

“Comfort Women”: Historical Agony and Practical Tasks

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Abstract

While more than seventy years have passed since liberation from Japanese colonial rule, the problems rooted in Japanese wartime aggression, including the issue of “comfort women,” remain unsettled due to the misperceived historical notion on the part of the Japanese government. The existence of the “comfort women” system has been commonly acknowledged as a fact by many and while the Japanese government acknowledged the existence of comfort women and comfort stations in the “Kono Statement,” the current administration of Shinzo Abe is denying Japan’s liability and compensation. First, we must contemplate again the meaning of the comfort women issue and the significance of resolving the issue. At the same time, we must endeavor not to leave imperial Japan’s inhumane activities and crime against humanity in the past and approach the comfort women issue to protect peace and justice and serve it as a warning to Japanese militarism which is currently on the rise. If we continue to fail in solving issues caused by the war, building a correct perception of history and securing peace in the region will be an arduous task. We must urge the Japanese government for a heartfelt apology, repentance and compensation so that the victims can pass away without any resentment.

Key Words: Comfort women, Kono Statement, Comfort stations, Coercion

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1. Introduction

More than seventy years have passed since liberation from Japanese colonial rule. However, the problems rooted in Japanese wartime aggression, including the issue of “comfort women,” remain unsettled due to the misperceived historical notion on the part of the Japanese government. Recently, Japan has set a goal to recover from so-called “lost two decades” and to build “powerful Japan.” Japan is also increasing tension and causing diplomatic conflict in the North East Asian region by trying to recover its status as a normal country and to expedite military expansionism. Moreover, the Japanese government is encouraging nationalism both domestically and internationally, and even distorting history. The Japanese government is not only distorting history regarding comfort women issue but also making ludicrous statements about the issue which is one of the most controversial post-war issues.

The Japanese government and the military were directly involved in the establishment and the operation of the “comfort women” system during World War II. This is a commonly acknowledged and undisputable fact. Testimony of living “comfort women” victims, conscientious confession made by Japanese people who were directly involved, classified information archived in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Army Ministry and the Ministry of Labor are all supporting evidence; moreover, on August 4, 1993, the Japanese government acknowledged the existence of comfort women and comfort stations and that Japanese government and the military were involved in the operation of comfort stations through “Kono Statement.” However, right-wing politicians such as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, former Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintaro, and former Osaka Mayor Hashimoto are denying Japan's liability in the “comfort women” system and making preposterous statements to deny Japan's compensation to victims and blinding the public's perceptions.

What is the ulterior motive of Japan's right-wing groups in avoiding government's liability and denying compensation? How will such attitude of Japan affect peace and cooperation in the North East Asian region in the future? How will neighboring countries work in harmony to reprimand Japan and to warn

right-wing groups about their outrageous statements? Let us begin by asking such questions and look back on the past events associated with solving "comfort women" issues. There is a need to contemplate again the symbolic implication "comfort women" issue carries and the practical implication that solving "comfort women" issue carries.

Therefore, rather than to reiterate oral testimonies of "comfort women" survivors or classified documents already covered by researchers in the academia, this paper will focus on the characteristics of "comfort women" issue that the international society pays attention to and the key to tackling this issue and suggest countermeasures that should be applied in the international society.

2. Operation of the "Comfort Women" System and the Agony of the Korean People

Some scholars believe that the first comfort station was established around the time of the January 28 Incident in 1932 and that Shanghai was the origin of the Japanese military's comfort women system. Dai Salon (大一沙龍) was the first Japanese military comfort station ever to be established in Asia.¹⁾ However, historically, even before the introduction of the "comfort women" system, state-regulated prostitution was universalized in Japanese society and the Japanese military practiced organized prostitution within the military. Japan's advance to Russia triggered the establishment of Japan's military prostitution system. Japan dispatched 72,000 troops to Siberia region of Russia from 1918 to 1920. Due to their lenient military discipline, high number of rapes were committed by the Japanese troops against civilians and it resulted in 1,200 sexually transmitted disease patients. As one-fifth of the entire military force was lost due to a

