

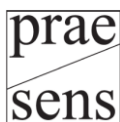
# The Academic Discussion of the ‘Comfort Women’ in the PRC

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## Abstract

*This article provides the reader with an outline of academic research on comfort women in China: its development and its main topics, the disciplines involved in the discourse and the timeline of events triggering and intensifying research in this area are discussed. Using a quantitative as well as a qualitative approach, I attempt to position these debates firstly within international discourses and secondly within general PRC historiography. The hypothesis being proposed is that in terms of topic as well as concerning the mode of research and presentation, comfort women-related research has been strongly influenced by an imagined Japanese revisionist interlocutor.*

**Keywords:** China, comfort women, historiography, positivism, postcolonialism



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## Introduction

In 2008, the People's Republic of China (PRC) still constituted uncharted territory on the map of international comfort women discussions. Indeed, so far English, German or Japanese publications on comfort women have focused solely on the fate of Korean, Japanese, or Southeast Asian former comfort women and as a consequence have made no reference to Chinese academic sources.<sup>1</sup> This restricted focus has created the impression that research into mainland Chinese comfort women does not exist at all. It is therefore an objective of this paper to provide the reader with an outline of academic research on comfort women in China: its development and its main topics, the disciplines involved in the discourse, and the timeline of events triggering and intensifying research in this area are discussed. Furthermore, the attempt will be made to position these debates firstly within international discourses and secondly within general PRC historiography. The former goal will be realised by tracing elements of foreign influence as well as endemic factors; the latter, for example, by examining the question of why analytic comfort women research has developed rather hesitantly compared to the vast majority of descriptive accounts.

In order to conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Chinese academic discourse around comfort women, I decided to investigate articles provided by two major databases: the China Academic Journals Full-text Database (CAJ) and the Century Journals Project (CJP) provide in total a number of 499 articles that are related to the comfort women issue. Given this high number, which also encompasses numerous polemical publications, I chose to rely on a 2004 publication *Zhōngguó rénwén shèhuì kēxué héxīn qīkān yàolǎn* 中国人文社会科学核心期刊要览, a guide to the humanities and social sciences core journals in China, in order to reduce this number to articles published in journals which were here defined as 'core journals'. The index to this guide lists journals of philosophy, literature and history, but also of political sciences, law and economy which distinguish themselves by high standards of quality. The object of analysis were 95 Chinese-language articles published in 34 journals, about half of them from *Kàngrì zhànzhēng yánjiū* 抗日战争研究 (Journal of studies on China's war of resistance against Japan), hereafter *KZY*.

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1 The author refers to 'classics' in comfort women research such as works by Yoshimi Yoshiaki 吉見義明 and Ueno Chizuko 上野千鶴子, but also to special issues in academic journals and comparative works about forced prostitution in wartime by such authors as Barbara Drinck and Chung-Noh Gross.

## Quantitative approaches towards discourse development

The first question seeking an answer is what disciplines are interested in the comfort women issue and who is actually participating in comfort women-related debates.

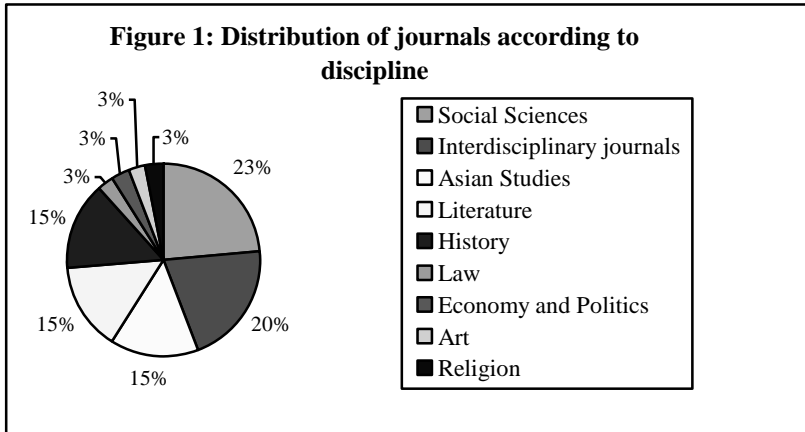
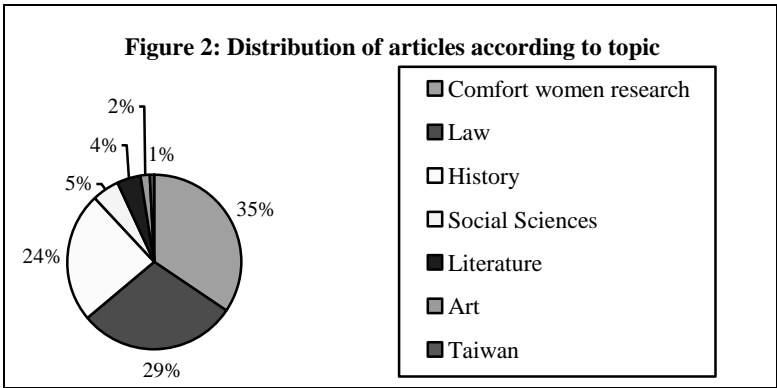


Figure 1 shows the highly interdisciplinary nature of this issue in the PRC. Even though most journals belong to the realm of social sciences, Asian studies, literature and history are represented too. Rather puzzling, however, is the absence of contributions from journals of Korean studies. The only publications in journals of Japanese studies, namely *Ribēn yánjiū* 日本研究 (Japan studies) and *Ribēn xuékān* 日本学刊 (Japanese studies), appeared relatively late, that is, in 1999, 2001 and finally again in 2007. Asian studies therefore seem to avoid such a politically sensitive issue. Equally noteworthy is the absolute absence of women's studies.

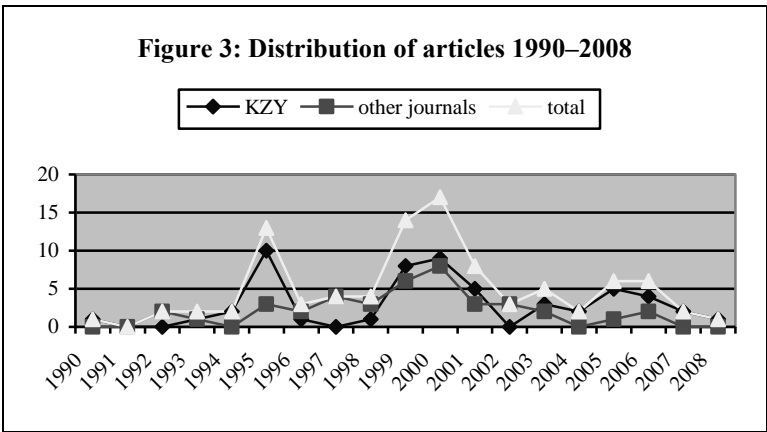
An analysis of what disciplinary areas the articles themselves actually cover demonstrates how the comfort women issue has been contextualised (see figure 2):

What I define as 'legal issues' are discussions about topics such as Japan's war responsibility, the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal that took place in 2000, or former comfort women's options to file compensation charges. Most of the 34 articles discussing legal issues were published in interdisciplinary, sociology or history journals. Only one contribution was actually found in an academic journal specialising in law: an article by Zhāng Shùhé 张树和, printed in *Fǎxué zázhi* 法学杂志 (Law science magazine) in 1994, the title of which in translation is 'Some judicial thoughts on Pǔ Bilián's lawsuit against the Japanese government' (Zhāng 1994).

