

4th Roundtable Meeting on the issue of “Comfort Women”

How were the “Comfort Women” Victimized?

-How the Victims feel now?-

Proceedings

This is proceedings of the 4th Roundtable Meeting on the issue of "Comfort Women" held in Okinawa, October 2003.

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In Publishing a Report on the Roundtable on Support for Former “Comfort Women”

An elderly female victim was hospitalized. She currently lives by herself. After she came out of hospital she said, “I had no visitors while I was in the hospital. The patients in the beds next to me had their grandchildren, sons and family visiting them. They were concerned and asked the patients how they were doing, while I had nobody. I became so ashamed to have no visitors that I went out to a store to get some fruits and asked the hospital staff to deliver them to me. I am so lonely now and living is more painful than dying.”

When we heard this story from a member of a support group we wondered: What in the world are the comfort women victims of? What are we calling “damage?” Only what happened during the tragic and grim days they spent then in the comfort stations as comfort women? Like this elderly woman, because they were made to be comfort women they could not get married, they were separated from their families and are living alone in their later years. Today, 60 years after the war, they are still tormented by “damage,” which is loneliness and discrimination. The suffering to the comfort women is ongoing.

However, the discussion of the issue of comfort women has focused only on such points as: whether they were forced into service or not; whether the Japanese military was involved or not; whether state compensation should be paid or not; and whether people are for or against the Asian Women’s Fund, both domestically and internationally. We think that the reality of the “suffering” that has continued to this day for 60 years has been focused on.

How are the victims living now? What are they thinking about everyday? What are their wishes? Now that the Atonement Project is over, we strongly feel that it is our responsibility to think about what the AWF can do for the victims from now on.

With this in mind, we held a roundtable in Naha City, Okinawa in October 2003. The principal participants were the staff of support groups in the countries and regions to which the Atonement Project by the Asian Women’s Fund had been implemented. It aimed to provide an opportunity to educate ourselves about the victims “today” and exchange opinions about what could be done about this suffering that continues to be inflicted on the former comfort women even today.

Once their past as comfort women is revealed the victims are subject to discrimination not only by the people around them but also by their relatives. They are treated with prejudice even today. The victims are pressured by the support groups that are against the Asian Women’s Fund, which tell them not to accept “Atonement money” from the AWF because it

is not state compensation or say that they will be imprisoned if they do and that government aid will be cut off. Those who have accepted compensation from the Fund are discriminated against and alienated. This severe situation that currently confronts the victims was reported by participants to the roundtable. Measures that should have been taken by the AWF to stop this pressure and discrimination were also discussed. Also presented was the fact that female victims were not the only comfort women victims and that these victims are still facing difficulties, just like the comfort women.

Some mentioned what the Atonement Project of the Asian Women's Fund had brought about to the victims. They said that the letter of apology from the prime minister of Japan had consoled them and noted the significance of the medical and welfare support project funded by the government. The AWF made a new report about the mechanism and development of the Atonement Project in each country and region and the activities of other projects and how this problem should be handed down to younger people in the future was also discussed.

Until the roundtable discussion in Okinawa, meetings with support groups from overseas had been held with a table between the two sides, where we listened to their requests with both sides discussing things for an hour or so. This time, however, we were able to have support groups from each country and region gather together, live under the same roof for several days and talk about how we can change things or what we communicate. Misunderstandings about the Asian Women's Fund and the Atonement Project have also been sorted out. We also believe that it provided the support groups with an opportunity to network with each other.

This report summarizes the points raised during the discussion. They include appeals from victims made in the form of handouts or spoken words by the participants, the environment they live in and the report made by the AWF. The report also touches on what the victims as well as their supporters demand of the AWF, which has completed its five-year Atonement Project. In reality, there are things we can and cannot do in response to these demands and things we must start to discuss. However, what the AWF can and must do right now is to listen to as many victims' voices possible and let as many people in Japan and in the world as possible know the fact that unreasonable discrimination and prejudice still exist today against those who were forced to become comfort women. We must send a message out to the victims themselves saying that it is wrong that the harm for which they are not at all responsible continues and that they should never be to blame. Finally, we would be happy if our intention of publishing this report—namely to address the fact that prejudice and discrimination against female victims arising from sexual problems still exist today, as

described above, and to ask people to understand that such problems must be eradicated in the future—is understood.

Asian Women's Fund

The present situation of the Comfort Women Victims in Korea

Sim Mi-Ja
Mukuge Friendship Society
Korea

My name is Sim Mi-Ja and I am a former military comfort woman from Korea. As I personally have nothing particular to say and have no learning to impart, I would like to talk to you about the elderly women who used to be military comfort women as a whole. We have had our human rights trampled underfoot a number of times. There are several parties who have trodden on the rights of former comfort women. First of all, members of the non-government organizations who are supposed to protect former comfort women have disregarded the human rights of those very same people. The reason for this is that these organizations do everything they can to look after the elderly women who do what they say, but do not lift a finger to help those who don't. Elderly former comfort women such as myself who have views of their own that do not coincide with the ideas held by these organizations receive no protection and become ostracized. I have received a certain amount of attention and even been subjected to criticism because of things like this.

The Korean government provides all women registered as former military comfort women with living support payments to the value of 100,000 won. However, this does not make up for how distressing it was to be abused by the Japanese military between the ages of 15 and 22 and then again by non-government organizations at present. I want the Korean government and the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) to hear about this. I want to tell them in detail about how we have been down-trodden from the point of view of a former military comfort woman. As a result of being down-trodden and feeling great pain in our hearts, we have developed heart conditions and been forced to live alone in solitude. As if the fact that we have been abused in the past alone wasn't hard enough to bear, women's organizations in Japan and Korean organizations have conspired to slander us. This is utterly unforgivable.

At present these elderly women live lonely lives all by themselves. There may be those who have managed to use the Korean government's living support payments to live comfortably, but there are also those that continue to suffer hardship regardless. The reason that these people continue to suffer is that their children or relatives have deprived them of even the small sum given to them by the government along with everything else, including their bank books, leaving them without a penny to live off. There are elderly women such as these who fall into ill health due to the fact that they have no money whatsoever at their disposal and wish to go to a hospital, but they complain of not even having the money to make it there. Thirty-two elderly women in unfortunate situations such as these got together

and formed the Mukuge Friendship Society. These women, who lead such terribly lonely, isolated lives, meet up together in one location once every two or three months and discuss one another's situations. It was through discussions such as these that I came to hear about this. In addition to having to bear the sadness of being down-trodden by various organizations, they have all been deprived of money by their relatives and been left without a penny. I learned from them that situations such as these were occurring. It was announced to the newspaper that the AWF would, if possible, construct facilities such as rest homes or health centers to protect elderly women such as these. If an announcement along those lines was printed in the newspaper then it would soon ease the sadness that these women feel. I have received requests from elderly women such as these asking that, if it is true that the construction of facilities such as rest homes or a health centers has been announced, I try to urge its completion as soon as possible. I have made it this far, but I only have so much strength. If the AWF was genuinely set up to help former comfort women—if it was really established based on donations and grants from the Japanese government to help us, the former comfort women who have had our human rights and dignity betrayed—if this is the case then I implore you to manage the Fund in the spirit of protecting such women and construct rest homes or health centers that former comfort women, who may have little more than days left to live, can use whilst they are still alive.

Over the last three years I have been using money that I have earned doing eastern embroidery to look after unfortunate elderly women like these by doing things such as buying painkillers for them. Looking back, I have come face to face with some extremely lonely situations. In order to help out elderly women in unfortunate situations such as these, I asked a certain person whether it might somehow be possible for these women to receive some sort of benefits from the Korean government. In response, this person said that a member of the government had suggested that we form an organization to protect these elderly women. This person went on to say that they thought that, if we did this and called the organization the "Mukuge Harumoni (*elderly woman*) Association," sympathy for the elderly women's situation would be aroused and they could receive benefits. To protect these poor elderly women who feel that they may die any day now, I have the fighting spirit to take on the major economic power that is Japan.

In 1991 there was an announcement to the effect that former military comfort women should report the fact that they were military comfort women on the grounds that their secrecy would be guaranteed due to the issue being an embarrassing one for the Korean government. Nevertheless, I refuse to go and make a statement to any organization. One day I was listening to Korean MBC Radio and news of a member of the Japanese government claiming that there were no instances of forced abduction with regard to the issue of former military comfort women. He claimed that there were apparently organizations that handed over money and took girls away with them, but that there was no truth in the

accusation that the Japanese government engaged in forced abduction. Upon hearing this news, I phoned MBC Korean Cultural Broadcasting to ask them what on earth they were saying and tell them that the Japanese police came into my elementary school and abducted me in the middle of class. The Japanese government is two-faced. People like that cannot be trusted. I took a stand and vowed to reveal the truth, even at the risk of my own life.

Since then a number of organizations have taken a stand. One such organization is a group called the 'Nanum House of Sharing'.

The impetus for starting up this organization came when I witnessed an elderly woman living in a plastic greenhouse-like structure by the water pump in a rural village. I was deeply distressed at seeing this and went to the temple in Chogejon to see the priest there. I asked him whether, seeing as his organization was so big, they could possibly raise money in order to help unfortunate elderly women such as this. That incident provided the momentum for setting up the 'House of Sharing'.

The elderly woman, who, as I mentioned a moment ago, was living in a plastic structure, started living in the House of Sharing and went on to give a statement to the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. As of fiscal 1990, a total of 61 people had given statements. We still do not have the financial resources for all 61 women to live at Nanum House, so there are just a certain number of them living there. What I want to say is that these people are still doing fine, but the same cannot be said for others. The roughly 80 to 100 people who were told by the government to make statements in the 1990s on the basis that their secrecy would be guaranteed and who subsequently did so for the sake of their families, society and their own honor have ultimately ended up living in situations even worse than ours. That is how things stand at present in Korea.

As with the Mukuge Friendship Society, which presides over our organization, we meet up together and discuss the hardship that each of us faces by way of recognition of what we are going through. In that sense too we are among the luckier ones. In the end however, the same cannot be said for these other women, who have suffered yet more tragedy in that the guarantee of secrecy was ultimately unable to be upheld and their identities have now been revealed. Various problems are starting to occur within households as children and husbands are just now discovering the truth about their mothers and wives. As I mentioned earlier, some of these women are in situations where their bank book has been taken away from them and they are unable to get hold of money to live off. The fact is that we receive a large number of calls from elderly women who want to tell us about their current situation.

I want to underline the fact that 40 of the elderly women who made statements to the government that I referred to earlier and a further 32 women from the Mukuge Friendship Society have suffered considerably. These people meet with Japanese organizations that come to Korea and show them around. We—the 32 members of the Mukuge Friendship

Society and the 40 women who initially made statements confirming that they were former comfort women at the encouragement of the government—have now made our own website, which will help give you an understanding of our feelings and point of view.

As a result of having made statements, our dignity as human beings has been trampled upon and, even now, we find ourselves in the unfortunate situation where it is difficult to go out at all because when we do so we are followed around by the impression that people are talking about us behind our backs, saying things like “that old woman used to be a military comfort woman.” It is an undeniable fact that factors such as this have led us to develop heart conditions, live with a permanent sense of dread and worry about people looking at us. It is not just Japanese people, people in Korea also talk contemptuously about the fact that we were once military comfort women behind our backs; our situation has become overwhelmingly hard to bear. I have read about the AWF collecting money to help people such as this in recognition of their suffering and pledging that they will build rest homes or health centers based on these funds in the newspaper time and time again. I hope to continue hearing of news like this. I show these newspaper reports to other elderly women so they can see what the AWF is doing for us. The AWF will erect monuments, museums, rest homes and health centers; as long as we have their support there is no need to worry, no matter how much people in Korea talk about us behind our backs. Up to now we have talked amongst ourselves any number of times about how the future is looking bright. Before returning home, I hope to obtain specific answers from the AWF regarding what they are going to do to help us in the future.

There is one more final thing that I would like to say. I am aware of the details of discussions between women’s groups in Japan and Korea. Apparently, one particular Korean women’s group has been telling Japanese women’s groups that former military comfort women in Korea are living perfectly peaceful lives thanks to protection from the Korean government and various Korean organizations. This is preposterous, as I think you will have seen from all the people here today who have informed you about the actual situation of former comfort women as it stands. I feel that we, the 32 members of the Mukuge Friendship Society and the 40 people who gave statements to the Korean government, are in a position to know just what kind of lives the former comfort women are living. Rather than getting the chance to be treated like regular human beings, we are treated like human garbage. These women are living in extremely miserable situations, with their hearts and minds torn to shreds. Please, I ask you; do something to help women such as these.

Sincere Remorse on the Part of Japan and Hopes for the Settlement of Past Issues between Japan and Korea

Yang Soon-Im

Society for the Bereaved Families of Pacific War

Korea

1. Background of activities carried out by the Society for the Bereaved Families of Pacific War in relation to the issue of Japanese military comfort women

January 19, 1971: Enactment of law regarding the right of Korean citizens to claim against Japan

May 21, 1971 – March 20, 1972:

Declaration issued by directly bereaved families of Pacific War victims and group of bereaved families established

April 1973: Inauguration of the Society of Bereaved Families of Pacific War

April 1984: First Japanese military comfort women uncovered

June 1988: Society re-established

February 24, 1989: Event (involving Yang Soon-Im and Moon Ik-hwan) held in Topgol Park (then Pagoda Park) on the day of Emperor Hirohito's (Emperor Showa) funeral; open letter urging Emperor Akihito (Emperor Heisei) to accept responsibility for Pacific War victims (including comfort women) released

April 1989: After much persuasion, one former comfort woman become a member of the Society

March 1, 1990: Declaration of an international tribunal to settle past issues with Japan

April 20, 1990: Request for 90,000-name list of the girls volunteer labor corps members from the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare; interviews and talks with strategists

April 27, 1990: Release of name list in line with request from Korean government; response received from Japanese side

August 1990: Selection of one Japanese military comfort woman as plaintiff

October 29, 1990: 22 surviving victims (military personnel, paramilitary personnel and laborers) and members of bereaved families file a personal lawsuit demanding an official apology and compensation

Objections made by a former comfort woman to unauthorized pictures taken by Pak Sunam, a Korean citizen living in Japan; withdrawal of

