

Shadow Report

To

The Committee of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

63<sup>rd</sup> Session

Issue of Comfort Women

Prepared by

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January 2016

Item 9 of the List of Issues dated 3 Aug 2015 states as follows: The Committee has been informed of recent public statements that there was no evidence that proved the forcible taken away of comfort women..... Please indicate whether the State party intends to reintegrate into school textbooks references to the issue of “comfort women,” and to raise awareness among the population on this issue.

In regard to the above issue of comfort women, we strongly support the public statements that “there was no evidence that proved the forcible taken away of comfort women.” It is our deep regret that the Human Rights Committees have been listening to the one-sided story and accused Japan for comfort women being sex slaves without investigating the historical facts. Promoters of the falsified version of comfort women are anti-Japan elements in Japan & Korea. Currently, it seems that even the national policy of South Korea focuses on the anti-Japan movement, and the issue of comfort women is nothing but the means to achieve this national policy. If their purpose of bringing the issue to the international attention is purely to improve women’s human rights, why don’t they take care of the Korean women who served American soldiers as comfort women during the Korean War, nor the Vietnamese women who served Korean soldiers during the Vietnam War? Even at present time, many children called Kopino in the Philippines suffer prejudice and their human rights are being violated because of reckless behavior of Korean men. Why isn’t the government of South Korea doing anything about them?

- Comfort Women were nothing but prostitutes during the war

What they did was nothing but business activities. They were well-paid and were not working as slaves. Of course, they were restricted in the comfort stations while they were working since that is where they worked. Also, since the comfort stations were located near war zones, their activities were also restricted within the certain area. The fact that their living and working areas were restricted does not mean their freedom was deprived.

- True condition of their life as comfort women

The report entitled “Japanese Army Prisoner Interrogation Report #49”, which was compiled by the US Army by interviewing Korean comfort women toward the end of the WWII, clearly indicates that their living condition was not miserable. We would like the committee to pay attention to this report before making judgment whether or not comfort women were sex slaves. Also, please note that many of the testimonies by so-called ex-comfort women lack credibility as to their birth place, time and location of comfort stations they worked, etc.

- Condition of the Japanese and international society 70 years ago

In Japanese society 70 years ago, prostitution was considered a legitimate occupation as it was on the Korean Peninsula, which was part of Japan then. Also, there were prostitutes all over the world. Many of them chose the occupation because of poverty. Prostitution was not a system unique only to Japan. That was the fact of life for many poor women and still is even in current time. Recently, there was a demonstration by many Korean prostitutes demanding the right to prostitute in the country. Why was the Japanese comfort women system singled out and accused of being in violation of the human rights 70 years after the fact? This is a groundless accusation.

- Forced recruitment by the Japanese military is a big lie

As mentioned above, there were prostitutes in Japan and Korea, so there was no need to recruit them with force. They could easily recruit them through advertisement or by sending requests to brothels. So-called “coercive recruitment” was first termed by Seiji Yoshida in his fictitious book called “My War Crimes,” then widely spread by the Asahi Newspaper. But the Asahi acknowledged its mistake two years ago (in 2014) and officially apologized. Also, the term “military comfort women” was first coined by a writer named Kako Senda after the war, which spread the impression that comfort women were under the direct control of the Japanese military

- Kono Statement

Many people who accuse Japan for comfort women quote the Kono Statement as a proof that comfort women were forcibly recruited by the Japanese military. However, the majority of them will probably believe a rumor without reading the Kono Statement by themselves. If they read it carefully, they will notice that it does not acknowledge the existence of the coercive recruitment in Korean Peninsula. On the other hand, it does not deny wholly. This will probably be because there is a fact that some vicious Japanese soldiers committed a crime that they forcibly brought Dutch women from an internment to be comfort women in Indonesia. However, please note that they were punished via a Japanese military trial, and later again on the charge of war crime. Also, we would like to point out that it was Mr. Kono Yohei himself that caused the misunderstanding of the Kono Statement. To our displeasure, he acknowledged at a press interview the coercive recruitment contrary to the Kono Statement which truly indicates the official view of the Japanese government.

- Nationalities and the real number of comfort women

Since Koreans make a big fuss over this issue, many people tend to believe that the majority of the comfort women were from the Korean Peninsula. However, the majority of the comfort women were Japanese. Koreans consisted of somewhere between 20 and 30%. Also, contrary to the claim that 200,000 Korean women were coercively recruited to be comfort women, the actual number of all comfort women were around 20,000. This confusion occurred because an Asahi Newspaper reporter confused Women’s Volunteer Labor Corps as comfort women. Since the total number of the comfort women were around 20,000, the total number of the Korean comfort women were around 6,000, which is far different from 200,000.

- The Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea

Some argue that since the issue of the comfort women was not even brought up during the treaty negotiation, the compensation toward the comfort women has not been solved yet. But, such an argument is nothing but deceit. The issue had never come up on the negotiation table because everybody knew that those women were well-paid prostitutes back then. The issue started appearing only after the publication of the fictitious book by Seiji Yoshida and falsified reports by Asahi Newspaper, and left-wing media and people with anti-japan motivations simply took advantage of them.

Based on these facts, we do not see any need for the Japanese government to “reintegrate into school textbooks references to the issue of comfort women and to raise awareness among the population on this issue” as stated above in Item 9 of the List of Issues submitted by the Committee. – End -