

Pre- and Post-War Life History of Sex Slave Victims by Imperial Japanese ArmyShinkwon Ahn¹, Yunho Lee^{2*}, Kyungil Park¹¹Dept. of Social Welfare, Dongguk University, 26 Pil-dong 3-ga, Jung-gu, Seoul, 100715, Korea²Dept. of Social Welfare, Kyung Hee Cyber University, 1 Hoegi-Dong, dongdaemun-Gu, Seoul, 130701, Koreashinkweo@naver.com, anne6@khcu.ac.kr, pki@dongguk.ac.kr

Abstract: This study attempts to investigate the pre- and post-war life history of the sex slaves by Imperial Japanese army, who were among the countless victims made during the Japanese colonial era, whose claims against the Japan wartime atrocity have yet to be resolved. With emphasis on the human rights violation cases therein and those regarding human rights restoration movement, the study aims to contribute to restoring the dignity of the victims. The study also attempts to expand the previous studies' discussion of the subject matter and the victims' oral testimony of their life experience such that a greater number of victims can be addressed. The sex slave victims by the Imperial Japanese army were drafted against their will to serve in the war waged by the then massive militaristic power Imperial Japan, thus becoming subject to utter stripping of their human rights. The victims had not only had to be forced into Imperial Japan's wartime sex slavery but also had to face the cold shoulder and discrimination from Korean society after returning to their home. Even since the first such testimony about the Imperial Japanese atrocity as given by one of the victims, Ms. Kim Hak-Sun, on 14 August 1991, many more victims have followed in her footsteps and testified. Moreover, the Wednesday protests, i.e., the spontaneous weekly gathering by the victims, and their testimony in Korea and elsewhere around the world have begun to ensure that their basic human rights will be restored. As with the victims taking the initiative in the issue, this study investigates their lives, particularly focusing on their lives after starting to participate so actively in the social issue.

[Shinkwon Ahn, Yunho Lee, Kyungil Park. **Pre- and Post-War Life History of Sex Slave Victims by Imperial Japanese Army.** *Life Sci J* 2014;11(7s):528-533]. (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 110

Keywords: social welfare, comfort women, sex slaves, women drafted for military sexual slavery, life history, life and memory

1. Introduction

This study intends to address the following four aspects of the sexual victims in Imperial Japanese army, who, since 1990 or for the past 23 years, have fought so independently to reinstate their human rights (hereinafter the "Victims"), by examining their life history, in particular their life before and after the War that had ended in 1945, and their life before and after 1990, which marks the beginning of their participation in the social issue, through their oral testimony of life and memory(kim, S.A, 2003)

First, the life of the Victims is a tragic by-product of the history of colonized Chosun. Hence, the focus of analysis given to what sorts of effects had the life experience over which the Victims had no control on them throughout their lives.

Second, the Victims represent an unprecedented sexual violence against women in the history of mankind and a case of war crimes invented institutionally and implemented organizationally and systematically by Imperial Japanese army. In that respect, the origin of the Victims' lifetime burden, i.e., the life and memory of guilt, is the patriarchal culture and chauvinistic sexual prejudice against women. The study focuses on investigating the issue from the perspective of women's rights breaking such social shackles of discrimination and growing increasingly

in the 21st century.

Third, the study examines the tasks for healing of the Victims, by re-experiencing the pain and suffering that is still real and continuous in the Victims' lives. Also, the examination was conducted of the kinds of political, human rights, and social welfare policy-wise support to be expanded for the Victims and of the implementation thereof for the rest of the Victims' lives, which is rather numbered.

Fourth, it will review the seven demands from the Victims which have consistently been addressed by the Victims against the perpetrator Japan, including Japan's official apology and the lawful compensation there from. Through such condemnation, the study aimed to help prevent another such war crime and to stress the importance of restoring the Victims' human rights.

The main focus of this study was given (a) on investigating the reasons behind the creation of the Victims in the Japanese colonial period and the history of the Victims' fight to restore their human rights; and (b) proposing ideas to solve the problems faced by the Victims while placing emphasis on the Victims' awareness of and attitudes towards the status quo.

