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Korea Lesson Plan
Korean Comfort Women

This lesson is for an independent project for students in Women in History. This lesson could also be used in World History as an independent project.

Purpose: Korean women were used as sex slaves by the Japanese military during their occupation of Korea and through the end of World War II.

Essential Questions:

1. Who were the Korean Comfort women?
2. What have been the lasting effects for the surviving women as they try to come to terms with what happened to them?

Rationale: The example of comfort women shows students that war often creates situations that encourage the exploitation and violation of women.

Materials: *Militarism, Colonialism, and the Trafficking of Women: "Comfort Women" Forced into Sexual Labor for Japanese Soldiers* by Watanabe Kazuko [On-Line] available at:
<http://csf.colorado.edu/bcas/sample/comfdoc.htm>

Comfort Woman by Nora Okja Keller

Activities: Read both the reading and the book.

Write a paper comparing the problems survivors face, and Kazuko discusses in the article, with the problems faced by Akiko in the story. Give examples that support your comparisons.

Assessment: Rubric attached.

Target Grade: High School
I would have a letter of permission from the parents before a student was allowed to use this project.

Grade Adaptation: None. This subject matter is too intense for students younger than high school age.

State Standards: Analyze the influence if different cultural perspectives on the actions of groups.

Analyze the consequences of oppression, discrimination and conflict between cultures.

Rubric for the Paper:

		Key	
	Focus	6	Focused, purposeful & reflects insight
		5	Focused on the topic
		4	Focused, on topic and includes few, if any, loosely related ideas
		3	Focused but may contain ideas that are loosely connected to the topic
		2	Addresses topic but may lose focus by including extraneous or loosely related ideas
		1	Addresses topic but may lose focus by including extraneous or loosely related ideas
	Organization	6	Powerfully organized
		5	Logical Progression of Ideas
		4	Transitional devices strengthen organization
		3	Lacks logical progression of ideas
		2	Includes a beginning, middle and end, but these elements may be brief
		1	Has an organizational pattern, but may lack completeness or closure
	Understanding	6	Superior understanding
		5	Mature understanding
		4	Commonplace understanding
		3	Partial/limited understanding
		2	Definite misunderstanding
		1	Obvious misunderstanding

	Support	6	Superior understanding
		5	Specific Details
		4	Lacks specificity and support is loosely developed
		3	Development of support is uneven
		2	Development of support is erratic and nonspecific
		1	Little, if any, development of the supporting ideas; support may consist of generalizations or fragmentary lists.

***Militarism, Colonialism, and the Trafficking of Women:
"Comfort Women" Forced into Sexual Labor for Japanese
Soldiers***

by Watanabe Kazuko

**Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars,
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On 6 December 1991 Korean women who identified themselves as "military comfort women" filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government for violating their human rights. They demanded an official apology, some compensatory payment to survivors in lieu of full reparation, a thorough investigation of their cases, the revision of Japanese school textbooks identifying this issue as part of the colonial oppression of the Korean people, and the building of a memorial museum.¹ With this action these women finally started to break their silence and disclose the sexual war crimes committed by the Japanese Imperial Army almost fifty years ago.

The term *jugun ianfu*, "military comfort woman," is a euphemism for enforced military sex laborer or slave for the Japanese Imperial Army in the name of Emperor Hirohito. The term was coined by the Japanese government, military officials, and sexual industry agents, all hoping to obscure the dreadful reality behind the term.² The women were originally called "*teishintai*," which means "voluntary corps," with the Confucian connotation of self-victimization. According to Yun Chung-ok, the founder of the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Sexual Military Slavery by Japan, in this context the term also conveyed the more specific meanings of "drafting of women for sexual service to Japanese troops" and "patriotic voluntary military troops."³ It was felt that Korean women would feel more obligated by the connotations of self-sacrifice in the term *teishintai* because they were educated in the Confucian tradition. In reality the practice of "military comfort women" suggests not only the institutionalized, collective, systematic rape of Korean and other women by Japanese soldiers but also trafficking in women. Moreover, one person who witnessed what happened at the time, military doctor Aso Tetsuo, commented that Korean women were treated as if they were inhuman "female ammunition" and often referred to as "sanitary public toilets."⁴

War often violates human rights, but the case of the so-called military "comfort women" must be one of the cruelest of such violations. The historical example of "comfort women" teaches us how war perpetuates the exploitation of women and the violation of their human rights. The number of victims involved is estimated as nearly 200,000, though it is possible that the figures are even higher. It reminds us that systematic rape, institutionalized prostitution, and sexual slavery as well as war crimes were not only practiced in the past but can still be seen near military bases around the world such as those near Davao, Naha, and Phnom Penh. The collective rape in the former Yugoslavia

is another form of war crime. Thus war and sexual exploitation are closely related in their violence against women that cuts across sex, gender, race, ethnic, and class lines.