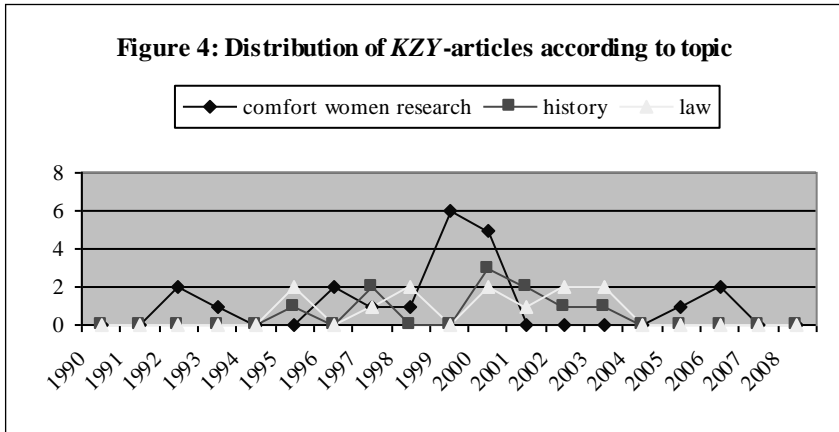


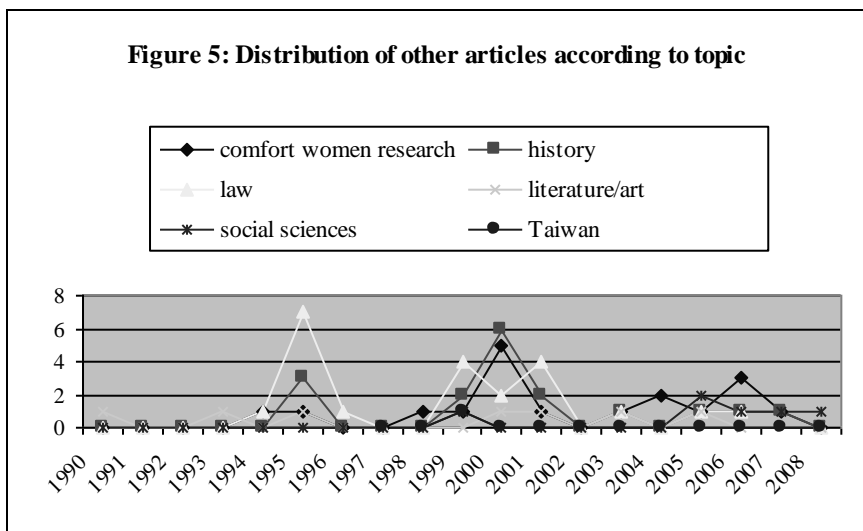
The category ‘history’ covers among other issues the history textbook controversy and public memory as well as general historical accounts of the comfort women system in World War II.

Articles about Sino-Japanese relations could have constituted a category of their own. However, given the fact that almost all of them deal with legal or historical issues, I decided to assign them to these categories. ‘Comfort women research’ and ‘social sciences’ could to some degree be classified together; still, I have introduced these as distinct categories to distinguish between articles that focus on comfort women as a distinct group (‘comfort women research’), and articles that attempt to obtain insights into society as a whole and/or use social theories in order to understand how, for instance, the comfort women system could emerge in the first place (‘social sciences’). Articles which investigated more than one of the areas listed above were attributed to all of them. As a consequence, ‘topic hits’ exceed the number of articles.



In the following an overview of the PRC's comfort women discourse is attempted. Figure 3 displays its emergence and development as reflected in CAJ and CJP. What catches the eye is that even though Kim Hak-sun's 김학순 (金学顺) testimony in 1991 about her experiences in comfort stations gained worldwide attention and gave international research on comfort women a strong impetus, it had only little impact on discourse in the PRC. Although the very first publication had already appeared one year earlier, in 1990, a first but steep climax in publications was only achieved five years later. In these first years, important domestic events, such as a petition for compensation filed by four former Chinese comfort women in the Japanese embassy in Běijīng, on 7 July 1992, were often left unmentioned. Despite its potential significance for Chinese comfort women research, this incident was referred to only in 1997 (Hé 1997: 149). Even in 1995, the year of the first pinnacle of comfort women publications and of the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women, convened in Běijīng, such events were ignored. Although four former Chinese comfort women brought a charge against the Japanese government in Tōkyō in the same year of 1995, this was not reported on in academic journals until 1998 (Wú: 175).



**Figure 5: Distribution of other articles according to topic**

In this early period, what were the concerns of Chinese academic publications on former comfort women if not the problems of these women? In order to answer this question, I find it more conclusive to distinguish between publications of the *KZY* (figure 4) mentioned before and other journals (figure 5). Whereas all articles of the *KZY* can be classified either as ‘comfort women research’, ‘history’ or ‘law’, other journals also include different areas such as ‘literature’ and ‘social sciences’. The very first publication is a play written by Zhào Guóqīng 赵国庆 and Wáng Xù 王旭 about a Japanese comfort woman (Zhào and Wáng 1990). The playwrights not only vividly reproduce the atmosphere in comfort stations, the rush for the tickets and the large-scale medical examination of comfort women, but also touch upon several sensitive issues. For example, the play criticises the Japanese army for luring young women into sexual slavery by promising them work as cleaning staff. Moreover, their oeuvre depicts the general poverty that drives parents to sell a child in the first place.

Furthermore, the play also gives insight into the aftermath of World War II, showing, for example, how after Japan’s surrender comfort women had to continue selling their bodies to survive. Moreover, it presents how these women struggled not only with health defects such as infertility, but also with rejection by their families, who would not accept a ‘soiled daughter’ (Zhào and Wáng 1990). Literature, a popular alternative form of historiography, thus assumed an avant-garde role in tackling the comfort women problem.

The *KZY*, on the other hand, was already contributing to the academic discourse on comfort women in 1992 with two articles in one issue: one by the famous Korean historian Yun Chǒng-ok 윤정옥 (尹貞玉) about the past and the present situation of

former Korean comfort women (Yun 1992); and another by Sū Shí 稣实, who called attention to the existence of Chinese comfort women in the Pacific War (Sū 1992).

Nevertheless, in the first half of the 1990s, publications on comfort women appeared rather unsteadily. The first peak in 1995 is neither the result of a literary coming to terms with the past nor of a sudden interest in the issue of comfort women as such, but is due to numerous publications in the realm of legal issues. Even though China hosted the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the founding of the Asian Women's Fund in June of that year appears to have been far more influential. Set up by the Japanese government 'in cooperation with a group of scholars led by then University of Tōkyō professor Wada Haruki', the Asian Women's Fund 'called upon Japanese citizens to make contributions...with the intent of disbursing to each former comfort woman 2 million yen in "reparations"' (Yoshimi 2000: 23-24). The government's attempt to use civic means to compensate infuriated not only former comfort women and their supporters but also the South Korean and Taiwanese governments. Questions of Japan's responsibility for the Second Sino-Japanese War and the subsequent Pacific War, as well as its duty to compensate, were therefore the subject of various debates. In Chinese academic journals, indignation about the Asian Women's Fund was also expressed frequently. Here, however, the comfort women issue did not achieve the status of a main topic, but served as a further example of Japanese war crimes. The large number of publications on comfort women in 1995 was thus due to an increase in general debates about Chinese victims of Japanese military aggression, in which comfort women were listed among other people who had been victims of forced labour and were subjected to experimentation with biological weapons (i.e. Wén 1995: 11-12; and Saitō 1995: 37). Interestingly enough, the comfort women referred to were mainly Korean and Philippine. Indeed, shortly before Chinese victims like Li Xiùméi 李秀梅 filed their own lawsuit against the Japanese government, Jiāng Wéijiǔ 姜维久<sup>2</sup> complained that former Chinese comfort women did not take this step (Jiāng 1995: 57). The lack of any reference to preparations for such a lawsuit points to a discrepancy—at least in these early years—between the activism of former comfort women inside and outside the PRC and the non-existent discussion of this activism in academic publications.

