Asia-Pacific Journal (2025), **23**, e13, 1–20
doi:10.1017/apj.2025.10012

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Research Article

Sino-Japanese Children Born of the Second Sino-Japanese War Who "Returned" to Their "Homeland": Experiences, Identities, and Belonging

Kanako Kuramitsu
Centre for East Asian Studies, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

Abstract

This article examines the little-known experiences of children born of Chinese mothers and Japanese fathers who had consensual relationships during and after the Second Sino-Japanese War in China, with a specific focus on those who migrated to Japan after 1972. To understand how and why they—in their own words—"returned" to their "homeland," this article analyzes historical circumstances as well as Sino-Japanese children's experiences, identities, and belonging in comparison with other groups of "children born of war" in different historical and geopolitical settings. Their long-neglected stories point to a missing part in narratives of the 8-year war.

Keywords: Sino-Japanese Children; Second Sino-Japanese War; Children Born of War; Identity; Belonging

Introduction

On August 15, 2020, which marked the 75th end-of-war memorial day, a Japanese newspaper featured Serikawa Koretada,[1] a 75-year-old resident of Saitama, Japan (Mainichi Shimbun 2020). Koretada had published a novel that portrayed a love story between a general of the Imperial Japanese Army and a Chinese nurse during the Second Sino-Japanese War. The narrative continues with the life of their son in Tokyo during the 1980s (Serikawa 2020). However unusual and unfamiliar such a story may sound, Koretada based his novel on his own life story. Born in Suzhou, China, just before the war's end, Koretada eventually migrated to Japan in the 1980s. He represents one of many hitherto unnoticed individuals born to Chinese mothers and Japanese fathers who had had consensual relationships during and after the war.

This article presents findings from a research project on children born of consensual relationships between Chinese mothers and Japanese fathers—both military and non-military personnel—during and after the Second Sino-Japanese War in China (hereinafter, Sino-Japanese children). This study was part of an interdisciplinary research network on "children born of war" (CBOW),[2] defined as the offspring of local women and members of the enemy, occupation, or peacekeeping forces, including child soldiers (Lee 2017: 24–26). Previous studies on CBOW have demonstrated that CBOW are not an exceptional phenomenon limited to particular historical and geopolitical contexts but are a global phenomenon of conflict (Lee 2017: 2; Wagner, Smith, and Lee 2024). Notable studies on CBOW have focused on children born to German soldiers and local women in German-occupied territories during World War II,[3] children fathered by Allied occupation forces—such as American soldiers in Britain and Germany[4] and Soviet soldiers in Austria[5]—and children resulting from sexual violence in conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina[6] and Uganda,[7] to name but a few. Some of those children were born as a result

[1] All Japanese names in this article are presented in the order of surname followed by given name.

[2] Children Born of War (CHIBOW network; https://www.chibow.org/, accessed April 29, 2025) was funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Curie grant agreement between 2015 and 2019.

[3] See, for example, Ingvill C. Mochmann and Stein Ugelvik Larsen. 2008. "Children Born of War: The Life Course of Children Fathered by German Soldiers in Norway and Denmark during WWII—Some Empirical Results." *Historical Social Research* 33(1): 347–63; Ingvill C. Mochmann, Sabine Lee, and Barbara Stelzl-Marx. 2009. "The Children of the Occupations Born during the Second World War and Beyond—an Overview." *Historical Social Research* 34(3): 263–82.

[4] See, for example, Sabine Lee. 2011. "A Forgotten Legacy of the Second World War: GI Children in Post-war Britain and Germany." *Contemporary European History* 20(2): 157–81.

[5] See, for example, Barbara Stelzl-Marx. 2015. "Soviet Children of Occupation in Austria: The Historical, Political and Social Background and Its Consequences." *European Review of History* 22(2): 277–91.

[6] See, for example, R. Charli Carpenter. 2010. *Forgetting Children Born of War: Setting the Human Rights Agenda in Bosnia and Beyond*. New York: Columbia University Press.

[7] See, for example, Eunice Apio. 2016. "Children Born of War in Northern Uganda: Kinship, Marriage, and the Politics of Post-conflict Reintegration in Lango Society" (PhD diss., University of Birmingham).

Email: kakura@utu.fi

Cite this article: Kuramitsu K. Sino-Japanese Children Born of the Second Sino-Japanese War Who "Returned" to Their "Homeland": Experiences, Identities, and Belonging. *Asia-Pacific Journal* https://doi.org/10.1017/apj.2025.10012

of rape and sexual slavery, while others were born following love affairs and friendly "business arrangements" (Lee 2017: 26–27). Across time and space, CBOW experience adversity as "the enemy's children," struggle with identity issues, and share a strong need to discover their absent fathers—regardless of the circumstances of their conception or whether their childhood experiences were positive or negative (Mochmann and Lee 2010: 281).

In the Asia–Pacific region, there are documented cases of children born to local women and Japanese men before, during, and after the Asia–Pacific War. These include children born to Filipino women and Japanese immigrants in the Philippines prior to the war[8]; children born to Indisch (Dutch Indonesian) mothers and Japanese fathers—who were soldiers, military civilian employees, or civilians—in Indonesia during the war[9]; children born to Indonesian women and Japanese soldiers who remained in the Dutch East Indies after the war[10]; and children born to Vietnamese mothers and Japanese soldiers who, after the war, joined the Việt Minh (the League for the Independence of Vietnam) and fought against the French army for Vietnamese independence.[11] Very little is known about all other groups of children born to local women and Japanese men in other occupied territories of the Imperial Japanese Army, including Myanmar and French Indochina (current Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos).[12] Notable commonalities—such as experiences of bullying and discrimination—can be observed between these documented cases of children born before, during, and after the Asia–Pacific War and CBOW in other historical and geopolitical contexts. However, these children cannot be uniformly classified as CBOW, as some—such as Filipino-Japanese children fathered by Japanese migrants prior to the war—fall outside the definition due to the civilian status of their fathers at the time of conception and the fact that they were born before the outbreak of the war.

In the case of the Second Sino-Japanese War, despite one known case of a child born to a Chinese victim of the "comfort women" system,[13] there remains a conspicuous absence of academic research on children born of local women and Japanese men to this day. This first investigation on children born of Sino-Japanese consensual relationships during and after the Second Sino-Japanese War focuses on those who migrated to Japan following the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972.

These Sino-Japanese children are distinct from the well-documented war-affected children of the Second Sino-Japanese War known as stranded war orphans (*Chūgoku zanryū koji*), who were of full Japanese parentage.[14] In the aftermath of Japan's state-directed settlement policies to its puppet state of Manchukuo—followed by its military defeat, withdrawal and ensuing chaos—a large number of children born to Japanese parents were left behind in northeast China. These Japanese children were subsequently adopted by local residents and gradually assimilated into Chinese society. After the 1972 normalization, efforts led by both civil society and the state to locate the Japanese relatives of stranded war orphans began to emerge. However, of the 2,818 offi cially identified stranded war orphans, more than half were unable to identify their Japanese relatives. Over time, both governmental and non-governmental actors played a role in facilitating the repatriation of approximately 2,500 stranded war orphans.[15]

Children born to Chinese women and Japanese men in this study are better understood as part of "global phenomenon of conflict" in which wars and conflicts often lead to a significant influx of foreign men into many enemy nations. The influx of foreign forces is known to have led to a range of military–civilian relationships of varying degrees of consent and coercion. The number of Sino-Japanese children

[8] See, for example, Shun Ohno. 2015. *Transforming Nikkeijin Identity and Citizenship: Untold Life Histories of Japanese Migrants and Their Descendants in the Philippines, 1903–2013* Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press; K Project. 2020. 日本人の忘れもの：フィリピンと中国の残留邦人 [*What Japanese Left Behind: Remaining Japanese in the Philippines and China*], documentary film.

[9] See, for example, Aya Ezawa. 2015. "'The Guilt Feeling that You Exist': War, Racism and Indisch-Japanese Identity Formation." In *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia, Vol. II: Interactions, Nationalism, Gender and Lineage*, edited by Rotem Kowner and Walter Demel, 481–502. Leiden: Brill; Eveline Buchheim 2015. "Enabling Remembrance: Japanese-Indisch Descendants Visit Japan." *History and Memory* 27(2): 104–25.

[10] See, for example, NNA ASIA. 2022. "【アジアで会う】ヘル・サントソ・衛藤さん　残留日本兵の互助組織会長 [Meeting in Asia: Heru Santoso Eto—Chairman of the Mutual Aid Association of Japanese Soldiers Remaining Overseas]." *NNA ASIA*, 18 January. https://www.nna.jp/news/2281805 (accessed April 29, 2025); Japan National Press Club. 2015. "戦後７０年　語る・問う：海外日系人の戦後 [Narrate and Question 70 Years after the War: Overseas *Nikkejin* in the Postwar Period]," YouTube video, 27 October. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSxe7JX6wfE (accessed April 29, 2025).

[11] See, for example, *The Seattle Times*. 2017. "Japan Emperor to Meet Abandoned Vietnam Families of Soldiers." *The Seattle Times*, March 1. https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/japan-emperor-to-meet-abandoned-vietnam-families-of-soldiers/ (accessed April 29, 2025).

[12] For a blog post about a Japanese man who remained in postwar Myanmar and his family, see Yuichi Hashimoto. 2011. "もうひとつのビルマの竪琴 [Another Burmese Harp]." *Yangonow*, 2 November. https://jsat.pussycat.jp/yangonow/info/history/burma_harp.php (accessed April 29, 2025). For a testimony by a politician who stated that he had heard reports of a large number of children born to Burmese, Cambodian, Indonesian, and Filipino women fathered by Japanese men, see House of Councilors. 1957. 参議院, 第二十六回国会参議院予算委員会第二分科会会議録第一号 [26th National Diet Session, House of Councilors Budget Committee, 2nd Subcommittee, Proceedings No. 1], 22.

[13] Luo Shanxue (1945–2023) was the only known child born to a Chinese "comfort woman" in Guangxi. His mother, Wei Shaolan (1920–2019), was abducted in November 1944 and raped at a military "comfort station" run by the Imperial Japanese Army. Though similar children were reportedly identified in Shanxi and Yunnan provinces, they have been reluctant to come forward. I chose not to request an interview with Shanxue for several reasons. He had already shared much with the media, and ethical concerns arose about re-traumatizing him, given his history of trauma. As a researcher unfamiliar with local support systems, I could not ensure access to counseling afterward. My focus on offspring from consensual relationships is not meant to dismiss his experiences or the magnitude of sexual violence by Japanese forces. See, for example, Koichiro Kasuya, July 6, 2007. "ルポ桂林 山水画の彼方で [Reportage: Behind Picturesque Guilin]." *Shūkan Kinyōbi* (661): 10–15; Ke Guo. December 2013. 三十二 [*Thirty-two*], documentary film; Pengpai Xinwen. 2023. "对话苏智良: 回忆那个一生追问'我是谁'的'慰安妇'之子 [Dialogue with Su Zhiliang: Remembering the Son of the 'Comfort Woman' Who Spent His Life Asking 'Who Am I?']." Baidu website, 13 December. https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1785166526342583163&wfr=spider&for=pc (accessed April 29, 2025).

[14] See, for example, Mariko Asano Tamanoi. 2006. "Japanese War Orphans and the Challenges of Repatriation in Post-colonial East Asia." *Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus* 4(8): 1–17; Robert Efird. 2008. "Japan's 'War Orphans': Identification and State Responsibility." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 34(2): 363–88; Yeeshan Chan. 2011. *Abandoned Japanese in Postwar Manchuria: The Lives of War Orphans and Wives in Two Countries*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

[15] See Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. 2025. "厚生労働省, 中国残留邦人等の状況 [Status of Remaining Japanese Nationals in China and Others]." Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare website, 31 March. https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/bunya/engo/seido02/kojitoukei.html (accessed April 29, 2025).

is arguably comparable to that of stranded war orphans, with this study estimating their population to be at least a few thousand (Kuramitsu 2021: 89–90). Most Sino-Japanese children in this study were born and raised in cities such as Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Suzhou, and Wuhan (Appendices 1 and 2), rather than in northeast China, which is strongly associated with the memory of stranded war orphans. The geographical spread of Sino-Japanese children highlights the presence and experiences of war-affected children in regions of postwar China that have been overlooked in existing scholarship. Although these children were dispersed throughout China and were unaware of each other's existence, they independently decided to migrate to Japan after 1972. Notably, their narratives regarding Japan as their "homeland" and their voluntary migration as a "return" were strikingly similar, despite the fact that only their father was Japanese.

