

Riko Kobayashi | March 15, 2026

Being a “White Banana” in a Postcolonial World: Japanese Feminisms at the 1975 International Women’s Conference

Introduction

“White banana”—Asian on the outside, acting white on the inside. At the 1975 UN World Conference on Women in Mexico City, some Japanese feminists were confronted with precisely this accusation: they claimed feminist solidarity while remaining indifferent to Japan's economic and sexual exploitation across Asia (Yoshitake, 1991). This encounter points to a broader problem at the heart of transnational feminism and postcolonial thought: the difficulty of theorizing subjects who cannot be neatly positioned on either side of the oppressor and oppressed divide. Feminist and postcolonial scholars have powerfully demonstrated that gender, race, and empire are not separate domains but mutually constitutive formations, and that feminist movements have themselves been entangled with colonial power in ways that demand critical scrutiny (e.g., Crenshaw, 1991; McClintock, 1995; Mohanty, 1984). Yet this scholarship has tended to map the world onto a binary, Western perpetrators and non-Western victims, white complicity and colored resistance, leaving little analytical room for subjects whose positionality cuts across these categories. When the actor in question is neither Western nor fully colonized, neither a straightforward beneficiary of the empire nor its unambiguous target, existing frameworks struggle to account for the contradictions she inhabits.

This paper takes up that problem through an archival analysis of materials produced by Japanese feminists who participated in the 1975 UN World Conference on Women in Mexico

City. Drawing on materials from feminist publications, activist organizations, and official government records, it examines how five Japanese actors navigated anticolonial critique at the conference, and what their varied responses reveal about the relationship between feminist politics and imperial complicity in contexts that exceed the Western frame. This paper argues that Japanese feminists' varied responses to imperial critique cannot be understood through a simple binary of complicity or resistance, but rather as a spectrum of positions shaped by a structural condition I term “nested imperialism.” This concept captures the multi-layered power configuration in which Japan occupied a subordinate position within U.S. hegemony while simultaneously exercising sub-imperialist dominance over Asia. This nested structure created a discursive flexibility: depending on which layer of the hierarchy they addressed, Japanese feminists could expand or contract their sense of responsibility, enabling a range of responses from strategic silence to reflexive solidarity.

Literature Review

Feminist scholars have long contended that various systems of power are not isolated phenomena but are indivisible and inextricably intertwined. Davis (1981), for instance, argued that the three axes of oppression, namely race, class, and sex, do not exist independently; rather, they are deeply embedded within the capitalist structure, forming a self-reinforcing apparatus. Consequently, Davis offered a trenchant critique of white middle-class feminism for privileging women's rights while decoupling it from the exigencies of class and race. Similarly, hooks (1984) emphasized the necessity of reconceptualizing oppression not as a single event, but as a multilayered structure of power where multiple systems of domination mutually facilitate one another. The Combahee River Collective (1977), a landmark Black feminist organization,

articulated a political movement against the multiple oppressions faced by women of color by defining race, gender, heterosexism, and class-based oppressions as an “interlocking system.” Their manifesto argued that the dismantling of capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy was a prerequisite for true liberation. These foundational discourses within Black feminism culminated in the conceptualization of intersectionality. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) theorized this framework as “intersectionality.” She critiqued contemporary identity politics for treating racism and sexism as mutually exclusive categories, an approach that often invisibilizes the internal heterogeneities within marginalized groups (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). She argued that the experiences of women of color are shaped by the conjuncture of racism and sexism and, therefore, cannot be understood through a single-axis lens (Crenshaw, 1991, pp. 1243-1244). This framework is typically analyzed through three dimensions: structural, political, and representational intersectionality. Building on Crenshaw, Collins (1990) proposed the “matrix of domination” to describe the overall social organization of intersecting oppressions. This matrix operates across four domains, which include the structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal, allowing for the localization of individual experiences of discrimination within broader mechanisms of power (Collins, 1990, pp. 227-228). However, while intersectionality has become a dominant paradigm for analyzing multidimensional power dynamics, its greatest strength is also its primary limitation: it is deeply rooted in the embodied experiences of multiple marginalized subjects, specifically Black women. This raises critical questions regarding its applicability to diverse geopolitical contexts (Nash, 2008). Because the concept was developed against the backdrop of the U.S., there has been insufficient scholarly attention to how race functions in non-Western contexts, such as intra-Asian racial and ethnic discrimination. Therefore, while intersectionality has successfully rendered visible the point of multi-layered

oppression where race, class, and gender converge, it lacks a sufficient analytical vocabulary to address the subjective ambivalence of subjects. That is, the framework struggles to account for subjects who may be oppressed along one axis of power while simultaneously being complicit in maintaining the structure along another.

Among the various intersections of power, this paper mainly focuses particularly on the relationship between feminism and colonialism. Feminism has been shown to be not a pure theory of liberation external to colonialism, but a project that has historically been entangled with colonial power and has remained complicit with it from the colonial period through the postcolonial era and into the present. Anne McClintock (1995) argues that within Victorian imperialism, gender, race, and class did not exist as separate domains but rather functioned as mutually constitutive and “articulated categories” (McClintock, 1995, p. 5). She further points out that white women in imperial contexts were not merely powerless observers or victims of patriarchal domination. Rather, they occupied a position of “ambiguous complicity,” simultaneously subject to gendered subordination while also exercising privilege over colonized peoples (McClintock, 1995 pp. 6, 379). The historical and structural asymmetry identified by McClintock did not disappear with the formal end of colonial rule but has persisted into the postcolonial era. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1984) famously criticized Western feminist discourse for representing “Third World women” as a homogeneous group of victims while simultaneously privileging Western women as liberated subjects. This representation of Third World women as passive victims of male domination was further examined theoretically by Saba Mahmood (2004). Mahmood argued that when Western feminists condemn non-Western, particularly Islamic, cultures and religions as inherently patriarchal and in need of reform, and position themselves as responsible for “saving” indigenous women, they reproduce the logic of

the colonial “civilizing mission” that historically justified imperial domination (2004, p. 90). More recently, the European context has provided another example of this dynamic. The ideals of feminism, such as women’s rights and gender equality, have sometimes been mobilized by right-wing political actors to justify xenophobic agendas, including anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant policies. Sara R. Farris (2017) conceptualizes this phenomenon as “femonationalism,” referring to the instrumentalization of feminist discourse by nationalist and anti-immigrant politics, a process in which some feminists themselves have also become implicated. Hence these critiques demonstrate that feminism has historically and discursively been entangled with colonial power structures and, at times, complicit in their reproduction. These debates have powerfully exposed the complicity between feminism and colonialism, yet their focus has remained largely confined to Western and white subjects. As a result, relatively little scholarship has accumulated on phenomena such as imperialism in non-Western contexts or forms of colonial complicity enacted by non-white actors. This paper therefore moves beyond a simple binary of oppression and resistance and instead develops what McClintock calls “notions of power and resistance to a more diverse politics of agency, involving the dense web of relations between coercion, negotiation, complicity, refusal, dissembling, mimicry, compromise, affiliation and revolt” (1995, p. 15).