2. Methodology and Design

2.1 Description of research methodology

As one way to examine the life history of the Victims, analysis was conducted with the following materials: the collection and video-recording of the Victims' testimony, video-recording of the Victims' protests against Japan, interviews given to the press, the Victims' registration documentation, management cards, nursing records and medical treatment records, and the websites relating to the Victims such as the House of Sharing (<http://nanum.org/eng/index.html>). Among the various foregoing life writing materials, the most real and effective information about the Victims can be obtained from the collection of the Victims' testimony, wherein the Victims' voice can be heard so strongly. In particular, the life-writing texts analyzed for the purpose of this study are the Victims' biography co-authored by the present researcher and the Victims giving oral testimony. The methodology employed for this study includes analysis of texts as obtained through the interview with the Victims as well as the narration technique.

2.2 Interviewees: Research Participants

A total of 47 Victims participated in the study, namely 10 individuals who, as of September 2013, are the residents at the House of Sharing (i.e., Kim Sun-Ok, Bae Chun-Hee, Park Ok-Seon, Lee Ok-Seon, Kim Gun-Ja, Kang Il-Chul, Yu Hee-Nam, Kim Jeong-Bun, Jeong Bok-Su, and Kim Oe-Han); other 10 former residents of the House of Sharing, who have since passed away (i.e., Kang Deok-Gyeong, Lee Ok-Geum, Kim Sun-Deok, Park Du-Ri, Ji Dol-Yi, Han Do-Sun, Mun Pil-Gi, Park Ok-Nyeon, Kim Hwa-Seon, and Lee Yong-Nyeo); and 27 individuals who are not among the residents at the House. The foregoing Victims have exposed Imperial Japan's wartime crimes and the atrocities thereof by giving their testimony to the world. The oral testimonies given by the study participants were found logical and coherent, which led the present researcher to believe that such testimonies are suitable to be used for this study without posing any problems.

2.3 Data collection method

On July 30, 2007, the resolution (HR. 121) proposed by the U.S. politician Mike Honda, a third-generation Japanese American, at the U.S. House of Representatives, urging the Japanese government to resolve the issue of Imperial Japanese army's comfort women victims, was passed unanimously without even voting. Ever since the passing of the resolution, however, the Imperial Japanese army's sex slave issue has remained an international human rights issue as well as an issue relating to the historical conflicts between Korea and Japan, headlining the papers practically on a daily basis. The foregoing notwithstanding, no collative

investigation of the matter has been conducted so far by the Korean and Japanese governments, leaving the Korean and Japanese non-governmental experts and organizations taking up the investigation from the end of 1980 the only such investigative parties so far. The number of the Victims drafted by the Japanese army is approximately 200,000, with only 237 from that number having reported to the Korean government and a mere 56 Victims remaining alive as of October 2013. Of the said 56 individuals, 51 are staying in Korea while the remaining 5 are residing overseas. Ten of the 56 Victims are currently living a communal life at the House of Sharing. Furthermore, of the Victims living across the country, to whom the present researcher attempted to gain access, only the residents at the House as well as those who are personally close to the present researcher were given in-depth interviews. For the rest of the study participants, the research was conducted based on the collection of their testimonies. Specifically, the information about the Victims was collected via in-depth testimony and interview; long-term participant observation; investigation of the historical factual background of the Victims' experience; human rights violation cases of the Victims before and after the War; video-recording of the Victims' testimony and the transcripts thereof; investigation by the organizations associated with the Victims and their movement therewith; research materials about the comfort women in Imperial Japanese army; the care records of the Victims residing at the House of Sharing; and the Resident Victims' nursing records, medical treatment records, etc.

3. Results

The analysis of the Victims' life stories reveals that the Victims' memory of their lives relating to their sex slavery is related to historic events of atrocity. The issue relating to the Victims is the first and foremost issue of the Korean people. First, the sex slavery issue, in fact, has been identified as: (a) an organized and systematic wartime atrocity committed by Imperial Japan's fascism centering around their Emperor and the militaristic power possessed by the Imperial Japanese government, which atrocity including forced arrest, rape, torture, and massacre; and (b) Imperial Japan's attempt at obliterating or erasing the Korean nation through the series of campaigns they had launched, including the sexual slavery program in addition to the compulsory draft and requisition. Second, the issue of the Victims is also the issue of gender equality, since the origin of the Victims' issue is at once Imperial Japan's discrimination against the Korean nation and the governing patriarchal culture in which the highest value is put on males above everything else. Third, the