- former Korean comfort woman plaintiff
- August 3-7, 1991: 54 members of the Society of Pacific War Bereaved Families and former comfort women take part in the International Forum of Postwar Compensation for the Asia-Pacific Region; former Korean comfort women disclose actual details of their experiences.
- December 6, 1991: 32 military and paramilitary personnel and members of bereaved families and three former comfort women file a lawsuit at the Tokyo District Court demanding compensation for Korean Asia-Pacific War victims
- December 13, 1991: Testimonies regarding the actual details of experiences undergone by former comfort women given at a Diet General Commission on Foreign Affairs hearing (former comfort woman: Lee Gibun; executive member of Society: Yang Soon-im)
- January 9, 1992: Denunciation of the injustice of Japanese forced draft of Korean women as military comfort women; meeting to oppose Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's visit to Korea; gathering of over 500 society members outside the Japanese Embassy
Written request for direct talks with the Japanese Prime Minister submitted to Japanese Ambassador to South Korea Kenichi Yanagi by ten former military comfort women; direct talks with the Director of the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a similar request made
- January 13, 1992: Talks with President-elect Kim Young-sam (Kim Jong-dae, Yang Soon-im); request for social security for former comfort women and war victims in general; President-elect pledges to solve the issue soon after his official appointment
- January 15-16, 1992: Rally involving more than 900 members (outside Japanese Embassy) to call for direct talks between ten former military comfort women and the Japanese Prime Minister and post-war settlement
- January 17, 1992: Demands made that Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa work on six areas of post-war settlement (including direct talks with 10 former comfort women) during his speech at the National Assembly as part of his visit to Korea
One of the society members of bereaved family dies after a collision with police during a demonstration outside the National Assembly involving more than 1000 members
- April 13, 1992: Six former comfort women file additional suit
- December 10, 1992: 50 society members, and seven former comfort women (Yang Soon-im), take part in an international tribunal (Tokyo) on Japanese

- post-war compensation; first meeting between South and North Korean former comfort women
- December 15 1992 – January 10, 1993: Survey of former comfort women's current living conditions conducted
- January 12, 1993: Request for urgent social security for former military comfort women made to Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- June 9 -23, 1993: Joint representative Yang Soon-im takes part in the 25th World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna); 3,000 copies of "A Demand for Solutions to the Issue of Japanese Military Comfort Women and Pacific War Victims" and 200 copies of collected materials distributed; 556 signatures collected from participating human rights commissioners on "A Demand for Solutions to the Issue of Japanese Military Comfort Women"
- June 14, 1993: Direct request placed with Conference Director John Pei after the opening of the plenary session to pass a copy of official post-war settlement documents, information sheets and collected materials to the UN Secretary General
- June 17, 1993: Minister Kim Yeong-Ho agrees to deliver official post-war settlement documents and collected materials to the UN Headquarters in Geneva and the UN's U.S. office (also given to the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in person during a visit to Korea at a later date); statement made on National Korean War Armistice Day regarding demands for settlement of past issues between Japan and Korea and the issue of Japanese military comfort women
- July 8-23, 1993: Seven preliminary conferences held between Japanese government officials and the Society for Bereaved Families regarding the testimonies of Japanese military comfort women
- July 26-30, 1993: Testimonies given by 15 former military comfort women; heard by five representatives from the Prime Minister's Office; Korean observer: Yang Soon-im
- March 26, 2001: First verdict reached in the former comfort women's suit demanding compensation for Korean Asia-Pacific War victims; all eight plaintiffs' claims rejected
- July 22, 2003: Majority of claims rejected in second verdict except partial acknowledgement of former comfort woman Shim Mi-Ja's claims; currently pending appeal in the Supreme Court

2. Visiting former Japanese military comfort women

It was in 1984 that I first visited a former Japanese military comfort woman. When I first came to know of the existence of comfort women from an elderly gentleman who had worked as member of the paramilitary, it came as a great shock. I had heard tell of young girls being handed over from my parents, but all I knew was based on legends whereby such girls handed over to the military ended up dying or couldn't be seen by people when they came back. I was aghast to learn that such elderly women actually existed.

My reaction was due to our historical emotions and concepts with regard to our society. We were afraid to even think about how to approach or how to handle this dishonorable, shameful national history of ours in which the chastity of our mothers, which we had been taught to value even above our own lives at that time, had been mercilessly trampled underfoot by Japanese imperialism.

In an attempt to learn about the situation experienced by these women I tried to arrange an interview with one such elderly woman through my elderly gentleman friend on several occasions, but she was adamant in her refusal.

She said "It would have been better if I had died, but I was so afraid that I couldn't even do that. I can never tell anyone about the shame that I experienced. I will remain quiet until I die."

For several years after that I traveled from Seoul to Pusan time and time again to try and persuade her to talk to me, but she avoided me and I would return back to Seoul without having met her, at times with a tear in my eye. Each time I took solace in the fact that my friend did a good job of trying to persuade her and showed appreciation for my efforts by saying that we would definitely file a suit in court with her.

At the end of an arduous process, we obtained permission to include her amongst the plaintiffs filing a personal suit against the Japanese government to demand an official apology and compensation (suit filed at Tokyo District Court on October 29, 1990 by 22 plaintiffs). She agreed to testify in court on the condition that I promised that nothing would be made public in the press and that the suit would be filed under an assumed name.

She made me sure that I would not disclose her experiences and I, the only that know about it. With that, I was able to go to the elderly woman's house alone and talk to her.

She was extremely cautious out of fear that people might find out about her past.

However my promise was broken when the member of the Society for Bereaved Families who accompanied me to the elderly woman's home (but waited outside) disclosed her address to Pak Sunam, a Korean citizen living in Japan, who then came into her home without permission, video camera in hand.

In shock, the elderly woman telephoned me and said that she wanted to be taken off the list of plaintiffs right away. I was in hospital at the time and was so surprised that I didn't even notice an injection being inserted into my arm and thus caused a major scene when my

blood flowed back into the syringe.

Ultimately, I had no option but to remove the elderly woman from the plaintiffs' claim and I took her name off the list of plaintiffs for the official apology and compensation trial. (The following year this became the list of plaintiffs for the legal action demanding compensation for Korean Pacific War victims, but this was not disclosed elsewhere.)

However, thanks to this process people in Japan and overseas who were interested in this issue came to know of the existence of elderly former comfort women and that they were filing a suit. It also led the media to pick up the story.

Kim Hak-Sun, an elderly woman living in Korea, heard about this story and came to ask the Society for Bereaved Families if she could take part in the trial. She explained that she had visited a Christian women's society that she had heard about from an elderly woman she had met in Topgol Park (then Pagoda Park) and that she had ended up releasing her story to the media.

This process left me with one particular painful memory. Despite the fact that this was a socially sensitive issue at the time, public interest gave rise to malicious behavior. Moreover, rather than unconditional disclosure of the details, which could potentially have caused the victims further dishonor and injury, the Society for Bereaved Families was striving to both bring the matter to court and use the opportunity to make Japan feel remorse and atone for their actions.

At that time, prior to Kim Hak-Sun going public, the Society for Bereaved Families had already obtained information from an additional two people. The elderly women who came to talk to the Society for Bereaved Families had experienced inhuman, cruel hardship as comfort women, but unfortunately, the initial release of pictures of Kim Hak-Sun paved the way for coverage in Japanese right-wing newspapers and the media that made light of their suffering. From the start of the news coverage, which implied that the pain worse than death experienced by the elderly comfort women was merely a matter of money, the remorse-less, indignant attacks on the part of their aggressors upon being confronted with their actions caused the women to taste yet more dishonor and bitterness.

I am here today to explain to you about the circumstances behind bringing the issue of comfort women to light because I feel that in the future this should not merely be an issue for the Republic of Korea to deal with, but that we all have a real-life historical role to play in ensuring that nothing like this ever happens again in the history of womankind. I believe that we have an obligation to rectify the aggressors' mistaken perceptions and distortion of the

truth with regard to military comfort women.

To reiterate, the Society for Bereaved Families has no intention of using the issue of comfort women to attack, arbitrarily beat or get money from Japan; I want to make it clear that the reason we did not release the details of this issue right away is that our aim is to make the aggressors to feel sincere remorse and a fitting sense of shame in order to ensure that no tragedy of this kind ever reoccurs.

Looking back on it all, I am left with a feeling of regret that if Lee Ki-boon, who was herself keen to talk to the press about her experiences, had gone public before Kim Hak-Sun, then the aggressors' attitude might have improved and this issue might have been handled better.

3. Requests for the testimonies of former Japanese military comfort women to be heard

On January 9, 1992, immediately prior to Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's visit to Korea, a document stating that the Japanese military were involved in the drafting of comfort women was discovered and Japan admitted that this was the case. However, Japan adopted a stance that there was no forced drafting carried out.

Right away over 500 members of our society gathered outside the Japanese Embassy. Kim Jong-dae and I (Yang Soon-im) met with Ambassador Yanagi and handed him copies of claims entitled "Opposition to Prime Minister Miyazawa's Visit to Korea and the Demand for Post-war Settlement" and "Talks between 10 Former Comfort Women and the Prime Minister".

On the premise that the Prime Minister should "meet the former comfort women in person and make a decision on whether they were forcibly drafted or not based on what his conscience tells him is right", we held a protest involving over 100 people outside the Japanese Embassy on January 15. On January 16, the day Prime Minister Miyazawa arrived in Seoul, we organized a protest rally involving over 800 people outside the Japanese Embassy.

On January 17, whilst Prime Minister Miyazawa was giving a speech to the National Assembly, a group of over 1000 members of our Society issued statements including a "Demand to Focus on Six Areas of Post-war Settlement" and a "Request for Direct Talks between 10 Former Comfort Women and the Prime Minister" from a location roughly 100 meters away from the National Assembly. Sadly, during this rally Chu Gison, an elderly male member of our Society, sustained four broken ribs as a result of heavy-handed intervention on the part of the police. He later passed away after being admitted to hospital in Yoido.

Moving on from this, the Society for Bereaved Families' first casualty since the start of our

activities to settle past issues between Korea and Japan, we continued to demand that the testimonies of former Japanese military comfort women be heard (talks with Sakutaro Tanino, Director of the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Councilors' Office on external Affairs, Cabinet Secretariat, Prime Minister's Secretariat, the Director of the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador to the Republic of Korea in Japan Gong Ro-Myung, President-elect Kim Young-sam, etc.). As a result of our efforts, we received a response regarding talks with the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary on May 27, 1993.

The Japanese government responded to the effect that, "If Korea could select roughly ten representatives involved in the comfort woman issue, advisory committee members (staff from the Councilors' Office on External Affairs) would enter into talks and, if studies showed that forced drafting had taken place, the Japanese government would be prepared to enact a special law and announce individual compensation for the victims. However, the process is currently on hold due to Korean refusal to cooperate."

On May 29, the Society for Bereaved Families made a statement demanding that "testimonies of victims in general be heard" rather than just those of former comfort women and relayed this to Japan. Naturally we also communicated our intentions to the Korean government and requested their cooperation.

Thus it was that on July 8, 1993, after battling our way through one and a half years since the initial request that the testimonies of former comfort women be heard, the initial conference regarding testimony hearings between the Society for Bereaved Families and Japanese government officials got underway. The two countries reached an agreement at the 7th preliminary conference (July 23, 1993).

Following on from that, during the five day period from July 26 to 30, 1993, 15 former comfort women gave their testimonies.

During this process I became the target for a great deal of criticism from people both in Korea and overseas. There were even doubts raised regarding the testimony hearings in certain quarters of the media. The reasons for this were that "no matter how many victims go over to Japan and give their testimonies and no matter far you push your efforts, the Japanese will soon forget it" and that "it is unbelievable that Japan is seriously willing to put efforts into solving this issue". There was a certain element of truth to such claims.

Therefore, despite feeling pressured by the fact that national sanctions might result, depending on the stance taken by Japan in response to the testimony hearings, I had one very clear intention in mind.

I wanted to ensure that Japan knew the truth about all the acts of brutality that they

themselves had committed. Due to Japan's steadfast denial regardless of this, I felt it my moral duty to make them speak the truth.

Even if we couldn't expect a satisfactory solution, I was determined that we would continue to create opportunities for Japan to admit to forced drafting and, as long as there were victims left to testify, confirm each victim's testimony and reach a solution, one at a time if necessary. As the former comfort women get older they will inevitably depart this world one by one, but I resolved that Japan would have to acknowledge the truth about the suffering it has inflicted on them within their lifetime.

I believed our Japanese audience to be essentially good people and despite numerous objections and concerns being raised, in particular countless protest phone calls from certain former comfort women threatening to protest against the testimony hearings outside our offices, I remained firm in my determination to knock down any obstacles that people put in our way and, in the end, the testimonies of 15 women who had been forcibly drafted by Japanese imperial forces into working as military comfort women were heard.

4. Japanese Government policy regarding comfort women after the end of testimony hearings

On August 4, 1993, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono made an official announcement partially acknowledging the forced drafting of comfort women, but he made no reference to problem solving measures or victim compensation.

Nevertheless, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama established a "Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative" policy whereby ¥100 billion would be used to help surrounding countries over a period of ten years, evening out at a total of ¥10 billion a year.

Following on from that, the Japanese government came up with the idea of creating a non-government fund to provide former comfort women with reward payments. It is also a known fact that ¥500 million of the fiscal 1995 budget was allocated for matters such as running costs for an office to set up a non-government organization.

The Society for Bereaved Families immediately saw through the fact that Japan was attempting to only deal with the issue of comfort women, which was merely the tip of the iceberg, and gloss over issues relating to Pacific War victims in general, including military and paramilitary personnel, laborers and members of the Girls Volunteer Labor Corps, and their families and issued a statement of opposition.

From the point of view of the former Japanese military comfort women, the priority task was to find solutions to help them deal with the hardships of daily life. However, we decided that what needed to be done first of all was to get Japan to show remorse and apologize for

acts of brutality committed in the past, obtain fitting compensation to help victims regain the honor that had been trampled into the ground and dispel the feelings of ill will and bitterness that still remained.

However, the Japanese government's policy regarding comfort women paid no heed to the issue of war victims in general and merely sought to solve the issue of comfort women, which had become a global issue by that time. We realized that its plan was to clear up the comfort women issue, which was standing in the way of Japan becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to restore international trust in Japan and achieve its aim of becoming a permanent member of the council, thus securing the position of leading country in Asia and increased influence on a global scale.

The Japanese government has to realize that its consistently surface-deep policy of appeasement regarding comfort women, which shows no fitting sense of remorse for past actions, has stirred up feelings of ill will towards Japan amongst the Korean government.

Without delay, the Korean government enacted living support legislation aimed at former comfort women and adopted a lump sum and monthly payment policy. Based on this, they rejected the non-government fund proposed by the Japanese government and, advocating moral superiority in defiance of Japan's remorseless stance, drew up and implemented a range of protective measures in order to provide basic day-to-day stability for former comfort women in recognition of their struggle.

As a result of this, the seven former comfort women who had initially promised to accept the non-government fund were cast as traitors. They found themselves in a position whereby they were shunned by the Korean government and criticized by all corners of society and people's sympathy turned to contempt.

Ultimately, Japan's remorse-less policy of appeasement with regard to their past acts of brutality provoked actions that left some of the former comfort women with a guilty conscience, feeling that they had no option but accept the non-government funds in secret, out of view of their own government and society. Even today, these women live their lives with bated breath like criminals, out of fear that they might face pressure to pay back money they have received or from the Korean Government, criticism if the Korean government or certain comfort women organizations get to know they accepted the non-government fund.

Moreover, on top of the fact that they didn't receive any non-government donations, a large number of these former comfort women could not do anything because they were not aware of these facts and some suffered even greater psychological distress due to the conflict between the two sides.

5. Management of non-government fund lacking in consideration for victim support groups

Despite committing unimaginably brutal crimes in the surrounding countries, Japan has shown no real remorse and certain high-ranking government officials have shamelessly made frequent reckless comments.