Contextualisation is also an important characteristic of history-related waves of comfort women research: the first climax in history publications in 1995 can be ascribed to the demand to increase research into the Chinese anti-Japanese resistance. Historians like Zhāng Quán 张铨 argue that the ferocities committed by the Japanese army must not be forgotten. Again, the comfort women issue serves as an example in order to illustrate the scale of Japanese violence, thereby depicting the Japanese wartime military as the ultimate villains (Zhāng 1995: 64, 66). From 1999

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2 An author who is well known for his frequent publications in law-related comfort women articles.

until 2001, the focus of historiographical interest shifted to Japanese historical revisionism: the depiction in certain Japanese textbooks of issues like the Nanjing Massacre, as well as respectively the comfort women system and the absence of these women, triggered harsh criticism in the Chinese academic world. As figures 4 and 5 reveal, the public protests in 2005, however, did not have a similar impact on academic writing despite international media coverage.

In 1999/2000 finally, the comfort women issue emancipated itself and became a field of research in its own right. Far from being mentioned only in the context of more general legal or historiographical debates, a rapidly increasing number of authors developed a keen interest in the life histories of these women and as a consequence devoted full articles to the women's experiences during and after the war. Publications before the turn of the millennia appeared mostly in the *KZY*, which pioneered the above-mentioned articles by Yun Chōng-ok and Sū Shí. Furthermore, as of 1996 this journal printed the results of local research: Fú Héjī 符和积, for example, conducted studies on comfort stations in Hǎinán 海南 (Fú 1996), and Sū Zhìliáng 苏智良 investigated the birth of the comfort women system in Shànghǎi (Sū 1996).

The increase of publications in 1999/2000 was probably also due to the Fifth International Symposium on the History of Almost 100 Years of Sino-Japanese Relations (Dì wǔ jiè jìn bǎi nián zhōng rì guān xī shǐ guó jì yán tǎo huì 第五届近百年中日关系史国际研讨会) in September 1998, where the issue of comfort women and the rejecting attitude of Japanese politicians in particular were subjects of heated discussions (Lǐ 1999: 171). The year 2000 finally marked a year of intellectual exchange when the International Symposium on the 'Comfort Women' Issue in China (Zhōngguó 'wèi ān fù' wèn tí guó jì xué shù yán tǎo huì 中国 '慰安妇' 问题国际学术研讨会) served as a platform for academics of various disciplines to present their own (so far rather isolated) local research findings (Chén and Sū 2000).

After 2001, however, the curve of publications exclusively devoted to the issue of comfort women sagged as their place was taken by an increasing number of articles which adopted a broader perspective and analysed the comfort women system in connection with more general social phenomena. Moreover, the object of interest in such articles was mainly Japanese rather than Chinese society.



## International interest in the subject

Having quantified and outlined the development of academic discussions on comfort women in the PRC, I want to address briefly the subject of international influence.

For Sū Zhiliáng 苏智良, head of the History Department of Shànghǎi Normal University<sup>3</sup> and founder and director of the Chinese Comfort Women Research Centre<sup>4</sup>, the encounter with Japanese scholars was decisive. In interviews he reveals that despite his profession, for many years he himself had not been aware of the very existence of Chinese comfort women until a Japanese colleague mentioned at a conference that the very first comfort station had been built in Shànghǎi, Sū's native town. Spurred by his own lack of knowledge, he made the origins and development of the comfort women system in the PRC his focus of research. Sū started his investigation in Japanese libraries, mainly at his own expense. In the memoirs of a military surgeon, Asō Tetsuo 麻生徹男 (1910–1989), he eventually discovered a photograph of a comfort station, namely the Shànghǎi yángjiāzhái wèiānsuǒ 上海杨家宅慰安所 (Chén Límào and Sū 2006: 80). This finally laid the foundation for his field research in China. Today, Sū is the most prominent historian in the field of comfort women research; together with his wife Chén Lífēi 陈丽菲 he discovered the remains of more than 150 comfort stations in Shànghǎi alone and established contact with more than 100 former comfort women (Chén and Sū 2006: 80, 83).

On the basis of the quantitative analysis alone, one is left with the impression that foreign resources had a relatively small impact on Chinese research on comfort women. In the *KZY*, 19 authors out of 29 quote non-Chinese sources in 23 out of 40 articles. *KZY* seems to be very open, while in the remaining journals less than half of the authors refer to foreign sources: only 20 out of 45 authors rely on Japanese, Korean or Australian sources in 24 out of 55 articles.

Furthermore, only a very small number of non-Chinese intellectuals have published in Chinese journals. Yun Chōng-ok's contribution in the *KZY* in 1992 has already been mentioned several times; three years later, in 1995, the US Japanologist Constantine N. Vaporis followed with an article about the Japanese text book controversy (Vaporis 1995). Other journals also published contributions by non-Chinese researchers: in 1995, Saitō Michihiko 齋藤道彦 reviewed trends within Japanese debates about the Sino-Japanese War (Saitō 1995); and in her 1999 analysis of Chinese wartime newspaper articles, Egami Sachiko 江上幸子 demonstrated that the general public was very much aware of the existence of Chinese comfort women (Egami 1999). Overall, Chinese authors seem to be more aware of international discussions in their publications than vice versa.

3 Shànghǎi shīfàn dàxué 上海师范大学.

4 Zhōngguó wèiānfū wèntí yánjiū zhōngxīn 中国慰安妇问题研究中心.

Nevertheless, participants in international academic debates on comfort women are not as ignorant of the Chinese research conducted as their academic writings might suggest. Sū Zhiliáng and others have lectured about the fate of former Chinese comfort women on various occasions and have attempted to integrate them into many other debates. Sū alone participated in a great number of transnational events such as the International Symposium Commemorating 60 Years of the Incident at the Marco Polo Bridge<sup>5</sup>, held in Chángchūn 长春 in 1997 (Zhào and Lǐ 1997); the fifth and sixth meetings of the International Symposium on the History of Almost 100 Years of Sino-Japanese Relations, organised in San Francisco in 1998 and 2000 (Jīng 1998: 194; Qí 2000: 232); the Emergency Meeting of Asian Unity against the Distortion of History<sup>6</sup> held in Tōkyō in 2001 (Su 2001b: 242); or the International Academic Symposium to Settle Japan's Past<sup>7</sup> in P'yōngyang in 2002 (Sū 2002: 248). Chinese experts on comfort women as well as activists attended the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal in Tōkyō in 2000 (Sū 2001a: 225) and hosted their own International Symposium on the 'Comfort Women' Issue in China in Shànghǎi in the same year (Chén and Sū 2000). Knowledge transfer from China to an international academic community therefore exists; it remains to be investigated, though, why it has had so little impact.

It can thus be concluded that famous international events such as Kim Hak-sun's testimony in 1991 did not trigger widespread academic reflection on that subject in China. Publications by foreign as well as by Chinese intellectuals specifically discussing the comfort women issue existed as early as 1992, but neither the international nor the domestic contributions gave momentum to more extensive research on comfort women in China. What eventually boosted the academic discourse on comfort women was the contextualisation of the issue within other hot international controversies. Contextualising the fate of former comfort women in debates about Japan's war responsibility, its duty to recompense and the history textbook controversy finally led to a first peak in publications specifically about comfort women in 2000.