The case of feminism in Japan

The case of Japanese feminists offers a unique site for examining subjects that cannot be positioned strictly within either power or resistance. This is because the Japanese feminist movement occupies a distinctive positionality shaped by the country’s complex historical trajectory. One of the origins of feminism in Japan can be traced back to the early 20th century. In 1911, the writer Raichō Hiratsuka spearheaded the founding of the women’s literary magazine

Seito, which advocated for women's self-expression, social participation, and autonomy (Inoue 2021). This is often regarded as one of the symbolic starting points for Japanese feminism. In the 1920s, the movement for women's political participation expanded, with figures such as Fusae Ichikawa advocating for suffrage through the Women's Suffrage League (Inoue 2021). However, the realization of women's political rights did not occur until after the Second World War, in 1945 after World War II.

From the early to mid-twentieth century, Japan functioned as a non-Western imperial aggressor, occupying various regions across East Asia, including Taiwan and the Korean Peninsula (Duus, 1995). Regarding this imperialism, Eiji Oguma (1998) argues that Japan was a latecomer imperial power, acutely aware of the threat posed by Western powers. Intellectuals in modern Japan oscillated between two self-perceptions: as colored peoples subjected to discrimination and the threat of invasion by the West and by white powers, and as members of an empire that controlled overseas territories. Oguma terms this ambivalent position of dominion the "colored empire" (1998, pp. 661–662). The Empire of Japan thus embodied a dual nature, simultaneously a victim and a perpetrator (Oguma, 1998, p. 665). Moreover, contemporary feminism did not merely support the war in the name of advancing women's status; it also functioned to justify imperial expansion in Asia, both as a response to Western-centric hegemony and through the rhetoric of women's liberation (Kano, 1987). Following its defeat in 1945, Japan, having suffered devastating damage from the atomic bombings, was placed under American occupation and became a subordinate subject (Dower, 1999). During the occupation, the "liberation" of Japanese women was, as Lisa Yoneyama (2016) notes, aptly described as liberation under siege. This form of liberation was politically constructed as part of a civilizing mission designed to justify American imperial domination. Measures such as granting women

the right to vote and legal reforms by the U.S. occupation forces served to fix Japanese women as pre-modern others awaiting salvation, thereby reinforcing the United States' superiority as the purveyor of modernity. In practice, however, this liberation also functioned as a form of hegemonic feminism deeply embedded in Cold War military strategy: it suppressed the issue of Japan's military sexual slavery, organized sexual services for Allied troops, and simultaneously restructured women into the maternal role of proper citizens. This case, in turn, has been rhetorically deployed as a so-called "successful model" for contemporary military interventions in the Middle East, justified under the guise of "saving Muslim women" (Yoneyama 2016).

Following its rapid postwar recovery, Japan achieved remarkable economic growth through the Korean War boom and the outsourcing of inexpensive labor across Asia, emerging as an economic powerhouse by the 1960s (Johnson, 1982). However, it took considerable time for debates over Japan's nationalist aggression and complicity to take hold. This was because, under the Cold War and occupation policies, many Japanese citizens maintained a self-perception as victims deceived by the military, while even progressive groups were immersed in discourses of avoidance that emphasized the suffering of the Japanese themselves (Fujiwara 2020; Tsutsui 2009). As a result, memories of imperialist acts against other parts of Asia were long concealed and forgotten. By the late 1960s, the realities of Japan supporting U.S. military operations were confronted through the anti-Vietnam War movement. During this period, leading activists such as Minoru Oda came to recognize that "we too are perpetrators" (Avenell 2022). This realization became a decisive driving force for confronting the long-neglected history of imperialist aggression, a process that can be understood as "deimperialization" (Avenell 2022).

This paradigm shift toward recognizing Japanese women as both victims and perpetrators also had a significant impact on feminism. Prior to this, feminist movements largely relied on

narratives of war-related suffering, positioning women primarily as victims advocating for peace. In the 1970s, second-wave feminism, known in Japan as *ūmanribu* (Women's Lib), emerged. By 1975, although women's educational attainment in Japan was rising, institutional and social constraints remained substantial. University enrollment rates exhibited a stark gender gap—12.7% for women compared to 41.0% for men—with women concentrated in junior colleges (enrollment rate 20.2%) oriented toward teaching, clerical, or domestic studies (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). In the labor force, participation among women in their early twenties was approximately 65%, but it declined sharply to around 45% during the childbearing and childcare years, forming the characteristic M-shaped curve. Women were largely confined to clerical and service-sector positions, with almost no representation in managerial roles (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications). Moreover, reproductive rights were constrained under the Eugenic Protection Law, enacted in 1948. The Women's Lib movement of the 1970s therefore demanded the rectification of inequalities spanning education, labor, and bodily autonomy (Ehara 2021). Within this movement, influenced by the process of de-imperialization, activists rejected the simplistic victim consciousness that leftist women in the peace movement often adopted, instead redefining Japanese women as the victims and at the same time the accomplices (Shigematsu 2012).

In this way, while existing scholarship has often tended to converge on a binary between power and resistance, or between the complicity of Western/white women and the multiple marginalities of women of color, the Japanese case presents a highly layered and ambivalent positionality, in which Japan was subordinate to American imperialism while simultaneously exercising dominant privileges over Asia. Through this analysis, I term the power dynamics whereby actors are oppressed by a vast imperial order yet continue to reproduce their own

positions of dominance within it as “nested imperialism.” This framework, grounded in the empirical diversity of Japanese feminist responses, further illuminates the multiplicity of strategies and negotiations these women employed when confronting colonialism and its legacies.