The use of the term "comfort women" is obviously itself a travesty, and it would certainly be more accurate to refer to the women who did this work as "enforced military sex laborers or slaves," as Pak Fam (a Korean activist living in Japan) and the Association for Anti-Prostitution Activity suggest.⁵ Nevertheless, I have used the term "comfort women" in this article because this remains the way they are most commonly referred to. I would prefer to at least encase the term in quotes to register my disapproval of it, but I have not done so because that would be cumbersome if it were done throughout the article.

Although Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipina, Indonesian, as well as Dutch women also worked as "comfort women," the article focuses on Korean women, not only because they were the majority--80 percent--and have already formed a political movement, but also because the colonial and imperial system is more clearly evident in their case.⁶ The article has, in fact, grown out of the actions of Japanese and Korean-Japanese women's groups concerned with the "comfort women" issue. I have been following their movements closely as a Japanese woman and thus as both a victim and a victimizer. I am indebted to members of these groups for helping me prepare the article by supplying me with their materials, ideas, and life stories.

Disclosures by Comfort Women

At the meetings and interviews organized by the Military Comfort Women Issue Uriyosong Network around the December 1991 lawsuit, Kim Hak-soon, sixty-eight, was the only plaintiff who revealed her name. In tears, she related her experiences as a comfort woman, explaining that her decision was prompted by the fact that since all had died she no longer had any close family members who would be ashamed of her past. Kim Hak-soon reported: "When I was seventeen years old, the Japanese soldiers came along in a truck, beat us, and then dragged us into the back.... I was told that if I were drafted I could earn lots of money at the textile company, and that it was also the emperor's order. I was taken to China to serve as a comfort woman for Japanese soldiers at military bases. I was raped on that first day, and it never stopped for a single day for the next three months."⁷ Often forced to accommodate dozens of soldiers in a day, Kim tried to flee three times. Twice she was caught and severely beaten, and finally on the third attempt she escaped with the help of a Korean man. They later married, but she lost her husband and children during the Korean War.

In an interview Kim Hak-soon explained:

I was born as a woman but never lived as a woman....I suffer from a bitterness I do not know how to overcome. I only want to ask the Japanese government not to go to war again. I feel sick when I am close to a man. Not just Japanese men but all men--even my own husband, who saved me from the brothel--have made me feel this way. I shiver when I see the Japanese flag. Because it carried that flag, I hated the airplane I took to

come to Japan. I've kept trying to disclose the facts....Why should I feel ashamed? I don't have to feel ashamed.⁸

Since then significant political actions and campaigns around military comfort women have been on the increase, and hundreds of former comfort women have told similar stories. However, the Japanese government initially denied its involvement and rejected their demands for apologies and compensation, which infuriated the survivors of sexual slavery and motivated them to reveal their pasts and appeal through the courts.

On 13 April 1992 six more Korean women sued the Japanese government. One of them revealed how Korean women were captured and drafted from school. Shim Mija, a South Korean, was said to have rebelled against the Japanese occupation armies by embroidering morning glories instead of the Japanese national flower, cherry blossoms, thus symbolizing that the Japanese government would wither in the evening. She was taken away from her school by the police, who then tortured and raped her. When she regained consciousness, she found herself already in a brothel in Japan. For the next six years she was forced to have sex with Japanese soldiers.⁹

In December 1992 a public hearing was held by a network of groups working on this issue in Tokyo.¹⁰ Former comfort women from six countries testified before a panel that included Theo van Boven, an expert on international law and human rights and a special rapporteur for a United Nations subcommission on protecting minorities. One Chinese woman fainted, overcome by pain and anger, and South and North Korean women who once shared a brothel hugged each other on the stage. Jeanne O'Hearn, a Dutch woman and the first European woman to testify as a comfort woman, did so in front of her daughter. She calmly reported that two hundred Dutch women were forced to provide sex in Java. This event was broadcast on TV news programs in Japan. After this public hearing, the Filipina Comfort Women Core Group organized in the Philippines and filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government. Filipina women can locate brothels and have important documents to prove their claims because most of them were not destroyed after the war.

Supported by various human rights groups, on 5 April 1993 Song Siin-do, a seventy-one-year-old Korean living in Japan, filed a lawsuit against the government in the Tokyo District Court.¹¹ She gave birth in a brothel and her children were left behind in China when she fled to Japan after several years of forced sex labor in China. Her goal has been to change the perpetuation of sexual abuse of women, sexual exploitation, and war crimes under imperialism and colonialism; she has not asked for compensation.

Song Siin-do was also one of the survivors of violence against women who testified on 12 March 1994 at a public hearing of the Asian Tribunal on Women's Human Rights in Tokyo, organized by the Asian Women Human Rights Council and the Women's Human Rights Committee of Japan. Held after the women's human rights tribunal at the Vienna World Human Rights Conference in June 1993, this Asian tribunal brought female victims from other Asian countries to Japan to testify. These included survivors of the trafficking of women from the Philippines and Thailand who had worked as prostitutes in Japan, as well as sexual slaves for the Japanese military abroad and victims of war crimes.