It could be said that the people of Korea (including North Korea) were made to pay the price that Japan should by rights have paid after losing the war. While the division of the Korean peninsula caused the Korean people to turn and point their guns at one another and suffer through a tragic war, no one could deny the fact that Japan, a country that had brought disgrace upon itself, used this as a foothold to enable it to grow into a major economic power once again.

Japan may not want to admit it, but the division of the Korean peninsula was a cross that Japan should have had to bear. Therefore everyone in Japan should strive to ensure that solutions are reached to issues relating to victims from North and South Korea and that the Korean peninsula is reunified.

Regardless of this, Japan has paid no attention to this fact, even criticizing us for bringing it up, and has brushed aside the issue of post-war settlement on the Korean peninsula. While the victims from the war continue to suffer in poverty, a policy of establishing a non-government fund with the aim of dealing with the issue based on the assumption that if enough money is given out everything will be put right, amounts to ignoring the feelings of the victims themselves. In actual fact, this policy was one of covering up the problem. That is why it was ultimately unsuccessful.

When opposition towards this way of management of the non-government fund increased, those responsible for the fund visited Korea on at least two occasions to seek out members of the relevant organizations. However, nobody visited the Society for the Bereaved Families of the Pacific War, which is a victim support group.

Despite all this, Japan's aim did not seem to be to find solutions to issues related to war victims out of a feeling of genuine remorse, but merely to set up a non-government fund as part of a policy to ease their conscience. Rather than achieving anything, this increased victims' feelings of ill will towards Japan.

Initially, the Society for Bereaved Families was in favor of the establishment of a non-government fund based on the understanding that it represented an apologetic stance in order to show sincere remorse on the part of the Japanese people and ease the suffering of former comfort women in some way and that it had nothing to do with the intentions of the Japanese government.

We had a sense of hope that, "If the Japanese people as a whole were to properly recognize their past mistakes during the war, no similar tragedy would ever happen again."

However, the stance that Japan continued to adopt up until the end of the non-government fund period on May 1, 2002, frustrated and undermined the hopes of the war victims.

Therefore, the end result was that the Japanese non-government fund, Asian Women's Fund (AWF) failed to resolve the issue of Japanese military comfort women.

First and foremost, from now on Japan should take some serious, heartfelt action to resolve issues related to Pacific War victims (including military and paramilitary personnel, the Girls Volunteer Labor Corps and Japanese military comfort women).

6. The current status of former comfort women.

There were initially 172 victims registered as former comfort women in Korea, afterwards this number subsequently increased to 192. Unfortunately, over the last few years a considerable number of these women have passed away and there are slightly over 150 remaining at present. Of the nine former comfort women plaintiffs that filed the "lawsuit demanding compensation for Korean Pacific War victims," one has withdrawn from the case and a further two have passed away. Moreover, most of the remaining former comfort women are in and out of hospital on a daily basis and are unlikely to be with us for much longer.

One of the victims, who is in relatively good health, was discharged from hospital on October 23, but other 6 former comfort women are basically unable to leave the house. Elsewhere, the other has been taken in by a welfare foundation managed by a religious organization, but is continuously in a great deal of pain. Moreover, another slipped on some ice and injured her shoulder over winter and, despite having been operated on, continued frequent relapses have resulted in her suffering from arthritis. A few days ago, she accidentally consumed 15 days worth of medication, which she had received from the hospital, in five days and was temporarily in critical condition, but thanks to measures such as having her stomach pumped she narrowly escaped serious harm. One has become blind after completely losing her sight when she developed a cataract.

These former comfort women are gradually losing their sight and hearing and have a great deal of difficulty living independently. The Society for Bereaved Families is working on constructing support centers and welfare facilities to look after them, but it just isn't enough.

In addition to this, more than ten of the fifty-six former comfort women who made registration to the Society for Bereaved Families have passed away. We are also trying to trace the whereabouts of certain former comfort women who we have lost contact with. At present the former comfort women don't have a great deal of time left as they will not be with us for much longer. We need to do everything possible to enable them to rid themselves of

the ill-feeling in their hearts while they are still with us and the Japanese government in particular needs to open its eyes to their situation.

7. Matters the Asian Women's Fund should be aware of

(1) On December 6, 1992, the Society for Bereaved Families filed a "lawsuit demanding compensation for Korean Pacific War victims" at the Tokyo District Court. The 35-strong list of plaintiffs was made up of military and paramilitary personnel and three former Japanese military comfort women.

On April 13, 1992, six additional former comfort women were added to the list of plaintiffs bring the total to nine former comfort women. However, following the deaths of two former comfort women, the case was rejected at the first ruling (March 5, 2002; Tokyo District Court) due to the comfort women not being recognized. At the second ruling (July 22, 2003; Tokyo District Court), Shin Mi-Ja's claims were partially recognized, but the remainder of the case was rejected. The case is currently pending appeal (August 2003) in the Supreme Court.

(2) The purpose of this trial is to demand that Japan accept direct responsibility for abducting young girls aged between ten and fifteen—5th year elementary school to 2nd year senior school (equivalent to 2nd year junior high school today)—under the pretense of allowing them to continue their studies. It should also be noted however that we were unsuccessful in trying to add members of the Girls Volunteer Labor Corps to the list of plaintiffs on the grounds that corporate organizations were directly responsible for them being exploited in munitions factories and killed by wartime gunfire.

(3) A number of members of the Girls Volunteer Labor Corps have filed individual suits against corporate organizations but none of them have been successful. Members of the Korean Girls Volunteer Labor Corps, who were victims of the same war, were forced to carry out heavy labor in poor conditions whilst suffering from hunger pains and some were even subjected to sexual violence similar to that experienced by comfort women. As a result of a nightmarish experience where they suffered a range of human rights violations, including violations that resulted in physical disabilities, the majority of these women have developed heart conditions and many have died. The number of these women still alive is even fewer than the number of remaining former comfort women.

Their wish is to receive a sincere apology and fitting compensation from Japan within their remaining years in order restore their honor, release them from the suffering that

this nightmarish experience has caused and put an end to their feelings of ill will and bitterness.

8. Projects that should be carried out on a continuous basis by the Asian Women's Fund

If the AWF genuinely does have the goal of working to benefit women, it is only natural that resolving issues related to members of the Girls Volunteer Labor Corps be treated in the same manner as the comfort women issue.

It should be pointed out that the process of managing the non-government fund and bringing it to an end has had the reverse effect of generating ill will towards Japan amongst war victims and surrounding countries rather than recovering their trust due to concerns that Japan intends to scale down its post-Pacific War settlement to just the issue of military comfort women alone, which is merely the tip of the iceberg, and cover up other areas. In addition to requesting that the AWF wakes up to taking these issues seriously and be reborn as a mechanism that will do everything within its power to *genuinely* tackle issues relating to war victims, the Society for Bereaved Families expects the AWF to fulfill the following roles.

- (1) A "restoration of honor through an in-depth investigation into and disclosure of the facts and an official apology" in the Diet should be promoted in response to the violation of former Japanese military comfort women's and members of the Girls Volunteer Labor Corps' rights.
- (2) The construction of welfare and medical facilities in Korea for former Japanese military comfort women and members of the Girls Volunteer Labor Corps should be promoted.
- (3) The establishment of a Committee for the Promotion of Compensation for Korean Pacific War Victims, (including former comfort women and members of the Girls Volunteer Labor Corps) within the Japanese Diet should be promoted in the name of women.
- (4) In terms of AWF-run projects, future priority should be given to welfare projects for Korean Pacific War victims, as was initially promised.
- (5) Despite the fact that it was officially announced that the ¥100 billion for "Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative" was set up for the benefit of neighboring countries that had suffered as a result of the Pacific War, even now, nine years later, war victims do not know anything about the running or contents of this fund. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs should disclose a breakdown of how this fund is financed straight away and the AWF should take the initiative to ensure that the remaining money in this fund is used for projects that will benefit war victims.

- (6) The establishment of a Peace Fund Support System within the AWF to work with victim support groups all over the world should be promoted in order to ensure that all countries can work together in harmony to let people know about the horrors experienced by Pacific War victims the world over and thus aspire towards peace and the prevention of war.
- (7) The establishment of a “system for revising and eliminating reckless statements from textbooks that distort historical facts” within the AWF should be promoted to bring about a change in historical awareness in Japan. Moreover, genuine peace and friendship between Japan and countries that suffered at the hands of Japan should be promoted based on efforts made by women.

I am pleased to have been invited to take part in this roundtable meeting with the AWF, which is moving forward to a new beginning, and to have had the opportunity to speak to you frankly from the victims' perspective, something that had not been possible previously. Although my objections have unfortunately not made for easy listening, I am grateful to have been given the chance to speak openly. I hope that the AWF will not continue to tread in the ill-advised footsteps of the non-government fund in the future, but act in a manner that fully and genuinely displays the true conscience of women, so as to resolve issues relating to Pacific War victims. I hope to be able to convince Japan that the way to become one of the leading nations in the world is to regain the trust of other countries in Asia by showing commitment to moving forward in the right direction.

9. Conclusion

- (1) When I first started to seek out former Japanese military comfort women, I encountered a great deal of suffering and hardship. Efforts to persuade them resulted in further hardships to overcome and I lost count of the number of times I was brought to tears. However, in some small way, all this hardship has brought results; the issue of Japanese military comfort women has been brought to the world's attention and the shock this has caused people the world over has caused it to rapidly become a global issue.
- (2) In a different sense, through the inhuman behavior of the Japanese military towards women during a time of war, this issue has effectively emphasized the horror of war. Moreover, I know that this issue has brought women's human rights the world over into relief and formed a solid foundation for the protection of women, not only in terms of Japan but throughout the world wherever there are countries in which war breaks out.

I think we could even take pride in the fact that, by educating the world about this most painful of issues for women to ensure that it cannot possibly recur in the future, this issue has furthered the development of women's human rights and will go down in the history of women's human rights as a major achievement.

- (3) Therefore, although I realize that the AWF experienced considerable growing pains at the time of its establishment, the fact that the AWF has ultimately fulfilled its role in helping to reduce the pain and anguish that the many long-suffering former comfort women have faced is appreciated.

In comparison to the extreme suffering experienced by Japanese military comfort women in war-affected countries throughout Southeast Asia at that time, the establishment and implementation of funds may only be a partial solution, but it has also helped resolve a significant number of problems. Therefore, although we cannot acknowledge that Japan has fulfilled its moral obligations as a nation, we can appreciate that this has yielded considerable results in that it has substantially reduced feelings of hostility towards war victims in the hearts and minds of the people of Japan.

- (4) From now on, the Japanese government needs to use the AWF to show a remorseful, apologetic attitude and eliminate criticism that they are "trying to reach a scaled-down solution" by expanding work undertaken, which has previously been limited to former comfort women, to include war victims in general. Japan has to work towards putting an end to war victims' feelings of dissatisfaction and hostility and bringing about a genuine reconciliation.
- (5) If these issues are not resolved now, as war victims reach the end of their lives, their bitterness will remain forever. This would surely become a burden that would weigh heavily on the hearts of the people of Japan.

If Japan were to show genuine remorse, this would be transmitted to the rest of the world through the war-affected countries of Southeast Asia and the war victims. My advice is that Japan should do everything possible to put its altered conscience into practice and take action.

The meaning of “The Assistance for War Victims”

Kim Jeong-Im

The Society for the Bereaved Families of Pacific War
Korea

I would like to thank you for inviting war victims, who have gone through such regrettable experiences, here today. As a member of the Society for Bereaved Families of Pacific War, I was involved in the Care Center, which we ran in cooperation with former comfort women, from 1996 onwards. When these elderly women, who live alone, were in poor health or feeling lonely all on their own, they would come together at the Care Center and dispel their pent-up feelings of resentment or sing songs together. I know that Ms. Usuki, representative of the Association to clarify the post-war responsibility of Japan (Hakkiri-kai) shed sweat and tears in doing everything possible to help the Society for Bereaved Families and former comfort women. People from a range of groups, such as the Hakkiri-kai, high school teachers in Tokyo and citizens of Hiroshima have visited us at the care Center and worked in cooperation with us. I myself have visited Japan on a number of occasions accompanied by Kim Hak-Sun. On these occasions I have received extremely kind words from the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary. I tried asking whether it will be possible to continue developing the Care Center and whether it will be possible for the Society for Bereaved Families of Pacific War and the former comfort women to continue managing the Care Center with backing from Japanese support organizations. For a while the former comfort women ran the Care Center happily, but as a result of factors such as the issue of whether they should accept the non-government fund that was established or not, the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan and opposition even from within the Society for Bereaved Families of Pacific War itself, the management of the center started to suffer. Unfortunately Kim Hak-Sun, who I mentioned a moment ago, passed away and I was only able to manage the Care Center for one and a half years. The Care Center ceased to exist and I heard from a great deal of people who were deeply upset by this fact and wanted to know if the former comfort women would be running the center any longer or if it would reopen. I am very much aware of the fact that these elderly women have undergone regrettable experiences. I also sat in on the 13-year trial and wanted to do everything within my power to support the former comfort women in the volunteer spirit. However, the Society for Bereaved Families of Pacific War has run into financial difficulties and the fact is that we have been unable to provide satisfactory support for these women. Although the former comfort women have received some small measure of support from the Korean and Japanese governments, but the bereaved of the members of the Society of Bereaved Families of Pacific War have not received any sort of support along these lines.

Although I look at things objectively, I personally lost my father in the war. My mother lost her husband, leaving her to lead a lonely life. I view the former comfort women in the same way as I view my mother; as extremely unfortunate individuals. We, the members of the Society for Bereaved Families of Pacific War, and the former comfort women work together and they do their best, but the majority of these women are over the age of 80. In the case of one of the comfort woman victims, she is unable to speak properly and cannot even drink a glass of water without someone helping her. I find it mortifying to think that we could be running the Care Center to help and take care of women such as this.

My mother was a victim of the war, but she has passed away now. I consider myself to be a victim of the war as well. I don't know what my own father looked like and cannot even go and look for his remains. Rather than the former comfort women acting alone, I believe that, although there will be a number of problems to overcome, all the victims of the war should join hands and work together to reach settlements and resolve the issues of our suffering in the pasts one by one.

Amongst the members of the bereaved families, there are those who survived their time in the Japanese military as military or paramilitary personnel and subsequently returned home. There are even those who lost limbs during the war. I know an elderly gentleman who has fallen ill and is suffering immensely. These people are also in unfortunate, difficult positions. People such as these have been abandoned by the Japanese and Korean governments and do not receive any assistance whatsoever. I think that they deserve to receive the same sort of support. As a woman, I am very much aware of how unfortunate the former comfort women's situation is. Therefore, they should receive priority treatment, but I feel that something should be done to reach out and help all war victims in all of the various colonies.