Victims' issue is also about social class, given the manner in which the Victims in Chosun had been drafted at the time which is equivalent to a fraud practiced as a pretext for "recruiting" Korean women either based on promise for employment or through physical coercion. As the war progressed, the primary subject of drafting was the poor farmers. Forth, the Victims' issue represents racial/ethnic discrimination. For instance, Imperial Japanese army punished the perpetrators of the Dutch women who had been drafted as sex slaves, through the Batavia military tribunal, thus treating white women better than Asian women as their way of practicing racial/ethnic discrimination. Fifth, the Victims' issue is above all a women's human rights issue addressing the violation of such rights. That the Victims from Korea, Taiwan and other Asian countries, as well as the witnesses thereof, have kept silence since after the war, that the Victims have survived a lifetime of suffering amidst the severe mental and physical aftermath all points to the Asian countries' Confucian patriarchal social mores that value women's chastity. Sixth, a strong nation's violation of the human rights of the people from a small nation is what also constitutes the issue of the Victims. Imperial Japan's drafting of sex slaves had been implemented mostly in its colonies and occupied territories rather than in Japan. In fact, the Victims had been subjected to a dual oppression that was not only against women in general but against the women from smaller nations in particular. That Imperial Japan had drafted only a limited number of

sex slaves from its own soil, all of whom were prostitutes, whereas the subject of its sex-slave draft in the colonized Chosun in the early stages was mostly non-prostitute regular, ordinary women indicates the fact that the Victims' issue is addressing an important point: the Victims' issue is about the human rights of people from weaker, smaller nations. Seventh, the Victims' issue also addresses the human rights violation committed by the governmental power against its citizens. At the time when the war ended, nearly all of the 7 million plus Japanese military personnel were found to have been served by the sex slaves. That such vast number of military personnel had been served by the comfort women and their service had been controlled systematically all along points to the fact that such implementation was possible only because it had been rendered by the Japanese government using its power and authority. Eighth, the Victims' issue represents the wartime violation of women's human rights. That the suffering endured by the Victims was such severe one indicates the fact that the atrocity was committed during wartime. Wars lead to serious violation of human rights, to which individuals from a weaker, lower class fall victim easily. Most of all, it would be imperative to obtain confirmation from the Japanese government that the Victims' experience as Imperial Japanese army's sex slaves does constitute a case of human rights violation which the Victims, i.e., women from the colonized country, had no control over as the Imperial Japanese colonization had proceeded.

Table 1. Experience, memory and influence of the victims of Imperial Japanese army

Time of events	Category of draft	Experience and memory	Effects on life in general
Before compulsory draft (situation)	Poverty and starvation	Kim Sun-Ok, Park Ok-Seon, Lee Ok-Seon, Kim Sun-Deok, Park Du-Ri	Unendurable suffering
	Father's joining the independence movement, and becoming an orphan	Mun Ok-Ju, Kim Yeong-Suk, Kim Tae-Seon	Loneliness and fear
	Zeal for learning, and compulsory change of Korean names to Japanese ones	Lee Ok-Seon, Ji Dol-Yi, Kang Il-Chul, Kim Hwa-Ja, Mun Pil-Gi	Suffering and overcomes
	Custom of early marriage	Kim Bok-Dong, Kim Hwa-Ja	Disengagement and ignorance
	Quota delivery and rationing	Kim Bok-Dong, Kim Hwa-Ja, No Su-Bok	Anxiety and fear
	Adoption	Hwang Geum-Ju	Yearning/missing
At the time of compulsory draft (method)	Forced arrest	Kang Il-Chul, Lee Ok-Seon	Mental and physical pain/suffering, aftermath, and passing down of pain/suffering
	Employment fraud	Gil Won-Ok	
	Threats and violence	Hwang Geum-Ju, Jin Gyeong-Paeng	
	Human trafficking and abduction	Choi Il-Rye, Choi Myeong-Sun	
Cases of sex	Torture and beating, and	Mun Pil-Gi, Lee Yong-Su, Park	Despair amidst unendurable suffering