The "military comfort women" issue was recognized as a violation of women's human rights.

History of Comfort Women

Many historians and activists in Korea and Japan have worked to reclaim these women's pasts, reconceptualizing this violation of human rights and historicizing the Japanese army's explicit military policy of wartime prostitution. Research shows that the modern Japanese system of prostitution for soldiers began as early as the turn of the century. In the invasion of Siberia starting in 1918 the Japanese military took Japanese prostitutes with them but then left them behind. Most of these women, daughters of poor farmers, had been sold into prostitution by their families and became prostitutes called *karayukisan*, foreign-bound (literally China-bound) women.¹²

In the 1920s, as part of Japan's imperial policies after the colonization of Korea in 1910, the Japanese Imperial Army began to mobilize Korean women as physical laborers or as enforced sex laborers. In particular, beginning with the Japanese invasion of China in 1932, the recruiting of Korean women as prostitutes was gradually institutionalized to arouse soldiers' fighting spirit, provide them with an outlet for the frustration and fear fostered by hierarchical military life, and, ostensibly, prevent random rapes. Since the official pretext of the war was that Japan was saving other Asian nations from colonization by Western countries, the Korean comfort women were needed to prevent Japanese soldiers from sexually abusing and collectively raping local Chinese women as they did during the Nanjing Massacre in 1937. The procurement of comfort women was institutionalized to avoid atrocities that would damage the reputation of the Japanese army.

At the beginning of World War II, the Japanese army brought Japanese prostitutes with them, but many of them were suffering from venereal diseases and infected the Japanese soldiers. So Japanese brokers recruited Korean village girls, seventeen to twenty years old, from poor families. Toward the end of the war, the supply of women was enlarged by more indiscriminate kidnapping of women aged fourteen to thirty, including married women. Under the enforcement of the Military Compulsory Draft Act in 1943, more women were taken by the Japanese Imperial Army; by then the number had reached approximately 200,000, among whom 70,000 to 80,000 were sent as comfort women to the front lines in Asia.¹³

The Japanese government initially denied its involvement and rejected the former comfort women's demands for apologies and compensation, which infuriated the survivors of sexual slavery and motivated them to reveal their past and appeal through the courts.

At the end of World War II, most survivors of military sexual slavery were not informed of Japan's defeat. During Japan's retreat, some of them were deserted by the Japanese army, some were massacred, and others were driven into trenches or caves and either bombed or gunned down. Some of the women who returned home killed themselves

when they were unable to overcome the bitter memories and shame; others survived in silence. Some of the former comfort women were obliged to support themselves by working as prostitutes in postwar Japan.¹⁴

Historically the emperor system and legal prostitution strengthened the double standard in Japan. The institution of prostitution was not legally prohibited until 1957. Enforcing respect for the emperor was used as part of the colonization of Asian people. Sixth-grade girls in Seoul's primary schools were drafted as teishintai laborers, called the emperor's children. A former Japanese teacher in Korea, Ikeda Masae, reported that "girls joined the 'comfort girls' corps of their own will by either persuading their parents or overcoming opposition from their family members."¹⁵

Comfort Women and the Trafficking of Women

The testimony of former comfort women and documents on them show how women were recruited by force, kidnapped from factories and farms, or taken away because of their rebellious attitude toward Japanese colonization. Each woman was made to serve an average of thirty to forty soldiers per day, with the soldiers waiting in line outside her small room. Women who were not submissive were brutally beaten and tortured, and escape was impossible due to strict surveillance.¹⁶ Japanese soldiers were reminded that women were their common property.

Comfort women were usually placed in hierarchies according to class and nationality. Many Korean women seem to have come from lower-class worker and farmer families. Korean and other Asian women were assigned to lower-ranking soldiers, while Japanese and European women were for higher-ranking officers.

The institution of comfort women was a public practice. A document discovered in Washington, D.C. discloses how a civilian brothel owner who was captured in Burma applied to the Japanese army headquarters in Pyongyang for permission to transport the comfort girls. He took Korean girls he purchased from Pusan to Burma with tickets provided by the Japanese army.¹⁷ In another example, because of the shortage of comfort women toward the end of World War II, Korean village leaders were ordered to send young women to participate in "important business for the Imperial Army."¹⁸

Most of the Korean comfort women were forced to lose their own nationality, called by Japanese names, and forbidden to speak Korean.¹⁹ A notice hanging at the entrance to a brothel on the outskirts of Shanghai stated: "We welcome courageous soldiers who are on duty for the holy war; Yamato *nadeshiko* (literally the flower called "wild pinks of Yamato," meaning "our flowerlike women of Japan") obediently dedicate their minds and bodies to you."²⁰

Those survivors, wherever they may be living, have been physically and emotionally battered. They suffer from physical health problems such as sterility, headaches, asthma, insomnia, and fears associated with their bitter experience. Nervous breakdowns are also common.

