

## **The Comfort Women Controversy and Actual Misdeeds of the United States Army**

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In July of last year, with only ten or so members present out of 435 Representatives, a Resolution condemning Japan in connection with the comfort women passed the United States House of Representatives. The Resolution was based on the utterly false assumption that the Japanese Army systematically abducted young women for the purpose of sexual servitude, and bitterly mistreated them as sex slaves.

On the issue of the comfort women, an official American document clearly stated: “‘comfort girls’ are nothing more than a prostitute or professional ‘camp follower’, and the girls’ average total monthly earnings were 1,500 yen, and 750 yen went to their master.’ (United States Office of War Information, Psychological Warfare Team Attached to U.S. Army Forces, India-Burma Theater). Incidentally, the monthly salary of a sergeant in the Japanese Army at the time was 30 yen; thus, the prostitutes made over 25 times more! However, completely ignoring what their official document describes, and pompously mentioning phrases like “forced abduction” and “sex slaves”, the House Resolution effortlessly passed, without any objection.

We were utterly flabbergasted at the passage of this Resolution. It is not only extremely unjust, but it also makes us wonder what we should say concerning the intellect and thought process of Americans. What is worse still, the majority of the American people seem to naively believe that their own troops are so pure and innocent that they would have nothing to do with such vices as “comfort women”, and that, on the other hand, the very fact the Japanese Army established comfort stations is itself proof of the Japanese Army’s baseness. Unquestionably believing such a fable, the American people always turned a deaf ear to our refutation: that there were no such things as forced abduction and sex slaves. This has brought us no end of trouble.

Although it is a well-known fact that during the occupation of Japan, the United States Army had requested that the Japanese government set up prostitution facilities to be used exclusively by American troops, and that they actually made the most of such facilities, Americans generally do not know about this. How problematic! Moreover, as to the Republic of Korea, a country that is eager to discuss the comfort women issue, it is true that the Korean government provided comfort stations, exclusively for United Nations Forces (in fact, the U.S. Army). It was not a secret. For instance, the September 14, 1961 issue of the Korean newspaper, *Dong-A Ilbo* (*East Asian Newspaper*) carried a detailed report of those comfort stations. It is also widely known that in Vietnam, American soldiers not only privately frequented local brothels, they used U.S. Army-supervised comfort stations: the U.S. Army authorities had brothels run within their base camps. Susan Brownmiller’s famous best-selling book, entitled *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Fawcett Book, 1993), reveals the fact that the management of these brothels was under the direct control of a brigade commander.

Military Brothels on Army base camps (“Sin Cities,” “Disneyland” or “boom-boom parlors”) were built by decision of a division commander, a two-star general, and

were under the direct operational control of a brigade commander with the rank of colonel. Clearly, Army brothels in Vietnam existed by the grace of Army Chief of Staff William C. Westmoreland, the United States Embassy in Saigon, and the Pentagon. (p.95)

In fact, they were U.S. Army military brothels similar to those of the comfort women stations supervised by the Japanese Army. It is also noteworthy that many prostitutes had suffered bitter days in these military brothels. Thirty or forty years ago, the American army actually indulged in such sexual services -- how dare they heatedly argue over the deeds of the Japanese Army of more than sixty years ago? Moreover, swallowing groundless demagogic propaganda, without an ounce of doubt, and not heeding our sincere protest based on historical fact, they passed the previously mentioned Resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The story does not end there. During the seven-year period of the U.S. military occupation of Japan between 1945 and 1952, American troops committed a number of criminal acts. Under rigid censorship, in accordance with the press code at the time, the Japanese media were not allowed to report murders, violent crimes and rapes committed by American soldiers. They could only partially refer to these criminal acts, in terms such as "rapes committed by tall men". It was vaguely speculated that many crimes were committed by the American Occupation forces. In fact, there were fairly detailed statistics about them. The labor union of the Procurement Agency conducted a comprehensive survey in 1959, with the cooperation of prefectures, municipalities, police departments and the press, and the results were included in *Boeishisetu-Cho Shi, Dai Ni go (History of the Japan Defense Facilities Administration Agency, Volume II)*. The data were limited to personal damages stated in person between 1945 and 1952. Rapes were not included. The total numbers were 3,738 deaths, 2,071 injuries and 3,035 cases that required medical care. If you include unreported cases, the numbers of injuries and those requiring medical care would probably double. It has been speculated that there might be nearly same cases of rape as those of injuries and medical cases. Most likely, there could have been nearly ten thousand rapes committed. We must remember that those acts of violence occurred under circumstances in which military brothels were well functioning for U.S. military personnel. I shudder to think that without such comfort facilities, the situation could have been far more horrible and tragic. In that sense, we might say that the comfort stations were not necessarily inhumane facilities, but may rather be defined as an indispensable wartime vice. It is members of the United States Army that committed nearly 4,000 murders, possibly 10,000 injuries and 10,000 rapes in Japan, even after peace was finally restored. The American people should well remember this fact. This is the fact based on clear and valid evidence, unlike the Resolution regarding the comfort women, which is based on fiction and not at all on fact.

Even after acknowledging the facts, if Americans continue to think it unnecessary to rescind the unjust Resolution on the comfort women, then we cannot help but doubt the American people's conscience as human-beings. I certainly believe that many Americans are conscientious people and that if they knew the truth, they will do justice.

Note: For detailed information on the comfort women issue, please refer to ***Behind the Comfort Women Controversy: How Lies Became Truth*** written by Nishioka

Tsutomu, Professor at Tokyo Christian University ([http://www.sdh-fact.com/CL02\\_1/39\\_S4.pdf](http://www.sdh-fact.com/CL02_1/39_S4.pdf)).