To understand the motivations and circumstances surrounding their "return" to their "homeland," this article explores the historical context in which these children were born, raised, and later migrated to Japan. This article also conducts a comparative analysis of the experiences, identities, and sense of belonging of Sino-Japanese children alongside those of CBOW in other historical and geopolitical contexts. It examines the implications of this specific case for research on CBOW, as well as their rights and well-being. This article reveals that Sino-Japanese children born of consensual relationships faced significant challenges due to their origin, and highlights the impact of their often-absent Japanese fathers on their identities, sense of belonging, and life trajectories.

Methodology and Sino-Japanese children in this study

Collecting systematic data with accuracy poses significant challenges for researchers studying CBOW (Lee 2017: 3–6), and this study was no exception. Obtaining information on Sino-Japanese children proved particularly difficult owing to the absence of dedicated associations, as well as the lack of official or scholarly investigations in both China and Japan. I identified and conducted oral history interviews with eight individuals who were born of marriages (Appendix 1). Five participants were located after contacting 118 support groups for stranded war orphans. These support groups were established across Japan mostly in the 1980s and 1990s to help stranded war orphans acquire Japanese nationality and resettle in Japan. I contacted these groups on the assumption that some Sino-Japanese children may have migrated to Japan concurrently with stranded war orphans. The remaining three participants were initially identified through written sources and subsequently through individuals referenced in those sources.

This study adopted in-depth, semi-structured oral history interviews. Adjusting interview methods and building participant–researcher relationships were essential in collecting rich accounts. Partly informed by biographical narrative analysis, I allowed participants to lead the interview without interruption to elicit the most detailed accounts possible. Follow-up questions were posed on the basis of a prepared list of inquiries. However, when participants were uncomfortable with this method, I guided the interviews by asking questions. Additionally, probing questions were employed to address gaps in written sources. The length and number of interview sessions varied on basis of the participant's schedule, stamina, and willingness to share their experiences. Seven interviewees in Japan were fully proficient in Chinese and less so in Japanese, having spent the first 3–4 decades of their lives in China. They could choose to narrate in either language, resulting in half of the interviews being conducted in Chinese and the other half in Japanese.[16] Oral history narratives are co-produced in the process of remembering and meaning-making between the interviewee and the interviewer, occurring within a unique participant–researcher relationship at a specific juncture of the participant's life.[17] To draw out the full implications of the collected oral history materials in the analysis, it was essential to critically consider the specific relationships and contexts of the interviews in which the narratives and nonverbal emotional evidence were produced.[18]

Regarding written sources, through a law firm in Tokyo, I obtained unpublished personal documents that provided extensive information on 20 Sino-Japanese children born of marriages who acquired Japanese nationality after 1972. This study ultimately identified approximately 230 Sino-Japanese children born of consensual relationships and marriages through participant recruitment and written sources.

Some Sino-Japanese children were born during the war, while others were conceived during the war but born after the war ended in August 1945. Additionally, a number of these children were fathered by Japanese men who remained in China in the postwar period. This study's focus on Sino-Japanese children born of consensual relationships is comparable to research on children born from consensual relationships between Soviet soldiers and German women in wartime and postwar Germany, where most encounters are known to have been exploitative, abusive, or violent.[19]

These Sino-Japanese children's fathers were not uniformly affiliated to armed forces, thus complicating their classification as CBOW (Appendices 1 and 2). Furthermore, there is no established terminology for these individuals in China or Japan,[20] and the participants themselves lacked a uniform self-designation. Therefore, this study refers to them

[16] While I understood most of the Chinese interviews, my comprehension was limited when participants spoke with a strong accent or used proper nouns and idioms. As a result, I asked an interpreter to accompany me when an interview was to be conducted in Chinese.

[17] See, for example, Alessandro Portelli. 2006. "What Makes Oral History Different." In *The Oral History Reader, 2nd ed.*, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 32–42. London: Routledge.

[18] For more discussion on oral history materials and positionality, see Kanako Kuramitsu. 2021. "In Search of the Father: Experiences, Identity and Belonging of Sino-Japanese Children Born of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) Who 'Returned to the Homeland.'" (PhD diss., University of Birmingham): 40–63.

[19] See, for example, Heide Glaesmer et al. 2017. "Childhood Maltreatment in Children Born of Occupation after WWII in Germany and Its Association with Mental Disorders." *International Psychogeriatrics* 29(7):1147–56, esp. 1147.

[20] Between 1983 and 1986, newspaper journalists referred to Sino-Japanese children as *Nicchū konketsu koji* (Sino-Japanese mixed-blood orphans), but this term never gained widespread acceptance in Japan. The term "mixed-blood orphan" was misleading, as most of these children were raised by their biological mothers or maternal relatives.

Appendix 1. List of participants

	Name	Gender	Year of birth	Place of birth	Wartime occupation of the father	Year of migration to Japan
1	Yuko*	F	1942	Beijing	Doctor, company manager, intelligence agent	1980
2	Michiko	F	1942	Beijing	Intelligence agent	1987
3	Seiji*	M	1942	Nanjing	Employee of the Central China Railway	1987
4	Koretada	M	1944	Suzhou	General of the Imperial Japanese Army, head of a food factory for Japanese military	1988
5	Momoko	F	1944	Shanghai	Soldier, security guard, company manager	1984
6	Toshio	M	1948	Beijing	Intelligence agent	1978
7	Keiko*	F	1953	Heihe	None due to being underage	1999
8	Yongyun	F	1950	Jinan	Civilian worker for the military (military veterinary), employee of a railway company, soldier	Residence in China

Asterisks indicate pseudonyms. Anonymity has been ensured for all participants, except for those who have published books or appeared in the media under their real names.

Appendix 2. List of Sino-Japanese children born of marriage whose information was obtained from a Japanese law firm

	Name	Gender	Year of birth	Place of birth	Wartime occupation of the father	Year of migration to Japan
1	Tsuneyoshi*	M	1939	Shanghai	Employee of a textile factory, translator for the military, soldier	N/A
2	Ryotaro*	M	1940	Shanghai	Manager of a trading company	1994
3	Yoshio*	M	1944	Shanghai	Soldier	N/A
4	Katsue*	F	1944	Suzhou	Manager of a café, a restaurant and a tofu shop	N/A
5	Kayo*	F	1941	Suzhou	Manager of a café, a restaurant and a tofu shop	N/A
6	Kayoko*	F	1943	Shanghai	Soldier	N/A
7	Maki*	F	1946	Wuhan	Company employee	1991
8	Mariko*	F	1946	Shanghai	Soldier	N/A
9	Masao*	M	1943	Nanjing	Employee of a shipping company, head of a shipping company	N/A
10	Teruo*	M	1945	Nanjing	Manager of a tobacco, liquor and flower shop. Also managed a flower farm. Soldier.	N/A
11	Taro*	M	1941	Shanghai	Manager of a ranch commissioned by Japanese military	N/A
12	Kuniyoshi*	M	1943	Shanghai	Employee of a glass factory, employee of a weaving factory	N/A
13	Mieko*	F	1943	Nanjing	Civilian worker for the military, employee of the Central China Railway	N/A
14	Akio*	M	1942	Kaifeng	Manager of a construction company	N/A
15	Akiko*	F	1944	Nanjing	Employee of a shipbuilding company	N/A
16	Takashi*	M	1955	Yinchuan	Soldier	N/A
17	Yo*	M	1954	Shenyang	Soldier	N/A
18	Tadashi*	M	1942	Jiaozuo	Head of a subsidiary company of Jiaozuo mine	N/A
19	Yu*	F	1945	Jiaozuo	Head of a subsidiary company of Jiaozuo mine	N/A
20	Makoto	M	1940	Macau	Intelligence agent	1987

Unpublished personal documents from twenty individuals were obtained from a law firm in Tokyo. Asterisks indicate pseudonyms. Anonymity has been ensured for all individuals, except for Makoto, who had previously appeared under his real name in a magazine article.

as "Sino-Japanese children born to Chinese women fathered by Japanese military and non-military personnel during and after the Second Sino-Japanese War." Despite not perfectly falling under the CBOW definition, conducting comparative analysis with studies of various CBOW groups remains enlightening in the illumination of the unique aspects of Sino-Japanese children's experiences, identities, and belonging.

Repatriation measures for Sino-Japanese children

In the immediate aftermath of the Second Sino-Japanese War, repatriation policies were formulated to return Japanese military personnel and later civilians, as the United States perceived their presence as a potential threat to the new order in postwar China (Sato 2016: 59). On behalf of the Japanese government, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) undertook the massive and complex task of repatriating Japanese nationals, utilizing US ships for the effort (Sato 2016: 59–69).

Under these circumstances, while most fathers of Sino-Japanese children were repatriated after the war, Chinese wives and their children were not given special consideration by the Chinese Nationalists, Communists, Japan, or SCAP to migrate to Japan with repatriating Japanese men. It is unknown whether SCAP was aware of the potentially large number of children born to local women and Japanese men in postwar China. What is clear is that addressing the issue was not in SCAP's interest during the repatriation operations, as they were at the same time suppressing the issue of children born to Japanese women fathered by members of the Allied forces in postwar Japan (Aoki 2016: 42–43; Dower 1999: 406, 408).

The issue of Sino-Japanese children first emerged in bilateral negotiations in 1953, opening up the possibility for them to migrate to Japan. The vast majority of Japanese nationals were repatriated by August 1948 when the worsening Chinese Civil War halted further repatriation. By 1952, an estimated 30,000–72,000 Japanese nationals[21]—including soldiers, civilian workers, stranded war orphans, stranded war wives, war criminals, and prisoners of war (POWs)—remained in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Amid growing calls in Japan to restart collective repatriation, the Japanese government negotiated with the PRC Red Cross through the Japanese Red Cross and two other Japanese non-governmental organizations in the absence of official diplomatic relations between the PRC and Japan (Japan Red Cross 1972: 268–277).

The question of the repatriation of Sino-Japanese children and their mothers was addressed in the bilateral negotiations as follows: (1) Chinese women who married Japanese men could remain in China if they did not wish to go to Japan; (2) children who were 16 years or older and had been born to the abovementioned Sino-Japanese parents could decide for themselves whether to go to Japan or remain in China; and (3) in regard to children who were under the age of 16 years who had been born to the abovementioned Sino-Japanese parents, the parents could decide whether they should go to Japan or remain in China (Japan Red Cross 1972: 272).

Although the exact number of Sino-Japanese children who migrated to Japan in the 1950s is unknown,[22] some did relocate with their mothers after 1953.[23] However, sources indicate that the implementation of the decisions mentioned above was inconsistent. Prior to the bilateral negotiations, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Japanese Red Cross that foreign wives and their children could be repatriated only if accompanied by Japanese nationals (Japan Red Cross 1972: 257). This policy effectively excluded wives and children whose Japanese husbands or fathers had already been repatriated or had passed away. It is likely that those who could be accompanied by their Japanese fathers/husbands lacked valid proof of marriage, preventing them from boarding repatriation boats. A source suggests that Japanese soldiers who remained in postwar Shanxi Province were not permitted to take their Chinese wives and children upon repatriation.[24] Keiko's father, a civilian worker, wished to take a collective repatriation ship in the 1950s.[25] However, uninformed of the possibility of taking his family with him, he chose to remain in China to be with them.[26] Sino-Japanese children and their families who missed the last repatriation boat in July 1958 had to wait another 14 years until the two countries re-established diplomatic relations, which made their migration to Japan a viable possibility.