Why did it take fifty years to disclose this issue? Why have comfort women kept silent so long? These women's stories did not surface after the war in part because the Japanese government destroyed military documents and in part because many Korean women themselves tried not to face what happened to them. This may be a reaction in common with rape or sexual harassment cases where women often remain silent because of fear of further humiliation or being attacked again. A Korean-Japanese former comfort woman, Pe Bon-gi, isolated herself in Okinawa without any welfare support, rejecting attention. In 1991 she was found dead in her small cottage. Her story became known through a nonfiction work, *Akagawara no ie* (A house with a red roof), written by Kawada Ayako, who was one of the few who helped her during her life.²¹

Confucian taboos put a priority in Korea on women's chastity, thus inhibiting women from speaking about their own sexual terror.²² Confucianism trapped women into perpetuating both the patriarchal system that created a double standard and the chastity myth. Moreover, Confucianism allowed men to continue to own women as private property. In the beginning women often had only two alternatives: either they could become comfort women or they could kill themselves to protect their own chastity--which Korean Confucianism taught them to consider more important than their lives. To live was to be guilty. They thought loss of chastity was shameful to their families. Some survivors committed suicide or stayed away from their families and led solitary lives. Thus these women suffered doubly and triply from sexual discrimination. "I was afraid to reveal my past for fifty years, but now I realize I've got only a short life left, and I will tell the whole world," said Kim Hak-soon, the first former comfort woman to reveal her name in court.²³

In Japan women tend to be divided into two categories for men: mothers and prostitutes. Mothers produce soldiers as well as male children in the patriarchal institution of marriage and family, while prostitutes give the pleasure of sex in the equally patriarchal institution of prostitution. Women were, and continue to be, treated by men only as sex objects. Thus, the patriarchal, imperial, and legal prostitution system continued throughout Japan's period of modernization. The issue of comfort women as an integral part of Japanese patriarchy and imperialism cuts across divisions of state, class, gender, race, and ethnicity. Interwoven into all these divisions, the use of comfort women helped to institutionalize the trafficking of women.

Japanese Government Response to the Comfort Women Issue

On 16 January 1992, just before Japan's former prime minister Miyazawa visited South Korea, documents on "military comfort women" were discovered in the Self Defense Force Library in Tokyo by Yoshimi Yoshiaki, a professor of Japanese history at Chuo University.²⁴ Since then many documents on "military comfort women" have been found in Japan and Washington, D.C., and witnesses have come forward to disclose how institutionalized prostitution and sexual slavery were controlled and supervised by the Japanese Imperial Army.

The inhuman practice of comfort women is rooted in discrimination in gender, race, and ethnicity, and driven by the imbalance in the international economy and systematic commodifying of female bodies.

Until Yoshimi's discoveries of incriminating documents, the Japanese government kept denying the compulsory drafting and recruiting of Korean women. During his visit to Korea on 17 January 1992, however, the Japanese prime minister apologized to the Korean people in a public speech in Parliament. Nevertheless, at that time he ruled out compensation for the military comfort women, suggesting that war compensation between Japan and Korea was settled in a 1965 agreement on war reparations. His comment disappointed the Korean and Japanese people committed to this issue.

In its second report on comfort women, the Cabinet Councilors' Office on External Affairs finally stated on 5 August 1993 that the "government admitted that Japanese military authorities were in constant control of women forced to provide sex for soldiers before and during WW II, and the government apologizes and expresses remorse over the issue." However, the Japanese government still did not bring up the issue of compensation.

After a year of further criticism and pressure, in November 1994 the Japanese government announced its plan to promote youth exchanges, create a center to support the financial independence of women, and establish a private-sector redress fund including a donation from the government to provide former comfort women with alternative compensation. However, former Korean comfort women and their supporters, primarily the Korean Council For the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, have rejected such donation or charity money as a token apology, demanding that the Japanese government provide compensation directly, along with an official letter of apology. The former comfort women and their supporters have been backed in this by a Geneva-based human rights group of legal experts from around the world, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), which issued a 240-page report in late November 1994 urging the Japanese government to provide full rehabilitation and restitution, and as a purely interim measure the sum of U.S. \$40,000 each to between 100,000 and 200,000 former comfort women.