1) Su Zhiliang wrote, "Shanghai was the origin of "comfort women" system which was the sin of the Japanese military, and "Dai Salon" which was located on the 125 Dongbaoxinglu was one of special comfort stations designated by the Japanese Navy. This comfort station was operated from 1931 to 1945 and was the first comfort station to be established by the Japanese military in Asia and also was the longest Japanese military comfort station in existence in the world. Su Zhiliang, "Japanese Government and the Evidence that the Military Operated Sex Slavery System," (paper presented at the International Conference on Japanese Military Comfort Women Issue," Yanbian University, China, May 30, 2014).

non-combat cause, the Japanese military authorities found it to be a state of emergency. The authorities recruited military prostitutes and operated military prostitution system as a countermeasure for such incident. Around the time of the January 28 Incident in 1932, some Japanese soldiers continuously raped civilians in Shanghai and it led to possible sexually transmitted disease outbreak in military bases. At this juncture, with the support from the Japanese government, Okamura Yasuji who was then the Vice chief-of-staff of Shanghai Expeditionary Army cooperated with government agencies in Nagasaki prefecture to recruit women in Japan and had them transferred to Shanghai as the “comfort women group” to provide sexual services to Japanese troops. The particular term “comfort women” and the system originated from this and from this period, “comfort women” replaced “military prostitutes.”

At this point, we must address the cause as to how the “comfort women” system could continue to exist throughout the Pacific War. For the “comfort women” system to subsist as a stable institution during the war, various conditions must have been fulfilled. For example, recruitment, transfer, supplies, and regular physical examination must be fulfilled to maintain the “comfort women” system. The Japanese government argues that private recruiters were the culprit behind the “comfort women” system; yet, how could a mere civilian recruiter operate such a system in a time of war? To seek an answer to this question, let us quote Tojo Hideki. During the press conference held after forming his cabinet on October 8, 1941, Tojo Hideki responded to a journalist’s question by saying, “from an Asian’s perspective, women are strategic goods, and they are irreplaceable material for victory.” In other words, “comfort women” are special strategic material that is close to, or even more important than combat capabilities of the troops. If so, could the Japanese military authorities, which had the aim of dominating Asia, rely on mere civilian recruiters for controlling and dominating such valuable strategic goods? The answer to this question is clear and verified materials, conscientious confession by relevant parties and testimony of “comfort women” survivors point to the fact that the “comfort women” system was not operated by a small number of private recruiters.

Yoshimi Yoshiaki who compiled *Collection of Military Comfort Women*

Documents (從軍慰安婦資料集) based on literature archived at the Army Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan was reviewing *Summary of Army Operation Log* (日本陸軍省業務日誌) which was extracted by Former Surgeon General Setsuzo Kinbara of the Army Ministry. During his review, Yoshimi Yoshiaki learned that the “comfort women” system which was operated by the Japanese military was flawlessly planned and structured, and coercion was also carefully planned and systematically executed and that major agencies of the Japanese military and superior authorities were also directly involved in the management and operation of the system. Moreover, the training reference material titled *Measure to Enhance Military Discipline Based on the Experience from January 28 Incident* which was distributed by the Army Ministry to operational forces in September 1940, clearly stipulates that “since sexual comfort has great influence on the mental status of soldiers, comfort stations must be carefully considered.” In other words, the Japanese government and high-level officials in the military believed that comfort stations had various functions such as boosting the morale of soldiers, keeping military discipline and preventing STDs.

Sufficiently recruiting “comfort women” who can provide sexual services to the Japanese troops is a prerequisite for “comfort women” system to function properly. It is clear that no one would want to be involved in “comfort women” system due to the distinctiveness of the system. That is why early phases of “comfort women” recruitment were disorderly and it led to the direct involvement of the military in the recruitment process. The military enforced recruitment of “comfort women” by mobilizing all possible measures including cooperation with local police, military police, and administrative agencies. On March 4th, 1938, an adjutant of the Army Ministry sent *Document on the recruitment of military comfort station workers* to the Expeditionary Army requesting to supervise conscription of comfort women to control forcibly conscripted “comfort women” and to safely transfer them to first-line operation forces. Some combat forces even set up comfort station division in their logistics base. Moreover, relevant government agencies including the Home Ministry were involved in recruitment and transfer of comfort women. Yoshida Seiji listed the actualities he experienced in *Korean Comfort Women and Japanese People* (1977) and revealed the crimes