Almost a decade after the re-establishment of Sino-Japanese relations, over a thousand letters from Sino-Japanese children requesting assistance in locating their fathers and acquiring Japanese nationality began reaching Japan's Social Welfare and War Victims' Relief Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) (*Asahi Shimbun* 1986). The bureau initially showed reluctance to take any special measures for these children, stating, "China is not the only

[21] The People's Republic of China (PRC) reported that approximately 30,000 Japanese remained in 1953, whereas Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated the number to be around 72,000 in 1951. See Social Welfare and War Victim's Relief Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Welfare. 1977. "厚生省援護局, 引揚げと援護三十年の歩み [Thirty-Year Trajectory of Repatriation and Relief]." The Ministry of Health and Welfare: 109–10; Japan Red Cross. 1972. 日本赤十字社社史稿第6巻 [*Japan Red Cross, Draft of the Company History, Volume 6*]. Japan Red Cross: 268; Takeshi Osawa. 2007. "戦後東アジア地域秩序の再編と中国残留日本人の発生–「送還」と「留用」のはざまで– [The Reorganization of the Postwar Regional Order in Northeast Asia and the Emergence of the War—Displaced Japanese Left behind in China]." *Chūō Daigaku Sēsaku Bunka Sōgō Kenkyūjo Nenpō* 10: 45.

[22] The Japanese Red Cross has published the number of repatriates from China to Japan between 1953 and 1955. However, the number of Sino-Japanese children who migrated to Japan is unknown, as there is no special category for them in the table. See Japan Red Cross, 日本赤十字社社史稿: 284–5.

[23] For a report on the treatment of Sino-Japanese children as foreigners upon entering Japan—taking into account their future wishes regarding nationality—see *Yomiuri Shimbun*. 1953. "'混血児は外人扱い'—中共帰還者の入国：管理事務所舞鶴出張所長談 ['Mixed-Race Children Are Treated as Foreigners'—Entry of Returnees from Communist China: Says Head of Maizuru Branch of the Immigration Office]." *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 27 February.

[24] See Yasuhide Yonehama. 2008. 日本軍「山西残留」：国共内戦に翻弄された山下少尉の戦後 [*Remaining Japanese Soldiers in Shanxi: Lieutenant Yamashita at the Mercy of Fate during the Chinese Civil War*]. Tokyo: Seiunsha; Hiromichi Nagatomi. 1996. 白狼の爪跡: 山西残留秘史 [*Traces of a White Wolf: The Secret History of Remaining Soldiers in Shanxi*]. Osaka: Shinpu Shobo; Kaoru Ikeya, 2010. 蟻の兵隊: 日本兵2600人山西省残留の真相 [*Ant Soldiers: Truth about 2,600 Japanese Soldiers Who Remained in Shanxi Province*]. Tokyo: Shinchosha; Saburo Omata. 2003. 残留: 日中友好への誓い [*Remaining in Postwar China: My Pledge for Sino-Japanese Friendship*]. Tokyo: Koyo Insatsu.

[25] Anonymity has been ensured for all Sino-Japanese children, except for those who have published books or appeared in the media under their real names.

[26] Interview transcript with Keiko, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Kanagawa, Japan, May 20, 2016.

Figure 1: Newspaper articles reporting on Sino-Japanese children in the 1980s and 1990s. 1. "My Father is Japanese, My Mother is Chinese—Please Grant Us Japanese Nationality Too: 2,000 More Stranded War Orphans Await Recognition," Mainichi Shimbun, January 16, 1986. 2. "Please Help Us Find Our Kin: Over 1,000 Sino-Japanese Mixed-Blood Orphans Separated from a Japanese Father or Mother Appeal for Reconnection," Asahi Shimbun, February 25, 1983. 3. "'Children Left Behind in Postwar China': 23 Born to Japanese Soldiers Who Remained in Shanxi and Local Chinese Women," Mainichi Shimbun, July 27, 1996.

country where children born to local women fathered by Japanese during the war exist" (*Asahi Shimbun* 1983). The bureau also claimed that extending support would be endless (*saigen ga nakunaru*) if applied to all children born to a Japanese father or mother abroad during and after the war (Mainichi Shimbun 1983), reflecting MHW's awareness of a potentially significant number of such children in China and other countries. Media coverage between 1983 and 1986 highlighted Sino-Japanese children's plight, eventually pressuring MHW to initiate the father searches. Despite the detailed information provided by the children, MHW could identify only about 10% of their fathers (*Asahi Shimbun* 1983). While the Japanese government carried out father searches for some Sino-Japanese individuals, it did not officially recognize them as a distinct group or implement any comprehensive measures for their repatriation. However, in the private sector, prominent activists supporting stranded war orphans—such as Ioriya Iwao,[27] Chino Seiji,[28] and Kawai Hiroyuki[29]—began assisting Sino-Japanese children in acquiring Japanese nationality during the 1980s. They utilized a procedure called *shūseki*, which proved effective for Sino-Japanese children whose fathers were unidentifiable or deceased or had disclaimed their paternal relationship. This legal route for Sino-Japanese children to acquire Japanese nationality set a precedent for other children born to local women and Japanese men before, during, and after the Asia–Pacific War (Figure 1).[30]

This procedure is a legal means of establishing a Japanese family register (*koseki*) for individuals who lack one, rectifying delays or oversights in registration that were

[27] Ioriya acted as a personal guarantor for at least two Sino-Japanese children, facilitating their migration to Japan. He also compiled a list of several court cases involving Sino-Japanese children. See *Asahi Shimbun*. 1998. "庵谷巌さん：中国残留孤児問題に取り組むボランティア [Mr. Ioriya Iwao: A Volunteer Tackling the Issues of Stranded War Orphans]" *Asahi Shimbun*, 20 November; Support and Exchange Center for Returnees from China. 2025. "いおりやノート [Ioriya's Notes]." Kikokusha Center website, 29 April. https://www.kikokusha-center.or.jp/resource/sankoshiryo/ioriya-notes/ioriya-title.htm.

[28] Chino was secretary-general of the Association for Supporting Japanese Nationality Acquisition of Stranded War Orphans (中国残留孤児の国籍取得を支援する会). One of the participants, Seiji, received support from Chino in acquiring Japanese nationality. See the transcript for the interview with Seiji, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Tokyo, Japan, May 17, 2016.

[29] Kawai was the chairperson of the Association for Supporting Japanese Nationality Acquisition of Stranded War Orphans (中国残留孤児の国籍取得を支援する会). Unpublished personal documents of Sino-Japanese children obtained from Kawai's law firm indicate that he assisted these children in acquiring Japanese nationality.

[30] Since 2004, children born to local women and fathered by Japanese men in the Philippines prior to the Asia–Pacific War have undertaken the *shūseki* procedure to acquire Japanese nationality, facilitated by the support of a Japanese nonprofit organization. The chairperson of the support group is Kawai Hiroyuki, the lawyer who assisted stranded war orphans and Sino-Japanese children in acquiring Japanese nationality through the *shūseki* procedure. See Shun Ohno. 2016. "「日系人」から「残留日本人」への転換：フィリピン日系二世の戦後問題と就籍運動を中心に [Shift from 'Nikkeijin' to 'Remaining Japanese in the Philippines': Concerning Issues of Second Generation Philippine *Nikkeijin* and Their Movement to Acquire Japanese Nationality through *Shūseki* Procedure]." *Imin Kenkyū Nenpō* 22: 23–42, esp. 32.

supposed to have occurred at birth. Family court approval to establish a *koseki* register conferred Japanese nationality on Sino-Japanese children, allowing them to migrate to Japan. In this process, a family court judge reviews submitted documents without oral pleadings, likely approving claims deemed reasonable and in need of legal redress.[31] Kawai emphasized the advantage of opting for this procedure over other methods, noting that the family court is known as "*ai no saibansho*" (court of love) for its sympathetic approach toward those seeking redress.[32]

Sino-Japanese children were considered Japanese at birth under Japan's former nationality law of 1899 and the new Nationality Act enacted in 1950, which adopted the patrilineal *jus sanguinis* principle, allowing Japanese nationality to be inherited from the father but not from the mother.[33] However, these children found themselves in a legal grey area, as most were not registered in the Japanese family register and could not prove their paternal relationship.[34] According to the *koseki* law, the father–child relationship could only be officially confirmed by registering the parent's marriage in the family register (Tanno 2014: 7).

While a small number of Sino-Japanese children could be entered into their father's *koseki* register with paternal acknowledgement, the majority had to invest considerable time and effort to gather the necessary documentation to establish their own *koseki*. Although all parents in this study were married according to then Chinese marriage laws and local customs, most lacked marriage certificates. This was because, prior to the implementation of mandatory registration in 1950, marriages were considered legitimate if the couple held a public wedding ceremony with at least two witnesses (Okuda 1996: 174–175). Worse still, during the Cultural Revolution, proof of marriage, including the father's photos and other mementos, were often confiscated by the Red Guards or had to be destroyed to avoid political persecution.[35] Consequently, Sino-Japanese children needed to gather detailed information, including testimonies about the wedding ceremony from their mothers, wedding witnesses, and the father's former neighbors, colleagues, and friends. However, this process was fraught with significant challenges, as it often began 30–50 years after the events—by which time many witnesses had either passed away, grown elderly, or become untraceable. All evidence was subsequently submitted to the court after multiple exchanges with Japanese lawyers—a process prolonged by slower international mail services at the time.

Sino-Japanese consensual relationships during and after the war

Existing studies have examined how the Japanese Empire sought to regulate marriages between Japanese and local populations in its colonies and in Manchuria—commonly referred to at the time as "intermarriage" (*zakkon*). These studies explore how discourses of race, ethnicity, and nation were mobilized and negotiated by various actors, becoming sites of interpretation and contestation.[36] Some studies also highlight the extent to which these unions and the resulting childbirths challenged racial, national, and legal boundaries.[37] Others analyze literary representations of intermarried couples and their mixed-descent children, which reflect the ways in which Japan's imperial expansion was imagined and navigated through complex sociocultural and political dynamics.[38] In contrast, Japan's approach to managing intermarriages between Japanese and local populations in its occupied areas of wartime and postwar China remains largely underexplored.

Within the Japanese Empire, colonial authorities either actively promoted intermarriage as part of assimilation policies or tacitly permitted it. Despite opposition from ardent critics motivated by eugenic and racial ideologies (Oguma 1997: 235–270), assimilationists prevailed in implementing intermarriage in colonial Korea and Taiwan, maintaining it in both until the empire's dissolution. Existing research suggests that there were no official restrictions relating to sexual relationships and marriages between Japanese and colonial subjects in other parts of the empire either.[39]

In the case of China, from the late 1930s onward, some Japanese eugenicists and officials from MHW sought to restrict Sino-Japanese marriages and childbirths.[40] In 1943, MHW created a classified policy document outlining measures to prevent intermarriage in Japan's occupied territories. Among these measures were recommendations that Japanese men assigned to overseas posts be accompanied by their Japanese wives, and that children of mixed

[31] Email correspondence from Yonekura Yoko (lawyer) to Kanako Kuramitsu, August 29, 2019; email correspondence from Yasuhara Yukihiko (lawyer) to Kanako Kuramitsu, August 29, 2019.

[32] Sakura Kyodo Law Offices. 2025. "中国残留孤児: 国籍取得1000人達成の記録 [Record of 1,000 Stranded War Orphans Acquiring Nationality]," Sakura Kyodo Law Offices website, 29 April. https://www.sakuralaw.gr.jp/contribution/01.htm.

[33] Since the 1985 amendment to the Nationality Act came into force, Japan has adopted the principle of dual lineage, which means that a child is conferred Japanese nationality if either parent is a Japanese national at the time of the child's birth (Nationality Act, Article 2, paragraph 1).

[34] Among the interviews and written sources collected for this study, only two cases indicate that a Japanese father registered his Chinese wife in the Japanese family register, enabling their children to acquire Japanese nationality and subsequently migrate to Japan. See notes from interview with Michiko, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Chiba, Japan, January 20, 2017; Nagatomi, 白狼の爪跡: 205.

[35] See, for example, Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 1, Tsuneyoshi.

[36] See, for example, Eiji Oguma. 1997. 単一民族神話の起源：〈日本人〉の自画像の系譜 [*The Myth of the Homogeneous Nation*]. Tokyo: Shinyosha, 235–70.