[The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) is a nongovernmental organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The U.N. Human Rights Commission decided in August 1992 to look into the issue of compensation for comfort women, and the resulting ICJ report is the outcome of its mission to the Philippines, North and South Korea, and Japan in April 1993. The ICJ mission interviewed more than forty victims, three former soldiers, and government representatives, nongovernment organizations, lawyers, academics, and journalists. The report was then compiled by Ustina Dolopol of Flinders University in South Australia. The International Commission of Jurists, P.O. Box 160, 26 Chemin de Joinville, CH-1216, Cointrin/Geneva, Switzerland. Telephone, (41 22) 788-47 47; fax, (41 22) 788-488 80 --ED.]

The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan also announced in July 1994 that it would file a complaint with the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague to clarify whether Japan is obliged to compensate individual women who were forced to provide sex for Japanese soldiers before and during World War II. The Permanent Court of Arbitration requires agreement by both parties, however, and the Japanese government has repeatedly decided not to accept the request. There is a need for international pressure urging the Japanese government to voluntarily present itself at the international court.

Comfort Women as a Feminist Issue and Action

In Korea agitation by the women's movement as well as anger at the Japanese government's attitude has brought the comfort women issue into the spotlight. The revelation of the condition of comfort women triggered stormy national protests, fueling animosity in Korea and encouraging more disclosures and lawsuits. In both Korea and Japan, however, without the women's movement the disclosures about comfort women and their lawsuits may never have happened or perhaps would have taken much longer to surface.

The women's movement in Korea and Japan has started to encourage women to discuss their sexuality and control their own bodies. The most influential court case occurred in Korea in the late 1980s: a Korean woman for the first time talked publicly about being raped in prison by a policeman.⁽²⁵⁾ This case taught Korean women how important it was to protest all kinds of sexual abuse.

Both in Korea and Japan women have been discovering and renaming the violation of women's sexuality--including such sexual violence as sexual harassment, domestic violence, pornography, and stereotyped images of women and gender roles. Especially, women have come to notice that sexual violence, violation of women's human rights, and sex industries and prostitution in Asian countries have worsened, and that women's bodies have been increasingly commodified. Sensing this situation, in the mid-1970s feminist activists in Korea began actions against the sex industries. At the same time, the Asian Women's Association was organized in Japan and started to protest Japanese men's sex tourism, establishing connections between Korea and Japan. Trying to examine prostitution historically, these women discovered the issue of comfort women.

Thus women started to make the connection between comfort women and the Japanese cultural apparatus responsible for the current trafficking of women and sexual violence. Sexuality was and is used to control and rule both men and women. Created through legalized prostitution based on patriarchy, colonialism, and imperialism, the system of comfort women clearly demonstrates that capitalism, sexism, and racism are linked and perpetuated both in the colonial and postcolonial eras.

Women's organizations and self-help groups were formed in Japan to politicize the issue. Through such groups women have been trying to bring about a revolution and liberation from patriarchy, militarism, and colonialism and to raise consciousness and establish

their own autonomy. They have also been working to make this historic case of military slavery an international issue, utilizing international human rights laws that provide for an individual's right to compensation. This has become an urgent task, for it must be done before former comfort women are too old to be able to use compensation to improve their lives.

In August 1992 the Asian Women's Network of East Asian Countries was established in Seoul to exchange information, provide support, and nurture mutual empowerment.²⁶ The network sent a legal appeal to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. This network has been creating a climate that will help survivors share their experiences.

To promote this network Yun Chung-ok, who is part of the same generation as the comfort women, has played a key role in the movement by conducting research on comfort women and helping establish the network of women's groups in Korea that are protesting the trafficking of women and sexual violence. This network has created a climate that has enabled women survivors to come forth to tell their experiences. In 1993 the second "Asian Solidarity Forum on Militarism and Sexual Slavery" was held in Tokyo with former comfort women and activists of eight Asian countries including South Korea, North Korea, China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan. At the solidarity forum Yun Chung-ok's Seoul-based group, the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, proposed as an additional new goal the prosecution of the persons responsible for the planning and execution of military sexual slavery.²⁷ Although the lawsuit by the Korean council was not accepted at the Tokyo district court, the council is moving ahead, as described in the previous section, by filing a complaint with the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague asking it to clarify whether Japan is obliged to compensate former comfort women.

Confucianism trapped women into perpetuating both the patriarchal system that created a double standard and the chastity myth. Moreover, Confucianism allowed men to continue to own women as private property.