I have known Ms. Usuki for 15 years and I think that she suffered a great deal when she came to Korea. As there are a large number of people in Korea that harbor extreme resentment within their hearts as a result of the scars left behind by the war, I think that carrying out activities in an environment like that must have been very hard. Nevertheless, she spoke to victims of the war very kindly and helped us a great deal in any way possible. I was as saddened to hear the news about her as I was to hear the news about my father. I think that is unfortunate that, despite the fact that she wants to do something to help war victims, she cannot do so because of the various conditions imposed on her. I hope that she will find an area where she can accomplish this sort of work and that we can work hand in hand to lay the foundations to ensure that problems such as these are resolved.

The Asian Women's Fund claims that all issues have been resolved, but they have not consulted the Society for Bereaved Families of Pacific War at all. The Society for Bereaved Families of Pacific War has not received any support from the Korean or Japanese

governments whatsoever. I have already mentioned that my father belonged to the Japanese military and died in the war, but I was unable to find out even whether he was dead or alive. Fortunately, during the course of following the trial in Japan I was able to find out that my father had died. There is one thing above all else that I want to say to the Japanese people and the Japanese government; despite the fact that war victims, including my father, lost their lives because of the Japanese people and government, why have you offered no word of explanation? I find this intolerable.

Having lost my father at the age of three, a huge range of bitter feelings in various senses have built up inside me. In addition to not even knowing what my father looked like, I am lacking in knowledge due to the fact that his absence meant that I could not attend school. I think that, having listened to the opinions of victims who have actually suffered as a result of the war here today, you will be able to properly appreciate how we feel. Now, what we would like you to tell the Japanese government about our situation. The Japanese Government stated that that they have made a mistake, so they must compensate us based on consideration of the mistakes they have made in the past. My father was taken away to go to war and had his youth ruined. In a sense, I myself, who was unable to go to school, get enough food to eat or even be held by my own father, also had my youth taken away from me. I don't think that anyone who has not experienced something like this could fully understand, but in this sense we have suffered a great deal. I would just like to say that we hope that we – the Korean government, the Japanese government and all the victims of the war – can all work together in cooperation, to resolve these issues in the future.

The Comfort Women Issue and Students' Reactions in Korea

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1. Introduction

More than 50 years after the end of World War II, Japan's wartime conduct remains a source of bitterness between Japan and other Asian countries, particularly China and Korea. The comfort women issue has been considered as one of the thorny 'historical issues' between Korea and Japan. It surely is a very difficult question to solve because it has mixed with political sentiment. Nationalist groups in both countries take full advantage of this issue as well.

It constitutes uncertainties regarding the construction of future East Asian regional order. It has become a political obstacle to establish a new relationship among East Asian countries after the War. It has brought emotional reactions in both of the countries and mobilized political sentiment to blame each other. Sometimes it has prevented the development of the constructive diplomatic relationship between two neighboring countries. It is standing like an old hindrance in the way of the emerging East Asian economic and security community. It is interrupting any development of friendship and feeling of intimacy between both of civil societies.

Nobody can answer to this question easily at this moment. But we need to proceed beyond this troublesome question not only because of the necessity of solution of the past problems but also because of the task of building a peaceful future order in East Asia. Korea should take an initiative to reunification process. This cannot be accomplished without political as well as huge economic support from Japan. Japan should be slipping out of its historical trap and could appear on the world stage as a normal state. This also need political as well as diplomatic support from her neighbors, especially from Korea. Both countries are sharing democratic values and vigorous market economy. Both are depending on each other more and more in many spheres such as security and economic fields. In this regard, we have to find out a path to breakthrough anyway. Then how can we start to tackle this question?

2. The significance of the student group

I do not try to give a comprehensive answer to this question right now. I'd rather raise a more practical question how to continue and how to revive a bilateral civilian solidarity between two countries coping with this issue. I would like to suggest that strengthening ties between younger generations in both societies could be a key to solution. It seems to be a more important and practical approach to establish a link between younger generations in both societies. Under this consideration, I would like to suggest a long-term as well as bottom-up approach taking notice of dynamics and changing aspects of Korean society.

Students group has a great significance in the Korean political scene during democratization process. The Korean students are very energetic and they like to participate in most of the key political issues. They initiated and played a major role in people power uprisings both in 1960 and in 1987. They are recognized as one of the major supporting groups for the incumbent president Mr. Rho Moo Hyun who elected in last December. As they have taken progressive role in the political scene in Korea, it is very important to understand their attitude toward Japan and history issues as well. I wish this presentation could contribute to depict this attitude and can indicate direction of future development of Korean society.

I would like to underline the changing aspect of the perception on the history issues among Korean university students. And also I tried to find out a truth of the Korean people without interruption from journalism as well as politics. I am trying to tell you a candid reaction of them.

Before showing how Korean young students think about this issue, let me bring an introductory chapter regarding on the development of the issue and the political sources of the civilian movements on the issue in Korea.

I have collected college students' book reviews on the AWF's works for last two years. I also organized student forum on the issue between two countries last July with hearty support from the AWF. This presentation is mainly relying on these experiences of my own.

3. Social components of the civil movement regarding the issue

In Korea the comfort women issue began to emerge only in the late 1980s. The international community began to hear about the comfort women issue from December 1991, when a number of Koreans, including three former comfort women, filed a class action suit against the Japanese government on behalf of former soldiers, paramilitary, and bereaved families demanding compensation for the violation of human rights of certain categories of Koreans under Japanese colonial rule. A major political impact of the lawsuit has been

widening the bi-national dispute into the universalistic issue of women's human rights.

It was the complete denial by a Japanese official at a Diet session in June 1990 of any governmental involvement in the recruitment of comfort women that spurred the formation of the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (hereafter referred to as the Korean Council) in November 1990. The coalition of 22 Korean civic groups, the Korean Council demanded that Tokyo offer an official apology to the victims, compensate them, establish a memorial for the deceased and describe the trafficking of wartime sex slaves in Japanese history textbooks.

Generally speaking, Korean government has been reluctantly involved in this issue. They are facing a lot of public pressure to show more determined gesture to Japanese party whenever Japanese right wing groups and politicians reiterating their impunity and innocence to war crime. The more voices and freedom came in Korean society after democratization, the more pressure burdened on the government to take some diplomatic measures toward Japan. And these kinds of public blaming and shaming are stimulating the Japanese right wing and the public to react negatively on the history issue more. But diplomatic means doesn't go farther because it costs vital common interests with Japan such as economic as well as security cooperation. At this moment there is no possibility of taking any initiatives from Korean government regarding this issue.

However Korean civil society approaches are stronger and more resolute ones. Several NGOs have formed to deal with this issue under the different causes in line with social dynamics of Korea. They are representing some feminists groups, nationalists groups, and general human rights defenders. They made a coalition with other movement groups like environmentalists, peace activists, and anti-American activists groups to cope with this issue. In a political sense they share a common interest to fight against government and conservative sectors in Korea. I will give more details on their political sources to mobilize people and social capital.

(1) NGOs

NGOs are major organizational sources of civil society to mobilize public participation on this issue in Korea. The development of NGO participation is directly related to democratization process. In other word most of the main stream NGOs came to exist in accordance with the people power movement. Most of them shared ideological background. Most of their leaders recruited from student activist groups. Some NGOs originated from the religious activism. This background gives us an answer the question why Korean NGOs are strongly bound each other. In a political sense the mainstream of the Korean NGOs could be considered as one group of the political origin even though their fields of concern are different.

Taking the comfort women issue as one of the key agenda for 90s' they started to campaign pressing both of the governments, Korea and Japan. Setting the agenda and action programs, the NGO coalition preoccupied and monopolized this issue in the public sphere. They formed various international networks on the issue. They have brought it to some international bodies like UN Commission on Human Rights, Sub-commission, ILO and UN Conference in Beijing. They constituted the International Civilian Tribunal in Tokyo in 2001. They have organized a series of weekly demonstrations in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul for 11 years.

Though the NGO coalition still has great influence on this issue, their driving force has declining in these days. Some key figures have retired and some went into the politics or cabinet members. Some are tired of the issue. A sexual abuse scandal by one of the key figures in those NGOs broke out some years ago. Generational change and organizational transformation are taking place in the major NGOs to catch up the rapid change in Korean society.

Korean NGO movement that has presented dynamics and participatory aspects of the democratizing civil society is now at the crossroad and is facing a new challenge. It still remains as one of the key questions for the Korean NGO movement how to recruit new generations with new leadership and how to catch up changing public interests in different perspectives. It is closely related to the dynamics of political interaction between state and society in Korea. Changing aspects of NGOs will be an important factor impacting on the direction of public debate regarding the comfort women issue in Korea in the long run.

(2) Feminism

The Feminist group is regarded as one of the most active and major elements concerning this issue. The feminist movement began to emerge in line with the modernization process in Korean society. University students, women intellectuals, women highbrows and religious groups who equipped with and also influenced by the western feminist theories have challenged traditional values and the men-dominated social orders.

The comfort women issue gave them a chance to appeal their causes and publicize the feminist issue in the whole society. They are emphasizing the sexual abuses aspect by men-dominated militarism in this issue. Some feminist activists are criticizing the nationalist group saying that their perception is too narrow to see the structural causes of the problem in the comfort women issue.

(3) Nationalism

Most of the activists with regard to the comfort women issue seem to be influenced by Korean nationalism as such. Nationalism has been one of the most significant engines in Korean social movement because Korea is still a divided country. In more general mode of cultural context, anti-Japanese feeling and a sense of victimization embedded in Korean public established by their colonial experiences have made a background for vitality and

enlightenment of the nationalist motivation on the movement. It is very interesting that some feminist groups are criticizing the nationalist motivation on the issue. They are arguing that nationalism disguising the real cause of the comfort women issue and misleading the movement to just bashing Japan.

With the rapid economic development and democratization in Korea, nationalism has been gaining more attraction from the public in a different way from old times. If the movement would be motivated and supported by the strong sense of nationalism it might result in being politicized by the political interest and being easily manipulated by the politicians. And this will impact negatively on other diplomatic issues between both of the countries in the long run.

(5) Human Rights

Human rights issues have been a vivid motivation leading the civil movement in Korea. During military dictatorship to say nothing of Japanese colonial rule, Korean people had been experienced cruel human rights abuses. The Korean younger generations are showing more concern on human rights issues. The compulsory aspect of enslaved military sexual workers during wartime drew more attention to human rights activists.

Sometimes human rights activism can go hand in hand with other motivation like feminism and nationalism without any contradictions. However human rights motivation is different from nationalist activism in terms of their universal perspective. Even if feminism shares much of the doctrine with human rights idea, its theoretical origin is different. Regarding to this point it is needed more advocacy for human rights aspect of the movement. The comfort women issue should not be considered as just another cause to blame Japan but a historical lesson for human rights promotion worldwide.

4. Students reactions on the issue

Then how react did students on the comfort women issue? The most striking finding is their maturity in attitude toward Japanese.

At the first glance, their emotional reaction is not quite different from that of the general Korean public. Most of them showed angers against sexual abuses and deep sympathy for the grandmothers who served as sexual slaves and destroyed themselves in disgrace and shame. They accused Japanese government not for taking any measures of responsibilities on the history issues.

However they are mature and sophisticated enough to look at broader contexts on the issue. They understand the deep causes of the sexual slavery system. They know the necessity of building a more concrete relationship between civilian groups in two countries. Their rationale for solution is broader and more sensible than that of Korean movement NGOs. Some are addressing harsh criticism on the 'all-at-once' strategy by the major Korean

NGOs. They are well aware of danger in the emotional approach to the issue. The following four points are selected for better understanding of their changing attitude.

I hope their candid and sincere reaction on the issue could give some 'comfort' to those who are tired of fighting for the comfort women issue and better relationship between Korea and Japan.

(1) Conceptualizing the issue as a human rights abuse issue, specially under the circumstances of the military dominated society during wartime

...As I was reading this book I was saying to myself not to hate Japanese people. We cannot say all the Japanese are bad people... It was Japan as itself to be guilty. Even if Japanese government had issued a public apology their deep sorrow and suffering cannot be erased at all...

(Jae-Myung LEE, Dept. Environmental Industry)

...This issue had been hided from public concern before human rights movement was becoming to draw public attention in both countries...This issue could be publicized in line with the development of human rights movement in Japan...The comfort women issue shows us an example of the double forced abuse and exploitation of minority groups by imperialism as well as by men...

(Hye-young Kim, Dept of geography education)

(2) Understanding and appreciating the Japanese civil movement and civilian efforts to solve the history issues

... I realized that there are many good Japanese who feel guilty and responsibilities to the comfort women. This made me to have interest in this book because I didn't know the fact. I thought that Japanese are not saying any sorry for the issue.

(Jae Hong Park, Dept. Information & Communications)

...At first we have to know about Japan correctly...we still have unforgettable memory against Japan. Japan is a country of remote even it located very close to Korea. However we have to overcome such an emotional bound toward Japan. And also Japanese should stop distorting the historical facts. We have to consider the history not as a matter of past but as a matter of present as well as future.

(Tae Sun Park, Dept. international trading)

...I feel proud of the Japanese people who dare to say with a kin observational ability what everybody like to forget about. I was impressed by their conscientious activities to say even their nation's fault. Everybody likes to conceal his mistake. Owing to this kind of people Japan could achieve her status as a leading countries in the world.

(Won Ja Hwang, Dept. management)

...We have to recognize a changing aspect of Japanese society. We have to notice of the existence of Japanese who like to compensate for their misconduct although they are still minority in Japan. If we do not pay attention to them and look down upon them there is no future between two countries.

(Chol wook Jeong, dept. North Korean Studies)

(3) Awareness of the necessity to build more constructive relationships between Korean and Japanese civil society for the future

...Korean and Japanese NGOs need to cooperate and make solidarity more and more. This is not only for the solution of this problem but because of the fact that we, two peoples are destined to live in the community of the same fortune.

(Tae-Ryeon Jeon, Dept. Information & Communications)

...We need to review why the international solidarity for this issue has failed; we have to understand the social factors in the weakness of Japanese civil movement and the limitations of the international solidarity. And we have to make more solid cooperation network with Japanese civil society as Koreans change their biased attitude on Japan to draw legal responsibility of Japan on historical misdoings.

(Guy Hon Choi, dept geography education)

(4) Preferring development of a long term and multiple approach

...This problem cannot be solved in a short period. It will take a long time to settle this problem after making more efforts to exchange between two peoples. I hope that the real thoughts of Japanese people could reach to Korean people. I can understand the real purpose of the AWF to help the Grandmothers even though the power is quite small as such. It is the most important thing to access them and to help them to know what they mostly need. Because they are poor and need help... I hope that the AWF's activities could be known to the Korean in more detail. And more Korean people could understand the AWF's hearty efforts. Now as we do not understand the cultural differences each other, we need to more exchange and mutual understanding. As a Korean citizen I would like to appreciate for the AWF as well as all those Japanese people to send money and warm letters for the Grandmothers. This book helps me to change my biased perception on the issue. Thank you for correcting my narrow view. (Hoon Namkung, Dept. engineering and industry)

...Regarding to the solution, there has an argument between government-compensation-first stance and civilian-compensation- first stance. I

think both are needed. It is important to show real heart of nation as much as to make compensation by government. It will take long time to make government compensation we have to make efforts to solve in long-term perspective. And we don't distort the AWF's activities and have to recognize the voluntary participation of Japanese people to deliver their personal apology because it is genuine one. The victimized country like Korea pressed the grandma not to accept the compensation money from the AWF on the ground that this can make an excuse for the Japanese government to escape from the historical responsibilities. However I think this is a really wrong way. I think the first thing we have to consider is not what NGOs and government want but what the victims themselves need most. (Dong-yu Jeong, Dept. environmental industry)

5. Conclusion: the way to go

- The Korean younger generations are showing more flexible and rational attitudes on the issue. They are more independent from nationalist sentiment.
- This can give us a hint for the future strategies.
- To see the issue with the broader and universal perspective
- Underlining the necessity of building and strengthening a network between Korean and Japanese civilian leaderships.
- Broadening the chance of contact and visiting program between younger generations in both countries
- History should not be an obstacle to the future but a new source of cooperation between two peoples
- Under guidance of the UN slogan which reads "think globally, act locally" the AWF should broaden its activity to cover more issues in this region like women refugee issues, humanitarian aids issues, protection maternity and protection of younger generation from the sexual abuse, etc.. I would like concluding my presentation quoting from a student's note with regard to the AWF's future role as follows.

