



Anne Frank in Japan

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A Must-Read Book for Children

There is one text that every Japanese child is encouraged to read while growing up. It comes from across the ocean, from a hidden abode, from a place in which the writer and her family were not even supposed to exist, for she and her family belonged to a population that occupying forces were trying not simply to oppress, but to eliminate from humanity. From that place came a voice, a voice so fragile, yet so unfathomably strong, a voice that was to be crushed in an abrupt and brutal fashion, like a tiny flower bud stomped on by a heavy boot. Yet, that voice did not die, continuing to live on in today's world, most prominently and persistently in Japan, through the medium of the Japanese translation of Anne Frank's diary, known in Japanese as *Anneno nikki* (Anne's diary). Since its Japanese publication in 1952, nearly six million copies of the book has been sold (Rand 2018). As David G. Goodman and Masanori Miyazawa commented: "Anne Frank and her *Diary* have become an integral, indeed a representative part of postwar Japanese culture" (Goodman and Miyazawa 1995: 168).

Needless to say, the world knows about Anne Frank and the fate that befell her and her family, as well as some six million other Jewish people, during WWII. *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank touched millions of hearts. Anne is admired for her undying spirit, her inner strength and her enduring hope, revered by countless children growing up in Japan and throughout the world (Frank 2016; see also Schnabel 2014, Prose 2010, Anne Frank House 2011, Lee 1999; Furanku 2003).

In Japan, boys and girls are encouraged to read Anne Frank's diary while growing up. I was ten years old when I first read it, as it was a book that children were supposed to read, just like *Aesop's Fables*, for example – this was 1970. My niece, who is 33, read it when she was in the elementary school. And pre-teen

grandchildren of my friends in Japan are today reading it. For girls in particular, Anne's diary continues to enjoy enduring popularity, along with works such as Montgomery's *Anne of the Green Gables* series and Alcott's *Little Women*. To this day, Anne Frank's diary is a staple among books that are considered as good reads for children. It is included in many educational literary series for children, including one published by Shōgakukan (a publisher specializing in children's educational books) that also includes works on Helen Keller, Galileo Galilei, the Wright Brothers, Columbus, Nightingale, Marie Curie, Edison, Lincoln, and Beethoven, for example. The series is entitled *Sekai no denki* or Biographies of the World and the volume on Anne Frank was written by Kijima Kazuko (Kijima 1983). In a series produced by another reputable publisher, Kōdansha, Anne Frank is included alongside Jesus Christ, Helen Keller, Marco Polo, Babe Ruth, Tokugawa Ieyasu, Gandhi, Marie Curie, Edison, the Wright brothers, Beethoven, Nightingale, Lincoln, Columbus, and others (Osanai 1989). Apart from these formal series, Anne Frank's story has been adapted into diverse educational forms in attempts to reach out to children. For example, an *anime ehon* or picture book on Anne Frank aimed at tenth-graders was published in 2001 (Ōishi 2001). A *manga* version of Anne Frank was published (also by Shōgakukan) in 1996, and had been reprinted seventeen times as of 2007 (Sugihara and Takase 1996).

As the effects of anti-Semitic policies intensified and the social atmosphere in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands deteriorated, Anne Frank and her family went into hiding in July 1942 in their hometown of Amsterdam – into a space known as the secret annex. (The family had already relocated from Frankfurt after the rise of the Nazis in the early 1930s.) The secret annex, or back house, had been created behind a bookcase that doubled as a door in the upstairs part of a building that housed a spice import company owned by her father, Otto Frank. The family, along with the other residents that they graciously accommodated, managed to survive here right up until their arrest by the Gestapo in August 1944. Thanks to the assistance of their Dutch helpers as well as their own personal strength, and in spite of the tensions and frustrations that naturally arose in such a difficult living environment, they persisted. On June 12, 1942—her thirteenth birthday—just a few weeks before going into hiding, Anne received a new diary as a birthday gift. She began chronicling her daily life, continuing to do so after the family went to live behind the bookcase. Despite the unnatural and stiflingly confined circumstances in which Anne found herself, her diary documents her remarkable growth in her own words: from a curious and smart girl to a thoughtful adolescent possessing a strong sense of moral responsibility and a respect for human dignity while at the same time remaining capable of crafting penetrating critiques of injustices. After their capture, all of the former residents