of forcibly conscripting Korean comfort women committed by the Japanese government and the military as the acts of national government. Yoshida Seiji confessed during an interview that from 1943 to August 1945, he traveled to Korea nineteen times as the director of the mobilization of Yamaguchi Prefecture and forcibly conscripted around fifty young women during each visit which lasted for about a week. According to Yoshida Seiji, the “comfort women” conscription process mostly began by reporting the number of women needed to be conscripted to the local police in advance, then receiving statistics information previously collected by the police. Approximately twenty to fifty police and military officials were mobilized in seven to eight cars to go to designated village and forcibly take women. He said that it was possible to recruit “comfort women” “thanks to the cooperation among the military, the police, and the government and was the result of the military and the police cooperation.” Additionally, Yoshida Seiji stressed in his confession that military comfort women were not recruited but coerced into working for comfort stations and that they were selectively arrested according to the order by the Japanese military and with the support from the Japanese Government-General of Korea, the police and military forces.²⁾

Since conscription of “comfort women” was forcibly done, strict control of comfort stations was required to prevent “comfort women” from running away or from rejecting to provide sexual services. The military authority led the control of comfort stations. Even if civilian individuals were operating comfort stations ostensibly, the military had complete control over stations, managing everything from goods supply to hygiene check-ups as comfort stations were practically vested in the military. On May 25, 1938, the Inspector-General of Military Training of the Army Ministry distributed *Summary of Wartime Service* (戰時服務概要) which is a document stipulating detailed management protocols for comfort stations. The “Summary” covers information regarding STD prevention methods and rules for sanitary facilities at comfort stations. As per requirements of the “Summary,” “comfort women” had to receive weekly health check up for mainly STDs and pregnancy. The military doctor visited comfort stations or the women

2) *Reference News*, December 14, 1991.

went to military hospitals for check-ups. When a "comfort woman" gets infected with an STD, she was buried alive or forced to take mercury pills which resulted in the loss of fertility.

"Comfort women" who were coerced to the comfort station under strict control of the military were deprived of any personal freedom on the day of arrival. Furthermore, they were forced to change their given Korean names into Japanese names, wear Japanese kimonos, speak only in Japanese, provide sexual servitude and were not allowed to leave comfort stations. In other words, "comfort women" were not only coerced to comfort stations but also had to live with everything forced upon them. The lives of these women were filled with endless violations and unforeseeable death.

This paper will not reiterate inhumane treatment these women received as such treatment have already been publicized through testimonies of the survivors. Their pain was not just physical and was not healed with the end of the war. They were separated from their loved ones, family, and children. Such separation left deep scars to the people around comfort women, and these women's pain did not end with the end of the war. Some "comfort women" who barely survived the war also led unfortunate lives. Some "comfort women" were forced into labor and did not attempt to go back to their hometown due to the indignities they suffered. Even if the women return home after going through hardships, sense of guilt, psychological pain, physical diseases caused by being forced to serve as "comfort women" deprived them the right to lead ordinary lives. No words can describe the pain these women who were forcibly conscripted as "comfort women" suffered especially when Korea was deprived of its sovereignty and had no right to resist wartime mobilization. Even the "Kono Statement" mentions that "other than Japan, the Korean peninsula accounted for the the greatest number of comfort women who were shipped to the battlefields." So for Korean people, "comfort women" system led by the Japanese government and the military was in fact "ethnic extermination policy" and is agony for all Korean people.

3. The “Comfort Women” Issue and Remaining Tasks

As previously pointed out, the “comfort women” issue has been our nation’s agony that should have been properly treated, but unfortunately, the “comfort women” issue has long been out of our sight post-independence. Such ignorance is perhaps attributable to the people’s general perception about “comfort women” developed by the dictionary definitions,³⁾ and also to the survivors’ decision to stay muted as they deny to remember their stigmatic past filled with violation of their dignity and human right, but mostly to the silence of the perpetrator, the Japanese government and the military and the servicemen who trampled the victims. Denied and ignored for long, the “comfort women” issue was gradually revealed to the public when Kim Hak-soon, the victim, filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government that subsequently followed by former soldiers’ confession and voices raised by social organizations.

Comfort women issue was publically escalated in Japan by conscientious scholars, journalists, and female activists, and reviews and studies of the Japanese governments’ classified documents and testimonies by victims from China, Chosun Korea, Korea, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia as well as from former Japanese military servicemen finally revealed to the public that the “comfort women” system was established through direct involvement of the Japanese government and the military authorities.

