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Life of the Self-Proclaimed Comfort Women after Motherland Liberation

1. Repentance

I would like to repent my unilateral preconception.

It has been several years since I got interested in the comfort women issue of the wartime. When I read books of hilarious episodes written by Seiji Yoshida and Kako Senda, the Asahi Shimbun, a Japanese daily, had already retracted over a dozen articles regarding Yoshida's fictions. I, therefore, did not side with a claim that the Japanese authorities had abducted 200,000 women to make them work as sexual slaves in warfront. Though I dare not deny some cases in which brokers trafficked women from both Japan and the Korean Peninsula to warfront. I consider the cases as exceptions in the days when the prostitution license system was in place.

I authored a few books and opinion pieces since early 2019 in which I specifically discussed personality of the self-proclaimed comfort women in Korea.¹ It is because I thought they had their "self" divided and lost their personality by becoming a group icon of the human rights violation issue.

My focus on personality of those women derives from what Mahatma Gandhi said about one's belief and personality.

"Carefully watch your thoughts, for they become your words. Manage and watch your words, for they will become your actions. Consider and judge your actions, for they have become your habits. Acknowledge and watch your habits, for they shall become your values. Understand and embrace your values, for they become your destiny."

Ordinary people always question themselves who they are and for

what and for whom they live. The struggle of questioning makes them strengthen their belief, which translates into action and builds personality. This is what personal growth is about.

Life of people begins with a period of education and proceeds to a period of work prior to reaching a period of retirement. The self-proclaimed women had to enter the period of work, being deprived of a full period of education partly due to family poverty and partly due to the inadequate education system. What awaited them in the period of retirement—after the long period of work—was the comfort women issue.

As I reflected on a span of their life, I have realized that my thoughts were unilateral. For, I discussed their personality without paying any attention to their long period of work.

On May 7, 2020, Lee Yong-soo broke the ice, which led to uncovering of dubious spending practices of the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (Korean Council hereinafter) regarding comfort women donations and government subsidies. Lee also publicly said she had detested the pronominal phrase, “Sexual Slave.” A while later, some intellectuals began to question anew what those women truly needed for their life.

Based on the circumstances above and my carelessness, I will review the life of the self-proclaimed comfort women after the liberation of their homeland. This is what I meant by repentance. Problem is I cannot read or speak the Korean language though I have just made a solemn pledge. To compensate for my inability, I carefully review herein translated versions of those women’s testimonies that are contained in books below.

Book A: The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan and the Study Committee on the Volunteer Corps (Ed.). (1993). *“Shogen: Kyosei Renko Sareta Chosenjin Gun Ianfu Tachi”* [Testimonies of comfort women forcibly taken by the military] (author translation). (The Uri-Yeoseong Network on Military Comfort Women Issues, Trans.). Tokyo. Akashi Publishing. Book A contains 19 testimonies.

Book BI and BII: Nishino, Rumiko & Kim, Puja. Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (Ed.) (2006, 2010). *“Shogen: Mirai heno Kioku Asia ‘Ianfu’ Shogenshu Parts I & II—Minami-Kita Zainichi Koreans”*

[Collection of Witness Statements of Asian Comfort Women, Memories for Future Regarding North and South Korea and Japan] (a/t). Tokyo. Akashi Publishing. Book BI and BII contains 26 testimonies, 5 of which are copied from Book A.

2. Questions to Books A and BI & BII

Each testimony is about 15 to 18 pages long on the average. The experiences of the self-proclaimed comfort women, as sexual slaves, are fully detailed, regardless of the credibility of the testimonies. I have a few questions about them. I provide the following excerpts as a premise of my misgivings (underlined by author).

Yun Chung-ok, Co-representative of the Korean Council, wrote in Preface of Book A (author translation, a/t hereinafter):

“It is urgent for us to reveal the whole truth. Materials found in newspapers and official documents are certainly important, however, testimonies of the former comfort women are no less important than those materials. They are living witnesses of those days with both physical and mental disorders. ... We are aware how difficult it is for them to reveal what really happened at comfort stations. But the issue we have on hand is a serious matter that pertains to human beings. ... I think we must get their life stories down on paper.”