Methodology

The data for this study consist of archival materials on feminist movements in Japan around 1975, particularly those related to the 1975 United Nations World Conference of the International Women’s Year. This conference is particularly significant not only because it was the first United Nations meeting to place issues concerning women at the center of its agenda, but also because it became the first large-scale international forum in which North–South conflicts emerged sharply within the sphere of women’s issues.

It served as a site where developing nations asserting that combating the legacy of imperialism is a prerequisite for women’s liberation stood in direct opposition to developed nations (Bonfiglioli 2016; Olcott, 2017). The conference was structured on two levels, consisting of an official conference and an informal conference, known as the Tribune. Official delegations from the government attended the official conference, while approximately 200 civilian women from Japan participated in the informal conference (United Nation 1976, Matsui 1975).¹

Regarding the discourse of the Official Delegation from Japan, two distinct perspectives were identified to capture the diversity of viewpoints within the government delegation. The focus on these two individuals is grounded in the fact that they were the only members of the delegation to participate in the conference for its entire duration. The first category represents the

¹ The official conference was attended by approximately 1,200 participants, including official delegations from 133 United Nations member states (United Nations, 1976). In contrast, the informal conference brought together NGO representatives, journalists, and activists, and is reported to have attracted approximately 6,000 participants in total (Olcott, 2017).

official discourse of the government delegation, centered on the records of Taki Fujita, the chief representative. The primary sources include Fujita's speeches delivered as the Prime Minister's representative and Fujita's reports presented at government briefing sessions and published in *Agora* (Agora, 1975). The second category reflects the perspective of Michiko Tanaka, a representative of the Japanese Communist Party. Although a member of the delegation, Tanaka provided an independent viewpoint as part of a minority political party. Specifically, I conducted a detailed examination of her autobiography alongside an interview from the year following the conference (Maruoka & Tanaka, 1976).

Regarding the discourse of the grassroots activists, three categories are primarily identified. Among approximately 200 people from Japan participants, journalist Yayori Matsui highlighted three groups that were organized and active: *the Ribu Shinjuku Center*, *Agora*, and *the Association of Women Who Act* (Matsui, 1975). In this study, materials from *the Ribu Shinjuku Center* are excluded, as no records related to its participation in the Mexico conference are extant.² Accordingly, the analysis focuses on *Agora*, *the Association of Women Who Act*, and journalist-activist Yayori Matsui. First, *Agora* centered on the publication of the magazine *Agora*, producing 107 issues between 1972 and 1986. The October 1975 issue, approximately 200 pages, was a special edition commemorating the International Women's Year and included interviews with government and bureaucratic officials, accounts of how *Agora* decided to participate in the Mexico conference, individual reflections of participants representing the *Agora* group, and proposals prepared for the panel "Japanese Women: Past and Present" at the Tribune. Second, To trace the perspectives of this emerging feminist organization, the analysis

² *The Ribu Shinjuku Center* experienced burnout from its activities in Tokyo between 1970 and 1975 and subsequently dissolved after attending the conference in Mexico. It is reported that the group conducted a session on the Eugenic Protection Law, which concerned abortion legislation, at the conference. However, no materials authored by the group have been located.

focuses on materials from the Association of Women Who Act Collection that reference the Mexico conference, including the first regularly distributed issue, approximately six pages (Takagi et al., 2015–2016). It also considers participant reflections later published in the retrospective volume *The Path Paved by the Association of Women Who Act* (1999). Third, Yayori Matsui, who was both a contemporary observer and an activist, offers a unique perspective. This study examines her reflections on the conference published in *minikomi*, a form of zine-like publication prevalent in Japanese feminism at the time, as well as her later interviews (Matsui, 1975).³

In addition, to provide an international context and reference official records, the study also consulted United Nations official documents, including the Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, which consists of approximately 200 pages, and the List of Participants, which contains 135 pages (United Nations 1976).

The primary sources underpinning this analysis were collected through archival research conducted at four institutions. First, at the National Diet Library (NDL), official government reports, the Official Gazette, and published books in Japanese were examined. Second, the digital archives provided by the Women's Action Network (WAN) *minikomi* library were utilized. Third, materials from grassroots movements, including internal documents and mini-comics publications from the period, were gathered from the National Women's Education Center of Japan Repository. Fourth, the University of Chicago Library was consulted to review United Nations (UN) official reports and related literature, providing supplementary context for the international dimensions of the study.

³ The term *minikomi* is an abbreviation of mini-communication, referring to communication on a small scale in contrast to mass media such as television or newspapers. Historically, it has functioned as a form of oppositional practice against mainstream media (Tamura 1976).

I analyzed the primary sources through close reading and memo writing. Each collected source was examined in detail through close reading to scrutinize how actors described themselves, Japanese women, and women from other countries. In parallel, memo writing was employed to conceptualize the materials: as the sources were read, notes were taken to record shared understandings among actors as well as gaps or silences in their discourse, such as the absence of references to Japan's imperial past. By comparing and integrating these memos, the analysis traced the conflicts and underlying logics faced by Japanese women at the time, as reflected in the various discourses.

When using Japanese primary sources, the study went beyond mere linguistic translation and supplemented historical and cultural context as needed. The contextual supplementation involved providing explanations of the historical and cultural background embedded in specific terms and expressions. In addition, all individuals discussed in this study —Taki Fujita, Michiko Tanaka, Yayori Matsui, Teruko Yoshitake, Midori Takeuchi, and Yayoi Aoki— are referenced based on publicly available publications, official records, or interviews. Since these materials document the historical activities of these figures as public actors, their real names are used throughout the study to maintain academic accuracy and integrity.

Finding

The five actors examined in this study represent distinct positions within the Japanese feminist landscape of 1975, spanning from state-appointed officials to independent grassroots organizers. The first two, Taki Fujita (A), the Chief Delegate, and Michiko Tanaka (B), a Communist Party representative, participated as members of the official government delegation. The remaining three actors emerged from outside state structures: *Agora* (C), a grassroots

publishing collective; *Women Who Act* (D), a newly formed feminist organization; and Yayori Matsui (E), an independent journalist.