Comfort women's hot lines have been installed by civic groups in both Korea and Japan. In the first three days the Japanese hot lines received 231 calls in Tokyo and 61 in Osaka. Most calls came from veterans over seventy years old, army doctors, and female nurses. There was one call from a former Japanese comfort woman included in the report published as *Jugun ianfu 110 ban* (Military comfort women hot lines). Nishino Rumiko, director of the Society Concerned with World War II, and the Group Supporting Comfort Women helped organize the hot lines. One former military man confessed: "I wanted to talk about these women for a long time, but I could not because it concerned my own sexuality. However, I felt relieved after telling you about my experience in the war."²⁸

Three different types of action groups in Japan emphasize different aspects of the issues. The first type consists mostly of men such as the Karabao group, men's liberation groups, and Japanese-Korean groups emphasize racism, colonialism, and imperialism. They see the Japanese armies using sexual enslavement to castrate Asian men and colonize Asian women as a way of controlling these countries. These male-dominated action groups note

that the Japanese army enslaved *Korean* women's bodies to protect *Japanese* women's chastity. Korean men living in Japan also felt dehumanized by Japan's degradation of Korean women. Sexual debasement in wartime contributed to the inability of the colonized countries to struggle for independence and their own identity as human beings. They were deprived of their human rights.²⁹

In contrast, Japanese feminists groups, which are broad and the members of which are from many different professions, emphasize sexism. Women like Suzuki Yuko and other historians see in the issue of comfort women the universality of sexual violence and discrimination practiced in such sex industries as sex tourism and trafficking in women. They feel that both developed and developing countries share the guilt of sexual exploitation by treating women as commodities and creating a sexist culture.

One of these feminists, Fukushima Mizuho, a Japanese woman lawyer who has been working on the lawsuits of migrant Asian women workers and comfort women, points out the similarity between comfort women during wartime and migrant women workers who work in the sex industries in present-day Japan: "There is a parallel between comfort women and Asian women today who are deceived into coming to Japan and are then forced to work as prostitutes against their wills. Both of these groups were and are deluded by the same seductive voice: if you come to Japan, you will easily find well-paid jobs."³⁰

Similarly, historian Suzuki Yuko suggests, sex tourism by Japanese men in other Asian countries and trafficking in Asian women is a contemporary version of the Japanese Imperial Army's prior exploitation of Asian women as comfort women. The only difference lies in whether men are in military uniforms or in business suits. It is male degradation of women as commodities.³¹ This analysis has been pointed out by many other feminists.

Many feminists also believe that men too are victims and are treated as commodities in militarist and capitalist societies.³² As they see it, and I agree with their argument, male soldiers were regarded as animals in need of prostitutes because they were supposedly unable to control their own sexual impulses. Male soldiers were actually made inhumane in order to be "good" fighters. The military and colonial soldiers were stimulated by sexuality just like economic soldiers in the postcolonial era. Prostitution is the reward for businessmen who may suffer death from overwork (*karoshi*) for their companies, as it was for the Japanese Imperial Army soldiers who were forced to risk death for the emperor on the battlefield. In this way women's sexuality has been used to expand the Japanese state's power in other Asian countries, and this continues today when migrant workers who come to Japan are forced into prostitution.

A third group, the Korean-Japanese women's groups such as the Military Comfort Women Issue Uriyosong Network based in Tokyo and the Group Considering the Korean Military Comfort Women Issue in Osaka,()both of which were organized in 1991 to support former comfort women in Korea, tell us that the whole structure of sexism joined with racism allowed the Japanese army to institutionalize the comfort women system, and

this combination continues today in sex industries that service Japanese men. The inhuman practice of comfort women is rooted in discrimination in gender, race, and ethnicity, and driven by the imbalance in the international economy and systematic commodifying of female bodies. Women's rights to control their own bodies were and are violated by a sexist and racist social structure both in the past and present. Korean-Japanese women in Japan themselves have no civil rights so that they have experienced social as well as racial and gender discrimination. Korean-Japanese Hwangbou Kangja, a committed member of the Group Considering the Korean Military Comfort Women Issue, says that she first tried to avoid facing the issues of comfort women as a wartime tragedy. But when she realized the importance of these issues, she committed herself to them as a way of grasping her own identity and raising her consciousness.³³ Through protesting against the Japanese government and organizing international conferences together, Japanese and Korean-Japanese feminist groups have started a dialogue for working together for the future.

Protest against a Condom Manufacturer

Women's action groups, such as Osaka Women against Sexual Assault, women teachers' unions, and the Group Considering the Korean Military Comfort Women Issue, have formed a coalition linking the issue of comfort women with sexual violence, postcolonial exploitation by Japanese corporations, and racism in our everyday lives. As a symbolic action they have undertaken actions against the Okamoto Rubber Manufacturing Company, the biggest condom maker in Japan. This company recently produced condoms with two names on the packages: "Rubber Man" and "Attack Champion" (Totsugeki Ichiban). The condom called Attack Champion suggests that the man's most important duty is to "charge" or "attack" enemies. In a sexual context this term is highly provocative, closely associated with collective rapes and pornographic cartoons such as *Reipu man* (Rape man).³⁴ The Japanese Imperial Army officially provided Japanese soldiers with the original condom called Attack Champion to use in brothels during World War II to protect the soldiers from venereal diseases. It is obvious that this reissued name is reminiscent of the comfort women and sex industries of earlier days.

