

The Truth About the “Comfort Women” (Summary)

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The “comfort women” issue arises based on a lack of historical accuracy and understanding. Clearly, activists who repeatedly raise this issue either are misinformed or willfully ignorant. Furthermore, while activists speak of the “comfort women” enduring horrible abuses from the Japanese, at the same time, they forget their own country’s past in terms of their own military’s involvement with prostitution.

The historical record absolutely demonstrates that neither the Japanese government nor the Japanese military had a “system of forced prostitution”. Somehow, the wartime order to mobilize the people within the Empire of Japan is conflated with “slave labor” and “military prostitution”. America’s own military records shows that “comfort women” were in fact prostitutes who were not coerced but came of their own volition. Rather than seeking to shed light, activists have resorted to distortion of the historical record, such as Senda Kako, who used the term “military comfort women,” implying that the Japanese military sanctioned a prostitution system. Such was not the case but military physicians did examine prostitutes in an effort to curb the spread of venereal disease. Such activity was not at all limited to military physicians of Japan, but to military physicians throughout the world.

It has been forgotten that at the time, prostitution in Japan, and elsewhere, was in fact legal. Brokers openly recruited women to work at brothels set up near the frontlines. Obviously, such businesses were highly lucrative and women and their masters greatly profited from soldiers who were willing to pay for prostitutes. Indeed, women’s salaries were many times greater than that of soldiers. Instead, activists have characterized the “comfort women” as “sex slaves” who were forcibly taken from their homes. A typical example of this lie is Yoshida Seiji’s claim that Korean women were abducted to work as military prostitutes. However, when a Korean journalist visited the village where the alleged abduction occurred, no one had heard anything about such an event. Furthermore, Koreans, upon learning of this lie, chided Yoshida as “immoral”.

While the US and South Korea lecture Japan about its wartime behavior, they should look at their own history. Instead of lying about their own past, they have chosen to ignore it. The South Korean government has fully cooperated with the US military in regulating prostitution. A similar arrangement was made between the US and the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. For some reason, Americans simply cannot imagine that their “boys” in uniform paying for sex. Rather than continued fixation over events of 70 years ago, perhaps both Korea and the US could focus their attention on the ongoing problems related to prostitution within their own countries. One cannot help but conclude that there is a hidden, ulterior motive to their demanding reparations and apologies from Japan on the basis of groundless accusations.

While Koreans and others have been unrelenting in their demands for Japanese reparations and apologies, the primary source of this campaign to denigrate Japanese history and honor is the Japanese themselves. It is the Japanese people, particularly

those of leftist ideology, who are the worst of the activists. The Japanese media along with the government leadership work in tandem to distort history and to even ignore historical facts that would restore Japan's honor. Instead, both the Japanese media and leadership insist on forever condemning Japan as a villain. This situation cannot possibly lead to improvements in human rights or a healthy future for Japan.