...the AWF can hardly be said as a NGO because the Japanese government had involved in its foundation...however it should continue to exist and operate as an

independent organization from government at least in a spiritual sense though its legal status can hardly be changed easily. If it cooperates with other Asian NGOs and consolidate civilian solidarity with them, it can contribute to solve the enmity and misunderstanding which was generated by history between Korea and Japan...
(Bong Su KIM, Dept. engineering and construction)

The Situations of Pilipino “Comfort Women”

Rechieda A. Extmadura
Lila-Pilipina
Philippines

On behalf of all the victims-survivors of Lila-Pilipina, we would like to extend warm greetings to all participants of the roundtable meeting, the comfort women groups represented today, all staffs and members of the Asian Women’s Fund, friends and guests.

We are glad to have been invited and given the opportunity to present our position on this important gathering. We do hope this activity will bring us to the immediate and appropriate resolution of the issue at hand.

The eleven-year struggle of the Filipino comfort women took shape at the shores of the Philippines in 1992. Task Force on Filipino Comfort Women (TFFCW), formed on July 13, 1992, was founded by seven women’s organizations to provide a national support mechanism for justice for Filipino comfort women survivors. The Task Force started a public awareness campaign. Maria Rosa Luna Henson at 65 years old became the first Filipino comfort women to publicly recount her story as a military sex slave in Angeles, Pampanga for nine months. Since then, more and more women victims have come out through the active campaign and support of the TFFCW. On May 16, 1994, a national assembly and consultation of TFFCW members and comfort women survivors resulted in the formation of Lila Pilipina. On June 25 of the same year, Lila-Pilipina was formally launched.

1. The Fifty Years of Silence

During the fifty years of silence, these former comfort women suffered in all aspect of their lives from the bitter trauma of their experience during World War II. Physically, they bore wounds, scars and disabilities due to the brutal treatment they received during the forced abductions and incarcerations at garrison. They serve as painful reminders of their experience at the hands of the Japanese soldiers.

Mentally, they suffer from, what is clinically known as, Post-Stress Traumatic Syndrome (PTSD). This mental illness is common among war victims or victims of natural disasters wherein they suffer from insomnia, recurring nightmares and restlessness.

Socially, these women were unable to function and e productive in society. Due to the social stigma they must hide face in their own community, many survivors opted to live in another town and start a new life. Even if others have managed to raise their own family, their past haunt them and greatly affects their relationships with the persons around them. Many of these women are

uneducated, illiterate and come from a poor family. Most of them survived after the war by doing menial jobs (doing laundry, vending, domestic help).

Faced with all these hardships, it is no wonder why they only came out publicly after fifty-years. With no one to turn, how can they know what proper direction to take? Any compassionate human being surely must not take their decision to conceal their true identity and past against them.

2. From victims to survivors

The Filipino comfort women broke their personal vow of silence only when they saw and heard Lola Rosa Henson's image and voice over the media. Finally, they have found another victim they could relate to. Finally, their ugly past is being talked about in the open. Seeing that women's organizations and concerned people are willing to take up their cudgels, these moves gave them hope to slowly break the bondage of Lola Rosa's call, gathered themselves and united struggle for justice.

The avalanche of support and protest actions designed to drum up the demands for justice of the Filipino comfort women and other comfort women groups in other countries shook the halls of the Japanese government. Even if the Japanese government continues to contend that the matter is already settled by signed international treaties years before (in the case of the Philippines, the San Francisco Peace Treaty), they still sought ways to atone their crimes to the victims.

3. Asian Women's Fund for Japan's moral obligations

The strong pressure to act on the comfort women issue gave way to the birth of the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) in 1995. The fund disbursed atonement money and letter of apology for the survivors. The atonement money was pooled from private contributions while medical and welfare fund came from government funds.

The AWF can never take the place of the state, legal compensation the former comfort women are entitled for. The atonement money is only pittance to what the comfort women truly deserve after being through military sexual slavery in World War II. The Fund, created by virtue of a legislative and Cabinet decision, only answers the moral obligations of the Japanese government and will not completely atone for the war crimes committed to these women.

For 11 years, the Philippine government has neglected the Filipino comfort women and their struggle. From the 173 documented cases of Lila-Pilipina, 88 lolas have accepted the fund and used the fund to support their struggle, themselves and their families. The remaining number

opted to stand their ground and chose to ignore the fund. Such in the case of a Lola in Davao. Even in her deathbed, she did not accept the AWF.

While it is true that the survivors benefited with the atonement money, those benefits are fleeting and does not answer the need of the former comfort women for closure. The survivors, like before the AWF, live in dire conditions and still suffer the social stigma in varying levels.

Upon the acceptance of the atonement money, many feared that this would weaken the resolve of the Filipino comfort women. Doubts have also been cast on the sincerity of the Filipino comfort women to work for the attainment of justice from the Japanese government.

But as the years have shown, the lolas and advocates under Lila-Pilipina continues to vigorously work for their demands against the Japanese government and Philippine government.

Humanitarian support for the victims should be done in context of resolving the comfort women issue. The victim-survivors refuses to accept any humanitarian aid (e.g. medical package) from the Japanese government due to the continuing inaction on their demands.

4. Resolution to the comfort women issue

We maintain our position that the resolution the Filipino comfort women are looking for lays in the immediate action on their demands.

The Filipino comfort women demand from the Japanese government the following:

- (1) That Japan fulfills its responsibility in the full disclosure of all information in its war archives concerning the operation of the comfort stations and the comfort women system.
- (2) Adequate compensation for the women victims and their families from the Japanese government.
- (3) For the Japanese government to include as reference in textbooks and history books the reality of military sexual slavery through “comfort women” during World War II as a war crime.
- (4) For the Japanese government to admit the use of force and violence in the conscription and treatment of the “comfort women” as military sex slaves, contrary to Japanese government report.
- (5) A formal apology to the Filipino people and specifically to the women victims and their families for having a direct hand in the conscription of Asian women for military sexual slavery.

The Filipino comfort women demands for the Philippine government:

- (1) To issue an official position declaring the comfort women system as a war crime, condemning the Japanese government in its direct involvement for institutionalized sexual

- slavery and demanding formal apology and compensation for the victims and their families.
- (2) To conduct an official investigation and documentation of the comfort women issue.
 - (3) To include in Philippine history the reality of the comfort women and comfort station during World War II. These include the curriculum, textbooks and other instructional materials used both in public and private educational institutions in all levels.
 - (4) To build historical markers and shrines around the country for the comfort women and war victims of World War II as a reminder to the present generation of the sad realities behind wars of aggression.
 - (5) To provide material support for the victims, survivors and their families.

To date, these are 39 deceased lolas while many continue to suffer from illnesses related to their age (diabetes, hypertension, rheumatism, emphysema). A Lola 89 years old, died last September 25 of natural death, is the 39th Filipino comfort woman to die without seeing justice. Time is running out for the lolas. Time is also running out for the chance of the Japanese government to absolve themselves and atone for their war crimes to these women.

5. Our Aches and Gains

On April 2, 1993, 18 Filipino comfort women filed a lawsuit at the Tokyo District Court of Japan demanding post war responsibility, compensation and reparations for crimes against humanity committed during World War II. Twenty-eight more plaintiffs joined the lawsuit filed on September 1993. The case was based on the violations of the following international laws: Hague Convention of 1907, International Convention of the Traffic in Women and Children, Convention concerning Forced Labor, International Customary Law and War Regulations. The plaintiffs believe that military sexual slavery is a war crime and thus, the Japanese government should recognize and uphold their legal responsibility.

The lawsuit, however, received a negative decision from the Tokyo District in October 9, 1998 as well as at the Tokyo Appellate Court in December 6, 2000. The courts argued that “individuals cannot be subjects of rights under the international law and that the “case is a state-to-state matter.” Another appeal for the lawsuit, filed in December 20, 2000, awaits verdict at the Japanese Supreme Court.

The same fate befell our class-action suit filed at the Columbia District Court, Washington D.C., USA last September 18, 2000 under the Alien Tort Claims Act. The case dismissal is also under appeal.

On the year 2000, Lila-Pilipina has actively lobbied for the compensation bill. The bill entitled, “Promotion of Resolution for Issues concerning Victims of Wartime Sexual Coercion” was filed at

the Japanese Diet in 2001. The bill awaits passage at the Japanese Diet.

Last September 18, 2000, two lolas from Lila-Pilipina has received the Holocaust Foundation Award – Women of Honor and Dignity Remembered.

Another accomplishment of Lila-Pilipina is the passage of the resolution from the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on August 31, 2001, wherein paragraphs 26 and 53 contained points favorable for the comfort women. The resolution recognizes “that the Asian Women’s Fund (AWF) has not been deemed acceptable measure by the victims-survivors.” Despite the claims of the Japanese government that the AWF answers the demand of the comfort women, the fund remains unacceptable as a form of compensation.

The Education Ministry of Japan has approved the Tsukurukai Textbooks that contained sanitized, onerous, and distorted interpretation of the Second World War in 2001. Thus, Lila-Pilipina actively registered and protested efforts of the Japanese government to erase the historical facts on comfort women. A protest-action was staged by Lila-Pilipina in front of the Japanese Embassy together with GABRIELA and Kilusang Mayo Uno (May First Movement). Lila-Pilipina also participated in international conference protesting this distortion of history.

A victorious moment for the lolas is the establishment of the first historical marker for Filipino comfort women on April 22 at Liwasang Bonifacio, sponsored by the City of Manila. The historical marker installed represented the first official recognition of a local government unit (LGU) to the existence of comfort women and comfort sites in the country. The installation of historical markers is a part of the Lila-Pilipina campaign to include the historical facts of comfort women in Philippine history.

Lila-Pilipina trooped to the Department of Education (DepEd) last September 15, 2003 to demand for a departmental order requiring the curriculum, history textbooks and other instructional materials to include the facts on comfort women. The delegation presented a petition with more than five thousand signatures to press for the historical inclusion of the comfort women in Philippine history.

Filipino comfort women delivered a resounding “No to US War in Iraq!” on its protest actions in front of U.S. Embassy and Mendiola. Carrying placards with words “Learn from the lessons of World War II” and “No to US Wars of Aggression!” the lolas affirmed their position against wars of aggression, specifically that of the U.S. The lolas reiterated that that as victims of military sexual slavery during the World War II, they continuously fight against any form of militarism and violence that mostly affect women and children.

6. Looking Forward

As work to redeem the past, we must also look into the future. The demands of the comfort women in order to attain justice lies on the premise that military sexual slavery shall not be and must not be repeated. This responsibility largely falls on the present and future generations. thus, we must ensure measures are taken so that the historical truth on the comfort women and the horrible effects of wars of aggression must be included in the education of our youth. This is a very valuable lesson today, as we lay witness to regional wars and U.S. aggression package as 'war on terror'.

We, lolas and advocates and future generations, need assurance that military sexual slavery will never happen again. Recent developments (e.g. amending Article 9, deployment of peace-keeping troops) are very alarming because these pave way to the resurgence of Japan's militarism. We raise fears and strongly condemn the position of the Japanese government and the Philippine government in support of the U.S. led so-called 'war and terror'. We join the Japanese people in their call for that is based on justice. We must not lay witness to another generation of comfort women.

Support Networks for Sexually Violated Wartime Women The Taiwan Experience

Yvonne Mei Jung Lin
Taipei Grass-roots Women Workers Centre

Su-jun Huang Lee
The Community Women's Association
Taiwan

The plight of sexually violated wartime women was brought to the public's attention in 1992 when three Taiwanese victims boldly narrated their stories behind the veil of curtains and tears. Soon after, more and more women sought help from Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation, TWRF, a NGO commissioned by the government to assist women who were sexually violated during the war. By 1996, TWRF accounted for 78 survivors, including 14 aboriginal women.

How should Taiwanese society take concrete action to care for these women, now in their old age? In 2000, the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo gave Women's organizations in Taiwan a reason and opportunity to unite behind this issue.

Support for comfort women grew from a single government-commissioned NGO to a coalition of 19 NGOs that united to form the "Taiwan Action Alliance for the 2000 Tokyo Tribunal." The alliance sent 57 representatives to attend the tribunal and accompany 12 survivors who testified. The cost of the trip was 63% subsidized by the government and 27% covered by donations. Their participation was significant because the tribunal prompted them to examine the issue of comfort women from a critical historical perspective.

The Taiwanese government has given condolence sums of 500,000NT each to a total of 42 victims. Additionally, fundraising efforts by civic organizations have resulted in 500,000 NT payments to each victim. Although these elderly and ill women are covered by national health insurance and are entitled to special living stipends upon application, they still must find ways to cover the burdensome costs of hospice care, taxi fare to the hospital and dietary supplements. Some women have expressed worry that they don't have enough money for funeral preparations, especially if they are alone without family.

Later I would like to ask Ms. Su-Jun Huang LEE, who leads a different women's organization, to say a few words about government support and the case of three women who made a similar declaration to this one previously in 1992.

I am grateful to the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) for the support they have kindly provided me with. The image I always remember is that of a woman with a smile on her lips due to receiving a letter of apology and the feeling of being saved. There may not be many people like this, but the fact remains that there *are* people like this out there. All I want to say here today is that there are people who have been saved thanks to your actions and people who feel that they themselves have been saved.

These women are witnesses to a wartime tragedy of the 20th century and are gradually disappearing from society. Of the 26 women who are still living today, 8 of them are appealing their cases at the local courts in Tokyo. After the tribunal, we continue to ask, how do we help these women continue with their lives? How can we alleviate their pain so that they can walk out of the dark shadows that have haunted their lives for decades? To this end, we published the book *Listen, Look, Think*, asking society to listen to the voices of these old women, look at the limitations to legal assistance, and think about what we should do. We cooperated with schools to bring this issue to the attention of young people through lectures, symposiums and book promotions.

