

# Legacy of the Asia-Pacific War: Poems by Ishikawa Itsuko<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This working paper is a part of our ongoing translation book project, *Reflections – Women writing women in Japanese poetry* edited and translated by Carol Hayes, Noriko Tanaka and Rina Kikuchi. This project is partially funded by Kaken (Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research) 15K01915 and 15KK0049.

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<sup>4</sup> The stone monument with a poem by Emperor Showa quoted in the poem, “Stone Monument” in this paper.  
[http://pds.exblog.jp/pds/1/201308/18/24/d0082324\\_18353944.jpg](http://pds.exblog.jp/pds/1/201308/18/24/d0082324_18353944.jpg)

# CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

## POEMS

My Daughter's Room

娘の部屋

Stone Monument

石の碑

Girl 2

少女 2

## TRANSLATORS' NOTES

## SELECTED BIBLIOPGRAPHY

# INTRODUCTION

This working paper presents three translations of Japanese anti-war poet, Ishikawa Itsuko (b. 1933). Ishikawa's poetry focuses on war victims, particularly the victimisation of women in war and the violence perpetrated by the Japanese Imperial Army across Asia and the Pacific.

Ishikawa was born in Tokyo in 1933. She graduated from Ochanomizu University's history department and her work continues to reflect her deep interest in history. Ishikawa is the author of many books, including works for younger readers about the war, such as her 1993 work, *Jūgun ianfu ni sareta shōjotachi* (『「従軍慰安婦」にされた少女たち』: The girls forced to be military comfort women).

Her first collection of poetry, *Hi ni Sando no Chikai* (『日に三度の誓い』: *Three Prayers a Day*) was published in 1956 when she was only 23 years old. Her work has been celebrated by many awards, including the Mr. H Prize, for her 1961 poetry collection, *Ookami Watashitachi* (『狼・私たち—詩集』: *Wolf/Us*). She is an active anti-war and anti-nuclear activist, publishing the magazine, *Hiroshima/Nagasaki o Kangaeru* (『ヒロシマ・ナガサキを考える』: *Thinking about Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, for nearly three decades (1982-2011). This magazine was awarded 15th Women's Culture Prize (女性文化賞) in 2011.

“My Daughter's Room” and “Stone Monument” were first published in her 1985 collection, *Chidorigafuchi e ikimashita ka* (『千鳥ヶ淵へ行きましたか』: *Have You Been to Chidorigafuchi?*), which was awarded the 11th Earth Prize (地球賞受賞). “Girl 2” was first published in her magazine, *Hiroshima/Nagasaki o Kangaeru* Vol.46 (May 1993), and then collected in her 1994 poetry collection, *Kudakareta hanatachi e no rekuitemu* (『砕かれた花たちへのレクイエム』: *Requiem to Trampled Flowers*).

In “Stone Monument”, Ishikawa begins by quoting a tanka poem composed by Emperor Showa and engraved on a monument at Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery for War Dead and then goes on to quote a number of tanka composed by young Japanese soldiers written on the battlefield. The poet has read and researched these poems in the manuscripts archived at Chidorigafuchi. Our translation of “Stone Monument” uses the official translation of Emperor Showa's poem, as displayed on the

Ministry of Environment's official Chidorigafuchi website

(<http://www.env.go.jp/garden/chidorigafuchi/english/>), but the translation of the soldiers' poems quoted in the poem are our own. We argue that the poet believes that this is the best way of allowing these soldiers' voices to be heard and that she can best express the horrors of their war experience by using their own words.

Ishikawa skillfully avoids clarifying the subject in her poetry, often avoiding the use of pronouns altogether. This strategy allows Ishikawa to draw her readers into her work and to include them as the 'you' or 'we' of particular poems. "Girl 2" provides one such example in which Ishikawa sometimes includes pronouns and sometimes deliberately avoids them. The reader must consider whether the focus is actually the ailing 17 year old 'comfort woman', the poet, or even the reader herself/himself. In our English translation, however, due to the importance of personal pronouns in English grammar, we have chosen to include the subject pronoun, even when omitted in the original. In another example, in our translation of "Stone Monument", we have sometimes chosen to include the title 'Your Majesty' when the poet is using only the pronoun 'you' (あなた), when we felt that it was important to clarify she was referring to the emperor.