of the secret annex were sent to the Nazi concentration camps. Anne and her sister Margot were first sent to Auschwitz along with their parents, Later, in October 1944, the two sisters were transported to Bergen-Belsen, where they both died in March 1945 amidst horrific epidemic caused by the Nazi mistreatment. Anne was only fifteen years old. Their mother died at Auschwitz, and their father, Otto Frank, ended up being the only member of the family to survive the concentration camps. There is no need for me to revisit here the unspeakable inhumanities that the detainees were subjected to, as these have already been painfully yet powerfully documented by survivors such as Primo Levi (1995) and Eva Schloss (1988), the latter to become Anne's step-sister through Otto's marriage to her mother, also a survivor of the concentration camps.

Japan is also home to a museum, a chapel, a flower garden, and an original statue commemorating Anne Frank and dedicated to her (Takahashi 2002; Shino 1996). In 2007, Reverend Makoto Otsuka has replicated the Franks' hideout as part of the Holocaust Education Center in Fukuyama, Hiroshima prefecture ("Anne Frank's" 2007). In 2013 alone, more than 33,000 Japanese visited Anne Frank House on Prinsengracht along the Prinsen canal in Amsterdam (De Clercq 2014). When I visited the Anne Frank House in June 2017, I, too, shared the narrow and steep staircases of the secret annex with a dozen or so young (mostly female) visitors from Japan. Why is Anne Frank so popular in Japan, her diary found on bookstore shelves reserved for one of the country's longest- and best-selling titles?



Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. Photo by the author.

Why Anne Frank?

Taniguchi Nagayo, a prominent foreign correspondent writing for a major Japanese paper and one of the authors of Japanese books on Anne Frank aimed at adults, encountered this question in 1989 when he visited the headquarters of the Anne Frank Foundation in Basel, Switzerland. The context of the conversation that he had there is a very interesting one and worth reproducing here. A female researcher at the foundation's office asked Taniguchi why it was that Anne was so famous in Japan. Taniguchi was not able to answer immediately, since he could not think of a good reason. The researcher pressed on: "When I visited Japan for the Anne Frank exhibition [held some time beforehand] I felt that in Japan, the general sentiment was that [...] the Japanese were the victims in the war [WWII], and that Anne was being taken as a symbol of this victimhood. Isn't this the case?" (Taniguchi 1996: 52-53; my translation). For Taniguchi, an experienced journalist who had studied and lived in Europe for over a decade, this question came from "a direction that had never occurred to me" (Taniguchi 1996: 53). The self-understanding of the Japanese as victims of WWII and their consequent understanding of and sympathy for Anne was something that had never occurred to a highly educated cosmopolitan professional from Japan. What is interesting here is that this notion was clear to a foreign researcher from the Anne Frank Foundation when she visited Japan.

The Japanese were, indeed, victims of WWII, given the total devastation wreaked by all of the carpet-bombing, the obliteration of two major urban centers by atomic bombs, and the subsequent ongoing US military occupation of Okinawa. On one level, it would be entirely natural for the Japanese to identify themselves with Anne Frank. On another level, one cannot deny that something is amiss here, as Japan was a firm ally of the Nazis, whose "final solution" erased millions of Jewish lives from the earth, including that of Anne herself. In my view, in and of itself, there is nothing wrong with the Japanese sympathizing with Anne Frank and the millions of Jewish people that perished at the hands of the Nazis. For, it is undeniable that the majority of innocent Japanese suffered tremendously because of the war that their national leaders had started. Not only were their livelihoods destroyed and their family members killed, but their futures devastated as well, the Japanese population being placed in an utterly hopeless position as the war ended in Japan's defeat. From this perspective, it is completely understandable that in Japan, and especially in children's literature and animated books, Anne Frank is treated as a victim of war, *sensō*, and

commemorated as someone who will live “until the day the two letters of *sensō* [consisting of *sen* 戦 and *sō* 争, denoting war] disappear from the world” (Takase and Sugihara 1996: 142). According to one picture book:

It is the war that killed Anne. It is the human society that produced Hitler and Nazis [that killed Anne]. We have no ability even to imagine how dreadful the Jewish persecution or life in hiding were. And it is beyond our comprehension how humans could do such cruel and brutal things to their fellow humans. During the Second World War, throughout the whole world, more than forty million people lost their lives. Of these, about thirty million were non-military and ordinary citizens. More than two million Japanese died because of the war as well. (Ōishi 2001: 128-129; my translation)

In a dialogue with a French journalist, Alain Lewkowicz, the afore-mentioned Reverend Otsuka, who operates the Anne Frank House replicated in Japan as part of his Holocaust Education Center, is represented to have stated as follows:

Lewkowicz: *Est-ce qu'Anne Frank vous incite à revisite votre histoire et à admettre la réalité des crime commis en asie?*

Otsuka: *Non. Un lieu comme le HEC nous aide simplement à réfléchir sur l'horreur de la guerre. Et puis, nous aussi nous sommes des victim. Souvenez-vous d'Hiroshima.*

Lewkowicz: Is it the case that you invoke Anne Frank in order to revisit your history and to admit the reality of crimes committed in Asia?

Otsuka: No. Here in the Holocaust Education Center we simply help reflecting on the horror of the war. Besides, we too are the victims. Remember Hiroshima. (Lewkowicz, Bourgeau, Sainsauve, Ogawa, & Pott 2013: 70; my translation)

What is problematical in this logic is that it misses another side of history. By entirely attributing the Nazi persecution of the Jews to one singular factor, “war,” on the one hand, and one super-collective and abstract entity, “human society,” on the other, the above statement evades the question of Japan’s own responsibility. The brutal fact that more than two million Japanese were killed—the majority of them civilians—does not cancel out the historical fact of Japan’s colonial and military aggression in Asia and the Pacific, which destroyed millions of lives, often in the most brutal of ways. As such, there cannot be some abstract and impersonal “monster” called “war” that is generally and globally responsible for the misfortunes of the humanity; rather, misfortunes are brought

about by concrete actions. As such, concrete responsibilities need to be questioned and pursued. Besides, there is no one-to-one equivalence between instances of victimhood and instances of crime against humanity. In other words, one victimhood experience does not cancel out one crime against humanity.

Needless to say, atrocities have happened all throughout human history and, unfortunately, continue to happen today, whether they are documented or not. No one group is exempt from the charge of violation. But, if, when thinking about the unspeakable treatment that Anne and the millions of victims of the Nazi concentration camps suffered, we were to simply locate responsibility and cause on a universal terrain, such as that of “human nature,” we would be at risk of deeming such suffering ultimately natural and inevitable. This would be to commit a grave mistake—both at an intellectual level and a moral one. Whenever a systematic and organized massacre of humans on an industrial level takes place—whether it be by the Nazis, Stalin, or Pol Pot—and whenever an all-out assault on other humans based on ideologically mobilized xenophobia, bigotry, and aggression takes place—whether it be the Pogrom of Lviv in 1941 or the Rape of Nanjing in 1937, the lynching of African Americans or the Rwandan genocide—there exist historic specificities, ideological stances, material conditions, and human agency in the background. It is undoubtedly true that no single group can be permanently and exclusively assigned the role of victim—people do horrible things to others and also have horrible things done to them. Does this, however, exonerate and expiate everyone from all travesties and crimes? If so, does it then follow that there is no injustice, just as there is no justice?

