sexual slavery for women in Asia today.

Presenters focused on Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia, both in relation to their wartime histories of Japanese military sexual slavery as well as their contemporary justice movements, especially for women and girls.

Speakers

Dr Yuki Tanaka

Dr Tanaka was a research professor at the Hiroshima Peace Institute of Hiroshima City University until he retired in 2015. He now lives in Melbourne and works as a freelance historian and political critic.

Associate Professor Kate McGregor

Associate Professor McGregor researches Indonesian historiography, memories of violence, the Indonesian military, Islam and identity in Indonesia and historical international links between Indonesia and the world. Her Future Fellowship at the University of Melbourne is titled *Confronting Historical Injustice in Indonesia: Memory and Transnational Human Rights Activism*.

Dr Mohita Roman

Dr Roman is a post-doctoral research fellow in Monash University's Korean Studies Program. She researches modern Korean studies, and holds a PhD from Monash University and a Masters from Yonsei. Roman's doctoral work was on the local-transnational dynamics of the Korean Comfort Women movement.

Dr Emma Dalton

Dr Dalton is a lecturer at RMIT University researching women's relationships with the state, and particularly in the context of their political under-representation in Japan. She has lived and worked in many different regions of Japan for a total of seven years and has taught Japanese at Australian universities since 2007.

Dr Caroline Norma

Dr Norma is a DECRA senior research fellow at RMIT University researching military prostitution during the New Guinea war. She is a member of People Against Pornography

and Sexual Violence (PAPS) in Tokyo, and will undertake a one-year visiting fellowship at Doshisha University in Kyoto in 2019. She returns to teaching in RMIT's translation and interpreting master degree in 2020.

Dr Yujie Zhu

Dr Zhu is a lecturer in ANU's School of Archaeology and Anthropology and for ten years has been researching the politics of cultural heritage, commemoration, cultural tourism and religious practices. Yujie spoke at the Tokyo conference.

Impact

Links between wartime history and current-day feminism and its aligned movements in the Asia-Pacific region show political movements and ideas developing in directions possibly different from those in the West. Learning from these different approaches and insights was a goal of the workshop, and the organisers welcomed participation by students, staff and community members.

The workshop exceeded expectations of participant engagement, bringing diverse members of the ANU community together through its forum. ANU postgraduate students, primarily, benefited from the opportunity to engage with specialists during the workshop to learn about historical and contemporary perspectives on military sexual slavery. ANU PhD candidates interacted with speakers during presentations and in one-on-one conversations during workshop breaks to discuss issues related to their own research fields. Other members of the ANU community also participated in the workshop, enriching discussions with diverse perspectives from a range of diaspora, namely from the Asian and Pacific region and with a high representation of Korean women nationals.

A total of fifteen participants from across the ANU and wider community attended the workshop sessions. In addition to the following participants, a number of Masters, Honours and Undergraduate students from various ANU colleges attended the workshop.

ANU workshop participants

Adam Broinowski, ANU associate fellow, PhD

Pak Yonjae, ANU PhD candidate

Lina Koleilat, ANU, PhD candidate

Kirsten Sellars, Visiting Fellow, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Emeritus professor, ANU

Gavan McCormack, Emeritus professor, ANU

Outcomes

Speakers and participants discussed the possibility of creating a national forum for engagement on the history of Japanese military sexual slavery in the region and issues of feminist interest in the Asian and Pacific region today. As an outcome of this workshop and with the support of speakers and participants involved, we hope to facilitate future events to generate interest and informed discussion on these issues. We thank the ANU Gender Institute for its generous support to host this workshop, which has inspired academic interest and support for collaboration on future initiatives on this subject.

Attachments:

- A) Workshop program
- B) Event poster
- C) Promotion

Attachment A. Program

Japanese military sexual slavery and women’s lives in the Asia-Pacific region today

Wednesday 21 November 2018 | Coombs Seminar Room D, Coombs Building #9, 9 Fellows Road, ANU

21 November 2018	Session title	Speaker	Discussant	Speaker bio
9am	Coffee available in workshop room			
9.30am	Welcome and housekeeping	Tatum Street		Ms Street is a postgraduate student in ANU’s Master of Asian and Pacific Studies, and worked for a number of years as a consultant in Delhi. She now works as a research assistant with ANU’s Humanitarian Health Research Initiative as well as Norma’s DECRA project. Tatum successfully applied to the Gender Institute for funding to hold this workshop.
10-10.45am	Briefing on an international conference held in Tokyo on 10 November 2018 about submission of ‘comfort women’-related materials to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register	Yujie Zhu	Caroline Norma (also attended conference)	Dr Zhu is a lecturer in ANU’s School of Archaeology and Anthropology and for ten years has been researching the politics of cultural heritage, commemoration, cultural tourism and religious practices. Yujie spoke at the Tokyo conference.
10.45-11am	Morning tea			
11am-noon	Contentious structural factors and framing dilemmas: the transnational ‘Comfort Women’ movement Abstract:	Mohita Roman	Kate McGregor	Dr Roman is a post-doctoral research fellow in Monash University’s Korean Studies Program. She researches modern Korean studies, and holds a PhD from Monash University and a Masters from Yonsei. Roman’s doctoral work was on the local-transnational dynamics of the Korean Comfort Women movement.
12-1pm	Lunch (with brief presentation about the Melbourne Comfort Women Memorial Task Force (MCWM))	Christine Kim		
1-2pm	Misogyny and the response of Japan’s far-right female politicians to the issue of the ‘comfort women’	Yuki Tanaka	Emma Dalton	Dr Tanaka was a research professor at the Hiroshima Peace Institute of Hiroshima City University until he retired in 2015. He now lives in Melbourne and works as a freelance historian and political critic.