The large gap (ten spaces) included in some lines of the translations indicates a similar space intentionally used in the original poem. Note that Japanese sentences do not usually include any spaces.

For the tanka poems quoted in "Stone Monument", we have decided not to follow the traditional 5-line tanka translation in English, for we argue tanka poems are better translated when broken into lines according to 'kire' (line-break) in tanka. Most of the tanka poems quoted in "Stone Monument" have only one 'kire' and hence are translated in two lines. One tanka has three 'kire' and as a result our translation is made up of four lines.

# 娘の部屋

千鳥ヶ淵にくる前の日

娘よ

あなたは発っていきました

からんとなった あなたの部屋

洋服箆笥には 置いていった 古びた服

青いカーテンが揺れて

あなたは いない

あなたは単に この家から離れていっただけなのに

同じトウキョウの空の下で

元気に今日も窓を開けているだろうに

あなたの旅たちの 辛さ

トカトカ階段を降りてくる足音のもう無いことが

なにげない笑い声の響かないことが

こんなに虚ろで

涙の滲むことだったとは

あなたのいない

あなたの部屋に ぼんやり佇ち

そして想った

赤紙がやってきた日の

母の気持

骨になってしまうかもしれない

わが子を 万歳で送る

母の気持

# My Daughter's Room

The day before I visited the Chidorigafuchi

My daughter

You left home

Your room        completely empty

Your old clothes        left behind        in that chest of drawers

The blue curtains sway

You        are not here

All you did        was move out of this house

Under the same Tokyo sky

You'll be opening your window today too, as full of energy as always

Your departure        fills me with such pain

Your footsteps no longer clatter down the stairs

Your easy laughter no longer echoes around

Such emptiness

Fills my eyes with tears

Without you

In your room        I stand lost

It is then I imagine

How those mothers must have felt

The day that red draft slip arrived.

How those mothers must have felt

Sending their sons off        with a banzai

Sons, who will end as bones

# 石の碑

大きな石の碑が建っていました

「過まてる国の政策のため  
無惨な骨となりし人たち ここに眠る  
ああ永久とわに戦争許すまじ」  
と刻まれているだろうか

昭和天皇の歌でした

「くにのためいのちささげしひとびとの  
ことをおもへばむねせまりくる」

ほかでもない あなたに

捧げられた 夥おびただしい いのち

「大君しこの醜の御楯と身をなさば雲染む屍何か惜まん」

牛久保博一 東京医科大学出身

「戦友ともは征く我も又征く大君の御楯とならん生きて還らじ」

小野正明 享年十九歳

「大君のみことしあれば天地あめつちのきはみの果も行き行き果てむ」

大森重憲 トラック諸島方面にて死す

あなたに捧げつつ

なお断腸の思いで母を偲んだ

二度と生きられない命を思った

死の前夜 若者たちの胸に溢れた涙を

あなたは知っているか

# Stone Monument

The large stone monument stood

“Due to wrongful national policy

They who became such pitiful bones      lie here

Aah, War must never again be permitted!”

Is that what is engraved here?

There was just a poem by His Majesty Emperor Showa

“Whenever we ponder on those who dedicated their lives for the cause of our nation,  
Our heart aches with deep emotion.”

These are the      numberless      lives

Sacrificed for none other      than you

“I become a shield for Your Majesty My Emperor

Although my blood splatters the clouds I have no regrets”

Ushikubo Hiroichi      Tokyo Medical University

“My friends depart for war,

I too depart,

Your Majesty My Emperor we will be your shields

We will not come back alive

Ono Masaaki      Deceased aged nineteen

“At your word Your Majesty My Emperor

I will go, go to the very edge of world, even to my death”

Oomori Shigenori      Died somewhere near the Chuuk Islands

Sacrificing themselves to you Your Majesty

Missing their mothers with heart wrenching sorrow

I think about those lives that can never live again

Your Majesty, have you thought about

The tears that overflowed the hearts of these young men      each night before each death