Morality's Challenge

Years ago, when I presented a public talk on the massacre of 6,000 Koreans in the aftermath of the 1923 Kanto Earthquake in Tokyo, Japan at a reputable US university, a visibly angry expatriate Japanese professor said to my face: “Japanese died as well.” Needless to say, I had been referring to the post-disaster violence that erupted among Japanese citizens in Tokyo and its vicinity, violence of a type that was spontaneous, yet eerily well-organized and well-targeted. It involved a pogrom-style mass hunt of Koreans, with this group either being blamed for the fire that followed the quake or becoming the target of false rumors that it was responsible for rioting, destroying Japanese property, and raping Japanese women. Yes, Japanese did, indeed, die as well, but the manner in which they met their ends during and immediately after the quake differed

greatly from that of the Koreans who became the targets of Japanese-instigated violence (Ryang 2007). So, to say to my face that “Japanese died as well” reflects a certain position and sensitivity. It is a sensitivity similar to this one that I would like to problematize when thinking about Anne Frank in Japan.

What I would like to explicate here is the following issue: Faced with questions about your own group, or a group that you may identify yourself with or sympathize with, and its unjustifiable past behavior, rather than trying to find equivalence in suffering (as seen in the statement “Japanese died as well,”) and rather than whitewashing its crimes by trying to establish that other groups were also perpetrators, should not one have the courage to face up to one’s own past or the past of those that one loves and sympathizes with, despite the fact that this same group may have been unjustifiably victimized on separate occasions? And, if that past is not justifiable, should not one need to view it as such? Yes, more than two million Japanese were killed—thousands in atomic bombings meeting horrible and unjustifiable deaths. But, this does not cancel out Japan’s responsibility for the atrocities and war crimes that it carried out in Asia and beyond. For, again, there is no equivalence between one count of victimhood and one count of crime.

I am fully aware that this is all easier said than done, for morality is starkly challenged by the visceral core in each of us when it comes to notions of redress and transitional justice. A good example is found in the way in which the issue of the former comfort women continues to play out between Japan and Korea and beyond. The comfort women were women who were subjected to sexual slavery in the name of the Emperor at military comfort stations that were found at diverse locations (See Ryang 2006: Ch.2). Comfort stations were an integral part of the Japanese military operation, and women were dragged from one front to another as the Japanese military advanced throughout the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Following decades of silence and then denial, it was only in the 1990s that the existence of the comfort stations and the army’s direct involvement became established as historical facts. The years since have witnessed a head-on clash between forces demanding belated justice and redress for the women on the one hand and forces denying this historical fact and/or viewing related accusations collectively as a national insult for Japan on the other. Elements in the latter group have launched full-scale propaganda campaigns, while the Japanese government has issued few apologies. As the number of surviving comfort women has steadily fallen, little meaningful progress has been made towards bridging the gap between the two sides, the most recent feud erupting after a South Korean politician referred to the comfort women as “sex slaves” in

February 2018, leading the Japanese foreign ministry to issue a statement denouncing this statement as totally unacceptable (Harding and Harris 2018).

As we keep the above in our minds, I wish to talk about another young girl, a girl who was perhaps about the same age as Anne Frank in 1945. Clad in Korean traditional clothing and with her hair trimmed short, she is seated in a small wooden chair, not knowing what fate awaits her. She first appeared in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul in December 2011, and has since appeared at other locations, including the southeastern Korean city of Busan, as well as several cities in the US, Germany, Canada, and Australia. Before long, this girl had been seen in almost forty cities throughout Korea. Similar figures began to appear in other places around the world, including Taipei, Manila, and San Francisco. These girls and women are statues depicting the comfort women, young girls and women who were forcefully taken from Korea and other parts of Asia and subjected to sexual slavery by the Japanese army during WWII around the same time that Anne Frank and her family were living in hiding and later perishing in the concentration camps, where they were permitted not even the most basic vestiges of human dignity.



A statue symbolizing the comfort women issue that has been erected in Manila, Philippines.

Source: <http://m.yeongnam.com/jsp/view.jsp?nkey=20171213.010140739020001>



A memorial for the “comfort women” in St. Mary’s Square, San Francisco.