## Qualitative approaches to methodology and content of contributions

After this quantitative discussion a qualitative approach is due to complement the picture. International investigations on comfort women have produced descriptive as well as analytic research. Space limitations preclude a comprehensive discussion of

5 Jiniàn Qīqī Shìbiàn zhōunián guójì xuéshù tāolùnhuì 纪念七七事变 60 周年国际学术讨论会.

6 Bù róngxǔ shǐyòng wāiqū lìshǐ de jiàokeshū. Yàzhōu tuánjié jīnjí dàhui jìshí 不容许使用歪曲历史的教科书 亚洲团结紧急大会.

7 Qīngsuàn Rìběn guòqù guójì xuéshù huìyì 清算日本过去国际学术会议.

the international state of the field and allow mention of only a few examples. By descriptive research I mean factual positivist accounts<sup>8</sup> that enumerate facts about the comfort women system and attempt to establish these as 'historical truths' without discussing the inherent epistemological pitfalls. Articles categorised as analytical research, on the other hand, are those that attempt to explain mechanisms that generate certain historical and social phenomena or conditions. A theoretical framework for interpretation can be provided by schools such as Marxism and feminism, but also by academic disciplines like social or political sciences.

Early results in factual positivist approaches have been achieved by pioneering historians, the most prominent being Yoshimi Yoshiaki 吉見義明. Yoshimi's contributions (2000) consist in proving the very existence of comfort stations, in clarifying the involvement of the Japanese military and government, but also in investigating the nature of the comfort women system. He meticulously depicts its characteristics and provides information about the regulations for the use of comfort stations without sparing the reader the details of atrocities committed. Last but not least, his investigations conclude in an attempt to quantify the scope and the scale of these war crimes.

Analytic approaches focus less on numbers and the historical phenomena themselves than on how we interpret these numbers and the accounts of 'what actually happened'. International comfort women discourses draw from a variety of theoretical frameworks. So far, feminist, post-colonialist and Marxist inputs have been found very useful in attempting to answer questions such as what socio-political conditions and factors other than Japanese militarism contributed to the comfort women's desolate situation, and in what way they are still victims of (continuing) colonialism. These studies question general assumptions about the nature of war crimes and attempt to go beyond the black-and-white binary of the collective victim-perpetrator dichotomy by suggesting that the victimised (post-)war society itself might be guilty.

An example of a feminist analysis with focus on discourse and language has been provided by Park You-Me (2000). Her article examines the discourse around the issue of apologies and reveals a patriarchal understanding that both the Korean and the Japanese government apparently share—despite antagonistic political demands. Park observes a general confusion about what the Japanese government should actually apologise for, who can be a victim of rape, and how this apology would have to be articulated. Park explains that the Korean government's first protests gave the impression that the atrocities committed were to be condemned only because they had been committed on women who were not prostitutes, the underlying assumption here being that prostitutes could not be raped. She further points to statements claiming that these atrocities were less awful if committed against women who were at

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8 As opposed to 'covering-law positivism', see Chris Lorenz 1998.

least 18 years old and already sexually active. In this way, the metaphor of 'Korea as a virgin nation being raped by the Japanese colonial power' (Park 2000: 205) has been deliberately constructed. To ask for such an apology and finally to accept it confirms and underpins the Confucian distinction between asexual, pure, thus 'worthy', women and sexually active, soiled and 'unworthy' women (Park 2000: 205). The Japanese government has to apologise only for having taken the *wrong* women. The practice of the comfort women system itself seems to be accepted even by the Korean government as a 'necessary evil'. Park thus argues that violent patriarchal assumptions that enabled the comfort women discourse to be held in the first place are being continuously reinscribed in the Korean discourse.

A post-colonialist approach, in both a theoretical as well as a methodological sense, has been adopted by Bella Adams in her analysis of Amy Tan's novel *The Kitchen God's Wife* (Adams 2003). Adams discusses the issue of who has the right to define an 'incident' as a crime. Through the deconstructive reading of two episodes in the novel she explains that different people's perceptions of 'reality' and what happened often do not coincide; what 'we' consider to be sufficient evidence of suffering is not so for others. However, what is of pivotal importance is the question of who the 'master of signification' is (Adams 2003: 20) and whose perception becomes accepted as the 'truth'.

In Adams's reading, the novel narrates a wife's experiences during and after the Nanjing Massacre. While the protagonist herself had to endure the most traumatic moments of her life, another woman managed to escape in time and refuses to believe that such horrors could have happened; two different accounts about the same event thus circulate within a seemingly homogeneous, victimised society. Adams points out that the narrative of the second woman unfortunately happens to coincide with 'history' and is consequently considered as the more reliable account. Without dwelling much on the question of other possible reasons for the second woman's behaviour, Adams hints at a (sub-)conscious complicity between Chinese survivors and Japanese nationalists who silence alternative accounts and reconfirm prevailing interpretations.

Min Pyong Gap's research (Min 2003) finally exemplifies a Marxist approach. Min emphasises that in addition to studies based on gender or on Japanese colonialism, Marxist class analysis is still important in order to understand the recruitment mechanisms of the comfort women system. Not all young Korean girls were automatically forced to serve in comfort stations. Those from well-to-do-families often found means to escape such a fate. At the same time, the Japanese military police itself preferred girls from a lower class background since such women had limited chances to protect themselves. Official criticism was thereby also reduced, since those with the power to speak were less affected. Generally speaking, the class system in Korea combined with Japanese colonialism made poor girls more vulnerable to forced or enticed mobilisation into military comfort stations. Finally, class-based

powerlessness 'is also partly responsible for the burial of the issue in South Korea' (Min 2003: 952): Korean politicians simply fail to pay sufficient attention to lower-class people's interests.

## Features of Chinese research

In Chinese research both descriptive and analytical approaches are represented as well. What catches the eye, however, is that descriptive accounts outweigh analytical articles in a ratio of 9:1. Before seeking to shed a light on this, I want to provide the reader with insights into the kind of descriptive and analytical questions that PRC authors are interested in.

Given that Sū Zhiliáng is the author with most publications in my sample, I believe that his example serves best to illustrate descriptive comfort women research in the PRC. In one of their articles, Sū and his wife Chén Lifěi at first discuss the term 'comfort women' and the dangers of euphemisms. Then they assess the Chinese state of the field and observe a delay compared to investigations in other countries. They believe this to be especially problematic considering the findings of their own research. Almost like an apostolic truth they state that China is the place where: (1) the first and (2) the most comfort stations were built, and where (3) most victims of the comfort women system lived (Sū and Chén 1998: 89). After an introduction into the historical background, namely the genesis of the comfort women system in response to devastating experiences with mass rape and sexually transmitted diseases in Siberia (1918–1922) (Sū and Chén 1998: 90), they address questions such as: How and where was the first comfort station built in China? How were Chinese women forced to work in comfort stations? What kind of comfort women stations did exist and how were they administered? Answers are formulated as enumerations of facts, places and atrocities. Sū and Chén conclude their article with rough estimations of the sum of comfort women in total and Chinese comfort women in particular (Sū and Chén 1998: 91–104).

The fact that the main body of their output consists of descriptive accounts that attempt to establish certain 'facts' about comfort women, whereas analytical articles with a theoretical framework constitute the exception, is to a certain degree puzzling. It is especially interesting with regards to the following: taking into account cultural and intellectual transfer (that is, the influence of Korean and Japanese comfort women research and activism on Chinese society) as well as 'indigenous' academic and political traditions in the PRC, theoretical discussions could be expected. In Korea and Japan, feminist activism and theories were decisive for the rise of a comfort women debate. In China, on the other hand, Marxism has been the dominant ideology and theoretical historiographical tool for decades (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik

1996). A continuation of these two academic traditions or at least some reflections on their advantages or disadvantages could be considered as ‘natural’.