On December 6, 1991, Kim Hak-soon and two other victims filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government demanding for compensation, asserting that the Japanese government and the military authority deliberately executed coercion of comfort women and maintenance of comfort stations. Kato Koichi, then Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan, avoided the Japanese government’s responsibility and claimed that “review by the Ministry of Labor finds no evidence to prove that the Japanese government was involved.” But Kato Koichi later admitted that the Japanese government was indeed involved in this issue after Professor Yoshimi

3) In *Kojien* (廣辭苑) (1973) published by Iwanami Shoten (岩波書店), comfort women are defined as “women who accompanied troops to the battlefield and comforted Japanese servicemen.” In *Daijisen* (大辭泉) (1995) published by Shogakukan (小學館), comfort women are described as “women who were forced to provide sex to servicemen usually in the battlefields in the past.”

Yoshiaki publicized on *Asahi Shimbun* the evidence that illustrated the Japanese military's involvement in the establishment of comfort stations and draft of comfort women. On July 6, 1992, Kato Koichi provided the results of studies about "comfort women" of Korean origin, what is known as the "Kato Statement." The "Kato Statement" admitted that the Japanese government and the military were involved in establishing, maintaining, managing and expanding comfort stations, supervising hygiene in the stations, and issuing identifications to the authorities, and thus expressed its apology and regrets to the victims. The statement, however, emphasized that the review did not identify any coercion, as no evidence was found to illustrate how comfort women were recruited.⁴⁾ The lawsuit by "comfort women" victims, Kim Hak-soon and others, the avoidance of responsibility by Kato Koichi, and the revelation of substantial evidence by professor Yoshimi Yoshiaki suggest that the "comfort women" issue had been neglected by the Japanese government from the beginning, and that the government had no willingness or effort to resolve "comfort women" issue. Thus, it is regretful that the focus of "comfort women" issue shifted to whether the government used coercion to recruit the women or not after the announcement of the "Kato Statement."

Fortunately, relentless research and studies by conscientious scholars revealed new findings, such as documents by relevant institutions, evidences from China and other countries, more testimonies of victims and investigation of the parties who were involved in the coercion, which resulted in the government's announcement of the second research results. These were included in what is known as the the "Kono Statement."

On August 4, 1993, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei announced the statement on the conclusion of the study of comfort women. The statement includes five key points. First, the Japanese military was directly or indirectly involved in establishing and managing comfort stations and transferring comfort women. Second, the recruitment of comfort women was executed by private contractors, and the contractors used force and deception to recruit them against their will.

4) *Asahi Shimbun*, July 7, 1992.

Third, government authorities were directly involved in the recruitment that was against individual's will. Fourth, the life in comfort stations was appalling in coercive circumstances. Fifth, when excluding Japanese comfort women, the comfort women from Korean peninsula consisted the largest part of the population, and their recruitment and transferring were executed as results of deception and coercion against their will.

The significance of the "Kono Statement" was limited to the admittance of the Japanese military's involvement in the comfort women system which hurt the honor and dignity of numerous women and to its indication of apology and repentance. It is still regrettable as the Japanese government still denies the direct involvement of the government and denies its liabilities. Prime Minister Abe, who was trying to deny the Japanese military's engagement in the issue of "comfort women," asserted at a debate in the Liberal Democratic Party's election on September 15, 2012, that Japan was disgraced by the Kono Statement's false accusation of the Japanese army's kidnapping and enslaving women to comfort stations and it should be corrected by revising and restating the Statement. *Sankei Shimbun's* article on October 16, 2013, which blamed the government for not reacting on the questionable testimonies by the sixteen Korean comfort women victims that built the basis for the development of the "Kono Statement," triggered some to reevaluate Japan's responsibility of the "Kono Statement" and "comfort women" issue. For the purpose of amending the "Kono Statement," the Japan Restoration Party established the "historical issues verification studies project team" and campaigned in an attempt to amend the "Kono Statement." In relation to the "Kono Statement," the current administration admits the existence of comfort women and comfort stations and takes moral responsibility for such historic events, but it refuses to admit legal responsibility or compensational duty as it asserts that no governmental or the Imperial General Headquarters's order was given to forcefully recruit comfort women and that such comfort stations were demanded by the regional troops and established by the private contractors. The study of the Japanese government's rationales to avoid its responsibility for comfort women issue can be summarized as follows:

- a) The recruitment of comfort women was not government-related and not coercive.