Credit: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images, Source:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/25/world/asia/comfort-women-stature.html>

Unlike Anne Frank, however, this figure—sometimes a girl, sometimes several women—is not welcomed, accepted, or sympathized with by all in Japan, which raises a question about the morality of victimhood. For, it is undeniable in anyone’s eyes that the comfort women were the victims of a system of sexual slavery that was instituted and maintained by the Japanese Imperial military, an institution that based its actions upon an ideology built around the worship of Japan’s Imperial House, with the Emperor at its apex. This victim figure of the comfort woman, even when appearing outside of Japan’s national territory, is not acceptable to many in Japan. The erection of figures depicting and symbolizing comfort women in San Francisco, for example, led the Japanese city of Osaka to sever its sister-city relations in 2017 (Fortin 2017; McCurry 2018). When the girl appeared in Sydney, a Japanese leader of the Australia-Japan Community Network described the girl’s presence as “disturbing” and “unfair,” insisting that the South Korean government had done the same thing, i.e. set up army brothels (presumably for the GIs) (Lattouf 2016). In Glendale, California, a group consisting of Japanese and Japanese American citizens filed a lawsuit against the city after it erected a comfort woman statue (Yoneyama 2016: 171). As late as September 2018, a Japanese tourist was caught on security camera kicking a statue at a comfort woman memorial in Taiwan, resulting in protests by outraged Taiwanese activists (Chung 2018). These and other examples of resistance to the public acknowledgement of the suffering of the former comfort women at the hands of the Japanese Imperial state reflects the sensitivity that I

noted above in the response to the post-disaster massacre of Koreans in 1923: “Japanese died as well.” In particular, the above-mentioned response by a Japanese leader of the Australian-Japan Community Network in Sydney—that the South Korean government had also set up military brothels—is noteworthy. This is because it is based on the assumption that as the Japanese were not the only ones that perpetrated such acts, Japan cannot be blamed for them.

Needless to say, the comfort women issue reflects a complex set of values and ideologies, as well as multiple perspectives, and scholars have been approaching this issue with such an awareness in mind. Critical consideration has come to be applied not only to Emperor-focused Japanese nationalism and militarism, but also to the postwar distortion of the women’s experience by South Korea’s male-centered postcoloniality. In addition, debate concerning collective as opposed to individual responsibility, as well as issues of redress and remuneration, has animated Japanese and Korean historians and feminist scholars, as well as others from different intellectual backgrounds and writing positions (e.g. Lee 2018; Herr and Jeong 2010; Soh 2008; Yoneyama 2016).

Here, I would like to examine a particular type of sensitivity in this area that can be traced to an area that is somewhat removed from the revisionist forces that refuse redress and responsibility in order to systematically reshape the way in which the Pacific War is remembered. This tendency, which I call for the sake of brevity the “equal exchange tendency,” is an insidious and subtle one, even bearing a demeanor of innocence, differing from the shameless right-wing re-packaging of WWII as a glorious story of bravery on the part of Japan. It forms an unspoken subtext that deems Japan as the victim of the war, considering that Japan’s own suffering means that the suffering that Japan inflicted upon others does not need to be addressed. It is precisely for this reason that challenging this tendency becomes tricky. This is because it leads to the raising of issues of individual morality and personal responsibility, even though a particular individual may not have committed a crime or had any role in historical decisions taken by the national government to invade other nation’s territories, engage in mass rapes, carry out experimental nuclear attacks on certain populations, systematically erase whole groups, or enslave fellow humans based on the color of their skins, treating them as mere property to be exploited. Indeed, such issues raise colossal moral challenges for each and every one of us.

Seen in this way, one is forced to realize that the passionate advocacy for the restoration of the dignity of the former comfort women and the vigorous protests against the indifference of the Japanese government that we have witnessed in