The harrowing problem of sexual exploitation remains with us into the 21st century and has only been worsened by the process of globalization. As a primarily receiving country in the trafficking of women, Taiwan is the transit stop of many Southeast Asian women who are then sold to other countries. Additionally, Taiwanese women fall into the trap of the mafia and are sold to brothels in Japan. Hsiulin Village of Hualien County, the home of many aboriginal wartime victims, currently has the nation's highest rate of trafficking in young girls. Similarly, many young girls who immigrate to Taiwan for marriage come from Indonesian villages where many comfort women have been discovered.

The international community must pay more attention to the grave problem of trafficking in young women. Human trafficking is a transnational problem that no country is able to solve on its own. However, due to international politics, Taiwan is often deprived of the means to work with other governments in combating transnational crime, which becomes a problem for not only Taiwan but also our neighboring countries. Thus, it is extremely important that we build a strong international network of NGOs to share resources, information and experiences in the fight against human trafficking.

Su-Jun Huang LEE

The Taiwanese government provides support for "comfort women" through the Ministry of interior. Although support is provided for all women who apply, by the time the government carried out studies, the number of surviving victims in our group had gone from being 78 in 1992 down to 42.

This number is presently just 25. Women receive Taiwanese \$15,000 (approximately US\$500) and support for their living needs, such as getting someone to accompany them when they wish to go out. Moreover, as Yvonne mentioned earlier, there are also activities carried out by private organizations and we have reached the point where women are provided with Taiwanese \$500,000.

Before coming here I went to see an old lady who still feels that she is one of the more fortunate ones. She has a grandson-in-law who treats her very kindly indeed. She was one of the participants in the Tokyo trials. When she returned home afterwards, the media press were waiting for her with their cameras. Consequently she was photographed from all directions and images of her ended up being broadcast on television throughout the country. Seeing this came as an immense shock to her grandson and his wife; there were things that even they did not know about one of their own relatives. From that point onwards people started to phone her incessantly and criticize her for shaming her family by going public with a matter such as this. After that she became unable to leave the house. Every time she went out to go to the market, people would point at her with contempt and say things like "That's her." The incredibly sad truth is that she is basically living shut up inside her small apartment. She has ended up letting her imagination run away with her, thinking sad thoughts about what the point of her life has been. When we met her and heard what she had to say, we were deeply saddened. She is an 80 year old woman who can't even leave the house because society will not accept her. This is neither her fault not that of society. I think that there is a similar sort of situation throughout East Asia. People just can't face up to the fact that things like this happened. People think that it is shameful on the women's behalf. People don't recognize this issue as one of history's tragedies, and thus cannot face up to it.

There are other women in truly terrible situations like this. I even know of a victim who lives in a graveyard. I have tried asking them the same question; "Why don't you apply for the AWF?" Their answers show there to be a clear division between two different ways of thinking. This is true of people in Korea and people from the Philippines have also said similar things. In Taiwan too, there are those who agree with the idea of applying for and receiving funds and those who are utterly opposed to this. These people are divided based on a lack of agreement with regard to matters such as the importance of political beliefs and historic commitments. However, the times are changing and the era of militarism has been and gone. The Japanese government has said that it is unable to make a genuine official apology. I have come to the understanding that the AWF is the only possible source of help. I feel that we can use funds to do something to help women who have suffered.

These former comfort women live in extremely poor conditions. Nevertheless, there are things that can be done to help them have a better quality of life. I want to help these women obtain support through funds such as this so that they can lead better lives. I want to help them improve

their standard of living. However, as you are all already well aware, there are people with a range of different opinions and there are women's support groups that discourage women such as these from applying for support. I feel that, if anything, actions such as these are politically motivated.

I wanted to help women such as this who are in a situation where they cannot apply for support to realize that applying for help is not a bad thing. Amongst these women, there were even those who have been threatened by their government that if they submit an application to the AWF they will be thrown into jail. There were a number of women who were seriously worried about matters such as this, so we helped them changed their minds. These women said that if others were applying for the AWF, then they would do so too. Unfortunately however, they had missed the application deadline. We are hoping to find out if there is some sort of method by which they can receive money.

The Situation of Dutch “Comfort Women” Victims at the war period until today

M.J. Hamer – Monod de Froideville
Project Implementation Committee in the Netherlands
the Netherlands

This script has been divided in the following subjects:

1. Why do the victims of forced prostitution have broken their silence only after approximately 50 years?

Discussed will be the following subjects:

- (1) 100% Dutch women,
- (2) women of mixed race,
- (3) married women of both categories,
- (4) overall picture of the causes and consequences of the sustained psychological damage.

2. The living conditions of the women, forced into prostitution, after the Second World War.

3. The comparison to other victims in post-war circumstances.

4. The present living conditions of the former “Comfort Women”.

In this a distinction will be made between the women living in the so called affluent countries and women living in Indonesia. By doing so, one is able to observe a difference in the way the Project money has been spent.

5. What has been the significance of receiving the Project money to the victims of forced prostitution?

Subjects to the matter are

- (1) the importance of former Prime Minister Hashimoto’s letter of apology.
- (2) the moment of the start of the Life Improvement Project,
- (3) the question: has the “Comfort Women” issue been settled in the Netherlands by implementing the Life Improvement Project,
- (4) the way this issue really could be closed.

6. The issue of the male-victims of forced prostitution.

7. How to raise awareness in our societies, especially towards the younger generation.

1. Why do the victims of forced prostitution have broken their silence only after approximately 50 years?

To be able to answer this question considering the Dutch victims of forced prostitution, one should go back in time to look at the society, in which these women were living, before they were forced into prostitution. In this there should be made a distinction between the women, living in the previous Dutch East Indies in those days: the 100% Dutch, partial natives and the married women of both categories.

The 100% Dutch women were mainly recruited from the internment camps, whereas the women with native mothers, grand- or great grandparents, being of mixed race, were mainly from Indian origin, because of which these women had mixed blood, mainly were taken from outside the internment camps.

It is true that every victim of forced prostitution has suffered in her own individual and personal way. However I have noticed a rough, but significant distinction between the above mentioned groups, in the way they have experienced their suffering. This is an important cause of their psychical trauma's and the way they have handled them afterwards.

Explicitly I do emphasize that my conclusions will certainly not be relevant to all the women of that specific group, but from the correspondence and the conversations with the women, the recurrent pattern has become quite obvious to me. On that account I have reached the following conclusions.

(1) The 100% Dutch women.

The majority of these women – at the time girls of 16 years and older (although some of them were much younger) – belonged to higher middle- and middle class families living in the previous Dutch East Indies. In general their fathers were officials and civil servants, working for the Dutch Government, planters, manufacturers and small tradesmen, etc. Most of these families had native staff employed. In those days there was a huge distance between the white employer, his family and the Indonesian servants. In spite of the often friendly treatment, there was always kept a big distance between the staff and the Dutchman. The Dutch children were not allowed to play with the native ones and to learn and speak the Malayan language. In reality, it still happened, because the servants were living on the employer's ground as well. They were living with their own families very nearby the Dutch family and so the children always found an opportunity to rub shoulders with each other. The Dutch children were often raised and looked after by an Indonesian nanny, called "Baboe", who was very dedicated to "her family". Although it was "not done", the Dutch children certainly had some relationships with the native population. Certainly it was considered not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with an Asian. Because of their upbringing, the girls were very aware of this. The humiliation therefore was even

bigger to be sexually abused and raped by Asian men.

Besides before World War II, sexual education didn't exist; this subject was taboo. One thought it not necessary, because a girl would acquire the knowledge in her marriage. In those days sexual intercourse before marriage was totally unacceptable. Even at school sex education was non existing. So these girls did not know anything about their own bodies and about the sexual deed, based on mutual love. Therefore it is evident that, because of their experiences in Japanese brothels, these girls have been seriously affected and damaged, psychically - and often as well as physically. Besides it has to be obvious, that these horrible experiences have influenced their (sexual) lives in a very negative way.

All the women, forced to prostitution, have suffered from psychical damage by the severe violation of their human honour and dignity. This, because of humiliation, sexual abuse and rape by the Japanese occupying power. To the 100% Dutch women these trauma's are even deeper, because it is concerning Asian men.

(2) The women of mixed race.

Although several women of mixed race (a relative small percentage) have been interned in the camps as well, a large number of women of mixed race were allowed to stay outside the camps, because of a higher percentage of mixed blood. They stayed in their houses together with their children, while their husbands were taken to the male-camps or served in the army and became POW afterwards.

Life outside the camps was difficult as well. Because there wasn't any regular income anymore the mothers faced the task, to survive with their children. In the beginning all the valuables were sold. After everything has been sold, they were very imaginative and tried to make a living by small trade. The older children took often part in this. Most of the time trading was happening outdoors. That's why it could be possible, that members of the Japanese occupying force, often the Kempetai, caught sight of one or more of the daughters. Hereafter *) I will tell you how sometimes the community in the camps tried to protect the girls to prevent them from being taken away. The girls outside the camps had to do without this form of protection and were so to speak at liberty. They were taken from the streets or from their houses and were put up with brutal force in a Japanese brothel, in spite of the desperate appeals from their mothers, who often offered themselves instead of their daughters.... in vain.

Indeed the gap between these families and the native population was smaller, because of their mixed blood and their father's lower position in society than the families of the 100% Dutch girls. But being neither completely white, neither Indonesian, the majority of the white as well as the autochthonous population regarded them inferior and they became quite isolated during the war. Because of the foregoing and because of the father's absence, these families' existence was becoming even more difficult and poorer.

Their position became very isolated. There didn't exist a sense of solidarity, like with the Dutch women, who were put "en masse" into internment camps. The Dutch women were able to support each other, as everybody had to undergo the same fate. And although these women had lost everything, there was still some sense of solidarity by living as a group. Especially during the last years of the war, life in the camps became very difficult. But despite all the tension and the stress, most of the time they could depend on each other for support, especially important because hunger, illness and death were part of daily life. Obviously one can tell there was some loss of human dignity, due to awful circumstances, but one cannot speak about feelings of inferiority. The group's influence was therefore too strong. *) A perfect example: In some camps the women as a group were standing in front of the entrance gate to prevent their daughters from being taken away to the brothels.

Unfortunately one cannot speak about solidarity as a group for the families, living outside the camps. These families also had lost everything gradually, but they had to try to survive alone as a family, without the support of the group. The reason for this very difficult and isolated position, was the Japanese occupation, so they should be very afraid of a Japanese, because he personified DANGER! Coming from an inferior background already, a girl captured by the enemy outside the camps and forced to work in a Japanese brothel, had the feeling of inferiority much quicker than a Dutch girl would have. There wasn't very much left from the pre-war reasonably good life, through the Japanese enemy's doing and now they had to undergo all sorts of things, they did not even know the existence of. (These girls also never ever had had any sexual education). To them they seemed to have become an object, a thing: nobody was treating them as a human being, with respect. The knowledge of not having a will of one's own had given them that feeling of inferiority and have led to serious psychological problems in their lives.

(3) The married women of both categories.

A third distinction should be made between the unmarried young girls and the already married women (thoroughbred and mixed blood), who were forced into prostitution. The married women were obviously not ignorant about the sexual side.

Most of the married women were in the group of >22 years of age. They of course were also feeling the loss of their human honour and dignity during the sexual abuses; but they held on to the idea, that they still would be valuable to their husbands. When however their husbands broke the marriage bond, after they couldn't believe or stand the idea of their wives being abused like that, the feelings of inferiority grew stronger and stronger. Likewise the feeling to be deeply humiliated by ASIAN MEN i.c. THE ENEMY was playing an extremely important role.

Noticeable at all categories in letters as well in conversations are:

- a. intense grief, often repressed,

- b. serious anger, mostly hardly expressed,
- c. pent-up rage,
- d. shame.

(4) Overall picture of the causes and consequences of the sustained psychological damage.

All the feelings, mentioned before, either in total or a mixture of them, are amongst others the reason why the women, who, in South-East Asia during World War II, were forced into prostitution by the Japanese occupying forces, have kept their silence for more than 50 years. Only a few of them had the courage to break the silence about their painful experiences during the war, after about 50 years.

Besides, an important aspect in those days is the total ignorance about the existence of these matters. As a consequence, nobody would have ever believed them, if after the war one had the courage to talk - very carefully - about this subject. The woman in question was considered a vulgar whore and a collaborator (the reason why many married women were left by their husbands and a number of them has been repudiated by their families). The women intuitively have understood this very well. Moreover they felt enormously ashamed about the fact, that this has happened to them. They didn't want to be humiliated once again and therefore have chosen to keep "schtum".

Not before scantily became obvious that Japan was guilty of setting up army-brothels before and during the Second World War and had recruited women against their will and often under false pretences, representatives of the Asian women, forced to prostitution, as well as the Dutch Foundation of Japanese Honorary Debts (JES), started legal proceedings in Japan to try and force the Japanese Government by law-suit to recognition, to offer apologies and to pay for compensation.

Only then, the first victims came forward very reluctantly. Two Dutch women had found the courage to come forward and express themselves in the nineties. In the mean time unfortunately many of the Dutch victims had passed away already and those, who were still alive had concealed the events in the past so thoroughly, they did not want to go through those painful experiences again.

Only after the Foundation PICN finally in 1998 has put advertisements in papers and other media worldwide with the purpose to approach this group of victims and ask them, if they wished, to apply for "The Life Improvement Project", set up in the Netherlands by The Asian Women's Fund to supply some sort of compensation for these women, finally 75 women and 4 men applied.

These 79 persons have been recognized by the Foundation PICN as receivers of the Project.

2. The living conditions of the women, forced into prostitution, after the Second World War.

The letters and conversations have shown the following:

- (1) A great deal of women has shared their previous miserable misfortune with their later husbands (and some even with their children). Mostly they were taken care of very well by their husbands, who have been trying to help them to get over it as much as possible. Obviously in some cases they experienced a lot of problems in their marital sexual life, but in general their spouses showed a lot of understanding.
- (2) Some women have not been able to have children, because of the brutal abuses during their stay in the brothels.
- (3) Some of them have children with the Japanese occupier. These children have been raised by the women themselves or together with their later husbands. Only a few have given up their children.
- (4) Some women have not told anything to their husbands, nor to anyone else. Because of the fear for and the impossibility of a sexual life within their matrimony, a lot of these marriages ended in divorce unfortunately. Some of them have found another partner, but the majority preferred to stay single for the rest of their life. In their letters to me, as trusted representative of the PICN, they confessed I was the very first person they have ever told their secret. Because they had chosen to apply for the "Life Improvement Project" voluntarily, they had to tell their stories, but only to me, a complete stranger. Often by putting their experiences, the done harm and their feelings in writing was although painful, it also appeared to be a big relief.
- (5) Because of their dislike of all men, some women stayed unmarried. A lot of them had never told anyone, before they told me their story. Sometimes they had confided in a member of the family.

For the rest of their lives most women have been suffering from sleeping disorders and nightmares. Some turned to be pregnant, during their stay in the Japanese brothel, after all the sexual abuses and had an abortion. These abortions, mostly performed without anaesthesia and with very primitive means, were the cause of infertility in later life. Another reason for infertility is the internal damage, caused by the abuses. If they were able to become pregnant, it was merely after intense treatment by gynaecologists and with great difficulty. One of the women is convinced of the fact, that – after having been treated intensely by gynaecologists - she finally could give birth to a mentally and physically disabled child, is due to the extremely severe abuses she underwent in a Japanese brothel.