「告げもせで帰る戎衣じゅういのわが肩にもろ手をかけて笑ます母かも」

知覧から飛び立っていった鷺尾克己よ

「送りくれし数々の文見つめつつ別れし去年こぞの母が眼を恋ふ」

敗戦五日前に回天に搭乗していった水井淑夫よ

二度と還らない人たちのために

せめて 一片のうたではなく

僧となって彼らの後世を弔いつつ

隠れ住んでほしかった あなたには

“Smiling for me my mother places her hand on my uniformed shoulder  
I return to fight saying nothing”

Washio Katsumi, you, who flew out from Chiran

“Looking at the many many letters sent to me by my mother  
I thinking lovingly of her eyes when we parted last year”

Mizui Toshio, you, who became a human torpedo five days before the surrender

For those men who can never again return home

At the very least        instead of writing this fragment of poetry

You, Your Majesty, should have become a monk and prayed for the peace of their souls

You should have lived in isolation        I wish you had

## 少女 2

一九四五年八月一五日

あなたの祖国が解放された日

あなたは病んで

もう起きあがれない身でした

散々にあなたを弄んできた

日本の軍人たちは

そそくさと軍用トラックで逃亡し

そのことさえ知らず

六人の姉さん達と

底冷えする小屋に横たわっていた あなたでした

僅か一七歳のあなた

「勤労挺身隊」の裏の意味も知らずに

古里を離れたあなた

汽車に乗ってからは見張られ

やがて軍用トラックの最後尾で揺すられて

歯の根も合わない 寒い地へ運ばれ

まだ蓄の清らかなからだは

サーベルつけた将校の餌食にされました

一日に 二十人 三十人

生きているのか 死んでいるのか

震えるほど寒いから まだ生きているのでしょうか

生理の日でも次々に軍人があらわれるとは

# Girl 2

15th August 1945

The day your motherland was liberated

You were so sick

No longer able to sit up

After abusing you so relentlessly

The Japanese soldiers

Ran off in their army trucks in mad haste

Yet you knew nothing of all this

Left with your six 'elder sisters'

Lying there in that tiny freezing hut      You

You, only seventeen years old

With no understanding of the hidden meaning of "Voluntary Labour Corps"

You, left your home town

Under guard on the train

Later jolted roughly in the last truck of the convoy

Taken to that cold place      teeth chilled to the very root

Your untouched body still to ripen

Falls prey to a sabred officer

Each day      twenty      thirty men

Am I alive?      Am I dead?

Shaking with cold      so I must be still living

Even when I'm menstruating, soldiers arrive one after another

もうこの世ではないのでしょうか

拒めばなぐられ

ヒリヒリ腫れた頬が痛いから やっぱり生きているのでしょうか

ある日 からだのあちこちに

斑点ができ

下半身はただれ 辛く

性病になってしまった あなた

〈ひどくなるとトラックに乗せられ

曠野に放られてしまうそうだよ〉

ささやかれる噂に 脅えた あなた

軍人たちはそれでもやってくる

あなたの病は 日に日に重くなり

からだはひどく熱っぽく

〈私 狼のエサになるんだろうか〉

そんな日に 日本軍はあなたを捨てました

逃げましょう 早く

誘う仲間に

動けないからここにいます 姉さんたちと一緒に

アン=ヨンヒ カシブシヨ  
안녕히가십시오 (さようなら)

朝露のような涙をひとしずく こぼした あなた

それからのことは わかりません

生きられたか

死んでしまったか

生きているなら どこに

死んでしまったなら どこに

Am I no longer in the human world?

Beaten for any refusal

Swollen cheeks burning with pain      so I must be still living

One day      spots appeared

All over your body

Your lower body so inflamed      so painful

You      infected with venereal disease

“When it gets really bad we’re sent off in a truck  
and dumped out on the empty plains”

You      terrified      by such whispered talk

Even then the soldiers continue to arrive

Your infection      worse day by day

Your body burningly feverish

“Will it be me?      Will I fall prey to wolves?”

But on that one day      the Japanese army discarded you

Let’s run away      quickly

The others call to you

I can't move, I'll stay here      with my sisters

*Annyeonghi kashipshiyo* (Farewell)

You      let fall      a single tear like a morning dewdrop

What happened after that      nobody knows

Did you survive?