Yet, so far the only article adopting a feminist/gender stance was published in 2007 in a journal of Japanese studies (Hú 2007). Indeed, its author, the Japanologist Hú Péng 胡澎, who has specialised in Japanese society, strongly advocates the inclusion of a gender-based perspective, thereby hinting at the absence of such an approach. A gender perspective, Hú argues, would provide explanations not only for the origins of the comfort women system but also for questions such as why former comfort women have remained silent/have not been included in national history, and why certain Japanese politicians have strongly denied their existence. Similar to Park, Hú points to patriarchal assumptions that prostitutes and comfort women by definition cannot be victims of sexual violence and that as a consequence former comfort women have felt too ashamed of their past to be able to talk about it. Hú also criticises the supremacy of written documents as evidence, since shortly before its surrender the Japanese military destroyed as much documentation as possible. She therefore supports oral history and the project to rewrite history from a gender perspective (Hú 2007: 117-121).

Given the significance of Marxist-Leninist and Maoist thought in the PRC’s historiography in the last century (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1996: 81), it is even more astonishing that no Chinese author has engaged in a class analysis of the comfort women system. For the sake of clarity, it has to be emphasised that in the case of Marxism, a line between Marxism as an ideology on the level of *Weltanschauung* and Marxism as a social theory on the level of research and presentation<sup>9</sup> has to be drawn. Generally speaking, the ideological inclination that comfort women authors reveal through their choice of vocabulary is nationalist rather than Marxist: several authors refer to former comfort women as *wǒ guó tóngbāo* 我国同胞 (compatriots<sup>10</sup>). Terms such as *liángjiā nǚzǐ* 良家女子 (women from respectable families) even reveal either a patriarchal or a capitalist attitude. Whereas Japanese comfort women were ‘prostitutes’ (*ribēn jìnnǚ* 日本妓女) and Koreans were simply ‘women’ (*cháo xiǎn nǚzǐ* 朝鲜女子), Chinese victims stemmed from ‘respectable families’ that fostered chaste daughters. The only article using Marxist terminology is, rather, an opinion piece that attempts to convince Chinese historians of the necessity to focus on the Chinese Anti-Japanese War of Resistance in order to put a halt to Japanese revisionism. The objective, therefore, does not consist in providing an analytical, class-based investigation of the comfort women system itself (Wén 1995).

As mentioned above, sociological journals have published a high number of articles on comfort women; however, sociological frameworks were introduced rather

9 For more information about the distinction between these levels see Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik’s discussion of Jiang Dachun (1996).

10 All translations, unless otherwise stated, are the author’s.

late. It was finally authors like Chén Lǚ 陈櫓, Gāo Fánfū 高凡夫 and Zhào Déqín 赵德芹 who attempted to explain the causes of the comfort women system, not by providing geopolitical answers such as the Siberia incident, but by tracing elements in Japanese society that enabled the comfort women system in the first place.

It has to be added here that some of these 'sociological' articles read more like a reiteration of Japanese wartime propaganda: for example, Chén Lǚ of Nanjing University of Technology and Science<sup>11</sup> discusses the comfort women issue in the context of Japanese collective consciousness. He implicitly states that in the beginning a conscription of Japanese prostitutes was rendered unnecessary by Japanese women's enthusiasm for the 'holy war' (*shénzhàn* 神战) (Chén 2005: 91). For the sake of the Japanese nation, Chén suggests, many Japanese women with different social backgrounds were more than happy to put their bodies at the military's disposal. Chén's attempt to explain this attitude is underpinned by the theory advanced by anthropologist Nakane Chie 中根千枝 of Japan as a 'vertical society' (*zòngxiàng shèhuì* 纵向社会) (Chén 2005: 90): with the Meiji Restoration the *samurai* class officially disappeared, but their loyalty to their master had already become a characteristic of Japanese society in general. Kamikaze pilots, but also Japanese comfort women, thus attempted to repay the emperor's kindness and grace by sacrificing their bodies and their lives (Chén 2005: 90).

Gāo Fánfū and Zhào Déqín as well place the origin of the comfort women system in feudal Japanese society. They focus, however, not on the *tennō*-subject relationship, but on the social acceptance of men as 'sex maniacs' (*sèqíngkuáng* 色情狂) who cannot possibly do without sexual intercourse (Gāo and Zhào 2006: 87). They furthermore attempt to conduct a psychological analysis of Japanese soldiers and highlight their view that to these men sexual contact constituted a proof of existence but also some sort of charm that would protect their lives in the battles to come (Gāo and Zhào 2006: 90).

As mentioned above, it is 'Japanese society' that is almost exclusively the subject on which sociological theories are being tried out. It is noteworthy that in these articles, orientalist 'othering' mechanisms are at work: Japanese society is described as strongly sexualised and in a fascinating way dreadful, thereby implicitly constructed as totally alien to Chinese society. What remains to be investigated is whether these authors deliberately describe Japanese society in such a stereotypical way, or whether they unconsciously reiterate a self-image generated and propagated in a militarist wartime society.

An article that touched upon very sensitive topics, such as the role of Chinese society and of anti-Japanese resistance in the comfort women system, was published by Wáng Lín 王琳 in 2000. Even though Wáng does not cite sources or use vocabulary characteristic of post-colonialism such as the 'subaltern', her approach is never-

11 Nánjīng lǐgōng dàxué 南京理工大学.

theless very much in the tradition of Gayatri Spivak. Just like Spivak, who explains that the voice of the *sati* (the faithful wife, the widow) has been deleted from official historiography (British imperialist as well as Brahman patriarchal), or has never been included, Wáng too attempts to trace the voice of a subaltern being, in her case of former comfort women through the media of novels.

To this end, Wáng analyses the novel by Dīng Líng 丁玲, *Wǒ zài Xiácūn de shíhòu* 我在霞村的时候 (When I was in Xiácūn), and *Xiànzài* 现在 (Now) by Yè Mí 叶弥, and suggests, especially in the former case, a new reading that ‘we’ would now identify as feminist if not post-colonialist.

According to Wáng, in her novel Dīng Líng raised the issue of Chinese society’s complicity in victimising comfort women during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Most of the villagers despise the protagonist Zhēnzhēn 贞贞 for what she is—a woman who was raped by Japanese soldiers and who in the further course of things had to provide sexual services. On the other hand, Dīng depicts positively the enlightened revolutionary youth who reject feudal ideals such as chastity and who admire as well as support Zhēnzhēn in daily life. However, Dīng lets the reader anticipate the resistance group’s complicity with the system, since it is for the sake of providing information about secret military operations of the Japanese army that Zhēnzhēn consents to stay in the comfort station. The anti-Japanese resistance sacrifices Zhēnzhēn’s body for the good of Chinese society as a whole and therefore—with the very best intentions in mind—has its share in perpetuating the crime.

Already among her own contemporaries, Dīng was considered as a revolutionary author, but then was criticised by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for her oeuvre. In ‘When I was in Xiácūn’, she produced a ‘happy ending’ that Wáng disapproves of: in Yán’ān 延安, the CCP’s stronghold, Zhēnzhēn starts a new, happy life in the anonymity of the masses. Wang, however, does not stop there and tries to find out what happened to Zhēnzhēn afterwards. Indeed, she rediscovers Dīng Líng’s protagonist in another novel, namely *Xiànzài*, which was written by novelist Yè Mí more than half a century later.

Yè’s protagonist Quánjīn 全金 hears about former Korean comfort women filing a collective lawsuit against the Japanese government. She intends to join in and returns to her home town in order to collect evidence of her past as a comfort woman. Upon her return she has to realise that she has been deleted from the village’s collective memory. Instead of her own story of a girl who had been raped and tortured by Japanese soldiers and who, after several attempts to commit suicide, finally left the village, the villagers recount a heroic tale. In their memory of events, there once was a young girl called Quánjīn who had died in pursuit of her duty. That Quánjīn wanted to provide the anti-Japanese resistance with valuable information but was taken prisoner by the Japanese, tortured, however not raped. Quánjīn bravely refused to betray her friends and eventually succumbed to her injuries. This heroic narrative was spread by Quánjīn’s brother as well as her lover, who dreaded the



shame and stigma of having been 'dishonoured'. The village committee therefore denies Quánjīn her request for confirmation of her suffering: 'We do not officially confirm that you are Quánjīn, because you are a soiled woman who would stain everybody's reputation'<sup>12</sup> (cited in Wáng 2000: 53). Wang Lin then points out that Zhēnzhēn experienced illusionary happiness in Yán'ān, since she chose silence and denial over coming to terms with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) and fighting for recognition by society.