[37] See, for example, Barbara J. Brooks. 2014. "Japanese Colonialism, Gender, and Household Registration: Legal Reconstruction of Boundaries." In *Gender and Law in the Japanese Imperium*, edited by Susan L. Burns and Barbara J. Brooks. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

[38] See, for example, Kimberly Kono. 2010. *Romance, Family, and Nation in Japanese Colonial Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; Hironobu Hoshina. 2002. "植民地の「混血児」—「内台結婚」の政治学 [Colonial 'Mixed-Blood Children': Politics of Japanese-Taiwanese Intermarriage]." In 台湾の「大東亜戦争」：文学・メディア・文化 [*Taiwan's "Great East Asia War": Literature, Media and Culture*], edited by Shozo Fujii, Ying-che Huang, and Chie Tarumi, 267–94. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.

[39] According to Koshiro, marriages between Japanese men and Russian women were perceived as unproblematic and were viewed by Russian families as a means of securing social and economic stability. See Yukiko Koshiro. 2013. "East Asia's 'Melting-pot': Reevaluating Race Relations in Japan's Colonial Empire." In *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Western and Eastern Constructions*, edited by Rotem Kowner and Walter Demel, 475–98, esp. 488–94. Leiden: Brill.

[40] See, for example, Yoshio Koya. 1944. "共榮圏と混血の問題 [The Problem of Mixed-Blood in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere]." In 戦時下の新結婚 [*New Marriage during the War*], edited by Haruo Maki, 66–73. Osaka: Asahi Shobō.

heritage born outside Japan proper be sent to Japan to receive education.[41] However, no formal policies were implemented before the end of the war to prohibit sexual relationships between Japanese individuals and the local Chinese population (Kuramitsu 2021: 115–116). The Chinese Nationalist government had passed anti-*hanjian* (traitor to the Han Chinese) laws, including the "Regulations on Handling *Hanjian* Cases (*chuli hanjian tiaoli*)" promulgated in 1937 (Xia 2013: 112). While these laws pointed to the possibility that a Chinese woman could be punished for having an intimate relationship with a Japanese man in wartime China, they were not specifically intended to ban wartime Sino-Japanese marriages. Between 1939 and 1940, Toho Studio, a Japanese film production company, screened three films, including *China Night*, which depicted romantic relationships between a Chinese woman and a Japanese man and achieved significant box office success. Despite their propagandistic nature, the popularity of these films indicates that Sino-Japanese love relationships were not entirely considered a social taboo.

By the war's end, approximately 1.1 million Japanese military personnel and 1.7 million Japanese civilians—both men and women—were present in China.[42] Sources suggest that intimate relationships and marriages between Japanese and Chinese individuals occurred primarily in large cities under Japanese occupation (Appendices 1 and 2). Although these major cities had at times turned into battlefields, Japanese men had opportunities to interact with local women in non-combat environments.

Sino-Japanese children were also born in postwar China, as Japanese men—whether awaiting repatriation or engaged in civilian or military roles—formed partnerships with Chinese women. After the founding of the PRC, the number of Japanese residents was estimated at 72,000 in total: 24,000 worked for government agencies, 30,000 for military organizations, and 18,000 worked for neither (Osawa 2007: 45). According to the autobiography of Kaji Makoto, a Japanese soldier who fought alongside the Communists during the Chinese Civil War, Communist army commanders discouraged both Chinese and Japanese soldiers from marrying local women—especially those not serving in the army—due to the likelihood of prolonged separations caused by military duties (Kaji 1957: 163–164). The situation for Japanese soldiers who fought for the Nationalists in Shanxi province was different. Yan Xishan, a powerful Nationalist warlord, compelled about 2,600 Japanese officers and soldiers to remain in postwar Shanxi after Japan's surrender to aid in resisting the Communists, thereby violating the Potsdam Declaration. As incentives, Yan offered preferential treatment, including permission for single soldiers to marry local women, despite expectations of their repatriation within a few years.[43]

Parents of Sino-Japanese children in this study were married for an average of 4 years.[44] This stands in contrast to other historical and geopolitical contexts where relationships were often coerced, transactional, or casual, with women frequently lacking knowledge beyond the forename of their child's father, even in cases of consensual partnerships (Stelzl-Marx 2015: 285).

Varied patterns characterized consensual relationships —intimate liaisons formed voluntarily by both parties without coercion—between Chinese women and Japanese men during and after the war. Some relationships were unequivocally affectionate. For example, Michiko's father, who had been an intelligence agent in China since 1937, fell in love with her mother, and they married in 1939, spending about 6 years together. Following postwar separation, neither parent remarried, holding on to hope for reunion.[45] Conversely, other consensual relationships were more complex and nuanced. In some instances, Chinese women initially refused to become second wives to their Japanese partners but later acquiesced owing to financial and social considerations, particularly during pregnancy or after giving birth.[46]

Regarding nonviolent sexual wartime liaisons between local women and Japanese soldiers across the Asia–Pacific region, the prevailing assumption among the general public and media has been that such relationships were temporary and casual extramarital affairs in which Japanese men regarded their local partners as "*genchi-zuma*," a local mistress, or "*daini fujin*," a second wife.[47] The offspring of such unions were often referred to as "*sensō no otoshidane*," a term implying that they were born to women other than the men's legal wives during the war.[48] However, this assumption warrants scrutiny, as Japanese fathers engaged in diverse patterns of consensual relationships with their Chinese partners during and after the war. Some mothers testified that their husbands did not heartlessly abandon them upon repatriation; instead, they shed tears, promised to return, and left behind their contact information, money, and assets.[49] After repatriation, logistical constraints during the Chinese Civil War and the severance of Sino-Japanese relations made it impractical for Japanese husbands to return to China. While some Japanese husbands returned promptly to their "first wife" in Japan after repatriation,[50] others remained unmarried for an extended period in hopeful anticipation of reuniting with their families in China.[51]

[41] Ministry of Health and Welfare, Institute of Population Problems. 1943. "厚生省研究所人口民族部, 大和民族を中核とする世界政策の検討 [An Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus]," 2364.

[42] The figures include the Japanese population in Manchuria at the war's end. See Ryo Sato. 2016. 戦後日中関係と同窓会 [*Postwar Sino-Japanese Relations and Alumni Reunion*]. Tokyo: Sairyusha, 55.

[43] Yonehama, 日本軍「山西残留」, 108; Nagatomi, 白狼の爪跡, 39.

[44] In calculating the average duration of cohabitation among these couples, I excluded the parents of three Sino-Japanese children, as they cohabited for extended periods in the postwar era—53, 29, and 19 years, respectively.

[45] Interview with Michiko, January 20, 2017.

[46] See, for example, Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 2, Ryotaro.

[47] See, for example, Nagatomi, 白狼の爪跡, 205.

[48] See, for example, House of Councilors, *Proceedings No. 1*, 22.

[49] See, for example, Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 1, Tsuneyoshi; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 4, Katsue; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 5, Kayo; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 11, Taro; interview transcript with Koretada, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Tokyo, Japan, May 19, 2017.

[50] See, for example, Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 8, Mariko; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 14, Akio.

[51] See, for example, interview with Michiko, January 20, 2017; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 7, Maki.

The mother's influence on the children's positive identification with the father

The key factors shaping wartime and postwar Sino-Japanese consensual relationships were the male–female power imbalance rooted in the patriarchal structures of both China and Japan, and the wartime racial ideology that positioned Japanese as a superior race (Kuramitsu 2021: 106–116). Chinese mothers in this study upheld their Japanese partners as central household figures through patriarchal practices, such as patronymic naming and maintaining a Japanese lifestyle at home.[52] For instance, Maki's father gave her a Japanese surname and given name at her birth in 1946. After her father's repatriation, her mother chose a Chinese name for her to avoid political persecution. Given that most Chinese surnames consist of a single character, her mother selected one character from her Japanese husband's two-character surname. She also chose a Chinese given name that closely resembled the pronunciation of the Japanese name chosen by her husband.

The mothers played a significant role in filling in the "missing piece of the puzzle" for their children by recounting stories about the absent fathers. For example, when Michiko began asking about her absent father in her childhood, her mother readily recounted their loving relationship.[53] She told Michiko about how her father fell in love with her at first sight, his efforts to stay in China after the war, and his promise to return to bring them to Japan. In his autobiographical novel, Koretada mentioned how his mother shared her fond memories of his father with him.

> My mother used to shed tears of happiness while reminiscing and talking about her love for my father. She would suddenly pull me tight against her, stroke my clean-shaven head, and say "Your face resembles mine, but your kind heart resembles your father's." (Serikawa 2020: 49)

Notably, these mothers' narratives about the father resulted in the knowledge of all participants[54] of their father's good qualities and deeds such as his kindness, an affectionate nature, politeness, intelligence, work ethics, skills, and good looks. Many mothers in this study also spoke positively about their marital relationships regardless of whether their relationships with their Japanese partners were characterized by love or something more nuanced. Ryotaro's mother, although initially hesitant about her role as a second wife, asked Ryotaro on her deathbed to scatter her ashes from the source of the Yangtze River toward the east, expressing her wish for spiritual reunion with her Japanese husband.[55] Similarly, one of the mothers, also a second wife, mentioned in 1989 that she had a good relationship with her Japanese husband and still kept her wedding ring.[56] Such experiences of Sino-Japanese children gaining knowledge that helped them construct positive images of the father early on are not widely shared among various groups of CBOW. Many CBOW encounter a "wall of silence" that limits their access to information about their fathers, and they grow up without knowing their biological father's identity, appearance, or relationship with their mother.[57]

Sino-Japanese children acquired Japanese nationality through the aforementioned *shūseki* procedure, which required proof of their parents' marriage. To strengthen this proof, Japanese lawyers asked the mothers to provide detailed information about their wedding and post-marriage life. Thus, the mothers' recollections of their marital relationships not only facilitated their children's positive identification with their fathers but also significantly increased the likelihood of their children obtaining Japanese nationality and migrating to Japan. Consequently, the sources for this study are biased toward Sino-Japanese children born to Chinese mothers—some of whom migrated to Japan with their children—who chose to narrate positive recollections of their married life and supported their children's migration to Japan, regardless of whether those relationships were clearly loving or more complex in nature. It is important to note that this occurred despite the fact that, following the repatriation of the fathers and in the absence of policies designed to support them, the mothers were often left solely responsible for the care and well-being of their children. If the parents' consensual relationships did not result in marriage or if the mother had a difficult relationship with the Japanese husband and refused to testify, the likelihood of the child acquiring Japanese nationality was significantly reduced, and such cases are far less likely to be documented.

Experiences, identities, and belonging

Adversities in China

The end of the Second Sino-Japanese War did not usher in peace for China, as the Civil War resumed shortly thereafter. Following the Civil War, the establishment of the PRC under Communist rule exposed the entire population, from politicians to ordinary citizens, to widespread persecution, not only sanctioned by the authorities but also executed by the populace.[58] Sino-Japanese children and their mothers were particularly vulnerable owing to their association with Japanese fathers because many Chinese harbored personal memories of Japanese wartime atrocities, and the Communist Party promoted a nation-building narrative centered on resistance against the humiliation and suffering inflicted by imperial powers, including Japan.

[52] Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 3, Yoshio; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 5, Kayo; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 6, Kayoko.

[53] Interview with Michiko, January 20, 2017.

[54] One participant learned about her absent father through stories passed down by her grandmother following the death of her mother when she was 1 year old.

[55] Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 2, Ryotaro.

[56] Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 4, Katsue; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 5, Kayo.

[57] See, for example, Lee. 2017. *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 89, 245; Stelzl-Marx, "Soviet Children of Occupation in Austria," 282–3; Ezawa, "The Guilt Feeling That You Exist," 489; Glaesmer et al., "Childhood Maltreatment in Children Born of Occupation after WWII in Germany and Its Association with Mental Disorders," 1147; Saskia Mitreuter et al. 2019. "Questions of Identity in Children Born of War: Embarking on a Search for the Unknown Soldier Father." *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 28(11): 3220–9, esp. 3220–1.

[58] See, for example, Hajimu Masuda. 2017. "What was the Cold War? Imagined Reality, Ordinary People's War, and Social Mechanism." *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 15(4).