	Abstract:			
2-3pm		Kate McGregor	Tessa Morris-Suzuki	Associate Professor McGregor researches Indonesian historiography, memories of violence, the Indonesian military, Islam and identity in Indonesia and historical international links between Indonesia and the world. Her Future Fellowship at the University of Melbourne is titled Confronting Historical Injustice in Indonesia: Memory and Transnational Human Rights Activism.
3-3.15pm	Afternoon tea			
3.15-4.15pm	Women as helpmates: The Japan Self-Defence Forces and gender Abstract:	Emma Dalton	Yuki Tanaka	Dr Dalton is a lecturer at RMIT University researching women's relationships with the state, and particularly in the context of their political under-representation in Japan. She has lived and worked in many different regions of Japan for a total of seven years and has taught Japanese at Australian universities since 2007.
4.15-5.15pm	In whose name?: Contemporary activism in support of former Japanese military 'comfort women' Abstract: I will argue in this presentation that recent moves towards understanding military sexual slavery as a problem of wartime rape are misguided, and contemporary examples of Japan-based groups campaigning in support of the former 'comfort women' from a feminist anti-prostitution perspective make more practical and theoretical sense.	Caroline Norma	Mohita Roman	Dr Norma is a DECRA senior research fellow at RMIT University researching military prostitution during the New Guinea war. She is a member of People Against Pornography and Sexual Violence (PAPS) in Tokyo, and will undertake a one-year visiting fellowship at Doshisha University in Kyoto in 2019. She returns to teaching in RMIT's translation and interpreting master degree in 2020.
6-8pm	Meet at Fellows café at University House for those who have time to catch up for dinner			

*We are grateful to the ANU Gender Institute for providing the support that has made the workshop possible.

---- Book launch: Hidden Horrors - Japanese War Crimes in World War II (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017)

Professor Emeritus Yuki Tanaka | 22 November 2018 | 12:30 to 13:30 | Room 1.04, Coombs Extension Building (8), Fellows Road, ANU

Professor Tanaka will give a lecture on Okuzaki Kenzo and his postwar campaigning against Japan's emperor system.

Attachment B. Poster



Japanese military sexual slavery and women's lives in the Asia-Pacific region today

This one-day workshop will examine women's lives in Asia and the Pacific today in light of the history of Japanese military sexual slavery (i.e., the 'comfort women' system) during the wartime 1930s and 1940s. We will discuss how this history continues to animate feminist movements in a number of countries, and explore how activism by young people in Asia and the Pacific today reflects considerations of war, militarism and sexual slavery.

Presenters will focus on Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia, both in relation to their wartime histories of Japanese military sexual slavery as well as their contemporary justice movements, especially for women and girls. Links between wartime history and current-day feminism and its aligned movements in the Asia-Pacific region show political movements and ideas developing in directions possibly different from those in the West. Learning from these different approaches and insights is a goal of the workshop, and participation by students, staff and community members is warmly welcomed.



This workshop is proudly brought to you by the ANU Gender Institute.

Presenter/s: Associate Professor Kate McGregor; Professor Yuki Tanaka; Dr Mohita Roman; Dr Emma Dalton; Dr Caroline Norma

Event type: Workshop

Event date: Wednesday, 21 November 2018 - 10:00am to 5:00pm

Event venue: Coombs Seminar Room D, Coombs Building #9, 9 Fellows Road, ANU

Attachment C. Promotion

The School of Culture, History and Language assisted with promotion and communications of the workshop on its website and social media channels. The Communications team also provided support in organising and running the event, assisting with the creation of an Eventbrite page and providing a camera for photography on the day.

CHL webpage

<http://chl.anu.edu.au/news-events/events/1038/japanese-military-sexual-slavery-and-women%E2%80%99s-lives-asia-pacific-region-today>

Eventbrite page

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/japanese-military-sexual-slavery-and-womens-lives-in-the-asia-pacific-tickets-51572899932>

The event was also promoted on the Monash University website:

<https://arts.monash.edu/languages-literatures-cultures-linguistics/news-and-events/articles/korean-studies/japanese-military-sexual-slavery-and-womens-lives-in-the-asia-pacific-region-today>