The Okamoto Manufacturing Company monopolized the condom business during World War II under the name Kokusai Rubber Company. During the present AIDS epidemic era, this company has expanded, building factories in Malaysia with the help of Japanese official development assistance money. Raw materials have been imported into Japan from the Asian countries the Japanese Imperial Army invaded, and the company's products have been sold in Asia as well as in the United States to help family planning, good contraception, and protection from AIDS. All this shows us how human-rights-violating sexism and racism are being perpetuated in the capitalist and postcolonial era.

Women's action groups have demanded that this company conduct research on its own company's past actions, take responsibility for its actions, publicly apologize for them, educate employees about human rights, acknowledge its part in the systematic rape of Asian women during World War II, and denounce violence against women. Also, these

groups demand that each condom box have a label stating that "every sexual intercourse without the women's consent is a rape."

Conclusion

So, what can we do now we have learned about this brutal aspect of history? We need new strategies. Unless sexual violence and the commodification of women's bodies is eliminated, there will always be comfort women. Recently the world has seen additional offensive cases, such as a representative of the Japanese government suggesting providing Japanese Peace-Keeper Operation (PKO) soldiers with condoms when they were sent from Japan to Cambodia. This equipping of men to buy women in other Asian countries brings to mind the practice of comfort women.

We have to change social structures as well as our consciousness, and acknowledge victims as courageous survivors. We have to keep re-creating a climate in which women will speak out against rape, sex tourism, prostitution, and the use of comfort women. Women must unite to fight against myths that obscure reality. A global women's movement has encouraged women to establish a network to halt the trafficking of women, unify the peace movement, and also form support groups for former military comfort women. Japanese women must establish close networks with Korean-Japanese women in Japan as well as with Korean women in Korea to change the social structures that allow men to exploit women's sexuality.

Global pressure is also needed to push the Japanese government to take full responsibility for what it has done in neighboring countries during war. The Japanese government is sensitive to international pressure. Women's collective voices must be a great force for change in the Japanese government's attitude regarding comfort women. By forcing the Japanese government to deal with the compensation issues, such pressure may help build closer relationships between Japan and other Asian nations.

We have to stop war; we have to monitor the new militarism in Japan--such as the bill attempting to allow the dispatch of Japanese Self-Defense Corps troops under the PKO and to change the constitution that prohibits any armaments. The United Nations Anti-Discrimination Act appropriately says that "without peace there would be no equality; without equality there would be no peace." I must add that there will be no human rights either. Hwangbou Kangja suggests that the Japanese government's treatment of the comfort women issue is a barometer of its sensitivity to human rights. Eight former comfort women have passed away in the last few years, three in 1993 alone. There is little time left.

Endnotes

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1. Jugun Ianfu Mondai Uriyosong Nettowaku (Military Comfort Women Issue Uriyosong Network), ed., *Kono han o toku* (To liberate this bitterness) (Tokyo, Jugun Ianfu Mondai Uriyosong Nettowaku, 1992); and Kaiho Shuppansha, ed., *Kim Hak-soon-san no shogen* (The testimony of Kim Hak-soon) (Tokyo: Kaiho Shuppansha, 1993). See the end of this article for a list of the names and addresses of twenty-three of the many organizations (thirteen mentioned in this article) that have dealt or are now dealing with comfort women and related issues.
2. Kim Iryumiyon, *Tenno no guntai to Chosenjin ianfu* (The emperor's army and Korean comfort women) (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1976); Suzuki Yuko, *Jugun ianfu to Naisen kekkon* (Military comfort women and marriage between Japanese and Koreans) (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1992); Suzuki Yuko, *Chosenjin jugun ianfu* (Korean military comfort women) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991); and Suzuki Yuko, *"Jugun ianfu" mondai to sei boryoku* ("Military comfort women" issues and sexual violence) (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1994).
3. Yun Chung-ok, "Chosenjin jugun ianfu" (Korean military comfort women), in *Chosenjin jugun ianfu mondai shiryoshu 3* (Chongshindae resource collection 3) (Tokyo: Chosenjin Jugun Ianfu Mondai o Kangaeru Kai). This collection is a Japanese version of Yun Chung-ok, *Chongshindae chaeryojip 3: chongshindae munje Ashia daehwee bokoso* (Chongshindae resource collection 3: report of the Asian conference on the "comfort women" issue) (Seoul: Hankuk Chongshindae Munje Daechaek Hyopwihwe [literally the Committee to Resolve the Comfort Women Issue, but the name used in English is the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan], July 1992).
4. Nishino Rumiko, *Jugun ianfu: moto heishitachi no shogen* (Military comfort women: testimony of former soldiers) (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1991), pp. 42-43. Jugun Ianfu Mondai Kodo Nettowaku (Military Comfort Women Issue Action Network), *Jugun Ianfu Mondai Ajia Rentai Kaigi Hokokushu* (Report on the Asian Association Conference on the Comfort Women Issue) (Tokyo: Baibaishun Mondai to Torikumu Kai [Association of Anti-Prostitution Activity], 1993); and Kim Iryumiyon, *Tenno no guntai to Chosenjin ianfu*, p. 17.
5. National Christian Council, ed., *Report: The Asian Solidarity Forum on Militarism and Sexual Slavery* (Nishi-Waseda, Tokyo: National Christian Council, 1994).
6. Zainichi no Ianfu Saiban o Sasaeru Kai (Support Group for the Lawsuit of Korean Former Comfort Women Resident in Japan), ed., *Sojo* (Written complaints) (Tokyo: Zainichi no Ianfu Saiban o Sasaeru Kai, 1993).
7. Kaiho Shuppansha, ed., *Kim Hak-soon san no shogen*; and Jugun Ianfu Mondai Uriyosong Nettowaku, ed., *Kono han o toku*.
8. Ibid.