Korea need to be accompanied by similar demands for redress with respect to sexual violence committed by Korean soldiers in Vietnam during the late 1960s. About 320,000 South Korean soldiers rotated through Vietnam during the Vietnam War, with a maximum deployment of 50,000 at any one time (Griffiths 2018). The atrocities committed by South Korean soldiers deployed in Vietnam against Vietnamese civilians, including the February 1968 massacre of 135 unarmed civilians at Ha My by South Korean soldiers and their participation in the My Lai massacre, have been widely documented (Kwon 2017). South Korean soldiers engaged extensively in acts of sexual violence against Vietnamese women during the war, leaving their victims (if they survived) with lasting scars, as well as children that were the product of such acts. In one incident recounted by a Congressional witness, US troops handed over four captured North Vietnamese nurses to ROK marines. The marines tied up the nurses spread-eagled on the ground and gang-raped them, eventually killing them and mutilating their bodies (Griffiths 2018). It is important to note that there have been grass-roots-level efforts to document and acknowledge the suffering of Vietnam War rape victims by South Korean activists advocating redress for the Korean comfort women, while apologetic statements by the South Korean government have not satisfied activists in either Vietnam or South Korea (Ko and Yoon 2015; Griffiths 2018). Even though South Korean soldiers were deployed under the overall command of the US military, the moral responsibility for such actions clearly remains with them and, of course, the South Korean government and nation. For, there is no such thing as an equal exchange in such cases, the sexual slavery that the comfort women were subjected to at the hands of the Japanese military by no means giving license to South Korea to inflict violence on others. For this reason, efforts need to be made in South Korea to redress the suffering of the Vietnamese victims that are as strong and determined in force and level of commitment as those directed at securing reparations for the victims of the comfort women system.

The same logic applies in the context of violence directed by the state against its own nationals on the basis of ideology, race, and other criteria used to dehumanize and eliminate certain groups of citizens. Recent efforts by South Korea to achieve reconciliation and tell the truth about the 1948 massacre of civilians on the island of Jeju off the south coast of the Korean Peninsula offers an example. While not entirely satisfactory when considered against the historical backdrop of over five decades of state-sanctioned silence by previous South Korean regimes, the establishment of the truth commission in 2000 and the work that it conducted marked the beginning of a reckoning. Between 1946 and 1949, with the backing of US Occupation forces and in a frenzied outpouring of

ideological zeal, South Korean military and police forces, along with anti-Communist militia groups, engaged in the large-scale destruction of villages on the island, as well as the massacre of some 30,000 civilians (see Ryang 2013). While President Park did little following the historic initiative taken by her predecessor, President Roh, current President Moon has consistently shown his administration's commitment to addressing such unresolved issues. Telling the truth and documenting what took place are not enough, but such actions at least open up a moral debate that was not previously present in the public discourse. Of course, there will be many opposing voices, some even brutally attempting to silence the truth, but having such voices is, in some ways, an expected part of public debate which, in and of itself, is often a struggle to write and re-write history.

In this vein, how should we then think about Anne Frank in Japan alongside the comfort women in Japan—or the absence thereof?

Stories of Another Girl

Not so long ago, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe visited Anne Frank House. During his visit, he commented: “We would like to face the historical facts in a humble manner and pass on the lessons of history” (De Clercq 2014). Perhaps it is time for Abe to do the same vis-à-vis the comfort women—especially given his history of stirring up controversy by denying that coercion was used by the Japanese military in relation to the Korean comfort women (Hayashi 2008). And, if he sat next to a comfort woman statue, the girl might whisper to him, slightly excitedly, that she would be going to the factory to work so she could send money to her parents, when in fact, she was going to be sent far, far away to work as a sex slave for the Imperial Army of Japan – all day long and every day, for many years. One survivor recalls:

It was 1939 and I was fourteen years old. I was picking cotton with my mom. Then, a small military vehicle parked and four Japanese military police officers got out. They were speaking in Japanese, so I did not understand what was going on, but they rounded me up and [put me in the vehicle]. I was frightened and simply screamed for Mom. Mom grabbed the leg of one officer, pleading with him not to take me and [saying that] if they had to take me, then [they should] kill her first. The officer kicked my mom to the ground. That was the last time I saw Mom. (Testimony by Jin Gyeongpaeng quoted in Yun 2006: 99; my translation)

The testifier, Jin Gyeongpaeng, served at the army comfort station in Taiwan for six years until the end of the Pacific War in 1945 (Yun 2006: 99). Another survivor, who was dragged along with the army throughout the Pacific, including to New Guinea and Borneo, recalled: “We took twenty to thirty soldiers every day. On Saturdays and Sundays, there were so many soldiers we had to take that it felt as if we were in an abattoir” (Yun 2006: 99; my translation). Another stated: “When I resisted, a soldier would take my *obi* [waist band] and tie up my legs. [He and others] would demand perverted acts, so I would swear, and each time I would be punched in the face. By the time I was able to be repatriated, I had hardly any teeth left” (Yun 2006: 100; my translation). Upon their hasty and chaotic withdrawal at the end of WWII, the Japanese soldiers mass-murdered comfort women in some locations, leaving mass graves of naked corpses (Nam 2018).