Many women do have other physical infirmities because of the abuses in the Japanese brothels. One of them has scars for life on her breasts and belly, after being treated with a broken glass bottle by a drunk Japanese soldier. Another cannot use one of her arms properly, because it was broken after her refusal to deliver the required services. The arm is disabled for the rest of her life.

All women are suffering from psychological problems and distress. To a psychiatrist most of them did not dare to go with the result of extreme nervousness and a lot of mental problems

and also physical problems, like migraine and insomnia.

3. The comparison to other victims in post-war circumstances.

Other women, who don't have had the experiences of forced prostitution, might have been suffering from problems due to the mistreatments, humiliations and other forms of abuses, they underwent during the war as well as in Asia as in Europe. But, if they felt to it, they might have been able to talk to other people about their feelings, because these other people have witnessed these mistreatments, humiliations and/or abuses, or because of the fact that these things happened on a large scale, or were common knowledge. These war victims have also been deeply affected by World War II, but in most cases there was recognition and the possibility to share one's fate, if only with their relatives or companions in distress. If they felt to it, they could seek professional help. This may have helped to overcome their psychological and physical problems.

It must be said that many of these war victims also were unable to talk about their war experiences and have hidden those memories deeply. They also suffer from post traumatic stress syndromes. They too have nightmares and/or suffer from other forms of expressions of fear.

In comparison with the war victims, who have not been forced into prostitution, the so called "Comfort Women" do have (had) a far more difficult life. There seems to be no difference from the outside. They also have been trying to build their lives after the war, difficult as it was, in the Netherlands or somewhere else in the world. They married, got children and looked after their families, just as other women did. Or they stayed single, got a job and lived the life of any other ordinary single woman.

However the kind of the humiliations, mistreatments and abuses, experienced by the former "Comfort Women", has been much more severe and much more dishonourable, than those, experienced by other war victims. Their grief, the anger, the hatred and the shame could not be overcome, because they are part of a deep, never or hardly told secret.

Especially the feelings of shame and the fear to be humiliated again kept them from speaking. (Many of these women are feeling "dirty" and feel imbued as well. Even after having a bath, the feeling of dirt will not vanish).

One of the reasons why the Dutch "Comfort Women" - in contrast with other war victims - consciously couldn't and wouldn't speak about these matters until only after 50 years (some of them still can't, even nowadays), is just to protect themselves.

Another reason is: the Dutch women have not united to a relatively strong group, in contrast with women in Asian countries. This also, because many of them emigrated after the war to various countries. They were scattered all over the world and were too busy to build a new life for themselves. The women, repatriated to the Netherlands after the war, were also very occupied in finding a new life and they have never felt the urge to unite and to operate as a

group. Only very few have looked for support on a companion from the same brothel. But in general everybody was living privately, everyone with her own problems. In contrast, the Asian often did unite, however sometimes at a later stage and were therefore finally able to talk to each other or to a representative and to let one selves go.

Not before 1998 the foundation of the PICN, the Dutch women, who applied for the “Life Improvement Project”, have been able to talk about their experiences (some even for the first time) to the trusted representative of the PICN.

4. The present living-conditions of the former “Comfort Women”.

Many women returned to the Netherlands after the war.

Like all the other repatriates they had to build a new life in a country, that was damaged by the Second World War. In these post-war circumstances there was less or no understanding for the situation of the repatriating war victims, because the Dutch population was dealing with their own war-past and was busy rebuilding and reconstructing the country. Only a short time ago the Dutch Government did recognize the “cold way of reception” of these war victims. To compensate this cold way of reception the Dutch Government recently did pay a small amount of money to the Jewish war victims, as well as to the gipsies and to the war victims from the former Dutch East Indies (the so called: “Gesture”).

In spite of the cold way of reception by their compatriots most of the repatriated war victims have been able to settle in the Netherlands and to build a rather good life.

Another part of the Dutch “Comfort Women” did not return to the Netherlands after the war, but emigrated to other countries, such as Australia, the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom. A number stayed in Indonesia as well. Because of this, it is very difficult to mention the specific living circumstances. Such a difference exists between the women, living in the Netherlands, Australia, the USA, Canada, the UK and the women living in the so called Third World countries, one can hardly compare. The women living in the prosperous countries have managed to build a reasonably wealthy life, with or without the support of a spouse and children.

However this doesn’t apply for women, staying in Indonesia. These women had to deal with the “Bersiap” period, the Indonesian people’s battle for freedom and independence.

This period has been extremely complicated for them, because they were of mixed race. They were often given the cold shoulder by the Indonesians. Many of them, being Christians, were not accepted in Muslim-society in Indonesia. Some by marriage to an Indonesian man obtained some respect. Others stayed alone and had great difficulties to be accepted. In comparison to the women from the Western World their living conditions have always been rather bad. So the latter’s could be seen as extremely sad and poor.

Receiving the Project money from the AWF all of a sudden gave prosperity to these women. Many of them have been using the money to build a small brick house and put the rest of the

money into saving account. They are very grateful, because this money has given them the opportunity of a worthy future life. The women in the welfare states have used the money to improve their lives, for instance to alternate and/or renovate their property, to buy new furniture, to buy a car, for travels to Indonesia to visit their family or the grave of their beloved, to pay for medical treatment, etc. etc.

5. What has been the significance of receiving the Project money to the victims of forced prostitution?

Although the pain of the former “Comfort Women” has been eased somewhat by receiving the Project money, the wound isn’t healed and will never be healed. Obviously the awful things they had to endure in their young days, have had a very destructive effect on their lives. Having hidden those experiences for a long time to enable the women to move on, the necessity of sharing those horrendous memories, in order to be able to apply to the “Life Improvement Project” did reopen all the old wounds. On the one side – already mentioned before – finally sharing their secrets have been therapeutic in some respect, because they haven’t been able to do so in the past. (To put things in writing to a total stranger was sometimes a relief). On the other hand old wound have been reopened, as a result of which these elderly women are feeling very vulnerable and insecure once again.

Despite the reopening of old wounds and the reliving of horrible experiences, most of the women think, although far too late, they finally have been done some justice, thanks to the Project money, the letter of apology and the recognition.

(1) The importance former Prime Minister Hashimoto’s letter of apology.

Receiving a copy of Mr. Hashimoto’s letter of apology to former Dutch Prime Minister Kok has meant a lot to them. In this letter Mr. Hashimoto is admitting Japan’s huge injustice to these women during World War II and is making profound apologies to them. His recognition and excuses have made the acceptance of the AWF’s Project money by the victims of forced prostitution less complicated; although they would have preferred to receive the money directly and legally from the Japanese Government itself, in stead of receiving the money from the Japanese Government through the AWF and based on moral grounds.

(2) The moment of the start of the Life Improvement Project.

Playing a prominent part in the decision of the Dutch “Comfort Women” to accept the Project money are their age and - because time is running out -: the feeling of “now or never”. I am convinced if this had been the case many years ago, the majority would have refused to accept the money from the AWF. Instead, on moral grounds, they would have insisted on receiving legal compensation for their sufferings **only** from the

Japanese Government itself. However, the letter of apology from the former Prime Minister Hashimoto proves that the Japanese Government is aware of its moral responsibility towards the “Comfort Women” and as a result of the former the Government wanted to express the apologies of the Japanese by - in close cooperation with the AWF - founding the Life Improvement Project in the Netherlands. Nowadays for a lot of the women it has been important that the Japanese population as well as the Japanese industries have apologized by giving donations to the AWF. Especially the thought of the apologies coming from the “ordinary” Japanese population touched them more than any legal battle to force the Japanese Government some day to legally compensate them.

Summing up: all women got the feeling that finally some justice has been done. However, they think that there should have been recognition, apologies and compensation on legal grounds much earlier, so their lives and the lives of those, who have passed away already, would have been improved in an earlier stage.

(3) Has the “Comfort Women” issue been settled in the Netherlands by implementing the Life Improvement Project?

The big question is now: By establishing the AWF’s Life Improvement Project has the issue of the “Comfort Women” truly been settled? The answer is no. As long as the Japanese Government doesn’t feel legally obliged to compensate all victims of forced prostitution directly and only make payments on moral grounds via the Project money of the AWF, the issue never will be solved, according to the feelings of the Dutch “Comfort Women”.

(4) The way this subject really could be closed.

It is still of the utmost importance for the Japanese Government to pass a bill, which makes it possible to compensate all “Comfort Women” according to law as yet and to carry this pact into effect as soon as possible. This would be of immense significance, when the Japanese Government could come to its senses spontaneously, instead of eventually being forced by a court settlement. Only then one might reach the conclusion that the issue of the “Comfort Women” is finally settled completely – albeit far too late regretfully.

6. The issue of the male victims of forced prostitution.

In conclusion I would like to draw attention to the men, who were forced into prostitution. The Foundation PICN has recognized 4 men as receivers of the Project money, because the way these men, by then 8 – 10 year old boys, under threat and against their will have been brutally and systematically sexually abused and raped by members of the Japanese occupying forces during World War II, is without any doubt comparable with the situation of

the Women, who were forced into prostitution.

The psychological damage of these men, caught by the rapes and sexual abuses is in the same league as those of the women. Besides, very essential is, they have been abused homosexually. (So for all of them against their own sexual nature). As a result a very negative influence on the rest of their lives. Their feelings of shame are the same or yet even bigger than those of the female victims. These boys have become men, who have been leading an insecure life and are very vulnerable. Three of them are married indeed and have children, but were unable to share their awful memories from their youth with their wives, or did so, but very briefly. Because of the trauma's their sexual marital life is very poor. The men also are suffering from insomnia, due to the constantly returning nightmares. And because they didn't want or could express their secrets, pushed aside so deeply, they are also suffering from depression and one or more physical problems. Because of all this these men have not achieved very much in life and society and are living a rather retired life.

The fourth boy never married and after numerous wanderings he landed in India, where he was in the possession of a small business. Unfortunately, after a lonely life, he recently has passed away.

Everything, which I have described before about the females, forced into prostitution, is equally relevant for these males. The brutal rapes and sexual abuses during their youth by the Japanese military men, performed against their will and under severe threats, have sadly left an imperishable mark upon them and the rest of their life.

7. How to raise awareness within our societies, especially towards the younger generation.

It is obvious, that it is very important that the issue of the "Comfort Women" is known completely by the people of Japan, as well as by everyone else in the world. For knowledge of the crimes, committed in the past, will certainly contribute to the awareness how to behave in the future, so that these crimes hopefully will never be committed again. One has to become aware of the fact that all human beings should be treated with respect whether in wartime or in peace. The issue of the "Comfort Women" should be told to the youth in historybooks, not just a few lines, but in an extensive way, and not only in Japan, but in the whole world. Men kind should become acquainted with this issue, f..i. by articles in papers and magazines, by movies and/or documentaries, broadcasted in cinema's and TV.

In order to make a small contribution to inform people I have participated in a documentary, made by the Dutch filmer Jan de Ruijter. (Mr. De Ruijter already won two special awards for two documentaries he made about Jewish war victims.) The documentary is called: "Along the way of remembrance". In this documentary 4 people do tell about their experiences during World War II in the former Japanese internment camps in the then Dutch East Indies. Two of the men, boys of >10 years of age were taken away from their mothers and brought

to men camps. They speak very emotional about this bad period, which had a huge effect on their lives. The other man (87 years now) tells about his resistance work at the very beginning of the war, his internment-time and the help he offered to women and children shortly after the war. On the basis of the diaries of my parents, I (then 2 – 4 years old) tell about the years, I was interned with my mother in the internment camps Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe. Later in the documentary I tell about my work for the Dutch “Comfort Women” by implementing the Life Improvement Project of the AWF in the Netherlands.

The filmer intends to make another documentary about the issue of the “Comfort Women”, as a follow-up of “Along the way of remembrance”. Already two former Dutch “Comfort Women” are willing to participate in this documentary. They too understand the necessary of telling the world what evil has been done to so many innocent young girls before and during World War II. For the same reason I will participate in this documentary as well.

The Hague, October 2003

Mrs. drs. M.J. Hamer – Monod de Froideville,
President and trusted representative of the PICN in the Netherlands.
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Secretary of the PICN in the Netherlands.

Assisting the Victims from Japan and the Evaluation of Asian Women's Fund by the supporters

Keiko Usuki

Association to Clarify the Post-war Responsibility of Japan
Japan

My name is Keiko Usuki and I am here on behalf of the Association to Clarify the Post-war Responsibility of Japan, commonly known as the Hakkiri-kai. As a journalist I had always been on the side reporting on various problems in magazines or on television. Then in June 1990 I did the approximately 500-kilometer journey from Pusan to Seoul on foot to draw attention within Korea to the fact that post-war compensation had not been provided. I interviewed members of the Society for the Bereaved Families of Pacific War, on whose behalf Yang Soon-im is here today. It was at that time that I received a massive shock; despite the fact that an agreement between Japan and Korea regarding the issue of post-war compensation, or to put it another way postwar settlement, had been reached, conversations with victims themselves revealed that there were those who didn't know where their parents had died in action, or even whether their parents were dead or alive, those to whom their parents' remains had not been returned and families of those who had died serving as members of the Japanese military or paramilitary who had not received a penny in compensation. Despite all these people lying neglected, I had shared the common awareness that everything had been settled based on the agreement reached between the Japanese and Korean governments, so discovering that problems were far from being solved came as a shock.

This provided the impetus to establish the Association to Clarify the Post-war Responsibility of Japan (Hakkiri-kai) based on the desire to start up support activities to help the Korean Society for Bereaved Families of Pacific War to file a law suit against Japan in some small way. I hope that you will all acknowledge this too, but I consider the two governments' actions in creating a postwar nationality clause and signing a bilateral agreement in response to the plight of Korean citizens who, as citizens of a Japanese colony, were forced against their will to leave their children and young, newly-married wives behind to take part in the war and tragically lost their lives as members of the Japanese military in combat in South Pacific islands such as the Philippines and Taiwan highly questionable. Meanwhile, as you are all aware, an annual total of ¥1 trillion has been paid out to Japanese people by way of post-war compensation. This is extremely unfair and, as such, the issue of Japan's responsibility towards those who lost their lives for the sake of Japan's war and

obligation to provide compensation was brought up before a court of law. This was done with the aim of stirring civic movements and spurring the two governments on to take action and resulted in the issue of former military comfort woman being thrust into the limelight to become a major global issue. As you might expect, the Japanese government have handled all post-war settlement relating to non-Japanese citizens as “special issues.” The issue of atomic bomb survivors has also been designated a special issue for which some sort of resolution needs to be worked out. Based on the need to do something about the issue of former military comfort women, which is somewhat of an awkward one, Kozo Igarashi, the then Chief Cabinet Secretary and the former Japan Socialist Party were both exceedingly keen to resolve post-war issues such as these and, in an attempt to work out what you might call some sort of method of resolving the issue, came up with the AWF in 1995.

