
**A Comprehensive Study to Resolve the Japanese
Military ‘Comfort Women’ Issue (Ⅱ)**

Inseon Lee
Jung-Im Hwang
Ai-Gyung Yang
Dong-Sik Kim
Jeong-Sook Kang
Yoonjoo Cho

For years, the Japanese military ‘comfort women’ issue has often been considered a diplomatic and political matter with its diplomatic discourse taking center stage, and lack of empirical investigation on the mobilization and victimization of ‘comfort women’. More efforts to empirically investigate the truth as well as thorough analysis and study on any accumulated materials are necessary in order to resolve the ‘comfort women’ issue.

This study, for this reason, approached the issue with two main topics as did the first study. First is a study of historical records related to the mobilization

of ‘comfort women’ which focused on the status and role of comfort station pimps in their mobilization and management by analyzing Korean and international literature, public documents, and Japanese military memoirs related to mobilization and victimization of the women. Korean and global victim testimonies and lists of ‘comfort women’ were also analyzed in order to grasp the trend of mobilization and the level of victimization. Testimonies of victims in Indonesia and East Timor and interview records accumulated over decades from victims and witnesses, as well as documents from Japan were also utilized. To understand the lists of ‘comfort women’, we first studied how these lists were created, then chose the Absentee List(留守名簿), the List of Korean Refugees in Shanghai(收容人員名簿), the List of Korean Returnees in Shanghai(歸國人名單), and J?nhua j?linhui mingd?n(金??林?名?) from J?nhua Shi(金?市), Zheji?ng Sh?ng(浙江省), China for comparative analysis.

Second is a psychosocial aftereffect study which conducted a systematic and objective psychiatric evaluation on surviving victims and their children in order to empirically prove the fact that forced mobilization and sexual violence through the ‘comfort women’ system left psychological and physical scars affecting direct victims and their children-who are also considered victims in a broader sense-to this day, persisting decades after the victimization. Psychiatrists conducted structured one-on-one in-depth interviews with each victim and her children, while developing and utilizing case report forms(CRF) through precedent literature reviews and consultations with other experts.

Major findings of the historical study are as follows.

First, regulations on comfort stations and pimps in documents from the Army Ministry of Japan, which helped understand the mobilization structure in the beginning of the military ‘comfort women’ system, mentioned pimps as dealers who were contracted to operate comfort stations-annex of the military logistics facilities called Yasen shuho(野戰酒保)-and some of them were given status as

civilian military workers. As war expanded, military comfort stations became necessary facilities for the army and navy according to these regulations, and the Japanese government and other colonial organizations such as the Home Ministry and Foreign Ministry accepted most of the demands from the Japanese military and supported measures to mobilize military ‘comfort women’.

The analysis on the titles for each comfort station mentioned in documents from Japanese authorities and military organizations revealed that top military leaders used referred comfort station pimps according to the functions and roles they were playing, while smaller units in that division used titles that were commonly used within the military.

Second, victim testimony analysis from Indonesia shows that comfort stations were widely established throughout the Sulawesi region, and that ‘comfort women’ were commonly taken by force in ways nothing short of kidnapping. Testimonies stating that young women (or girls) were taken on streets and those who resisted were murdered differ to other testimonies from the Java region which heavily focused on victims who survived the ‘comfort women’ system. The victim testimonies from East Timor suggest that the Japanese military established comfort stations as soon as they occupied the region, and it seems that everywhere the Japanese military stayed had comfort stations. Local women became either ‘comfort women’ at comfort stations or the possessions of certain officers who had decided to keep them as spoils of war. The analysis also showed that the women were traumatized in the sexual slavery system and suffered due to discrimination within local communities.

Third, the lists mentioned names of ‘comfort women’ with deposit money, suggesting that the deposit system was applied to the ‘comfort women’ system. J ? nhua j ? linhui mingd ? n and other lists also from China especially provided clearer information on the actual level of victimization of Korean women who were allocated throughout China. The comparative analysis on the List of Korean and the List of Korean returnees in Shanghai which confirmed those

who were listed on both and or were omitted in either one of them suggested the truthfulness of the existing testimonies and the existence of another list of people who were on board to return to Korea.

Major findings of the psychosocial aftereffect study are as follows.

Twenty victims residing in Korea as well as six of their children participated in this study. First, on the victims' psychosocial aftereffects, 65% of them qualified with the diagnostic criteria of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the lifetime prevalence rate of PTSD was as high as 90%. Even though it is difficult to compare this result with precedent studies, the prevalence rate of PTSD among the victims of the Japanese military 'comfort women' system is higher than with other victims of trauma.

Second, 70% of the victims have at some point wished to commit suicide, and 30% have thought about committing suicide in the last year, suggesting the victims' high suicidality.

Third, the lifetime prevalence rate of Hwa-byung is 60%, with a current prevalence rate of 50%. Correlation between Hwa-byung and PTSD was also observed, victims who have ever suffered PTSD in their lives were more likely to experience Hwa-byung as well.

Fourth, it was confirmed that the victims have suffered humiliation and stigma throughout their lives, and that 75% of them still feel extreme humiliation caused by their experiences as 'comfort women'.

Lastly, the psychosocial aftermath study on the victims' children revealed that 83%-five out of six-suffered from one or more psychological disorders in their lifetimes, while their symptoms vary including depressive disorder, panic disorder, PTSD, adjustment disorder, and sleep disorder.

This study could not draw statistically significant results, as only a limited number of the victims' children participated without any control group. It was especially difficult to determine the statistical correlation between the mothers'

psychological disorders and that of the children. Nevertheless, it was observed that in cases in which the victims suffered from PTSD, their children also suffer one or more psychological disorders in their lifetimes. This suggests that the victimization affects not only its direct victims, but also the next generation.