Did you die?

If alive      where are you?

If dead      where are you?

一七歳

〈怪我した兵隊さんのお世話をすると考えたの〉

ある日 ポツリといった顔は幼げで

桃の花のようだった というけれど

一九四五年八月一五日

「朕ハ茲ニ国体ヲ護持シ得テ忠良ナル爾臣民ノ赤誠ニ信倚シ常ニ爾臣民ト共ニ在リ……」

昭和天皇の放送に

もう灯火管制はなくなった 空襲もないのだ と

それまでの皇国少女が嘘のように

一二歳の私は ほっとしていたけれど

がらんとした 吉林省とある兵営内の「慰安所」で

寝たきりの六人のあなたがたは 痩せこけたあなたは

どうなったか

知っているのは 風だけなのでしょうか

Seventeen years old

“I thought I’d be nursing wounded soldiers.”

That’s what they say you said one day with such a face of girlish innocence

So like a pink peach blossom

15th August 1945

“Having been able to safeguard and maintain the structure of the Imperial State, We are always  
with ye, Our good and loyal subjects, relying upon your sincerity and integrity.....”

Hearing His Majesty Emperor Showa’s radio announcement

No more blackout regulations No more air raids

Contradicting the beliefs of a patriotic daughter of the emperor

That twelve-year old me was so relieved

But in that abandoned ‘comfort women’ station in Jilin

The six of you lying there unable to move and you so emaciated

What happened to you?

Only the wind bears witness

# Translators' Notes

## “My Daughter’s Room”

**Chidorigafuchi:** Chidorigafuchi is the National Cemetery for War Dead (千鳥ヶ淵戦没者墓苑). Tokyo: In the Japanese original, the word ‘Tokyo’ is written in Katakana script (トウキョウ) which we argue is used to indicate the fact that the city sits in a number of different time lines, the contemporary Tokyo of today and the Tokyo during WWII.

**Red draft slip:** The draft notice that families received when their sons were drafted to war, was written on red paper and so was referred to as ‘akagami’ (赤紙), literally ‘red paper’.

**Banzai:** During the war years, this expression was commonly used to bid farewell to soldiers as they left to fight for the emperor. It was very common to see a large group, made up of family, neighbours and the general public, gathering at the railway stations to cheer the soldiers on their way.

## “Stone Monument”

**Chiran:** During the war, Chiran, located in Kagoshima Prefecture, served as an airbase for kamikaze pilots.

**Human torpedo:** In the original Japanese, the term used is ‘kaiten’ (回天), which refers to the miniature submarine suicide torpedoes, manned by one sailor, that were used at the very end of WWII by the Japanese navy.

## “Girl 2”

**Voluntary Labour Corps:** The Japanese term ‘Kinrō teishin-tai’ (勤労挺身隊) directly translates as ‘Voluntary Labour Corps’, however, during WWII this term was used to refer women and girls who were drafted for sexual and industrial labour. It came to be used as a euphemism for military comfort women.

**Annyeonghi kashipshiyō:** In the original poem, this Korean expression is written in Hangul with Japanese katakana furigana, as follows, アンニョンヒ カシブシヨ 안녕히 가십시오. This is then followed by the Japanese translation ‘Sayonara’ (さようなら) presented in brackets. In Korean this phrase is expressed in formal respectful language, which more literally means “Please look after yourselves and just go, leave me behind”.

**“Having been able to safeguard and maintain the structure of the Imperial State, We are always with ye, Our good and loyal subjects, relying upon your sincerity and integrity.....”:**

This is an extract from Emperor Showa’s surrender speech which was broadcast at noon the 15th of August 1945. We have used the translation quoted in Robert J.C. Butow’s *Japan’s Decision to Surrender*, published in 1954 by Stanford University Press.

**Patriotic daughter of the emperor:** In the Japanese original, the term used is ‘Kōkoku shōjo’ (皇国少女). This term was used to refer to the ‘patriotic young girl’ that every ‘true’ daughter of the Japanese empire should model herself on.

**‘Comfort women’ station:** In the Japanese original, the term used is ‘ianjo’ (慰安所). This refers to the military brothels which were set up to service the Japanese soldiers during WWII.

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