Sino-Japanese children employed various coping strategies to avoid stigmatization, discrimination, and political persecution. They often concealed their origins by erasing traces of their fathers, such as changing their Japanese names to Chinese ones and discarding their fathers' memorabilia.[59] Another common strategy was to maintain a low profile within their communities, facilitated by their physical features indistinguishable from the majority of the Chinese population.

Despite these efforts, the origins of most Sino-Japanese children in this study were known or eventually revealed, leading to significant adversities.[60] Consistent with the experiences of CBOW in most historical and geopolitical contexts (Mochmann, Lee, and Stelzl-Marx 2009: 271–272), Sino-Japanese children were often stigmatized as "enemy's children" and subjected to discriminatory labels such as *xiaoriben* (Japanese runt), *riben guizi* (Japanese devil), and *hanjian* (traitor to the Han Chinese state). They were also labeled as *ribenren* (Japanese), *waiguoren zinü* (foreigner's child), *youwenti de zinü* (problematic child), and *zhengzhi chengfen buhao de ren* (person with bad political affiliation).[61] During the Cultural Revolution, anyone with a foreign connection, including innocent Sino-Japanese offspring, could be categorized as politically unreliable (Dikötter 2016: 185), though not everyone was bullied or persecuted. These acts of name-calling constituted "othering" (Jensen 2011: 65), which hindered Sino-Japanese children's sense of belonging to their maternal country. They also recalled that their mothers were subjected to harsh labels, as being married to a Japanese was perceived as a betrayal of the country. Some mothers were labeled as *hanjian maiguozei* (traitor to China), *fangeming* (counter-revolutionary), and *riben tewu* (Japanese spy) and were subjected to forced labor.[62]

Sino-Japanese children commonly encountered barriers to various life opportunities and to political participation. Koretada had to forgo university when a family register officer revealed his origin before his high school graduation.[63] Although Yuko was an accomplished actress, she was only allowed on stage as a understudy for the main actress.[64] Keiko and Maki were expelled from the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution when their origins were discovered.[65] A few participants successfully concealed their origins and lived as "Chinese" without facing discrimination or persecution, yet they lived in fear of exposure, keeping their origins secret even from their closest friends.[66] Furthermore, some Sino-Japanese children faced severe persecution in adulthood, including years of detention, imprisonment, and forced labor during the Cultural Revolution.[67] The experiences of Sino-Japanese children in this study align with Lee's claim (2017: 6) that CBOW born of consensual relationships did not necessarily have easier childhoods and adolescences than those conceived under exploitative or violent circumstances.

Constructing idealized notions of the "homeland"

The challenges faced by Sino-Japanese children are similar to those encountered by CBOW globally. However, Sino-Japanese children are distinct in their strong sense of belonging to their paternal country. Throughout their lives in China, they idealized Japan as their "homeland" to which they felt they belonged and wished to "return." Despite being born and raised in China, all participants described their migration to Japan using the terms *huiguo* or *kaeru*, which translate to "to return" in Chinese and Japanese, respectively. In the interviews, I consciously employed neutral phrases such as "go to Japan" and "migrate to Japan" when posing questions. This indicates that these concepts were not imposed on the participants' narratives but were expressions that the participants themselves adopted. Similarly, they referred to their father's country as their "homeland," using the terms *zuguo* in Chinese and *sokoku*, *furusato*, or *kokyō* in Japanese. Participants imbued "homeland" with various meanings: (1) a place of belonging based on patrilineality, (2) a place of security and acceptance, (3) a place for reuniting with their father, and (4) an imagined affluent and beautiful place.

Some Sino-Japanese children began to identify Japan as their "homeland" upon learning about their origin. The notion of "homeland" for Toshio and Yuko shifted from China to Japan owing to the logic of patrilineality, which dictates family membership through paternal lineage. Toshio initially believed his father was Chinese until his father's arrest revealed his Japanese identity, leading Toshio to recognize Japan as his "ancestral homeland" (*sokoku*).[68] In an interview with Yuko, she consistently asserted her Japanese identity. I asked if she had ever considered herself Chinese, as she learned about her father's nationality at the age of 13 years.

[59] See, for example, interview with Michiko, January 20, 2017; Vivian Zhou. 2018. "Michiko: A Child Born of War." Vimeo video, 15 May. https://vimeo.com/269945416 (accessed April 29, 2025).

[60] The origins of Sino-Japanese children in this study were disclosed under various circumstances. In some instances, the neighborhood was aware of the Japanese paternity during the war. In other cases, their origins were exposed by individuals seeking to gain political advantage during the Cultural Revolution. These individuals included former domestic helpers, relatives, and civil servants with access to family registers. See notes from interview with Yuko, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Kanagawa, Japan, May 12, 2016; Toshio Fukatani. 2014. 日本国最後の帰還兵: 深谷義治とその家族 [*The Last Soldier That Returned to Japan: Fukatani Yoshiharu and His Family*]. Tokyo: Shueisha, 39; interview with Koretada, May 19, 2017.

[61] Interview with Keiko, May 20, 2016; interview with Seiji, May 17, 2016.

[62] Two of the mistreated mothers were married to intelligence agents, while another was married to a businessman. The mothers of five other participants did not face any punishment. It remains unclear whether the severity of punishment toward these mothers was linked to their Japanese husband's wartime professions. Interview with Michiko, January 20, 2017; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 7, Maki; notes from interview with Yuko, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Kanagawa, Japan, May 10, 2016.

[63] Interview with Koretada, May 19, 2017.

[64] Interview with Yuko, May 12, 2016.

[65] Interview with Keiko, May 20, 2016; *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai* (*NHK*). 2011. "二人の旅路: 日中激動を生きた京劇夫婦 [A Journey of a Couple: Beijing Opera Actress and Actor Who Led a Tumultuous Life in China and Japan]." *NHK*, 1 March.

[66] Transcript from interview with Momoko, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Tokyo, Japan, May 23, 2017; interview with Michiko, January 20, 2017.

[67] Fukatani, 日本国最後の帰還兵, 296–301; Masayasu Hosaka. August 1988. "文革で裁かれた残留混血孤児—「お前の父は阪田特務機関長だ」[Mixed-Blood Orphan Left behind in China and Punished during the Cultural Revolution: 'Your Father Was Sakata, Head of the Secret Military Agency!']" *Shokun!* 20(4): 196–225.

[68] Transcript from interview with Toshio, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Hiroshima, Japan, January 15, 2017.

She replied that she had never given it much thought.[69] Yuko internalized the logic of patrilineality and unconsciously omitted inconsistencies in her sense of national identity to preserve a subjective sense of self-continuity.

Another concept of "homeland" for Sino-Japanese children was an imagined place of security and acceptance. This perception arose from feelings of alienation within their communities, coupled with experiences of discrimination and a constant fear of persecution. During periods of bullying by his classmates in secondary school, Shigeo began to perceive Japan as a safe haven and developed a strong desire to move there (Fukatani 2014: 76–7):

> In middle school, a class bully called me *dongyangren* (a derogatory term meaning "Japanese") and *riben guizi* (Japanese devil). I could not stand it any longer, so I stood on a chair and jumped on him with all my might . . . . When I got home, I broke down in tears in front of my mother. I felt deeply sad, and once again, a strong desire to return to my ancestral homeland consumed me.

For Toshio, Japan was an imagined sanctuary from daily stigmatization and discrimination (Fukatani 2014: 99–100):

> I used to dream of my entire family returning to and being reunited in our ancestral homeland. In my dreams, I could escape from my sufferings and feel a momentary sense of happiness.

Michiko cited escaping political oppression and seeking inner peace as crucial reasons for her migration.[70] A traumatic incident she recalls involved witnessing a truckload of corpses while shopping with her mother. Michiko remembers her fear of becoming one of those bodies if her background were exposed.

During Mao's era, Sino-Japanese children harbored dreams of reuniting with their fathers in an imagined Japan, shaped by exceedingly limited sources of information available to them. When the Japanese Embassy provided Toshio with a Japanese magazine, he devoured the iconic images of Japan, such as Mt. Fuji and cherry blossoms (Fukatani 2014: 224–225, 234). This prompted him to actively search for locations in China where he could foster a deeper sense of connection with Japan (Fukatani 2014: 77):

> I visited the Hongkou district in Shanghai, once a Japanese settlement, in search of cherry blossoms. I explored areas with remaining Japanese buildings, but the cherry blossom trees and the *Shanhai Jinja* (a Shinto shrine in Shanghai) were no longer there.

Yuko composed the following poem shortly before her migration to Japan, vividly expressing her intense longing to reunite with her father and to experience her imagined homeland.[71]

> My dream is to see Mt. Fuji's reflection in the Japanese ocean
>
> I convey my thoughts through turbulent waves
>
> My homeland (*furusato*), where leaves float in waves of the distant sea
>
> Facing a wall, I agonize alone
>
> What should I do?
>
> Tears flow incessantly as I think of my father
>
> Heart-wrenching to revisit the agony
>
> Thirty-five years since our separation
>
> Sleep evades me, pondering, "When will I see my father?"
>
> If I'm blessed with kind people . . . [we may reunite one day]
>
> Beyond the eastern sea, an island hosts Mt. Fuji
>
> Blessed with spring's cherry blossoms in bloom
>
> Hand in hand, I yearn for enduring Sino-Japanese friendship
>
> I want to become a seagull and perch upon my father's lap
>
> When will we reunite?

Yuko expressed her yearning for Japan through the term *furusato*, which indicates one's sense of nostalgia for the place of childhood and adolescence (Wierzbicka 1997: 156–161). To her, "homeland" represented an emotional and idealized concept—a mythical and sentimental realm where she imagined reuniting with her long-lost father. Toshio also used the term *kokyō*, synonymous with *furusato*, to refer to his father's hometown in Shimane Prefecture. Unlike terms such as *zuguo* (in Chinese) or *sokoku* (in Japanese), which emphasize ancestral ties and national loyalty, both *furusato* and *kokyō* convey nostalgia for special cherished memories integral to one's identity. The use of *furusato* and *kokyō* might suggest that Toshio and Yuko, to some degree, inhabited their imagined "homelands" during childhood and adolescence as a refuge from harsh realities. Toshio recounted experiencing *déjà vu* and a profound sense of nostalgia upon finally seeing Mt. Fuji, feeling he had at last "returned" to his "homeland" (Fukatani 2014: 329, 432).

Push and pull factors for "returning" to the "homeland"

While the interviewed Sino-Japanese children cultivated a strong sense of belonging to Japan in postwar China, economic considerations also significantly influenced their decision to migrate. Before the possibility of migration emerged, they had a vague idea, based on scant information, that Japan was a prosperous nation. As migration became a possibility, some participants saw it as an opportunity to escape challenging economic conditions. Seiji's decision to acquire Japanese nationality was primarily driven by his aspiration to improve his children's quality of life. Seiji recounted with sadness the financial hardships that limited his ability to provide adequate nutrition for his children, such that only one of his three children could eat an egg each day. Despite learning of his father's passing while searching for ways to migrate to Japan, Seiji remained resolute in acquiring Japanese nationality for better economic opportunities.[72]

The economic disparity between China and Japan in the 1970s and 1980s was striking, with Japan's economy far outpacing China's in terms of both total gross domestic product (GDP) and per capita income. The importance of

[69] Notes from interview with Yuko, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Kanagawa, Japan, December 21, 2015.

[70] Notes from interview with Michiko, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Chiba, Japan, January 14, 2017.

[71] Photocopy of a newsletter issued by a support group for stranded war orphans, Yuko, issue date unknown.

[72] Interview with Seiji, May 17, 2016.

economic differentials between maternal and paternal countries is evident when comparing groups of CBOW who had the option to acquire their paternal country's nationality. Driven by poverty, children born to local women and American soldiers during the Vietnam War sought better opportunities in the United States. In contrast, a minority of children born to local women fathered by Americans in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Austria during and after World War II acquired US citizenship by proving their father–child relationship but felt no need to migrate. They simply wanted to feel the sense of connectedness with their fathers.[73] This lack of desire to migrate likely stems from the minimal economic disparity between the parents' countries.