Post-colonialist research in Spivak's tradition challenges not only foreign, imperialist (in this case Japanese revisionist) discourses and master narratives, but also already established domestic interpretations of the past. It attempts to expose class- and gender-based conflicts of interest that exist even in the so-called egalitarian Communist system and furthermore challenges the victim-perpetrator dichotomy (e.g. Wáng Lín's article exposes the 'good ones', by showing the anti-Japanese resistance's complicity in perpetuating the comfort women system). With a post-colonialist approach, narratives might thus come to the fore that endanger the hegemonic/master narratives not only of the old familiar foreign bogeymen, but also of those in power in China itself.

## Dissatisfactions and problems

Having presented these rare examples of analytic discussions, I shift the focus of attention back to the question of why feminist and Marxist theories did not have a greater impact.

In Japan and South Korea, substantial feminist activism and theoretical framing allowed comfort women discussions to evolve. Yun Chǒng-ok's feminist discussion of the Korean situation was printed in the *KZY* as early as the 1990s. Yet, a 'feminist' stance by a Chinese author was taken only in 2007 in a journal of Japanese studies (Hú 2007).

One aspect that partly explains such a reluctance is that in mainland China the label 'feminism' itself has rather negative connotations. Novelist Zhāng Jié 张洁<sup>13</sup> replied at a banquet to the question 'whether Chinese women writers were keen on expressing feminist intent and exposing female oppression...that there was no such thing as "feminism" in China and that she would not call herself a "feminist" or a "feminist writer"' (Shih 2002: 93). And indeed, when it comes to the translation of the term 'feminism', no agreement has yet been reached; neither of the expressions

12 'Táimiàn shàng bù chéngrèn nǐ shì Quánjīn yīnwèi nǐ shì gè bù jié de nǚrén, huì bài huài le dàjiā de míngshēng.' 台面上不承认你是全金因为你是个不洁的女人，会败坏了大家的名声。

13 In 1979, Zhāng Jié published the novel *Love Must Not be Forgotten* (*Ài shì bù néng wàngjì de* 爱是不能忘记的), in which she points to social pressure to marry and the lack of love in many marriages thereby criticising the institution of matrimony (Zhong 2007: 222).

*nǚxìng zhǔyì* 女性主义 or *nǚquán zhǔyì* 女权主义 has been unanimously accepted (Zhong 2007: 217). Authors like Wèi Huì (also known as Zhōu Wèihuì 周卫慧),<sup>14</sup> on the other hand, who officially consider themselves to be feminists, often encounter vehement criticism.

One reason for this derogatory view of feminism can be traced to a general dissatisfaction with the *Western* concept of feminism and its overhasty categorisations of Chinese women. In the 1950s, European and American feminists analysed Chinese society and—observing that Chinese women had already acquired what they wanted for themselves at that time, namely, equal rights before the law and the opportunity to work—created the myth of the liberated Chinese woman (Shih 2002: 92).

However, afterwards Western and Chinese concepts of women's liberation diverged. According to the Marxist perspective, women's subordination and oppression are rooted in private ownership and the class system. The state claimed therefore, that with communism, that is, with public ownership, the collectivisation of housework and women's participation in production outside the home, women's liberation would be achieved, rendering further official discussions about the need for gender equality unnecessary (Chow, Zhang and Wang 2004: 176).

Upon Western feminists' return to the PRC after its opening from 1978, however, they noticed the difficulties Chinese women encountered in private as well as in official spheres. In the following years, they deconstructed their own myth of the liberated Chinese woman and replaced it with a new myth of double oppression by tradition and by the state (Shih 2002: 93), thereby causing dissatisfaction with Western-based concepts of feminism among Chinese intellectuals.

Comfort women-related articles do not make use of Maoist-Marxist vocabulary. They do not describe the mechanisms of the comfort women system in terms of peasant daughters being abducted by bourgeois businessmen who pay little or nothing, comfort women thus being victims of imperialist capitalism. Instead they use nationalist, patriarchal expressions such as 'daughters from respectable families'.

Official Marxist historiography, on the other hand, hesitated to include the history of Chinese comfort women in its canon. Parallel to academic research, the *Rénmín Rìbào* (RMRB; *People's Daily*) equally ignored events such as Kim Hak-sun's testimony or Yoshimi Yoshiaki's discoveries. Publications on the comfort women issue gained momentum only in 1996, again in the context of heated debates about Japanese tendencies to downplay the World War II atrocities. However, most RMRB articles report on events that happened in Korea or in Japan. This and the

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14 Wèi Huì published the novel *Shanghai Baby* (*Shànghǎi bǎobèi* 上海宝贝) in 1999. In April 2000, the novel was banned because of 'its blatant and unabashedly exhibitionist flair' (Zhong 2007: 223, 241).

general reluctance to mention the existence of Chinese former comfort women<sup>15</sup> give the reader the impression that the comfort women system is something that happened elsewhere. A comparative analysis of official and academic sources concerning the comfort women issue thus points to a gap between those two types of historiography. It seems that official historiography as represented in the *RMRB* is reluctant to accept a self-image as a victim. Indeed, the focus on China as a victor and its transformation from a prey of Japanese imperialism to a sovereign nation has played a key role in legitimising the party's claim to govern (Denton 2007: 245-246). From the 1980s to the 1990s, however, popular historiography underwent a shift from such a 'victor narrative' to a 'victim narrative', where the emphasis in historical research was transferred to the suffering of the people and consequently to the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers (Gries 2004: 43-52). Academic comfort women research emerged and developed accordingly. In times of the market economy, the *RMRB* adapts as well, when the emphasis on the old new foe Japan helps to ensure a national unity that cannot otherwise be maintained on the basis of a so-called classless society. But despite that official historiography does not cross a certain line, and Sū Zhiliáng complains that the CCP government itself keeps relevant comfort women-related documents under seal:<sup>16</sup>

Up until today in the 21st century, access to archives containing documents about the War of Resistance [against Japan] is still severely restricted. Taking the 'comfort women' issue as an example, at the beginning of the 1990s, the state's department concerned issued a memo giving an order that all archives should keep under seal wartime dossiers about 'comfort women'. According to the author's knowledge, this ban is still in force, which means that many 'comfort women' files cannot not be used in due time... (Sū 2005: 3)<sup>17</sup>

The lack of information which is at least partly caused by governmental interferences forces historians to choose an empirical approach. Sū and his comrades-in-arms do not compose a grand narrative accepted by members of the government as with the revisionists' case in Japan, but on the contrary, have to establish and defend an interpretation of a past that official Marxist explanations have never covered. By choosing a different type of research and presentation, comfort women historians consciously or unconsciously distinguish themselves from official historiography.

15 I.e., of 235 articles 38 mention the existence of foreign comfort women, and only 17 of Chinese comfort women. For more information and data about *RMRB* publications on the comfort women issue, see my MA thesis, *Die akademische Diskussion der Trostfrauen in der VR China*, 2009, pp. 56-60.

16 For more information about the Chinese government's agency and motives in the comfort women issue, especially in the context of 'national shame', see my thesis, chapter 2, pp. 33-72.