A statue of a girl symbolizing the comfort women in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul
Credit: Chung Sung-Jun— Getty Images, Source: <http://time.com/4164004/taiwan-japan-comfort-women-resolution/>

The Japanese military, state, and Emperor squarely bear responsibility here. As can be seen in the ongoing struggle to achieve redress, gender bias has meant that the comfort women issue has failed to be fully dealt with by the international justice system. Furthermore, the Cold War political environment, marked by continuing US military domination throughout East and Southeast Asia, has maintained gendered asymmetry between occupier and occupied. As stated above, however, the question does not end at the level of systematic

compensation or government-level apology. For example, local Korean underlings participated in the hunting down of young girls in farm fields, such as in the case of Jin Gyeongpaeng in the above testimony. How about the Japanese soldiers who were engaged in the systematic rape of comfort women, yet now recognize that such actions were gross violations of human rights (e.g. Nishino 1992)? How do we address the albeit unevenly interconnected and mutually reinforcing nexus of macro-level and micro-level responsibilities? And how do we try not to be sucked in by what I call the idea of equal exchange whereby crimes perpetrated against one actor exonerate that actor with respect to the crimes they then perpetrate against others? The tension between individual morality and personal responsibility vis-à-vis nationally and Imperially mobilized violence that often comes in the guise of universal values—as in the case of the US registering the WWII as a just war—is a challenge that we are eternally faced with. There is no easy or quick solution to this. Perhaps, minimally, we should remember that this challenge exists—even at the height of nationalist frenzy, a national security crisis, or all-out self-righteous war against an enemy. Is it not ironic that the words of fourteen-year-old Anne Frank teach us something about all of this?:

No country sacrifices its men without reason, and certainly not in the interests of another, and Britain [as the would-be liberator] is no exception. The invasion, liberation and freedom will come someday; yet Britain, not the occupied territories, will choose the moment.

To our great sorrow and dismay, we've heard that many people have changed their attitude toward us Jews. We've been told that anti-Semitism has cropped up in circles where once it would have been unthinkable. This fact has affected us all very, very deeply [...] Could anyone, regardless of whether they're Jews or Christians, remain silent in the face of German pressure? Everyone knows it's practically impossible, so why do they ask the impossible of the Jews?

It's being said in underground circles that the German Jews who emigrated to Holland before the war [like the Franks] and have now been sent to Poland [to the concentration camps] shouldn't be allowed to return here. They were granted the right to asylum in Holland, but once Hitler is gone, they should go back to Germany.

When you hear that, you begin to wonder why we're fighting this long and difficult war. We're always being told that we're fighting for freedom, truth and justice! The war isn't even over, and already there's dissension and Jews are regarded as lesser beings [...]

I love Holland. Once I hoped it would become a fatherland to me, since I had lost my own. And I hope so still! (Frank 2016: 250-251)

The above passage captures the precarious yet very real balance between the universal and the historically specific. Anne's fatherland is Holland, or so she wishes. The desire for one to have one's own homeland while keeping one's Jewish identity does not cancel out the Netherlands as a nation, even in the face of the cold, hard fact that many Dutch people betrayed their Jewish neighbors and friends. Putting it in the Japanese context: The fact that the Japanese suffered an unspeakable fate in WWII does not cancel out Japan's crimes. By the same token, issuing a sincere apology to Japan's Asian neighbors and making an effort at redress for historic victims of Japan's national and Imperial violence does not in any way hurt Japan's national dignity. Only when such a view prevails will the stories of another girl—or indeed those of thousands of other girls—be heard in the same voice as the one heard in Anne Frank's diary in Japan.

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