The motivations for Sino-Japanese individuals to migrate to Japan were influenced by a complex interplay of sociopolitical, economic, and emotional push and pull factors, each varying in significance for different individuals at the time of their decision. However, the deeply personal emotions deriving from constructed beliefs about the absent father played a key role in their "return." For instance, Michiko initially hesitated to migrate owing to her and her husband's stable careers as a doctor and a physicist. Migration in mid-life, with its cultural and linguistic challenges, implied downward occupational mobility.[74] However, Michiko ultimately decided to move to Japan upon learning from a Japanese relative that her father had expressed a deathbed wish for her and her mother to live in Japan one day. She sought to honor her father's wishes and reside in the place he envisioned for her.[75]

Searching for information about the father

CBOW in various historical and geopolitical contexts often experience "absolute fatherlessness" mainly owing to the taboo surrounding their conception and the almost complete absence of any information about the father, including name, images, stories, or similar. In this regard, the cases of Sino-Japanese children are rare, as they not only learned about their fathers from their mothers and relatives but also uncovered substantial details while acquiring nationality for migration purposes.

The 1972 normalization and subsequent media reports on stranded war orphans searching for their Japanese kin prompted many Sino-Japanese individuals—then in mid-life—to simultaneously seek out their absent fathers and find ways to migrate to Japan. The strong urge of Sino-Japanese children to search for the absent father mirrors those of various CBOW groups who started tracing their fathers in adulthood, mostly not in an attempt to "return" to the paternal country but in an attempt to find the missing parts in their own biography, to trace possible paternal family, and to deal with challenges in their own identity formation due to the absent father.[76]

The search for the absent father and acquiring Japanese nationality required extraordinary determination and perseverance. Although the Chinese state media had started to emphasize friendship and exchange between China and Japan around 1972, contacting individuals in Japan carried considerable political risks. Maki referred to contacting her father and other people in Japan in the 1980s and stated, "I cut all the possible paths [in China] to move forward" because making such connections meant that she might be placed under surveillance and could be subjected to persecution.[77] It often took many years—sometimes over a decade—to find a key individual who guided them toward the aforementioned *shūseki* procedure.

The *shūseki* procedure was pivotal for Sino-Japanese children in several respects. First, it provided legal recognition of their Japanese nationality and established the father–child relationship not only for children born of monogamous marriages but also for those born from bigamous or polygamous marriages (Kuramitsu 2021: 95–96). Consequently, it likely bolstered their sense of legitimacy, self-worth, and social acceptance. Furthermore, although extremely time-consuming, it facilitated an in-depth exploration of their paternal lineage and relationships, deepening their understanding of their fathers. In gathering necessary proof of their parents' marriage, Sino-Japanese children figuratively walked in the footsteps of their absent fathers by visiting their former residences, workplaces, and the location of their parents' wedding celebrations.[78] They not only collected detailed narratives about their parents' initial meeting and marriage but also discovered their father's wartime relationships with Chinese relatives, friends, colleagues, and neighbors—a perspective they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to explore.

Sino-Japanese children in this study persisted in their efforts to migrate to Japan, regardless of whether the information they obtained about their fathers was positive or negative. A few instances resulted in successful family reunification and the affirmation of mutual affection.[79] While many were unable to reunite with their fathers, they nonetheless gained significant insights into their fathers' lives and relationships. Disappointment ensued in other cases, primarily owing to the father's death or refusal to acknowledge the father–child relationship.[80] Despite encountering these challenges, these individuals remained committed to relocating to Japan.

Identities and belonging after migration

Sino-Japanese children in this study acquired Japanese nationality through the *shūseki* procedure, thereby renouncing their Chinese nationality, and they migrated to Japan

[73] Email correspondence from Ute Baur-Timmerbrink (she is a child born of a German mother, fathered by American occupation soldier, and renowned for her efforts in supporting German and Austrian children of the occupation in their search for their fathers) with Kanako Kuramitsu, April 7, 2018.

[74] After graduating from secondary school or university in China, participants pursued diverse careers: Michiko became a doctor, Keiko a pharmacist, Momoko a school teacher, Seiji an engineer, Toshio a factory worker, Yuko an actress, and Koretada a playwright.

[75] Interview with Michiko, January 20, 2017.

[76] See, for example, Mitreuter et al., "Questions of Identity in Children Born of War"; *GI Trace,* http://www.gitrace.org/ (accessed April 29, 2025).

[77] Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 7, Maki.

[78] Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 2, Ryotaro; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 5, Kayo.

[79] Interview with Yuko, May 12, 2016; Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 11, Taro.

[80] Unpublished Personal Documents, Case 10, Teruo.

Figure 2: Portrait of a 'Sino-Japanese child' taken in Japan, 2018. Photograph by Miyuki Okuyama.

with their families in the 1980s and 1990s. Their post-migration experiences were different from their expectations of their imagined "homeland." While some received government-sponsored assistance—primarily intended for stranded war orphans—to learn Japanese and secure employment, others were unaware of such support and received none. Without financial aid, they had to quickly find employment and acclimatize to Japanese culture and language. The linguistic barrier often led to downward occupational mobility, at least until they could start communicating in Japanese. Learning Japanese while working proved difficult, and their accents frequently marked them as "foreigners" (Fukatani 2014: 405). Some Sino-Japanese children faced discrimination as "Chinese" in what they had expected to be their "homeland":

> When I lived in China, Chinese people didn't trust me because I was Japanese. Since coming to Japan, Japanese people don't trust me because I'm Chinese. Now I feel that I'm sandwiched in between. Neither country trusts me. They don't believe me. [In China, they said,] "You are Japanese, so we can't give you an important post," and in Japan, vice versa.[81]

Many CBOW, including Amerasians born of the Vietnam War, have also experienced social exclusion as "foreigners" in their country of birth and encountered similar challenges upon migrating to their paternal country (Figure 2).[82]

[81] Interview with Keiko, May 20, 2016.

Despite notable parallels between stranded war orphans and Sino-Japanese children—particularly in their return to Japan and the discrimination they faced in both China and Japan—participants in this study emphasized a clear sense of distinction from the orphans, shaped by a range of factors. This included the significant difference of being raised by adoptive parents or their biological mother, respectively. Living with their mothers and maternal relatives often enabled Sino-Japanese children to retain substantial information about their absent fathers, in contrast to more than half of the stranded war orphans, who were unable to identify any of their Japanese relatives. In terms of upbringing, most stranded war orphans grew up in rural villages in northeast China, while most Sino-Japanese children in this study were born and raised in more urban settings. Some Sino-Japanese children—having attained higher levels of education and holding occupations such as doctors or company employees—expressed sympathy for stranded war orphans who had endured physically demanding agricultural labor in rural areas.[83]

During the interview, Keiko described herself as an "in-between person" (*zhongjianren*) viewed by others as neither fully Chinese nor Japanese. Keiko also exhibited signs of dissociation from "Japanese people." She called herself "*Heilongjiang de ren*" (a person from Heilongjiang),

[82] See, for example, Lee, *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century*, 141.

[83] Notes from interview with Michiko, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Kanagawa, Japan, December 18, 2017; interview with Seiji, May 17, 2016.

highlighting that her dispositions align more closely with those from Heilongjiang Province, who are typically regarded as generous (*dafang*). She also used the third person plural "they" (*tamen*) when referring to other Japanese people.[84]

Nevertheless, Keiko continued to perceive Japan as her "homeland." When asked "Which country is your homeland?" Keiko expressed her frustration, replying emphatically, "Japan!" She elaborated:

> Although I grew up in China, I have identified as Japanese since my childhood. I have always wanted to return and remain committed to this goal.[85]

Keiko also stated that she was extremely relieved when she and her siblings could build a tomb in Japan for their father, who died in postwar China, and finally place his ashes to rest in his homeland. Her empathy and a sense of filial responsibility toward her father have sustained and reinforced her sense of belonging to Japan. As for other participants who decided to permanently live in Japan, their perceptions of "homeland" also evolved after migration, after experiencing feelings of alienation and other difficulties in Japan. Despite this, the connection with their fathers remained central in their narratives, potentially influencing their decision to stay in Japan and reinforcing their sense of belonging to the country.

After migration, some participants developed identities as "peacebuilders" between their country of origin and their new home. In his two novels, Koretada explores themes of war, peace, cultural exchange, and interpersonal relationships between China and Japan (Serikawa and Yu 2019; Serikawa 2020). He identifies himself as a "child of war" (*sensō no ko*), acknowledging that his existence is a direct result of wartime circumstances, which led to the meeting of his parents. Koretada also describes himself as a "child of peace" (*heiwa no ko*), expressing a desire to promote peace and friendship, drawing on his experiences as the offspring of an "enemy" father and from a loving wartime relationship. He further notes that his father serves as the "driving force" behind his motivation to write his novels.[86] Another participant, Toshio, has authored a non-fiction book about the experiences of his father and family, highlighting the profound impacts of war, including discrimination, poverty, and the long-term imprisonment of his father and elder brother (Fukatani 2014). He was motivated to publish the book to address the injustice his father suffered and to promote peace. In Toshio's book, his father's experiences are narrated in the first person. To construct these autobiographical narratives, Toshio conducted thorough research into his father's professional and private life. This process deeply immersed Toshio in his father's experiences and emotions, reinforcing his love and empathy for the father (Figure 3).

[84] Interview with Keiko, May 20, 2016.

[85] Notes from interview with Keiko, interviewed by Kanako Kuramitsu, Kanagawa, Japan, December 24, 2017.

[86] Interview with Momoko, May 23, 2017.

Such a creative process, primarily motivated by their fathers' stories, has imbued both Koretada and Toshio with a new role as "peacebuilders" in their old age, providing them with a meaningful purpose amid ongoing historical and political tensions between China and Japan. Some CBOW from other historical and geopolitical contexts also seek to play a reconciliatory role in their post-conflict societies where tensions with former adversaries persist, although they may represent a minority among previously studied CBOW groups (Lee 2017: 170, 248).

Interestingly, participants in this study expressed no interest in connecting with other Sino-Japanese individuals, forming a group, or being recognized as a collective. This stands in contrast to groups of CBOW in other historical and geopolitical contexts, many of whom have formed support networks in recent decades.[87] In particular, those who faced adversities—such as the "wall of silence," stigmatization, and discrimination—have come together to share their experiences and support one another in pursuing a common life goal: the search for their absent fathers. This was also the case for children born to Indisch women and Japanese men during the war, who later migrated to the Netherlands (Huijs-Watanuki 2006). In the case of children born to Filipino women and Japanese immigrants in the Philippines before the war, they collectively adopted the label *Nikkeijin* around the 1980s (Ohno 2007: 244). This term, which denotes "Japanese who emigrated from Japan and their descendants," was used as a means of empowerment and public recognition, countering derogatory labels previously used against them. It also enabled them to see themselves as part of *Nikkeijin* communities in other parts of the world. Furthermore, they have been engaged in a collective movement, as war-victimized *Nikkeijin*, to reclaim their Japanese nationality, currently supported by a group led by Japanese lawyer Kawai Hiroyuki—who also assisted Sino-Japanese children in acquiring Japanese nationality in the 1980s.

Some assumptions can be made regarding the participants' lack of interest in forming a group. First, Sino-Japanese children who migrated to Japan had already completed the search for their fathers—finding their "missing piece of the puzzle"—between the 1970s and 1990s, as part of the process of gathering the necessary documentation for nationality acquisition. Secondly, participants in the interviews did not have a shared need for financial, legal, or psychosocial support. Thirdly, while they were eager to share their life stories with the researcher or to

[87] This trend has been reinforced through the development of social media platforms that connect CBOW of all ages across different historical and geopolitical contexts. For example, regarding children fathered by Allied forces of the postwar occupations of Germany, children born of conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, children born to Indisch mothers and Japanese fathers in Indonesia who later relocated to the Netherlands, and children born of occupation in postwar Japan, see Lee, *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century*, 87; Forgotten Children of War Association. 2025. ZDR website, April 29. https://zdr.ba/en/; Huijs-Watanuki. 2006. わたしは誰の子?：父を捜し求める日系二世オランダ人たち [*Whose Child am I?: Japanese-Dutch Second-Generation Descendants Searching for Their Fathers*]. Tokyo: Nashinokisha; *JBpress*. 2014. "エリザベス・サンダース・ホーム：米国で同窓会呼びかけ [Elisabeth Saunders Home: Calling for reunion in the U.S.]," *JBpress*, 3 May. https://jbpress.ismedia.jp/articles/-/40641 (accessed April 29, 2025).