Official Delegation: Chief Delegate (A)

Taki Fujita was born to a family of judges and grew up moving across multiple locations, including Okinawa shortly after its incorporation into Japan and Port Arthur, still marked by the Russo-Japanese War (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 1983). She attended *Joshi Eigaku Juku*, a women's college that was rare at the time, and later studied at Bryn Mawr College in the United States (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 1983). After returning to Japan, she taught at a university and participated in the women's suffrage movement as part of the first wave of Japanese feminism (Kaneko et al., 2008). Therefore, she can be characterized as an elite, well-educated figure whose involvement in the women's movement dates back to the first wave of Japanese feminism.

At the age of 70, Fujita was appointed as the Chief Delegate of the Japanese government delegation for the International Women's Conference. She led a Japanese delegation that largely resonated with the First World position, emphasizing that the conference should focus on issues directly related to women. In a post conference briefing held by the government delegation, she stated that when terms such as colonialism, neocolonialism, militarism, and apartheid were mentioned, the applause was so strong that it made her feel as though this was not a conference on women's issues (Agora, 1975). She further remarked pointedly that a statement criticizing Panama's status as a United States military base did not so much as mention the word "woman." Fujita delivered an official speech at the main conference, acting as a proxy for the Prime Minister. Prior to presenting the Prime Minister's message, Fujita cited ancient Japanese

mythology and quoted the words of the earlier feminist Hiratsuka Raicho.⁴ Hiratsuka's well-known statement reads, "In the beginning, woman was truly the sun. Now, woman is the moon, which shines by the light of others."⁵ We must now reclaim our sun, which has been hidden from us" (Gendaishi Shuppankai Henshūbu, 1975). Fujita commented that these words continue to encourage women today. She then transitioned to the official address by stating, "Having shared this, it is my pleasure to present the message from Mr. Miki, the Prime Minister of Japan, which is the land of the sun, to all of you" (Gendaishi Shuppankai Henshūbu, 1975).

The narrative of returning to the origin, as seen in the phrase "woman was the sun," relies on a nationalistic mythological framework that is inseparable from the Emperor system and the construction of a unique Japanese identity. During Japan's colonial rule across Asia, this very mythology served as the ideological foundation to justify imperial authority and to enforce State *Shinto* upon colonized peoples.⁶ By invoking this myth as a symbol of equality on the international stage in 1975 without acknowledging its historical context, the Japanese government demonstrates a profound insensitivity toward the perspectives of former colonial subjects. This rhetoric suggests a refusal to confront the legacy of imperialism, opting instead to utilize a classical, nationalistic myth to promote the idea that a "pure" origin of gender equality has existed in Japan since ancient times. The official stance of the Japanese government evades

⁴ "Ancient Japanese mythology" refers to the oldest chronicles of Japan, the *Kojiki*/古事記 (712 CE) and the *Nihon Shoki*/日本書紀 (720 CE). These texts establish the Sun Goddess, *Amaterasu Omikami*/天照大神, as the supreme deity and the legendary ancestor of the Japanese Imperial Family. This framework directly links the sacred origins of the Japanese nation to the authority of the emperor.

⁵ The Japanese term *ganshi* (元始), translated as "in the beginning," carries a profound, primordial nuance that evokes the mythological dawn of the Japanese nation. It alludes to the Shinto creation myths where the sun was personified as the female deity, *Amaterasu Omikami*.

⁶ *Shinto* is a set of indigenous religious beliefs and practices in Japan, centered on the worship of kami, or deities associated with nature, ancestors, and mythological origins of the Japanese nation. In the modern period, selected Shinto myths were institutionalized and politicized by the state, linking national identity, imperial authority, and symbolic representations such as the sun.

historical introspection regarding the violence of imperialism and redefines a nationalistic Japanese identity on the international stage.

Official Delegation: Communist Party Representative (B)

There was another member of the delegation whose perspective stood in stark contrast to that of Fujita. Michiko Tanaka, a member of the House of Representatives, participated in the conference as part of the Japanese government delegation. Born in 1922 in Hiroshima, she was in Keijo (now Seoul) at the end of the war and returned to Japan afterward. In postwar Tokyo, she worked alone, taking on physically demanding jobs such as cleaning U.S. military camera bodies, as well as tutoring and teaching at private schools, moving frequently between locations (Tanaka, 1989). She also experienced periods of unemployment and developed a working-class identity. In 1972, she became a legislator for the Japanese Communist Party. At the time of the conference, she was 53 years old (Japanese Communist Party, 2019).

She belonged to the Japanese Communist Party, which represented a small minority in Japan, and focused on issues such as the gender wage gap. As a legislator representing the Japanese Communist Party and the Innovationist Joint Group, Michiko Tanaka centered her political advocacy on issues such as the gender wage gap and was selected as a member of the official government delegation. For Tanaka, this assignment marked her first experience traveling abroad and flying, a significant personal milestone (Tanaka, 1989, p. 233). At the Tribune, the non-governmental forum of the conference, Tanaka served as a panelist on Peace Education. During her session, she critically addressed the Japanese government's commitment to strengthening the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, a military alliance maintained under the American nuclear umbrella. She contended that although Japan was categorized as an independent nation, the presence of 142 foreign military bases, the operations of which remained

largely opaque to the Japanese public, fundamentally undermined this status. Tanaka highlighted the plight of innocent citizens suffering from crimes committed by U.S. personnel, including assault, robbery, and the exploitation of women through the sex trade, arguing that Japan could not be considered a truly peaceful nation under such conditions (Tanaka, 1989). Moreover, reflecting on the conference in an interview the following year, Tanaka recalled being profoundly inspired by the voices of women from the Third World. This encounter led her to the conviction that women's liberation is unattainable unless a nation achieves full independence (Maruoka & Tanaka, 1976). Drawing from the Third World's emphasis on national sovereignty, Tanaka reapplied this lens to Japan–U.S. relations. She argued that Japan's sovereignty was fundamentally compromised by the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty, which legitimized the stationing of American forces on Japanese soil. Through this perspective, she questioned whether Japan could truly be regarded as a sovereign, developed state.