As Ms. Yang mentioned earlier, at that time we were not only looking for a solution to the issue of military comfort women, but also solutions to related issues that arose at the same time such as those of members of the military or paramilitary, forced drafting and bereaved families. In addition to Korean citizens, this also brought to light a range of issues relating to citizens of Sakhalin, Taiwanese military and paramilitary personnel and Indonesian citizens recruited as mercenaries. Based on the need to take some kind of short term action in response to the issue of former military comfort women, which had become a major issue and was potentially the most embarrassing of the Japanese government’s “special issues,” in 1994 the coalition government made up of the Japan Socialist Party, the Sakigake Party and the Liberal Democrat Party had the intention of moving forward with the issue of post-war settlement in some shape or form ahead of the 50-year anniversary of the end of the war in 1995 and a subcommittee on the issue of former military comfort women was set up within the ruling party to discuss how to resolve the issue. I myself and the elderly women who are here today sat outside the Diet for roughly two weeks from around November 20 to December 6 in order to demand that the subcommittee make the government take responsibility and provide compensation for individual victims. However, the then ruling coalition ultimately came up with just two resolutions: to set up some sort of atonement program and to set up a modern-day program for women. Although the idea of setting up a AWF had not yet been raised at that time, the Liberal Democrat Party were against one point in particular. They were totally opposed to giving any compensation to war victims. A confidential internal document stating that the government would not hand over a single yen in compensation was drawn up and agreed upon. They accepted the possibility of providing some sort of material compensation, but declared that they could not directly hand over any monetary compensation.

Amidst all this, in July 1995, the Asian Women’s Fund was established. The money to be

given to victims themselves was to be comprised of private donations collected from a wide range of members of the Japanese public. As it was a case of individuals donating their own money rather than the government handing over money, it was thought that this would stand as a show of good will on behalf of the people of Japan and demonstrate the fact that individual citizens felt remorse. Instead of providing monetary compensation, the government started up Medical and Welfare Support Projects as an attempt to do something to help victims. I am not that familiar with the situation in the Philippines or Taiwan, but despite their initial vow to not hand over a single yen to war victims, the fact is that, as I am sure you are all aware, the Japanese government has ultimately given ¥3 million yen to Korea and Taiwan, ¥1.2 million yen to the Philippines via the AWF in the form of Medical and Welfare Support Projects. This seems to me to be material compensation. However, unless the government specifically states that, "This is compensation," it will not be considered as such. Ultimately, the partial compensation that the Japanese government went to the effort of providing was handed over to victims in a half-hearted manner and thus went largely unrecognized, as did the letter from the Prime Minister. Despite the fact that there are a number of problems facing Japan domestically, I feel that the government's methods with regard to the victims have been exceedingly inappropriate and have done nothing to genuinely help their situation.

I would now like to go into slightly more detail with regard to the case in Korea. During this time I discussed matters face-to-face with the elderly women involved and members of the Society for Bereaved Families and looked into various specific details regarding the possibility of a "near-compensation method." Although the excessive amount of problems means that it would be difficult to solve them all at once, if the government really wants to tackle the issue of military comfort women, I think that this issue should be treated as a first step, with the AWF eventually dropping the "Women's" part of its name in favor of a more comprehensive name such as the "Asian People's Peace Fund" and extending its work to issues relating to the likes of female members of the Society for Bereaved Families, men who were drafted by force and soldiers. I think that this would enable the AWF to be effective on a much larger scale. In fact, we used to be in the same situation as members of trade unions: they took on roles such as members of the Advisory Committee or Directors of the AWF and we were on the outside, but we both had plans to change the contents of the AWF. Even now, almost ten years on, the AWF continues to concentrate exclusively on women's issues, leaving other issues totally untouched.

I feel that the manner in which money was handed over by the AWF to elderly women who actually wished to accept it was handled extremely badly. It is true that there were local movements in opposition to this, particularly in Korea where there was fierce opposition from

the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery, which strongly opposed accepting a single penny of “dirty money” from Japan. In spite of this, asking actual war victims how they felt revealed that they were uncertain how much longer they had left to live and that there was a strong desire to accept some form of compensation while they were still alive. It is our belief that war victims quite clearly have the right to decide whether or not they accept compensation. No matter how hard organizations and support groups work to prevent them from doing so, it is the victims themselves that retain the ultimate right to decide what to do. Therefore, based on awareness of this fact, I felt that the only people who could make the decision regarding whether or not to accept atonement from the AWF, insufficient as it may be, were the individual victims themselves. That is why I said to victims that, whatever discussions there may be regarding what to do, they should decide for themselves. However, speaking from my position, I fear that my words were seriously misunderstood and that malicious rumors to the effect that every time I went to Korea I would meet the victims and tell them to accept money from the AWF were circulated. This situation made carrying out activities very complicated and I think that, while it was publicized in Korea, particularly in the press, it acted as a piece of evidence to help anti-Japan movements bring their cause in terms of refusing the AWF into the limelight. I think that this nationalistic environment where, rather than attention being paid to the actual suffering undergone by individual victims, the act of refusing the AWF was regarded as the right, honest, patriotic thing to do and those who accepted the AWF were considered unpatriotic must have been extremely hard for the victims themselves.

Against the backdrop of such harsh conditions in Korea, in January 1997, seven people accepted the AWF. The mistake made by the AWF when it came to handing over compensation that left a bad aftertaste in my mouth was that no serious thought was given to what would happen to the seven elderly women in Korea who wanted to accept the money in the event that they were actually given the money. I think that the AWF should have erected a barrier in order to protect the people who accepted the money from criticism, slander and other disturbances. To erect such a barrier, I think that the AWF should have staged a proper press conference and made an appeal to the people of Korea clearly stating their position; that these donations had been collected in good faith and that the Japanese government was also working on providing victims with some form of compensation. However the press conference that was held took place in Tokyo. Why was it not held in Seoul? Upon learning this the day prior to the press conference, I emphasized the need to abandon such a plan because, unless the press conference was held in Seoul the AWF's intentions would be misconstrued as it would seem like the money was being handed over in secret and the victims involved would suffer as a consequence. Ultimately however, no such consideration was shown and, as I had predicted, the victims, elderly women were subjected to attacks as

if they were traitors. I think that this lack of consideration on the part of Japan and the AWF amounted to a major mistake and delayed efforts to solve problems considerably. The AWF was insufficient in a number of ways right from the beginning, and, despite acknowledging this fact, was sorely lacking in terms of discussion with regard to how to go about explaining the AWF's good intentions. The AWF's stance was found to be lacking then and I can't help feeling that it is still lacking even today.

In that sense, this is not merely an issue of money, but also of restoring individual victim's honor. I feel that unless this is recognized by society, simply handing over money, no matter how many millions or tens of millions of yen, will not make up for the suffering that these elderly women have gone through. As Shim Mi-ja mentioned earlier, in terms of exclusively financial problems, it creates situations where victims are approached by heartless relatives and friends who deprive them of their money. I think that we need to learn from this experience, particularly the fact that the money unfortunately brought more trouble than happiness to individual victims. I say this because the victims that I know have a particularly large amount of money at their disposal and there are those among them who, despite the fact that I think they would be better off planning how they use their money to some extent, are so happy about it that they let it be known publicly. As a result of this, everyone who comes to see them asks them for money to buy this or that and the victim ends up squandering it all. Initially, out of concern that problems might arise, it seems that a system whereby lawyers had control of the money and just handed over small sums of money as necessary was considered, but I think that it was rejected because the people themselves would not have been happy to have large sums of money that were rightfully theirs but have to apply to someone else to get hold of it one bit at a time. I feel that proper research should have been carried out based on highly detailed calculations, experiences and what the victims themselves thought about real-life problems such as these related to what the AWF was trying to achieve.

As I was taking a look at the AWF recently, one thing that struck me as being particularly regrettable was the fact that there are too many people managing the AWF and not enough people actually putting words into actions to back this up. Whereas the level of contact with victims themselves is minimal, the number of theories discussed is high. Looking back, they did not even know the names of the people they were giving the money to, leading people to doubt just who this AWF was actually for. If your stomach hurts, a doctor will examine you to find out where it hurts. In a sense, the AWF is in that same position, and, just like a doctor, has a duty to take some concrete steps to help specific individual victims. Therefore, I think that the AWF needs to conduct serious research alongside those who work to provide support in the relevant countries and take steps to grasp specifically what is required based

on the opinions of those involved. I feel that whether or not the AWF is able to do this thoroughly will determine whether the existence of the AWF is utterly hollow and lacking in meaning or whether it is practical, realistic organization.

Finally I would like to touch upon the situation faced by former comfort women in Korea today. As Shim Mi-ja mentioned, former military comfort women in Korea are seriously discriminated against socially, both openly and behind their backs, as a result of their past. First of all, the hardest thing for these women to bear is the backlash from their relatives, who warn them not to disclose anything about their past as military comfort women because it will tarnish the family name. As far as I am aware, there are only one or two of these women whose families accept the fact that they used to be military comfort women. There are a large number of these women who live in solitude because their families feel ashamed and say that they are not part of the family. Women in such circumstances have registered as members of the Society for Bereaved Families or the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery and taken part in temporary activities, but these are not enough to take away the sense of loneliness they feel. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the way of comprehensive care available for these women. In the case of former military comfort women in Korea, they have lived to the age of 80 without having been married once and, taking the elderly women that I know as an example, spend each day alone with painful thoughts along the lines of, "Why has my life turned out like this?" They wonder why they have no husband, no children and no grandchildren. Injuries from where they were beaten by soldiers during the war become more and more evident and painful the older they get. Old wounds from having their arms twisted throb with pain and others from where they were stabbed with bayonets also flair up painfully. In spite of all this, they do not have a soul in the world who will call them up to ask, "Are you OK" or call round to ask, "How are you doing?" Even if they get admitted to hospital, they don't have anyone to come and visit them. Children and grandchildren come to visit people in nearby beds, asking, "Grandma! How are you doing?" But they have nobody. Such women have told me, pleading with loneliness, that they feel so ashamed that they have even gone out to buy fruit from the fruit store and then asked hospital staff to have it delivered to them. I have heard them say on the telephone any number of times that the way they are living at the moment is worse than being dead. As Shim Mi-ja said, we have been asking the AWF to, if possible, erect a facility such as an old people's home for a long time in order to help elderly women in situations like these, but we have still not received an answer as to whether or not this is possible. I think that it would be good to have such a facility and that this needs to be treated as a priority issue. Based on the current situation in Korea, I feel that an emergency care center needs to be set up in some shape or form, even if it is privately-run, and a situation where there is someone to listen to these elderly women, or even to just get them a cup of tea or water or ask them where it

hurts, needs to be created right away. I want to work to ensure that we can make some progress with matters such as these, even if just in some small way. As part of this seminar, I look forward to hearing about the situations in each different country.

Trade Union's View on the issue of "Comfort Women" and Women's Dignity

Michiko Inaba
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My name is Michiko Inaba from the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC) Council on Gender Equality, which is located in the Japanese Trade Union Confederation's National Center. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you here today.

Listening to the discussions at this conference has really brought home to me the scale and gravity of this issue and, moreover, the duty we have to resolve it. I feel ashamed, not as a member of an organization, but as an individual, as a woman, of the fact that I have done so little to help resolve this issue up to now. I feel that the issue of former military comfort women represents a major violation of basic human rights and highlights the issue of violence against women stemming from gender discrimination and sexual exploitation.

The JTUC Council on Gender Equality was established based on recognition of the need to work towards both conquering gender discrimination and creating a society where men and women can stand on equal footing, respect one another, share equal responsibility both within society and in the home and participate equally in decision making processes in terms of society, companies and organizational policies.

The JTUC Council on Gender Equality is working to tackle issues such as equal participation in trade union activities and eliminating gender discrimination. Moreover, with regard to violence stemming from discrimination against women, we have continued to work on the issue of preventing sexual harassment. As part of activities such as these, we have continued to call for the development of a legal framework that shows zero tolerance towards the commercialization of sex, something that violates women and children's human rights, and that will eliminate violence stemming from discriminatory sentiments towards women, improved protection of human rights for victims of sexual violence and the introduction of such issues into the education system.

In terms of the issue of what to do about the current day-to-day situations faced by those who suffered as a result of Japan's ill-advised actions during World War II, I think that three of the most important issues are how to confront trends within Japan that encourage gender discrimination, how to educate future generations in order to ensure that acts of brutality such as this are not repeated and how to translate these thoughts into actions.

The Japanese "Basic law for a Gender-equal Society," which stipulates that local governments must work towards the creation of a society in which men and women can

participate equally, was enacted in 1999. Although work is underway to develop regulations relating to local authorities as a consequence of this, opposition has also come to light. This opposition takes the form of an unwavering insistence on the allocation of determined gender roles, which is further aggravated by the accompanying feelings of so-called patriotism. This is a trend that is visible throughout Japan. It could be that this is what Prof., Lee was referring to when he talked about Japan's shift towards the right yesterday.

The JTUC is continuously working to dispatch female staff to international trade union conferences, as demonstrated by the fact that roughly half of ILO trade union delegates dispatched by the JTUC are female. As a result of this, the majority of the women who have taken part in such conferences have had their eyes opened to a wide range of global issues that they can now take on rather than concentrating exclusively on those within Japan. We have received suggestions regarding the issue of comfort women from Asian women, such as those affiliated with Korean trade unions. However, to be honest, I don't feel that this issue has been sufficiently discussed by trade union members.

As I do not have the relevant data to hand at the moment, I do not know what the situation is like in Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan or Holland. I don't know exact details for Japan either, but I can tell you that, for example, women account for slightly less than 27% of trade union members. In terms of JTUC board members, the number of female committee members responsible for organizational decision making is relatively low and women make up just under 15% of the JTUC Head Office's Central Executive Committee. In terms of the organization's top officials, there is one female vice president and one female Vice General Secretary.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few personal remarks. I feel that the theme of how future generations will inherit responsibility for the issue of what can be done to help the surviving war victims who have experienced suffering as 'comfort women' is a vitally important one. The comfort women issue represents a case of people's basic human rights being violated as a result of gender discrimination. Obvious as it may seem, I feel the need to widely publicize the fact that all people have the right to life and that "respect for human life" forbids anyone from violating this, particularly to younger generations and children.

The important thing is to tell them the facts; the fact that there are a large number of people who suffered human rights violations at the hands of Japan and the fact that there is a range of opinions towards these people. If we accept gender discrimination and engage in discriminatory behavior, we could end up, on reflection, getting trapped in the darkness created by acts of discrimination or being discriminated against. I think that we need to convey this, based on the facts, to future generations. Moreover, I feel that we need to discuss matters openly, without hiding anything, and make some choices with regard to what

we should do and what path we should follow. What destruction and suffering did Japan cause as a result of the war? What things did Japan do and fail to do after the war? We need to recognize issues such as these. To achieve this I think that we need to build up the foundations for the future within organizations brick by brick. I think that each individual person should clearly indicate “this is what you can do” and “this is what I will do.” I feel that it is important to move forward together based on clarification of differences in terms of position and opinion. Grass-roots methods such as these may be a roundabout way of doing things, but I think that they will prove to be a source of great strength in the future.

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