17 'Shí zhì 21 shìjì de jīntiān, kàngzhàn wénxiàn dǎng'àn de fēngsuǒ réng xiāngdāng yánzhòng. Yī 'wèi'ānfù' wèntí wéilì, 20 shìjì 90 niándài chūqī, guójiā yǒuguān bùmén xiàwén yāoqiú suǒyǒu dǎng'àngǎn fēngcún zhànshí 'wèi'ānfù' dǎng'àn. Jù bǐzhě suǒzhī, zhè yī jìnlìng zhìjīn shēngxiào, zhìshǐ dàliàng 'wèi'ānfù' dǎng'àn wèinéng dédào jíshí lìyòng [...]'. 时至 21 世纪的今天, 抗战文献档案的封锁仍相当严重。以“慰安妇”问题为例, 20 世纪 90 年代初期, 国家有关部门下文要求所有档案馆封存战时“慰安妇”档案。据笔者所知, 这一禁令至今生效, 致使大量“慰安妇”档案未能得到及时利用... .

The descriptive form itself might be evidence of political activism in the academic sphere.

Eventually, the high amount of descriptive, factual research might reflect a realignment in the historical discipline in general. Sū criticises—in a very diplomatic way—methodological practices which are prevalent in his profession:

Our research scientists in general do rather attach importance to the collecting, sorting and using of already existing material (especially written documents) (of course, we do not reject this research method) and they frequently neglect empirical research and relatively seldom do they leave the library and the studio to enter society, to mingle and to go into to the field in order to rescue, excavate, protect, sort and use empirical material, which is more real and convincing (mostly artefacts and oral history interviews) (Sū 2005: 3).<sup>18</sup>

Sū—by reproducing a demand made by Wáng Xuǎn 王选—then reveals his persuasion that historians are bound not only to academic objectives but also to the well-being of society. For the sake of reducing if not remedying historical atrocities, historians have to rank among political activists by actively producing legal evidence for civic lawsuits against the Japanese government:

It was on many occasions at academic congresses that Ms Wáng Xuǎn, who filed a lawsuit because of Japan's bacteriological warfare, strongly called for historians to value factual evidential research. Time is short, [according to Wáng,] they have to rescue and excavate more of the precious evidence and material that is just about to be destroyed or lost in large quantities. They have to provide more accurate and more convincing evidence for people who file compensation claims. They have to fulfill the duties and obligations that those who work in the historical profession are bound to (Sū 2005: 3).<sup>19</sup>

Sū Zhiliáng therefore engages in a battle not only between historians and between different interpretations about the past, but locates himself on the side of former comfort women against the Japanese government.

18 'Wōmen de yánjiū rényuán, yībān jiàowéi zhòngshì xiànyǒu zīliào (tèbié shì wénzì zīliào) de shōujī, zhēnglǐ hé yùnyòng (wōmen dāngrán bú shì fǒudīng zhè zhōng yánjiū fāngfǎ), ér wǎngwǎng hūshì shízhèngxìng yánjiū, jiào shǎo zōuchū túshūguǎn hé shūzhāi, bùrù shèhuì, shēnrù mǐnjiān, zōuxiàng tiányě, qù qiǎngjiù, wǎjué, bǎohù, zhēnglǐ hé yùnyòng gèngwéi zhēnshí, yě gèng yǒu shuōfùlì de shízhèngxìng zīliào (gèng duō de shì shíwù zīliào hé kǒushù zīliào).' 我们的研究人员，一般较为重视现有资料（特别是文字资料）的收集、整理和运用（我们当然不是否定这种研究方法）、而往往忽视实证性研究，较少走出图书馆和书斋，步入社会、深入民间、走向田野，去抢救、挖掘、保护、整理和运用更为真实、也更有说服力的实证性资料（更多的是实物资料和口述资料）。

19 'Cóngshì duì rì xījūnzhàn sùsòng de Wáng Xuǎn nǚshì, céng duōcì zài xuéshù huìyì shàng, qiángliè hūyù shíxué gōngzuòzhě zhòngshì shízhèngxìng yánjiū, yào yǔ shíjiān sàipǎo, gèng duō de qiǎngjiù hé wǎjué zhèngzài dàliàng yīnmì hé yīshī de zhēngjù zhèngjù hé zīliào, wèi mǐnjiān duì rì suǒpéi sùsòng tígōng gèngwéi xiángshí gèng yǒu shuōfùlì de zhèngjù, jìndào shíxué gōngzuòzhě yīng jìn de zhízé hé yìwù.' 从事对日细菌战诉讼的王选女士，曾多次在学术会议上，强烈呼吁史学工作者重视实证性研究，要与时间赛跑，更多地抢救和挖掘正在大量湮灭和遗失的珍贵证据和资料，为民间对日索赔诉讼提供更为翔实更有说服力的证据，尽到史学工作者应尽的职责和义务。

This brings to the fore another facet of foreign influence on Chinese comfort women research, since this research does not exist in a closed space but has reference groups. Sū has so far expressed a rejection of 'heavy theoretical discussions' and promotes 'empirical' (实证性 *shízhèngxìng*)<sup>20</sup> research. Here, he encourages his colleagues to follow the 'overseas example'. But even though the desired readership might be international researchers and the expected one primarily Chinese, comfort women authors nevertheless seem to have a different interlocutor in mind. When asking questions such as: Whom do these authors ultimately intend to convince? and Who stimulated/triggered their discussion in the first place? the answer seems to be—the Japanese rightwing revisionists. Looking at the aforementioned first two peaks in comfort women publications, revisionists seem to have dictated the choice of topics. Discussions about Japan's war responsibility and duty to compensate, just as Chinese indignation about the history textbook controversies, are direct reactions to Japanese revisionist claims. Revisionists thus emerge as *the* reference group.

In addition to the content, the very manner in which Chinese historians conduct their research and the form in which they present their findings are shaped too by the imagined Japanese revisionist interlocutor. The phenomenon of descriptive factual research outweighing analytical discussion is astonishing with regards to foreign academic publications. It is not so surprising, however, if one takes into account that some historians believe it to be their task to become more active not only in libraries, but also in society. It is in everyday life that a semi-academic, semi-political group consisting of Japanese rightwing politicians and historians dominate international mass media and succeed in nailing down the comfort women debate to a descriptive, factual-positivist level. In order to refute revisionist claims in legal processes as well as in the mass media, but having no back-up in archival evidence provided by the Chinese government, historians like Sū Zhiliáng have to adapt to their opponents' rhetorical strategies and attempt to excavate their own 'facts' about the 'truth' of the comfort women system in mainland China. Once enough factual evidence has been provided, analytical approaches gain importance. Only after basic research has been conducted and certain 'facts' that underpin the Chinese case have been accepted in wider international communities, so, it seems, can the luxury of analytical if not philosophical debates be afforded. This would suggest that the Chinese academic world is still deeply rooted in Marxist thinking in its purest sense: the basis determines the superstructure. Once the economic basis (in this case material and oral evidence proving former Chinese comfort women were victims of Japanese militarism and imperialism and are thus entitled to compensation) has been established, resources can be shifted into the superstructure, that is, into philosophical debates about further causalities, etc. In 2000, former Chinese comfort women testi-

20 For a discussion of the ambiguous nature of the term *shízhèngxìng*, also of the various translations employed in the quotations above, see chapter 3 of my thesis, pp. 73-101.

fied in the Women's International War Crime Tribunal in Tōkyō, a mock tribunal based on international laws that were in place during World War II, which was broadcast by international media. 'On the fifth day, 12 December 2000, the Tribunal issued its preliminary judgment, which found Emperor Hirohito guilty, and the State of Japan responsible, for the crimes of rape and sexual slavery as crimes against humanity' (Violence Against Women in War-Network Japan). After the evidence had sufficiently supported the prosecutors' case, comfort women research in the PRC started to produce analytical, theoretical articles as well. International developments thus again seem to have had an effect on the quality (in its ontological meaning) of PRC comfort women discourse.