However, despite her professed resonance with the Third World's assertions, she maintains a conspicuous silence regarding Japan's history of imperialist aggression in Asia. Having personally experienced the end of the war in the Korean Peninsula under Japanese rule, it is inconceivable that she was unaware of the realities of Japan's expansionism. Yet, she maintained a sharp distinction between state and people, believing that the responsibility for colonialism and war rested entirely with the government, whereas the citizens themselves were innocent and virtuous. This ideological stance is vividly captured in an episode from her autobiography regarding an encounter in post-surrender Keijo (now Seoul). Shortly after the war's end, a Korean individual attempted to take her English dictionary. When she confronted the individual, they argued that such an act was justifiable given the extensive exploitation of Koreans by the Japanese. Tanaka, however, retorted that while the Japanese government might

have been at fault, individual citizens bore no guilt, and thus the individual's resentment was misdirected (Tanaka, 1989). This exchange underscores her perception of a clear demarcation between state accountability for colonialism and the innocence of the general public. Within this logic, the collapse of the Japanese Empire functioned as a definitive end to the country's role as a perpetrator, rendering further historical introspection regarding individual or societal complicity unnecessary in her political discourse.

Tanaka's political lens was circumscribed by a bilateral U.S.–Japan framework, within which she consistently redefined Japan as a victim whose sovereignty had been compromised by the United States. She selectively appropriated the rhetoric of national sovereignty championed by the Third World, borrowing its anti-colonial fervor as a tool to criticize the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty. In this sense, Tanaka's discourse functioned as a selective appropriation of Third World struggles. By continuously reframing Japan as a victim of American hegemony, she created a narrative mechanism that effectively neutralized Japan's historical responsibility as a perpetrator. Consequently, the historical context of colonial responsibility toward Asia was never integrated into her discourse on sovereignty.

Grassroots movement: Agora (C)

In contrast to the state-appointed delegates, several grassroots feminist groups independently organized their own participation in the Tribune. Agora, a Japanese grassroots organization involved in publishing, traveled to Mexico to observe the International Women's Conference. Inspired by the Greek agora, this publication initiative was founded in 1972 to support working women (Agora, 1972). Its members were primarily working mothers and housewives, focusing on workplace inequality. The initiator, Chiyo Saito, was born in 1926, so most participants were likely in their 40s–50s at the time (Aoki, 2017). Seizing the opportunity

to cross the Pacific, the group also expressed a desire to visit Cuba and to see the Mayan ruins while in Mexico. A total of eighteen members participated in the tour. They appear to have participated mainly as observers, rather than as active delegates to the Mexico conference (Agora, 1975).

In their magazine, *Agora* described the conference as reflecting the international political climate of the time, noting that “since the 1960s, a series of colonial independences, combined with denunciations of long-term aggression by developed countries and the harms of capitalism, has made it natural for the pursuit of the roots of discrimination to extend to socioeconomic issues” (Agora, 1975: 9). By framing the issues raised by Third World feminists as a natural and logical development, this statement demonstrates a clear resonance with the Third World. Regarding their decision to travel to Mexico, they further explained: “We strongly wished to engage in dialogue with the so-called Third World people with whom we want to express solidarity” (Agora, 1975: 32).

At the time, traveling from Japan to Mexico was challenging, and *Agora* initially considered using a travel agency. However, they discovered that the agency had been recognized by the Korean administration for sending over 5,000 Japanese tourists annually on so-called *Kisaeng* tours, which involved Japanese men visiting Korea for prostitution. Consequently, the group decided not to use this agency. They explored alternatives but found that most other agencies were either connected to *Kisaeng* tours to varying degrees or were prohibitively expensive. Despite the inconvenience and higher costs, *Agora* was determined to avoid supporting such operators and instead organized the trip themselves. This decision reflects a clear awareness of Japan’s “sexual imperialism” in Asia and the *Kisaeng* tourism problem

highlighted by Korean feminists. It also demonstrates their political resistance to participating economically in the reproduction of Japanese imperialism.

At the Tribune, Agora quickly prepared a panel presentation on June 10, 1975. At the conclusion of the panel, they put forward six proposals. The proposals focused on critiquing population-control agendas in women's education, promoting women's autonomy, challenging patriarchal norms in marriage and language, questioning elite-oriented Western feminism, and redefining progress through the improvement of ordinary women's lived conditions rather than through symbolic female leadership. While Agora successfully articulated a critique of Western-style feminism, the organization was unable to develop a substantive decolonial critique of the Japanese state and its imperial legacy. Although Agora sought to engage with Asian and African feminists, the absence of these groups from the actual panel limited the potential for a transnational decolonial critique. Without the intervention of formerly colonized voices, their critique of Western notions of progress could not fully address the historical complicity of the Japanese state in these issues.

However, some of the women who participated in Agora's tour reflected on imperialism and its enduring legacies. For example, Yayoi Aoki, one of the participants, noted that unless concrete measures are proposed to address one's own complicity, neither women's liberation nor solidarity with the Third World can be persuasive.⁷ She also reflected on working women, observing that they are inevitably implicated in Japan's economic aggression and cannot escape the paradox of being both victims and perpetrators. Moreover, she recalled that everyone carries this duality of victimhood and complicity, and although it had been known to them in the past, the experience in Mexico brought this awareness to the forefront with intensity.

⁷ Yayoi Aoki is an independent scholar, social critic, and freelance writer in Japan who consciously operates outside academic institutions to maintain her intellectual freedom. She is renowned for theorizing the symbiotic relationship between the Japanese imperial system and the patriarchal household (*ie*) system.

In summary, Agora sought solidarity with the Third World and demonstrated this commitment through ethical choices, such as their careful selection of a travel agency. However, at the conference, they were unable to engage directly with women from the Third World, nor did they confront criticism of Japan. Consequently, their proposals did not incorporate a concrete critique of Japanese imperialism. Nevertheless, some participants in the Agora tour reflected on their own complicity, while others did not. Although the group did not receive direct criticism and was unable to translate these reflections into concrete proposals, it can be argued that attending the Mexico conference prompted a sense of discomfort as feminists from an economically powerful country fostered self-reflection among participants.