slavery experienced during war (wartime)	violence by guns and knives	Du-Ri	
	Resulting in diseases related to genital organs	Choi Myeong-Sun (alias), Kang Mu-Ja	Infected with life-long disease/condition
	Opium addiction	Jung Seo-Wun	Lethargy
	Mental illnesses	Kim Yi	Suffering of family members
	Pregnancy	Jang Dol	Aftermath and guilt
	Abortion	Hwang Geum-Ju, Kim Ok-Ju	Ever-present/ever-lasting sense of personal injustice
	Suicide attempts	Mun Ok-Ju, Kim Bok-Dong	Bewailing one's lot, insomnia, indigestion, and heart disease
	Threats/risks during wartime, and risks of epidemics and endemics	All of the Victims	PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and fear
	Aftermath of salvarsan injections	Jin Gyeong-Paeng, Sohn Pan-Yim, Kim Bok-Dong, Hwang Geum-Ju, Choi Myeong-Sun	Hysterectomy and infertility
Escape	Lee Ok-Seon	Traumas and fear	
Suffering experienced after returning home (returning to Korea)	Life of a sinner	Kim Bong-Yi (alias), Gil Won-Ok, Gong Jeom-Yeop, Lee Ok-Seon, Kim Jeong-Deok (alias)	Strained marital relationships, and suspecting of infidelity
	inerasable traumas and scars to the body	Gil Won-Ok, Kim Jeong-Deok (alias), Jung Seo-Wun, Choi Yong-Sun (alias), Lee Ok-Seon	Infertility and stabbing-induced scars
	Life that continues in pain and suffering	Jung Seo-Wun, Choi Yong-Sun (alias), Seok Sun-Hee (alias), Kim Bong-Yi (alias), Kim Sun-Ak, Jang Jeom-Dol, Choi Myeong-Sun (alias),	Continued effects of traumas, diseases, pent-up anger, and aftermath
	Silence (word[s] buried deep in one's heart)	Choi Yong-Sun (alias)	Striving to instill a positive notion of self
	Courage and hope (reporting)	Park Hwa-Ja (alias) and 235 other Victims	Confidence and courage
Beginning of Victims' human rights movement to restore their human rights, and now	Leading the movement to restore one's dignity (Wednesday protests and testimony)	Kim Hak-Sun, Park Du-Ri, Kim Sun-Deok, Mun Pul-Gi, Ji Dol-Yi, Park Ok-Nyeon, Kim Hwa-Seon, Hwang Geum-Ju, Kim Sun-Ok, Kim Gun-Ja, Lee Ok-Seon, Park Ok-Seon, Kang Il-Chul, Lee Yong-Su, Gil Won-Ok, Kim Bok-Dong	Discovering the other aspect of self, Acquainting with Me I had not known, courage of "coming out" with one's painful past, Wednesday protests, and peace movement
	Social roles and responsibility (donation)	Kim Ok-Ji, Mun Myeong-Geum, Kim Ha-Seon, Kim Gun-Ja, Bae Chun-Hee, Lee Ok-Seon, Hwang Geum-Ja	Beginning of a new life, donating scholarship funds, participating in the construction of peace museum and of the international peace and human rights center
	Independent decisions where to live (a communal life at the House of Sharing) Changed attitudes (i.e., expressed one's painful past in drawings/paintings with courage)	Park Du-Ri, Kim Sun-Deok, Mun Pil-Gi, Ji Dol-Yi, Park Ok-Nyeon, Kim Hwa-Seon, Hwang Geum-Ju, Kim Sun-Ok, Kim Gun-Ja, Lee Ok-Seon, Park Ok-Seon, Kang Il-Chul, Yu Hee-Nam, Bae Chun-Hee, Kim Jeong-Bun	Independent decisions, various advantages offered at the facility, satisfaction with my choice, learning to live with others, not lonely any longer, meeting various visitors, becoming confident, becoming the true owner of my life

4. Conclusions

The significant in rightful rectification of the issues addressed above is found in ensuring that none of the above-mentioned human rights violation cases are repeated themselves anywhere around the world any longer. As with any crimes existing in society, prevention of the recurrence thereof requires proper punishment of the parties responsible for such crimes. Both the Korean and Japanese organizations have demanded that the Japanese government submit the issue of the Victims to the International Court of Arbitration, to which demand the government of Japan has declined. The Human Rights Commission of the United Nations and the U.N. Committee Against Torture as well as the related international organizations such as ILO (International Labor Organization) have advised the Japanese government that it offers its official apology to the Victims and proceed with proper compensation based on the procedures and with recurrence prevention efforts.