- b) Compensation was already paid as the result of Japan's peace treaty with related nations.
- c) The twenty-year statute of limitations has expired for all civil or criminal cases with regard to coercion of "comfort women."

However, when observed carefully, all of Japan's three reasons above claiming for no responsibility are ungrounded. The compensations that Japan claims to have provided according to the so-called peace treaty agreement resolves the issues between the nations, but it does not include compensations for the individual. In the case of China, on April 2, 1991, during the fourth plenary session of the seventh National People's Congress, Tong Zeng put forward a bill, Manōnsō (萬言書), to the NPC delegates and strongly argued that "war compensations and compensation to the victim should be distinguished." On March 1, 1992, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson claimed that "individual victims during the Sino-Japanese War can submit claims to the Japanese government for compensations." The Chinese government has consistently asserted that the renunciation of Japanese war compensation stated in China-Japan Joint Communiqué is only limited to a government-level renunciation but does not refer to the abandonment of civic compensations. In March 1995, Qian Qichen, then Deputy Prime Minister of the State Council, declared during the NPC that the China-Japan Joint Communiqué did not abandon individual Chinese's right to claim compensations against the Japanese government.

The case is same for the twenty-year statute of limitations that Japan claims. "The 20-year statute of limitations" is perhaps accepted should the issue be a civil or criminal agenda. However, the "comfort women" issue is, due to its brutality, certainly a crime against humanity, and it is commonly accepted by the international standard that crimes against humanity have no expiration date. The Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, ratified on November 26, 1968 by the United Nations, states clearly that any war crime or crime against humanity is not a subject to statutory limitations. Article 29 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, ratified on July 17, 1998 stipulates that no statutory limitation could be applied to ethnic extermination, crime against humanity, a war crime or act of

aggression. Therefore, Japan's claim of the "expiration of the twenty-year statute of limitations" is unfounded.

The non-coercion alleged by the Japanese government is even more preposterous. After the defeat, the Japanese army attempted to eliminate evidence by incinerating large amounts of documents about comfort women and trying to terminate or bury comfort women with sexually transmitted diseases alive. After the end of the war, the Japanese authorities had deliberately deceived or concealed comfort women issue and asserted that comfort women were operated by private contractors and that there was no coercion. The coercion in the comfort women issue is expressed in the recruitment against one's will, in the forceful sexual service in comfort stations, and in the forceful deprivation of one's freedom. The "Kono Statement" admits, using the expression "against individual's will, that the comfort women issue was a coercive event. That is why lawsuits filed against the Japanese government by private citizens demanding compensation is just and has legal effects. Due to such legal grounds, private citizens continue to file lawsuits with regard to coercion of workers and "comfort women" issues.

However recently, Japanese right-wingers are fully denying Japan's criminal acts by arguing "comfort stations were commercial entities," "comfort women worked for money," "the military was involved only due to humanitarian causes," "the military involvement was due to human right protection of comfort women," and "not the Japanese government but private contractors should be liable."⁵⁾ At the same time, we must endeavor not to leave imperial Japan's inhumane activities and crime against humanity in the past and approach comfort women issue to protect peace and justice and serve it as a warning to Japanese militarism which

5) On January 25, 2014, Momii Katsuto, the new Director-General of NHK, made a preposterous statement during his inaugural speech saying that military comfort women existed in any country and that it is a bias to say that Japan was the only nation to forcibly draft comfort women. On February 12 of the same year, Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio said during a press conference that Japanese military sex slavery issue "should not be developed into diplomatic and political issues," and that comfort women issue raised by the Korean government was already settled according to the 1965 Claims Settlement Agreement between Korea and Japan. On February 20, former Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ishihara Nobuo said that even though the "Kono Statement" was drafted based on the testimonies of comfort women, he did not verify whether the testimonies were true or not. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga also said that the government will reexamine the testimonies of victims which became the ground for the "Kono Statement" which admitted the involvement of the Japanese military in sex slavery crimes, trying to deny facts admitted in the "Kono Statement."

is currently on the rise. Therefore, we not only have to endeavor to help surviving comfort women victims to be properly compensated but also must work for the Japanese government to repent its wrongful perception toward history and to awaken right-wing politicians.