Grassroots movement: Women Who Act (D)

Among the grassroots organizations participating in the Tribune, there were also groups from newly emerging movements that were entirely unfamiliar with discourses on such topics as anticolonialism. *Women Who Act*, officially named *the Association of Women Who Take Action in Response to the International Women's Year*, was established in 1975, as its name indicates. It was a newly formed organization, composed mainly of critics and white-collar professional women. Most members were born around the 1930s, so at the time of the conference, participants were generally in their 40s–50s. Approximately ten members of the group participated in the Tribune.

An activist Teruko Yoshitake participated as a member of *the Association of Women Who Act*. She later reflected on a moment at the Mexico conference when an Asian woman called her a “white banana” (Yoshitake, 1991).⁸ The term “white banana” refers to a banana that appears

⁸ This account comes from an interview published in 1999, twenty-four years later, and there is no definitive confirmation that it reflects interactions at the Mexico conference. In her report at an internal regular meeting on July 14, 1975, she only stated, “I feel a certain weight pressing on me, and perhaps over the course of this year or the next, as I take action and encounter various challenges, I will look back and realize, ‘Ah, that was what it was about at that time.’” I am currently in the process of verifying whether this can be corroborated through contemporary materials from South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines.

yellow on the outside but is white once peeled. It was a critique of Japanese women who, despite being people of color, act like white people and discriminate against or trample upon individuals from other Asian countries. Yoshitake realized that, even as a fellow woman, she had been on the side of those who step on others, having lived comfortably amid her country's wealth while ignoring the political situation in which Japan engaged in sexual and economic aggression against other Asian nations. Moreover, when she attended a forum on prostitution, she was shown brochures for Japanese "sex tours" and asked: Are Japanese women protecting their own homes by exploiting the sexuality of Asian women, whom they consider inferior? From these experiences, she reflected: when participating in international conferences, one cannot treat any issue as merely a personal matter, for example by claiming that one's own husband does not engage in such behavior. Realizing, with sharp and profound pain, that she must take responsibility for her country's actions as a citizen, she became deeply aware that forming strong bonds with women around the world requires a thorough reckoning with her own country's politics. Since Yoshitake and *Women Who Act* began their activities in 1975, they were likely unfamiliar with earlier feminist critiques of imperialism. The "white banana" criticism first prompted Yoshitake to deconstruct her view of herself as merely a passive victim of patriarchy, serving as a catalyst for recognizing her role as a privileged accomplice within global imperialist structures. Her realization that "even as a fellow woman myself, I was on the side of those who step on others" rejects the notion of universal feminism and highlights her complicity. Importantly, Yoshitake did not retreat into personal moral issues, such as her husband's behavior, but instead directed her awareness toward political responsibility as a citizen.

Another participant from *Women Who Act*, Midori Takeuchi, reflected at a post-conference report meeting that Japan, while a developed country, is not white, and that

Japanese women occupy a dual position as both members of the exploiting side and as those who are themselves exploited. She noted that she had hoped to foster solidarity with the Third World and serve as a bridge with the First World. However, Takeuchi emphasized the perspective of those being exploited rather than Japan's complicity. A dynamic of retreating to a victimized position, in which "we too are discriminated against," was at play, and as a result, the group's subsequent activities did not incorporate perspectives on colonialism (Takagi et.al., 2015–2016).

Grassroots movement: A Journalist (E)

The final case is Yayori Matsui (E), a reporter for *the Asahi Shimbun*, which is one of Japan's major liberal newspapers, who attended the conference in her capacity as a journalist.⁹ Born in 1934 to Christian pastor parents, she studied in the United States and France and became fluent in both English and French (Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center, n.d.). Prior to the conference, Matsui had already developed an interest in Asia. Her tenure as a correspondent in Singapore and her investigative reporting on kisaeng tourism, involving Japanese prostitution tours to South Korea, provided her with a direct perspective on the systemic exploitation underlying Japan's growth. Consequently, she was uniquely positioned to comprehend the contemporary denunciations of Japan's economic development, which was often characterized as "economic aggression" throughout East Asia.

Shortly after the conference, on October 25, 1975, she contributed a reflective piece on the event to *Onna no Hangyaku [Women's Rebellion]*, a self-published magazine produced by an activist circle. Matsui stated, "Of course, Japan, a major GNP nation, was also one of the countries subject to criticism by the Global North" (Matsui 1975), positioning Japan as an economic perpetrator. She further remarked that if the conference had been held in another Asian

⁹ *Asahi Shimbun* is one of Japan's major national newspapers, traditionally considered center-left or relatively liberal in its political orientation. It is widely read across Japan and is known for its coverage of social issues, politics, and international affairs.

country, Japan would likely have become a target of attack and anti-Japanese sentiment would have erupted. In doing so, Matsui addressed Japan's culpability toward East and Southeast Asia more explicitly than other participants. She emphasized that "how Japanese women should respond to the denunciations of Third World women is a crucial issue that will shape the future direction of the women's liberation movement in Japan" (Matsui 1975). Indeed, a year and a half later, in 1977, she established the Association of Asian Women, a feminist movement that foregrounded Japan's violence in Asia as a central concern.¹⁰ Having already been aware of Japanese economic harm, her experience at the conference further deepened her understanding, and it can be said that she subsequently helped establish a feminist movement that placed anti-colonialism at its center.

Discussion

Japanese feminism's engagement with imperialism at the conference reveals a distinct gradient of complicity and resistance, ranging from the official delegation's alignment with First World perspectives to the grassroots' efforts toward Third World solidarity. While the government delegation, exemplified by Taki Fujita, maintained a strategic silence on imperial history by reframing it as an innocent "Japanese culture," political representatives like Michiko Tanaka acknowledged U.S. hegemony while remaining silent on Japan's own role as a perpetrator. In contrast, grassroots organizations such as *Agora* and *Women Who Act* attempted to confront the intersection of gender and colonialism through practical actions and self-reflection, yet they often struggled to move beyond conceptual solidarity or victim-centered narratives.

¹⁰According to Olcott, Matsui served as a co-chair of the United Women of the Tribune, an organization convened by Betty Friedan. The co-chairs included feminists from Korea, Japan, and Nigeria. Friedan claimed that the group formed spontaneously, but Olcott suggests that relatively cooperative Asian and African feminists may have been involved strategically to deflect criticism from the Third World. However, no such information appears in Matsui's own materials. I am currently requesting the primary sources referenced by Olcott, although obtaining them is taking time.