9. Hirabayashi Hisae, *Kyosei renko to jugun ianfu* (Forced recruits and military comfort women) (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Centa, 1992) p. 189.
10. Executive Committee, International Public Hearing Concerning Post War Compensation by Japan, ed., *War Victimization and Japan: International Public Hearing Report* (Tokyo: Toho Shuppan, 1993).
11. *Jugun Ianfu Mondai Uriyosong Nettowaku Nyusuretta* (The Military Comfort Women Issue Uriyosong Network newsletter), no.5 (April 1993); and the Zainichi no Ianfu Saiban o Sasaeru Kai, *Sojo*. This support group also published a booklet, *Zainichi moto jugun ianfu, Song Siin-do* (The story of Song Siin-do, Korean former "comfort woman" resident in Japan) (Tokyo: Zainichi no Ianfu Saiban o Sasaeru Kai, 1993).
12. Many books on Korean comfort women are available in Japanese. My report is based on Suzuki's three books (see n. 1) as well as her speeches.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Asahi Shinbun Sha, ed., *Onnatachi no Taiheiyo Senso* (Women's Pacific War) (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun Sha, 1992).
16. Kankoku Teishintai Mondai Taisaku Kyogi Kai (the Japanese name for the Hankuk Chongshindae Munje Daechaek Hyopwihwe, in English the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan [see n. 3]), ed., *Shogen: Kyosei renko sareta Chosenjin gun ianfu tachi* (Testimony: kidnapped Korean military comfort women) (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1993). This book was written in Korean and then translated into both Japanese and English.
17. Yun Chung-ok, *Chosenjin jugun ianfu mondai shiryoshu 2-3*, the Japanese version of Yun Chun-ok, *Chongshindae chaeryojip 2-3* (Chongshindae resource collection 2-3).
18. Ibid.
19. Zainippon Chosenminshu Josei Domei (People's Republic of Korea Resident in Japan Women's Association), ed., *Chosenjin "ianfu"* (Korean "comfort women") (Tokyo, Zainippon Chosenminshu Josei Domei, 1992).
20. Ibid.
21. Kawada Ayako, *Akagawara no ie* (A house with a red roof) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1989). Also see Asahi Shinbun Sha, ed., *Onnatachi no Taiheiyo Senso*.
22. Kim Iryumiyon, *Jugun ianfu to Naisen kekkon*; and Yun Chung-ok, ed., *Chosenjin josei ga mita "ianfu mondai"* (Korean women's view of the comfort women issue) (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1992).
23. Jugun Ianfu Mondai Uriyosong Nettowaku, *Kono han o toku*.
24. Yoshimi Yoshiaki, ed., *Jugun ianfu shogen shu* (A collection of trial documents of military comfort women) (Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 1992).
25. Suzuki, *Chosenjin jugun ianfu*.
26. Jugun Ianfu Mondai Kodo Nettowaku, ed., *Jugun Ianfu Mondai Ajia Rentai Kaigi Hokokushu*.
27. National Christian Council, ed., *Report: The Asian Solidarity Forum on Militarism and Sexual Slavery*.

28. Jugun Ianfu 110 Ban Henshu Iinkai (Military Comfort Women Hot Line Editorial Committee), ed., *Jugun ianfu 110 ban* (Military comfort women hot lines) (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1992).
29. Takagi Kenichi, *Jugun ianfu to sengo hosho* (Military comfort women and war compensation) (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1992).
30. Fukushima Mizuho, personal interview with the author, April 1992.
31. Suzuki, "*Jugun ianfu*" *mondai to sei boryoku*.
32. Ibid.
33. Hwangbou Kangja, "'Zaini' josei to Chosenjin jugun ianfu mondai" (The issue of forced military prostitution from the perspective of Korean women resident in Japan), *Joseigaku Nenpo* (Women's studies yearly report), vol. 13 (1992), pp. 36-45.
34. *Reipu man* (Rape man) is the title of a comic and the name of the central character, whose profession is to rape women.