On August 30, 2011, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Korea judged that the lack of governmental diplomatic efforts to resolve the issue of the comfort women in Imperial Japanese army constitutes the failure to fulfill the government's roles and responsibilities, thus, based on the principle of forbearance, finding the case unconstitutional. Since the foregoing sentence, the Korean government has proposed to the Japanese government that a bilateral meeting be held in accordance with Article 3 of the 1965 Korea-Japan agreement on reparation, which proposal the Japanese government has continuously turned down. In addition, the Korean government has worked on making public through the U.N. the issue of comfort women as an international issue of wartime crimes. Now, more than ever before, is the time for the Korean government to show strong will to solve the issue such that it should, upon proposing the bilateral meeting to the Japanese government, propose to submit the case to the arbitration committee where the three nations gather to discuss the issue, and if Japan still doesn't respond to the arbitration proposal, it should yield the case to the International Court of Arbitration and the International Court of Justice. Furthermore, the Korean government should include the issue of the Victims in Korea-Japan summits and/or meetings between foreign affairs ministers as a compulsory subject on the agenda, thus putting pressure on the Japanese government. The present researcher considers that a true restoration of the Victims' violated human rights can only be achieved in the form of (a) the House of Sharing, a shelter where some of the Victims are living a communal life with their fellow Victims, and (b) achievement of the official apology from the Japanese government which

the Victims, now quite advanced in age, have consistently demanded to the Japanese government. Given there is not much time left before solving the issue by restoring the dignity of the Victims, it is absolutely imperative that both the Korean and Japanese governments seek humanitarian solutions. Additionally, it is necessary to ensure the expansion of social welfare services to support and protect the elderly Victims and the extension of social welfare policy to help restore the violated human rights of the Victims.

Furthermore, the social welfare benefits being offered to the Victims as per the related laws should be further expanded. Now, the entire world, including the U.N. and the United States, views the issue of the Victims as the case of women's human rights violation, and the international community is hoping that the issue will be resolved while the Victims are still alive. In particular, the issue of the Victims constitutes Korea's collective national trauma and is part of the country's tragic history, hence all the more reason to ensure expanded support for the Victims as provided by Korean society. Also, in consideration of the ever rising medical and living expenses due to the Victims' advancing in age, the current social welfare services for the Victims should be further expanded to include, for instance, increases in the amount of nursing fees being offered and in the amount of living and medical expenses currently supported with; the expansion of psychological and Korean medicinal treatment programs; and home-visiting services that customize those Victims who are unable to join the care facilities due to their sociophobia.

The results of the living standard survey conducted each year by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family show that in 2012, the median age of the Victims was 88, and they were having difficulties maintaining independence due to the physical and mental conditions associated with the growing age as well as due to the PTSD they have been suffering from owing to the aftermath of sexual violence against them as experienced in such young age. In fact, the majority of the Victims are living by themselves without any guardians or caretakers, while with some of the Victims having their own family, their children, too, are having difficulties adjusting to society due to the sociophobia that had been passed down to them. Also, the applicable law, the Act on Livelihood Stability and Commemorative Projects, Etc. for Sexual Slavery Victims Drafted for the Japanese Imperial Army under the Japanese Colonial Rule, should be amended such that the family members of the Victims are also qualified as the bereaved, thus being entitled to care, treatment and protection. Supports should also be given to the

Victims' funeral expenses, legal fees being extended by the Victims against the Japanese government, the expenses required for the Victims to testify in local and international locations, the stipends for the operating expenses of the special shelter for the Victims (i.e., the House of Sharing) and of the other shelter run by the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (i.e., Our Home), the care/protection expenses, and the living expenses, thereby further specializing in the support being provided. Last but not least, commemorative/memorial projects for the Victims should be expanded, and more emphasis be given to discovering related information/materials both here in Korea and elsewhere around the world; to expanding related research; to strengthening of education about the history and human rights issues. The research results in general imply that it ought to constitute the social welfare policy to ensure universal human rights.

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7/11/2014