Finally, the perspective of journalists like Yayori Matsui represents a stance in which the explicit recognition of Japan's complicity in Asian exploitation served as the basis for engaging in transnational solidarity.

The findings of this study offer significant theoretical implications, which can be synthesized into two primary dimensions. First, those responses of Japanese feminists toward imperialism suggest that the engagement was not a simple binary of opposition or support, but rather a complex gradient of complicity and resistance based on the degree of recognition of their own role as perpetrators. This study identifies several configurations within these positions. This includes the invisibilization of complicity exemplified by the official government delegation (A), which utilized the strategic replacement of imperial history with the reified concept of "Japanese culture" to evade historical responsibility. Furthermore, the position of Michiko Tanaka (B) demonstrates a selective appropriation; by critiquing only the external imperialism of the United States, she emphasized Japan's victimhood while abstracting its own aggression in Asia. In the grassroots sphere, *Agora* (C) represented a state of conceptual solidarity, where intellectual recognition of complicity remained abstract due to a lack of direct dialogue with the Global South. This is contrasted with the regressive victimhood observed in certain reflections within *Women Who Act* (D), where the confrontation with the reality of Japan's exploitation prompted a psychological retreat into the narrative of being "also discriminated against." Ultimately, the work of Yayori Matsui (E) points toward a reflective practice, in which the acceptance of one's position as a subject of critique becomes the very point of departure for transnational solidarity. These varied responses provide a critical lens for understanding how privileged subjects within the global order navigate their structural complicity.

Second, to explain the multiple macro-power structures underlying the diverse responses identified in this study, I propose the concept of “nested imperialism.” I conceptualize this framework as a multi-layered, nested power configuration that functions like a bellows. Specifically, because the positionality of Japanese feminists was structurally rooted in Japan’s dual status as both a subordinate to U.S. hegemony and a sub-imperialist power in Asia, it became logically possible for these women to expand or contract their sense of responsibility depending on which tier of the dominant hierarchy they addressed. This nested structure thus provided a variety of discursive logics across the entire spectrum of Japanese participation. For the official delegation (A) represented by Taki Fujita, Japan’s status as the leading economic power in Asia at the time allowed them to identify with Western nations and mimic their claims. By expanding the developed nation layer of their positionality, they could align themselves with the First World. Michiko Tanaka (B), a member of the Communist Party, focused solely on the outer layer of the dominant structure, which was the United States. This allowed feminists to use the logic of national victimhood as a rhetorical shield to obscure their inner role as perpetrators within Asia. In the grassroots sphere, Agora (C) criticized the feminism of Western elites and sought to fight alongside the Third World. However, it was physically difficult for them to emerge from the bubble of their nested structure to engage in direct dialogue, which left their solidarity at a purely theoretical level. The group Women Who Act (D) resorted to a defensive contraction of the bellows. By emphasizing Japan’s own experiences of oppression under U.S. hegemony and domestic patriarchy, these women negated their positionality as perpetrators and sought refuge in the narrative of being victims themselves. Finally, the perspective and practice of Yayori Matsui (E) represented a refusal to manipulate the bellows for the sake of convenience.

She demonstrated that locating oneself within the painful reality of one's own structural complicity is the only starting point for transnational solidarity.

Conclusion

This study has examined how Japanese feminists navigated the complex intersection of gender and imperialism at the 1975 UN World Conference on Women in Mexico City. By analyzing a range of actors, from the official government delegation to grassroots organizations and individual journalists, the findings reveal that Japanese feminism's engagement with colonialism was not a simple binary of complicity or resistance, but rather a spectrum of responses shaped by a structural condition I term nested imperialism. These findings carry implications beyond the Japanese case. Intersectionality, as originally theorized, powerfully renders visible the convergence of multiple oppressions, yet it struggles to account for subjects who are victims along one axis while reproducing dominance along another. The Japanese feminist case demands a framework that can hold this ambivalence without collapsing it into a single narrative of either victimhood or guilt. Nested imperialism offers such a framework, attending to the ways in which multiple scales of imperial power mutually sustain one another and shape the discursive possibilities available to actors within them.

These findings suggest several directions for future inquiry. First, comparative analysis of other non-Western, sub-imperialist feminist movements, such as those in South Korea or Taiwan, would test the generalizability of the nested imperialism framework. Second, this study has focused primarily on textual and discursive evidence; ethnographic and oral historical approaches might further illuminate how individual actors experienced and processed their ambivalent positionalities. Third, extending the analysis to subsequent UN women's conferences would illuminate how, or whether, these discursive positions evolved over time.

More broadly, this study contributes to scholarship in feminist and postcolonial studies that destabilizes the binary between oppressor and oppressed. The categories of power and resistance, while indispensable, prove insufficient for subjects whose positionality is constituted by multiple, overlapping imperial formations. By attending to such subjects, this study opens a space that these categories alone cannot adequately hold. The Japanese case does not resolve this tension; it renders it more precisely visible.