Furthermore, comfort women issue is global. Victims of the Japanese military's "comfort women" institution are not only from Korea, but also from China, Southeast Asian countries, European citizens including the Netherlands, and even Japanese citizens. That is why the "comfort women" issue cannot be resolved by consultation between Japan and just one nation. On December 28, 2015, the Korean government and the Japanese government reached an agreement on resolving the "comfort women" issue. If implemented as agreed by two parties, the Japanese government will provide 1 billion yen in funds in exchange for final and irreversible resolution of the "comfort women" issue. The two governments also announced that the two parties will limit criticism against each other internationally including in the United Nations. It raises questions about how the Korean government will join the efforts of, for example, the UN Human Rights Committee in defining the "comfort women" issue as a crime against humanity and urging the Japanese government for an apology. Even if we slightly step back and acknowledge the agreement, then how can we confirm the number of living former "comfort women" if the two governments were to establish a foundation for former comfort women? If the Korean government were to spend 1 billion yen paid by the Japanese government for the living former comfort women, is this fund a compensation for comfort women survivors or is this fund sponsoring the foundation? The purpose of this fund is ambiguous and if the statue of a girl waiting for the Japanese government's atonement and reparation is removed in exchange for the fund, it will not be a remedy for living former comfort women but only hurt them even more. Especially when the people of Japan contributed to the Asian Women's Fund in 1995 to pay atonement money to the comfort women victims, and considering the fact that lawsuit demanding compensation filed by "comfort women" victims is an exercise of right for the victims' honor and dignity, it is hard to understand the rationale behind the Korean government's such diplomatic measure.

The Japanese government which repetitively distorts history is responsible for any country or victim for not accepting the so-called “heartfelt apology” from the Japanese government. The current Abe Administration denies to admit that “comfort women” issue is not just a crime committed by private contractors but an organized crime that the Japanese military and the government systematically planned and committed. The facts are already disclosed, and conscientious confessions of scholars and the people involved in the operation of comfort stations who ask for justice fully prove that the Japanese government and the military were deeply involved in the establishment of comfort stations and forced conscription of “comfort women.” However, it is a secondary victimization against the victims for the Japanese government to review testimonies of the former comfort women survivors. The Japanese government is the architect of its own problems and should strive to solve its own problems. The key to resolving the “comfort women” issue is the Japanese government’s heartfelt repentance on their past wrongdoings, apology toward the victims and its attitude of admitting liabilities. Germany enacted relevant laws to completely eradicate Nazism and is tracking war criminals on the wanted list to entirely root out the revival of Nazism. Moreover, the German government expressed heartfelt apology to the Jewish people and is planning to conclude the payment of \$80 billion of compensation to them by 2030. If Japan denies admittance of the history that they committed and denies wholehearted apology to victim nations and their people, imperial Japan’s war of aggression is not over for us and our independence is not complete without the proper healing of wounds that still “comfort women” and other war victims carry. It is challenging to secure peace in the region without settling problems caused by the war.

4. Conclusion

Until now, our effort to solve the “comfort women” issue was limited to individual victim's lawsuit and we did not attempt to solve the issue as a matter of two nations. We urged an apology and the compensation to the Japanese government with a focus on the matter of coercion based on the rationale of the

"Kato Statement." However, the legal action between "individual and nation" seems to have reached a limit. Therefore, the author would like to stress the need to think outside the box to solve the "comfort women" issue. Even if the government gave up on urging compensation at the national level, the government should not neglect damages of its own people. Moreover, "comfort women" issue is not limited to issues of individuals that can be interpreted in a simple manner nor is a private issue. That is why the government should mobilize a minimum level of diplomatic measures at least to create a setting where "comfort women" issue can be thoroughly settled. There is a statue of a girl, also known as the Statue of Peace, in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. When asked who is she waiting for, the sculptors Kim Un-Sōng and Kim Sō Kyōng who created the statue answered, "she is not waiting for someone, but she is waiting for the Japanese government to regret, repent and to provide legal compensation," and as for the shadow of the girl which is shaped like an old lady, the sculptors described the shadow as the "symbol of lingering resentment the victims had for a long time for not receiving an apology."⁶⁾ We must not let the girl wait for the apology in severe heat and cold, and must not let any more halmōnis pass away before receiving their long-awaited apology. We will also be "sinners" to our fellow Koreans and our history if we fail to solve this issue during our generation.

6) Young Hwan Chong, *Reconciliation for Whom: Comfort Women of the Empire as Invented History*, trans. Kyung Hwa Lim (Seoul: Blue History, 2016).

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