## Conclusion

This paper has attempted to provide the reader with a general outline of academic research in the PRC on comfort women from its very beginning until 2008. The quantitative section of the paper demonstrated that—unlike in other countries—neither feminist activism nor women's studies gave the impetus, but that literature studies were the first to mention the issue. However, comfort women soon turned into a research field that concerned almost the whole academic world beyond disciplinary boundaries. In this context, further analysis has disclosed a discrepancy between comfort women activism inside and outside the PRC and Chinese academic publications. What eventually triggered a widespread discussion of the issue was not the concern for the hardships of these women but a general indignation with official Japanese attitudes towards past crimes. This paper has argued that it was the contextualisation within debates about Japanese atrocities, their denial, and the refusal to pay 'adequate' compensation that eventually enabled the issue to become a research field in its own right.

Another finding is a strong preference for descriptive as opposed to analytical research. Here again the PRC deviates from academic trends in other countries. The qualitative section of this paper locates the reasons for such behaviour firstly in a general dissatisfaction with feminist concepts and Marxist party historiography. Secondly, a ban issued by the Chinese government on comfort women-related material in the archives forces Chinese non-party historians to 'excavate' their own 'facts'. Thirdly, it has been argued that the imagined Japanese interlocutors, that is, Japanese revisionists, have shaped comfort women research not only in terms of topics, but also concerning the mode of representation, as Chinese historians attempt to refute revisionist positivist arguments on their own grounds. This focus on Japan and Japanese atrocities is then part of a larger phenomenon in Chinese popular historiography, namely the shift from self-perception as a victor to a victim.

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## GLOSSARY

Bù róngxǔ shǐyòng wāiqū lìshǐ de jiàokēshū. Yàzhōu tuánjié jǐnjí dàhuì jìshí	不容许使用歪曲历史的教科书—亚洲团结紧急大会	Emergency Meeting of Asian Unity against the Distortion of History
Chángchūn	长春	capital of Jilin province
cháoxiǎn nǚzǐ	朝鲜女子	Korean women
Chén Lǐfēi	陈丽菲	Chinese comfort women historian; Shànghǎi Normal University
Chén Lǚ	陈櫓	Chinese sociologist; Nanjing University of Science & Technology
Dì-wǔ jiè jìn bǎi nián zhōngri guānxìshǐ guóji yántǎohuì	第五届近百年中日关系史国际研讨会	Fifth International Symposium on the History of Almost 100 Years of Sino-Japanese Relations
Dīng Líng	丁玲	Chinese novelist, author of the novel <i>Wǒ zài Xiácūn de shíhòu</i>
Egami Sachiko	江上幸子	Japanese specialist on modern Chinese literature and women's history, Ferris University
Fǎxué zázhì	法学杂志	Law science magazine
Fú Héjī	符和积	Chinese comfort women historian, Hainan Normal University
Gāo Fánfū	高凡夫	Chinese historian, specialising in the history of the Chinese anti-Japanese war of resistance and of Sino-Japanese relations; Shànghǎi Normal University
Hǎinán shěng	海南省	Hainan province
Hú Péng	胡澎	Chinese historian, specialising in Japanese society, women's studies; History Department of Běijīng University
Jiāng Wéijiǔ	姜维久	Chinese Japanologist, specialising in Japanese economy and politics; fellow at the Institute for Japanese Studies at the Jilin Academy of Social Sciences
Jìniàn Qīqī Shìbiàn zhōunián guóji xuéshù tāolùnhuì	纪念七七事变 60 周年国际学术讨论会	International Symposium Commemorating 60 Years of the Incident at the Marco Polo Bridge
Kàngri zhànzhēng yánjiū	抗日战争研究	Journal of studies on China's war of resistance against Japan

Kim Hak-sun	김학순 (金学顺)	(1924–1997), former Korean comfort woman; testified in public for the first time in Korea that she was forced to serve Japanese soldiers sexually
Lǐ Xiùméi <i>liángjiā nǚzǐ</i>	李秀梅 良家女子	Former Chinese comfort woman women from respectable families
Nakane Chie	中根千枝	Japanese anthropologist, tibetologist, professor emeritus at University of Tōkyō
Nánjīng lǐgōng dàxué	南京理工大学	Nanjing University of Technology and Science
<i>nǚquán zhǔyì</i> <i>nǚxìng zhǔyì</i> Qīngsuàn Rìběn guòqù guójì xuésù huìyì Quánjīn <i>Rénmín Rìbào</i>	女权主义 女性主义 清算日本过去国际学术会议 全金 人民日报	feminism feminism International Academic Symposium to Settle Japan's Past Protagonist of the novel <i>Xiànzài People's Daily</i> , organ of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party
<i>rìběn jìnnǚ</i> <i>Rìběn xuékān</i> <i>Rìběn yánjiū</i> Saitō Michihiko	日本妓女 日本学刊 日本研究 齋藤道彦	Japanese prostitutes Japanese studies, journal Japan studies, journal Japanese sinologist, specialising in Chinese language and literature, professor at Chuo University
<i>sèqíngkuáng</i> Shànghǎi shīfàn dàxué Shànghǎi yángjiāzhái wèiānsuǒ	色情狂 上海师范大学 上海杨家宅慰安所	sex maniacs Shànghǎi Normal University name of a comfort station in Shànghǎi
<i>shénzhàn</i> <i>shízhèngxìng</i> Sū Shí Sū Zhiliáng	神战 实证性 稣实 苏智良	holy war empirical, positivist Chinese comfort women author Chinese comfort women historian, head of the History Department of Shànghǎi Normal University and founder and director of the Chinese Comfort Women Research Centre ( <i>Zhōngguó wèiānfù wèntí yánjiū zhōngxīn</i> 中国慰安妇问题研究中心)
Ueno Chizuko	上野千鹤子	Japanese feminist sociologist, professor emeritus at University of Tōkyō
Wáng Lín	王琳	Chinese comfort women author

Wáng Xù Wáng Xuǎn Wèi Huì (also Zhōu Wèihui) <i>wǒ guó tóngbāo</i> <i>Wǒ zài Xiácūn de shíhou</i>	王旭 王选 周卫慧 我国同胞 我在霞村的时候	Chinese playwright Chinese plaintiff Chinese novelist compatriots When I was in Xiácūn; title of a novel
<i>Xiànzài</i> Yán'ān	现在 延安	Now [title of a novel] prefecture-level city in Shǎnxī province; former Chinese Communist headquarters
Yè Mí	叶弥	Chinese novelist, author of the novel <i>Xiànzài</i>
Yoshimi Yoshiaki	吉見義明	Japanese comfort women historian
Yun Chǒng-ok	윤정옥 (尹貞玉)	Korean comfort women historian
Zhāng Jié Zhāng Quán	张洁 张铨	Chinese novelist Chinese historian, Shànghǎi Academy of Social Sciences
Zhāng Shùhé Zhào Déqín	张树和 赵德芹	Chinese lawyer Chinese historian, specialising in the history of anti-Japanese war of resistance and Chinese Marxism, Qingdao University of Science & Technology
Zhào Guóqìng Zhēnzhēn	赵国庆 贞贞	Chinese playwright Protagonist of the novel <i>Wǒ zài Xiácūn de shíhou</i>
Zhōngguó 'wèiānfù' wèntí guójì xuéshù yántǎohuì	中国“慰安妇”问题国际学术研讨会	International Symposium on the 'Comfort Women' Issue in China
<i>Zhōngguó rénwén shèhuì kēxué héxīn qīkān yàolǎn</i>	中国人文社会科学核心期刊要览	A guide to the humanities and social sciences core journals in China
Zhōngguó wèiānfù wèntí yánjiū zhōngxīn <i>zòngxiàng shèhuì</i>	中国慰安妇问题研究中心 纵向社会	Chinese Comfort Women Research Centre vertical society