References

Primary Sources

- Agora (Ed.). (1972). *Agora 1-gō: Onna ga hataraku koto / josei wa kahogo ka / tomobataraki wo chōsa shite / okaasan ginkō wo* [Agora: No. 1. Women working / Are women overprotected? / Survey on dual-income households / A mother's bank]. BOC Shuppanbu.
- Agora (Ed.). (1975). *Agora 12-gō: Tokushū sekai fujin kaigi* [Agora: No. 12. Special issue on the World Conference of the International Women's Year]. BOC Shuppanbu.
- Gendaishi Shuppankai Henshūbu (Ed.). (1975). *Kokusai fujin-nen Mekishiko kaigi no kiroku* [Records of the International Women's Year Mexico Conference]. Gendaishi Shuppankai.
- Kaneko, S., Kuroda, H., Kanno, N., & Yoshie, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Nihon joseishi daijiten* [Encyclopedia of Japanese women's history]. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- Kōdō suru Kai Kirokushū Henshū Inkaï (Ed.). (1999). *Kōdō suru onnatachi ga hiraita michi: Mekishiko kara Nyūyōku e* [The Path Paved by the Association of Women Who Act From Mexico to New York]. Miraisha.
- Maruoka, H., & Tanaka, M. (1976). *Shinshun taidan: Fujin no ikikata to bunka no kiki* [New Year dialogue: Women's lives and the crisis of culture]. Bunka Hyoron, 177, 52–53.
- Matsui, Y. (1975, October 25). *Kokusai fujin-nen Mekishiko de tsukitsukerareta mono* [What was confronted at the International Women's Year in Mexico]. Onna no Hangyaku, (13)
- Takagi, S., Nakajima, S., Mitsui, M., Yamaguchi, T., & Yamada, M. (Eds.). (2015–2016). *The Complete Collection of Reprinted Materials of the Women's Action Group* (Vols. 1–8). Rikka Press.
- Tanaka, M. (1989, July). *Onna wa dokyō* [Women Need Courage]. Gakushū no Tomo Sha.
- United Nations. (1976). *Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico City, 19 June to 2 July 1975* (E/CONF.66/34).
- Yoshitake, T. (1991). *Heiwa to kokusai rentai* [Peace and international solidarity]. In Kōdō suru Kai Kirokushū Henshū Inkaï (Ed.), *Kōdō suru onna-tachi ga hiraita michi: Mekushiko kara Nyūyōku e* [The path opened by women who act: From Mexico to New York] (pp. 226–233). Miraisha.
- Tokyo Metropolitan Government. (1983). *Meiyo tomin shōden (Shōwa 57-nen hyōshō)* [Brief biographies of Tokyo's honorary citizens (1982 commendation)]. Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Secondary Sources

- Aoki, E. (2017, January 6). *Kyōdō shigoto ya shōshin kakusa... josei ga totta 40-nen* [Working couples and promotion gaps... 40 years questioned by women]. Mainichi Shimbun. <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20170106/k00/00e/040/245000c>.
- Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center. (n.d.). *Matsui Yayori ni tsuite* [About Yayori Matsui]. Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center. <https://www.ajwrc.org/about-us/outline/yayorimatsui>.
- Avenell, S. (2022). *Asia's Postwar Japan: Transnational Activism and the Remaking of the Self*. Duke University Press.
- Bonfiglioli, C. (2016). *The first UN world conference on women (1975) as a Cold War encounter: Recovering anti-imperialist, non-aligned and socialist genealogies*. Filozofija i Društvo, 27(3), 521–541.

- Combahee River Collective. (1977). *The Combahee River Collective statement*. In K.-Y. Taylor (Ed.), *How we get free: Black feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (pp. 15–27). Haymarket Books.
- Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). *Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color*. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Davis, A. Y. (1981). *Women, race, & class*. Random House.
- Duus, P. (1995). *The abacus and the sword: The Japanese penetration of Korea, 1895–1910*. University of California Press.
- Dower, J. W. (1999). *Embracing defeat: Japan in the wake of World War II*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Ehara, Y. (2021). *Joseikaihou toiu shisou [The ideology of women's liberation]* (expanded ed.). Chikuma Shobō. (Original work published 1985)
- Ermakoff, I. (2019). Causality and History: Contextualizing Statistical Explanations. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 48(3), 584–625.
- Farris, S. R. (2017). *In the name of women's rights: The rise of femonationalism*. Duke University Press.
- Fujiwara, K. (2020). Hiroshima, Nanjing, and Yasukuni: Contending discourses on the Second World War in Japan. In M. D. Gordin & G. J. Ikenberry (Eds.), *The age of Hiroshima* (pp. 201–218). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691195292-013>
- hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. South End Press.
- Inoue, T. (2021). *Nihon no feminizumu: 150-nen no hito to shisō [Japanese feminism: People and ideas over 150 years]*. Tokyo, Japan: Iwanami Shoten.
- Japanese Communist Party. (2019, February 23). *Kakushin kyōdō moto Shūin giin Tanaka Michiko-san shikyo [Former House of Representatives member from the progressive coalition, Tanaka Michiko, has died]*. Shimbun Akahata.
- Johnson, C. (1982). *MITI and the Japanese miracle: The growth of industrial policy, 1925–1975*. Stanford University Press.
- Inoue, T. (2021). *Nihon no feminizumu: 150-nen no hito to shisō [Feminism in Japan: 150 years of people and thought]*. Iwanami Shoten.
- Kano, M. (1987). *Onnatachi no jūgo [Women's "home front"]*. Chikuma Shobō.
- Kaneko, S., Kuroda, H., Kanno, N., & Yoshie, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Nihon joseishi daijiten [Encyclopedia of Japanese women's history]*. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- Mahmood, S. (2004). *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton University Press.
- McClintock, A. (1995). *Imperial leather: Race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial contest*. Routledge.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). (n.d.). School Basic Survey [Statistical table]. e-Stat. <https://www.e-stat.go.jp/dbview?sid=0003147040>
- Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. (n.d.). *Labor force survey (basic tabulation): Long-term time series tables*. Mohanty, C. T. (1984). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Boundary 2*, 12/13, 333–358.
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Duke University Press.

- Nash, J. C. (2008). *Re-thinking intersectionality*. *Feminist Review*, 89(1), 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2008.4>
- Nash, J. C. (2019). *Black feminism reimagined: After intersectionality*. Duke University Press.
- Oguma, E. (1998). *〈Nihonjin〉no kyōkai: Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, Chōsen shokuminchi shihai kara kikki undō made [The boundaries of “the Japanese”: Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, Korea, from colonial rule to the reversion movement]*. Shinyōsha.
- Oguma, E. (1995). *Tanitsu minzoku shinwa no kigen: “Nihonjin” no jigazō no keifu [The origin of the myth of the homogeneous nation: A genealogy of “Japanese” self-images]*. Shinyōsha.
- Olcott, J. (2017). *International Women’s Year: The greatest consciousness-raising event in history*. Oxford University Press.
- Shigematsu, S. (2012). *Scream from the shadows: The Women’s Liberation Movement in Japan*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). University of Illinois Press.
- Tsutsui, K. (2009). The trajectory of perpetrators' trauma: Mnemonic politics around the Asia-Pacific War in Japan. *Social Forces*, 87(3), 1389–1422.
- Yoneyama, L. (2016). *Cold War ruins: Transpacific critique of American justice and Japanese war crimes*. Duke University Press.