Figure 3: Portrait of a 'Sino-Japanese child' taken in Japan, 2017. Photograph by Miyuki Okuyama.

publish their own autobiographies or autobiographical novels, they regarded their experiences as inherently unique and deeply personal. For instance, Seiji, who happened to know a few other Sino-Japanese individuals in Nanjing, stated that his life story and current situation are quite different from those of his acquaintances.[88] As a result, they did not express a desire to be recognized or remembered as a collective (Figure 4).

Some participants rejected being categorized as members of a minority group to avoid disadvantages, such as being labeled a "war victim." Yuko, who had worked closely with a support group for stranded war orphans, witnessed firsthand that victimhood narratives became dominant among them in their legal fight for compensation and welfare benefits. She observed that narratives that did not strengthen this legal fight were excluded or criticized. In the interview, Yuko repeatedly affirmed her identity as "Japanese" to emphasize her affiliation with the majority group rather than with the group of stranded war orphans. By differentiating herself from stranded war orphans, she aimed to assert her agency, highlighting that she is not a vulnerable victim in need of help but rather an individual capable of standing independently through her own efforts and abilities.[89] Similarly, Koretada did not wish to be reduced to the label of a "war victim." Although he had experienced significant adversity in China, he sought to narrate his story through a selective reconstruction of his autobiographical past—one that emphasized familial love, resilience, and personal achievement.[90] By remaining socially invisible and silent after accomplishing the monumental task of searching for information about their fathers and migrating to Japan, Sino-Japanese children in this study constructed deeply personal narratives through their interactions with the researcher, free from the constraints of any specific collective narrative. The dilemma, however, is that the lack of public recognition as a group has meant that the valuable voices and life stories of many have gone unrecorded. Furthermore, those who continue to need financial, legal, and psychosocial support may remain invisible and isolated (Figure 5).

Conclusion

Although the analysis is limited in generalizability owing to the small sample size, this first investigation into the experiences of Sino-Japanese children highlights the significant impact of their often-absent Japanese fathers on their identities, belonging, and life courses. Sino-Japanese children born of consensual relationships experienced similar challenges to many groups of CBOW, including stigma and discrimination stemming from their association with the

[88] Interview with Seiji, May 17, 2016.
[89] Interview with Yuko, May 12, 2016.
[90] Interview with Koretada, May 19, 2017.

Figure 4: Portrait of a 'Sino-Japanese child' taken in Japan, 2017. Photograph by Miyuki Okuyama.
© Miyuki Okuyama, used with permission

"enemy" father. However, Sino-Japanese children in this study also had significantly different experiences, such as obtaining substantial information about their fathers. Many of these differences can be attributed to the fact that they were not offspring of uniformed personnel. Although some fathers may have served as soldiers before and/or after marrying Chinese women, this study discovered that their non-military status during the relationship often allowed for a relatively "normal" family life that lasted from a few months to several years. What distinguishes the study group from other CBOW groups is that, despite their fathers' physical absence, these fathers maintained a significant presence in their lives, enabling the construction of positive paternal images. Despite the nuanced nature of some consensual relationships, the mothers, having experienced married life with their Japanese partners, were able to selectively recall and share positive aspects of these relationships with their children. This had a profound impact on the formation of Sino-Japanese children's identities and enhanced the possibility of their "return" to the "homeland."

Unlike the case of stranded war orphans, there were no state-led initiatives or policies specifically aimed at facilitating the "return" of Sino-Japanese children. Their voluntary return migration was enabled through the *shūseki* procedure—which acknowledged that Sino-Japanese children were entitled to Japanese nationality at birth—and through the support of individuals who assisted them with the process. The procedure also positively impacted Sino-Japanese children in this study by establishing a legal father–child relationship and enabling them to align their sense of belonging to their paternal country with their official nationality. It was not a legal procedure specifically established for Sino-Japanese children and was applicable only to those who could provide information about their father and evidence of their parents' marriage. The procedure was also extremely time-consuming and required considerable perseverance. Nevertheless, this legal route to

Figure 5: Portrait of a 'Sino-Japanese child' taken in Japan, 2017. Photograph by Miyuki Okuyama.

acquire the nationality of the paternal country represents an interesting early example of children born to local women and fathered by men from an enemy country, under very specific circumstances, being supported in claiming nationality rights in their paternal country. Acquiring their nationality through paternal descent and gaining the rights associated with this nationality in the father's country raises the prospect of CBOW's rights to access improved economic opportunities, as well as a more favorable sociopolitical environment for their well-being—an option that has largely remained inaccessible to the majority of CBOW (Wagner, Smith, and Lee 2024; 44).

This study on Sino-Japanese children, along with previous research on children born to local women and Japanese men before, during, and after Japan's wars in the Asia–Pacific region, reveals that many were fathered not only by soldiers but also by non-uniformed military personnel and civilians. Another notable pattern is the existence of groups of children born to Japanese men who, for a range of historical and personal reasons, remained overseas following Japan's defeat (Hayashi 2012).[91] Among these children, there are diverse patterns in their aspirations to acquire Japanese nationality and migrate to Japan. Developing a common conceptual framework could facilitate future cross-regional and cross-chronological analyses of the circumstances of conception, experiences, and identity formation of war-affected children of transnational heritage fathered by Japanese men across the Asia–Pacific region.[92]

The accounts from Sino-Japanese children, whose lives have been profoundly shaped by the war and the political, legal, and cultural boundaries between China and Japan, reveal an overlooked but important part of Sino-Japanese history. In postwar China, these individuals' rights and well-being have been severely undermined owing to their origins and presumed association with the former enemy country, highlighting the far-reaching consequences of the war. Although they lack a community or interest group, these issues deserve attention from both children's rights and human rights perspectives. Their family stories also provide insight into little-known wartime and postwar Sino-Japanese consensual relationships and transnational family bonds, which challenge major narratives of the Second Sino-Japanese War. As oral historian Paul Thompson observed, "the far limit of the past recoverable through oral evidence recedes remorselessly through death, day by day" (Thompson 2000: 308), and the stories of other Sino-Japanese children, whom I could not locate, are disappearing as we speak. Now, 80 years after the war's end, it is time for

[91] See Eiichi Hayashi. 2012. 残留日本兵：アジアに生きた一万人の戦後 [Japanese Soldiers Who Stayed behind: The Postwar Period for the 10,000 Who Lived in Asia]. Tokyo: Chūōkōron Shinsha.

[92] In 2017, an attempt was made to launch an interdisciplinary research project aimed at exploring the conceptual framework of "children born of the Asia–Pacific War" (太平洋戦争で生まれた子供たち), directly inspired by the concept of CBOW. However, the project has been discontinued owing to circumstances beyond the researchers' control. See *The Toyota Foundation, 2017 Research Grant Program* http://toyotafound.force.com/psearch/JoseiDetail?name=D17-R-0770 (accessed April 29, 2025).

the existence of Sino-Japanese children to be remembered and for their extraordinary life stories to be told.

Supplementary material

A short animated film portraying the life story of one of the study participants is available at: https://vimeo.com/269945416

Financial support

I received a small amount of funding from the University of Turku to support the writing of this article. This research was supported by funding from the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Initial Training Network (ITN) of the European Commission. The funder had no role in the design of the study, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or writing of the manuscript.

Bibliography

Aoki, Fukiko 青木冨貴子. 2016. *GHQと戦った女: 沢田美喜 [The Woman Who Fought GHQ: Sawada Miki]*. Tokyo: Shinchosha.

Apio, Eunice. 2016. "Children Born of War in Northern Uganda: Kinship, Marriage, and the Politics of Post-conflict Reintegration in Lango society." PhD thesis, University of Birmingham.

Asahi Shimbun. 1983. "肉親捜し私たちも: 千人超す片親と生別　日中混血孤児訴え [Please Search for Our Kin, Too: Over One Thousand Sino-Japanese Mixed-blood Orphans Separated from Their Japanese Parents Appeal for Help]." 朝日新聞 [*Asahi Shimbun*], 25 February.

Asahi Shimbun. 1986. "混血孤児も肉親捜し：中国から支援要請 就籍申し立て続々 [Mixed-blood Children Also Seeking Their Relatives: Requests for Support from China, Numerous Applications for Shūseki Procedure]." 朝日新聞 [*Asahi Shimbun*], 16 January.

Asahi Shimbun. 1998. "庵谷巌さん: 中国残留孤児問題に取り組むボランティア [Mr. Ioriya Iwao: A Volunteer Tackling the Issues of Stranded War Orphans]." 朝日新聞 [*Asahi Shimbun*], 20 November.

Asano Tamanoi, Mariko. 2006. "Japanese War Orphans and the Challenges of Repatriation in Post-colonial East Asia." *Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus* **4**(8): 1–17.

Brooks, Barbara J. 2014. "Japanese Colonialism, Gender, and Household Registration: Legal Reconstruction of Boundaries." In *Gender and Law in the Japanese Imperium*, edited by Susan L. Burns and Barbara J. Brooks, 219–39. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Buchheim, Eveline. 2015. "Enabling Remembrance: Japanese-Indisch Descendants Visit Japan." *History and Memory* **27**(2): 104–25.

Carpenter, R. Charli. 2010. *Forgetting Children Born of War: Setting the Human Rights Agenda in Bosnia and Beyond*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chan, Yeeshan. 2011. *Abandoned Japanese in Postwar Manchuria: The Lives of War Orphans and Wives in Two Countries*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.

Dikötter, Frank. 2016. *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962–1976*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Dower, John W. 1999. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: The New Press.

Efird, Robert. 2008. "Japan's 'War Orphans': Identification and State Responsibility." *The Journal of Japanese Studies* **34**(2): 363–88.

Ezawa, Aya 江沢あや. 2015. "'The Guilt Feeling that You Exist': War, Racism and Indisch-Japanese Identity Formation." In *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia Vol. II: Interactions, Nationalism, Gender and Lineage*, edited by Rotem Kowner and Walter Demel, 481–502. Leiden: Brill.

Fukatani, Toshio 深谷敏雄. 2014. *日本国最後の帰還兵: 深谷義治とその家族 [The Last Soldier That Returned to Japan: Fukatani Yoshiharu and His Family]*. Tokyo: Shueisha.

Glaesmer, Heide, Philipp Kuwert, Elmar Braehler, and Marie Kaiser. 2017. "Childhood Maltreatment in Children Born of Occupation after WWII in Germany and Its Association with Mental Disorders." *International Psychogeriatrics* **29**(7): 1147–56.

Guo, Ke 郭柯. 2013. 三十二 [*Thirty-two*]. Documentary film.

Hashimoto, Yuichi 橋本裕一. 2011. "もうひとつのビルマの竪琴 [Another Burmese Harp]." *Yangonow*, 2 November. https://jsat.pussycat.jp/yangonow/info/history/burma_harp.php (accessed April 29, 2025).

Hayashi, Eiichi 林英一. 2012. *残留日本兵：アジアに生きた一万人の戦後 [Japanese Soldiers Who Stayed behind: The Postwar Period for the 10,000 Who Lived in Asia]*. Tokyo: Chūōkōron Shinsha.

Hosaka, Masayasu 保阪正康. 1988. "文革で裁かれた残留混血孤児—「お前の父は阪田特務機関長だ」[Mixed-Blood Orphan Left behind in China and Punished during the Cultural Revolution: 'Your Father Was Sakata, Head of the Secret Military Agency!']." *Shokun!* **20**(4): 196–225.

Hoshina, Hironobu 星名宏修. 2002. "植民地の「混血児」—「内台結婚」の政治学[Colonial 'Mixed-Blood Children': Politics of Japanese-Taiwanese Intermarriage]." In *台湾の「大東亜戦争」：文学・メディア・文化 [Taiwan's 'Great East Asia War': Literature, Media and Culture]*, edited by Shozo Fujii, Ying-Che Huang, and Chie Tarumi, 267–94. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.

House of Councilors 参議院. 1957. "第二十六回国会参議院予算委員会第二分科会会議録第一号 [26th National Diet Session, House of Councilors Budget Committee, 2nd Subcommittee, Proceedings No. 1]."

Huijs-Watanuki, Yoko 葉子・ハユス-綿貫. 2006. わたしは誰の子?：父を捜し求める日系二世オランダ人たち[*Whose child am I?: The Second Generation Japanese-Dutch Descendants Searching for Their Fathers*]. Tokyo: Nashinokisha.

Ikeya, Kaoru 池谷薫. 2010. *蟻の兵隊: 日本兵2600人山西省残留の真相 [Ant Soldiers: Truth about 2,600 Japanese Soldiers Who Remained in Shanxi Province]*. Tokyo: Shinchosha.

Japan National Press Club 日本記者クラブ. 2015. "戦後７０年　語る・問う：海外日系人の戦後 [Narrate and Question 70 years After the War: Overseas Nikkejin in the Postwar Period]." YouTube video, 27 October. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSxe7JX6wfE (accessed April 29, 2025).

Japan Red Cross 日本赤十字社. 1972. *日本赤十字社社史稿第6巻 [Japan Red Cross, Draft of the Company History, Volume 6]*. Tokyo: Japan Red Cross.

Jensen, Sune Qvotrup. 2011. "Othering, Identity Formation and Agency." *Qualitative Studies* **2**(2): 63–78.

K Project K プロジェクト. 2020. 日本人の忘れもの：フィリピンと中国の残留邦人 [*What Japanese Left behind: Remaining Japanese in the Philippines and China*]. Documentary film.

Kaji, Makoto 加地信. 1957. *中国留用十年 [Serving China for Ten Years]*. Tokyo: Iwanamishinsho.

Kasuya, Koichiro 糟谷廣一郎. 2007. "ルポ　桂林　山水画の彼方で [Reportage: Behind Picturesque Guilin]." *Shūkan Kinyōbi* **661**: 10–15.

Kono, Kimberly. 2010. *Romance, Family, and Nation in Japanese Colonial Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Koshiro, Yukiko 小代有希子. 2013. "East Asia's 'Melting-pot': Reevaluating Race Relations in Japan's Colonial Empire." In *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Western and Eastern Constructions*, edited by Rotem Kowner and Walter Demel, 475–98. Leiden: Brill.

Koya, Yoshio 古屋芳雄. 1944. "*共榮圈と混血の問題* [The Problem of Mixed-Blood in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere]." In *戦時下の新結婚 [New Marriage during the War]*, edited by Haruo Maki, 66–73. Osaka: Asahi Shobō.

Kuramitsu, Kanako 倉光佳奈子. 2021. "In Search of the Father: Experiences, Identity and Belonging of Sino-Japanese Children Born of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) Who 'Returned to the Homeland.'" PhD thesis, University of Birmingham.

Lee, Sabine. 2011. "A Forgotten Legacy of the Second World War: GI Children in Post-war Britain and Germany." *Contemporary European History* **20**(2): 157–181.

Lee, Sabine. 2017. *Children Born of War in the Twentieth Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Mainichi Shimbun. 1983. "父の国へ: 永住の道探る [To the Father's Country: Searching for Ways for His Permanent Return]." 毎日新聞 [*Mainichi Shimbun*], 4 May.

Mainichi Shimbun. 2020. "激動の半生、小説に [Publishing a Novel about His Tumultuous Life]." 毎日新聞 [*Mainichi Shimbun*], 15 August.

Masuda, Hajimu 益田肇. 2017. "What was the Cold War? Imagined Reality, Ordinary People's War, and Social Mechanism." *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* **15**(4): 5012.

Ministry of Health and Welfare, Institute of Population Problems 厚生省研究所人口民族部. 1943. "大和民族を中核とする世界政策の検討 [*An Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus*]."

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 厚生労働省. 2015. "中国残留邦人等の状況 [*Status of Remaining Japanese Nationals in China and Others*]." Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfar website, 31 March. https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/bunya/engo/seido02/kojitoukei.html.

Mitreuter, Saskia, Marie Kaiser, Sophie Roupetz, Barbara Stelzl-Marx, Philipp Kuwert, and Heide Glaesmer. 2019. "Questions of Identity in Children Born of War: Embarking on a Search for the Unknown Soldier Father." *Journal of Child and Family Studies* **28**(11): 3220–9.

Mochmann, Ingvill C., and Stein Ugelvik Larsen. 2008. "Children Born of War: The Life Course of Children Fathered by German Soldiers in Norway and Denmark During WWII—Some Empirical Results." *Historical Social Research* **33**(1): 347–63.

Mochmann, Ingvill C. and Sabine Lee. 2010. "The Human Rights of Children Born of War: Case Analyses of Past and Present Conflicts." *Historical Social Research* **35**(3): 268–98.

Mochmann, Ingvill C., Sabine Lee, and Barbara Stelzl-Marx. 2009. "The Children of the Occupations Born during the Second World War and beyond—an Overview." *Historical Social Research* **34**(3): 263–82.

Nagatomi, Hiromichi 永富博道. 1996. *白狼の爪跡: 山西残留秘史 [Traces of a White Wolf: The Secret History of Remaining Soldiers in Shanxi]*. Osaka: Shinpu Shobo.

***Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai* (NHK)** 日本放送協会. 2011. "二人の旅路: 日中激動を生きた京劇夫婦 [A Journey of a Couple: Beijing Opera Actress and Actor Who Led a Tumultuous Life in China and Japan]." *NHK*, 1 March.

NNA ASIA. 2022. "【アジアで会う】ヘル・サントソ・衛藤さん　残留日本兵の互助組織会長 [Meeting in Asia: Heru Santoso Eto—Chairman of the Mutual Aid Association of Japanese Soldiers Remaining Overseas]." *NNA ASIA*, 18 January. https://www.nna.jp/news/2281805 (accessed April 29, 2025).

Oguma, Eiji 小熊英二. 1997. *単一民族神話の起源：〈日本人〉の自画像の系譜 [The Myth of the Homogeneous Nation]*. Tokyo: Shinyosha.

Ohno, Shun 大野俊. 2007. "Regaining 'Japaneseness': The Politics of Recognition by the Philippine *Nikkeijin*." *Asian Studies Review* **31**: 243–60.

Ohno, Shun 大野俊. 2015. *Transforming Nikkeijin Identity and Citizenship: Untold Life Histories of Japanese Migrants and Their Descendants in the Philippines, 1903–2013*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Ohno, Shun 大野俊. 2016. "「日系人」から「残留日本人」への転換：フィリピン日系二世の戦後問題と就籍運動を中心に [Shift from "Nikkeijin" to "Remaining Japanese in the Philippines": Concerning Issues of Second Generation Philippine Nikkeijin and Their Movement to Acquire Japanese Nationality through *Shūseki* Procedure]." *Imin Kenkyū Nenpō* **22**: 23–42.

Okuda, Yasuhiro 奥田安弘. 1996. *家族と国籍: 国際化の進む中で [Family and Nationality in an Increasingly International Context]*. Tokyo: Yuhikaku Publishing.

Omata, Saburo 小俣佐夫郎. 2003. *残留: 日中友好への誓い [Remaining in Postwar China: My Pledge for Sino-Japanese Friendship]*. Tokyo: Koyo Insatsu.

Osawa, Takeshi 大澤武司. 2007. "戦後東アジア地域秩序の再編と中国残留日本人の発生–「送還」と「留用」のはざまで– [The Reorganization of the Postwar Regional Order in Northeast Asia and the Emergence of the War—Displaced Japanese Left Behind in China]." *Chūō Daigaku Sēsaku Bunka Sōgō Kenkyūjo Nenpō* **10**: 35–51.

Pengpai Xinwen. 2023. "对话苏智良：回忆那个一生追问'我是谁'的'慰安妇'之子 [Dialogue with Su Zhiliang: Remembering the Son of the 'Comfort Woman' Who Spent His Life Asking 'Who am I?']." 澎湃新闻 [*Pengpai Xinwen*], 13 December. https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1785166526342583163&wfr=spider&for=pc (accessed April 29, 2025).

Portelli, Alessandro. 2006. "What Makes Oral History Different." In *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 2nd ed., 32–42. London: Routledge.

Sakura Kyodo Law Offices さくら共同法律事務所. "中国残留孤児:国籍取得1000人達成の記録 [Record of 1,000 Stranded War Orphans Acquiring Nationality]." Sakura Kyodo Law Offices website, April 29, 2025. https://www.sakuralaw.gr.jp/contribution/01.htm.

Sato, Ryo 佐藤量. 2016. *戦後日中関係と同窓会 [Postwar Sino-Japanese Relations and Alumni Reunion]*. Tokyo: Sairyusha.

Serikawa, Koretada 芹川維忠. 2020. *夜半の鐘声 [Sound of a Bell in the Middle of the Night]*. Tokyo: Ark Communications.

Serikawa, Koretada 芹川維忠 and Xihua Yu 虞希華. 2019. *愛はどこから: 波濤を越えた三つの物語 [Where Did Love Come from?: Three Stories That Transcended the Waves]*. Tokyo: Ark Communications.

Social Welfare and War Victim's Relief Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Welfare 厚生省援護局. 1977. *引揚げと援護三十年の歩み [Thirty-Year Trajectory of Repatriation and Relief]*. Tokyo: The Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Stelzl-Marx, Barbara. 2015. "Soviet Children of Occupation in Austria: The Historical, Political and Social Background and Its Consequences." *European Review of History* **22**(2): 277–91.

Support and Exchange Center for Returnees from China 中国帰国者支援・交流センター, "いおりやノート [*Ioriya's Notes*]." Kikokusha Center website, April 29, 2025. https://www.kikokusha-center.or.jp/resource/sankoshiryo/ioriya-notes/ioriya-title.htm.

Tanno, Kiyoto 丹野清人. 2014. *国籍の境界を考える: 日本人、日系人、在日外国人を隔てる法と社会の壁 [Considering the Boundaries of Nationality: The Legal and Social Barriers that Separate Japanese, Nikkei and Foreign Residents in Japan]*. Tokyo: Yoshida Shoten.

The Seattle Times. 2017. "Japan Emperor to Meet Abandoned Vietnam Families of Soldiers." *The Seattle Times*, 1 March. https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/japan-emperor-to-meet-abandoned-vietnam-families-of-soldiers/ (accessed April 29, 2025).

The Toyota Foundation. 2017. 2017 Research Grant Program. http://toyotafound.force.com/psearch/JoseiDetail?name=D17-R-0770 (accessed April 29, 2025).

Thompson, Paul. 2000. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History, Third Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wagner, Kirstin, Scarlet Vass, and Sabine Lee. 2024. *The Immediate and Long-Term Risks, Harms and Challenges Faced by Children Born of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CBoCRSV) in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs): A Rapid Evidence Assessment*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

Wierzbicka, Anna. 1997. *Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Xia, Yun. 2013. "Engendering Contempt for Collaborators: Anti-Hanjian Discourse following the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–1945." *Journal of Women's History* **25**(1): 111–134.

Yomiuri Shimbun. 1953. "'混血児は外人扱い'—中共帰還者の入国：管理事務所舞鶴出張所長談 ['Mixed-Race Children Are Treated as Foreigners'—Entry of Returnees from Communist China: Says Head of Maizuru Branch of the Immigration Office]." 読売新聞 [*Yomiuri Shimbun*], 27 February.

Yonehama, Yasuhide 米濱泰英. 2008. *日本軍「山西残留」: 国共内戦に翻弄された山下少尉の戦後 [Remaining Japanese Soldiers in Shanxi: Lieutenant Yamashita at the Mercy of Fate during the Chinese Civil War]*. Tokyo: Seiunsha.

Zhou, Vivian. 2018. "Michiko: A Child Born of War." Vimeo video, 15 May. https://vimeo.com/269945416 (accessed April 29, 2025).

Author Biography

Kanako Kuramitsu conducted research on children born of Chinese mothers and Japanese fathers during and after the Second Sino-Japanese war as part of the EU-funded collaborative network Children Born of War (www.chibow.org) and completed her Ph.D. at the Department of History at the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. She is currently a teacher and visiting scholar at the Centre for East Asian Studies at the University of Turku in Finland.