Professor An Byeong-jik of the Economic Faculty of the Seoul University wrote in Forward also in Book A (a/t):

“While reviewing investigation results, we found it most difficult to reconstruct one’s testimonies because what she had said was oftentimes logically contradictory. ... The most annoying thing the investigators experienced was when they noticed the interviewees intentionally distorting facts. To overcome such cases, each of us tried hard to build confidence with each interviewee. Our efforts were rewarded in most cases, however, there were cases in which investigators had to quit interviewing halfway through. We conducted an interview more than five or six times for each woman.

*I do not claim our investigations are flawless. For, as in the case of comfort women, I think it difficult for anyone who was treated as a subhuman to narrate everything she had gone through. I also think it impossible for us to complete investigations in a short time (*underlined by author)."*

2.1. Investigations of Book A heard stories of 40 women though as many as 110 women were registered as former comfort women in the early days. The Korean Council published testimonies of only 19 women. This may be attributable to "logical contradictions" and "intentional distortions of facts" Professor An mentioned. No one, however, explained why the published accounts were reduced from 110 to 40 to 19. Does it mean the rest, 91, were not comfort women?

2.2. This question also relates to the "intentional distortions of facts." Why did those women dare not tell facts? Having female investigators interview them, building confidence with them, and holding interviews more than a few times should have made it possible for them to come out of their shell. Besides, they knew their testimonies were supposed to protect women's rights and, furthermore, pursue social justice.

2.3. Six of the 19 women used pseudonyms in Book A. Why did five of them have their photographic portraits shown on the first page of their testimonies?

2.4. Five testimonies in Book B are copied, word for word, from Book A. Does it mean 14 others in Book A are not trustworthy? Either way, the total number of the women in both Book A and Book BI and BII is not 45 but 40. It must be noted there are two different women whose names are identical.

2.5. Why did the investigators not prepare a list of key issues in advance? It is vital to reveal the whole truth—as Professor Yun mentioned—by organizing key issues by category. Putting things in order would have visualize not only the how and why the women became comfort women but also the how and under what system they made a living at each comfort station in warfront. It is unfortunate that the testimonies portrayed a litany of complaints because the investigators were merely in listen-only mode

toward the women. There are cases in which time and place remained unknown. The significance of the “living witnesses” emphasized by Professor Yun did not bear fruit, if not wasted.

Books BI and BII compiled more than a decade after Book A was published did not correct the inadequacy of systematic approaches observed in Book A. As for the inadequacy mentioned above, O Yon-ju, one of the editors, made the following comment (Book BI, pp. 237-238) (*underlined by author).

*“Stories I heard from a halmoni (*grandmother in Korean) sounded like reading a prepared statement written in a concise and orderly manner. She narrated each event, following closely the passage of time. I interviewed her four times; she repeated her accounts almost in the same way. In the meantime, her memories began to bother me because they had been fixed in a certain pattern. I sort of struggled to find out means to make her talk about other things.*

I was compelled, during an interview, to ask questions to change the set flow of her thoughts. Giving up listening to her experience, I decided to start questioning her about general ideas of things or about her emotional conditions.”

2.6. Both Books A and BI and BII failed to make a comprehensive conclusion to the key issues listed below.

(1) The difference between comfort stations in warfront and brothels in Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria—which were internationally recognized as under Japanese rule—and Japan. Those in the latter were Pusan (Korea), Hsinchu (Taiwan), Jilin (Manchuria), and Osaka/Toyama/Okinawa (Japan).

(2) The presence or absence of the following matters: trade of women by parents, family members, or husbands (Kim Hak-sun, Hwang Geum-Joo, Lee Yong-nyeo, Park Sun-e, Lee Gye-wol, Lee Ok-pun); identification papers (Park You-nian); term of employment (Lee Sang-ok of South Korea, Park Sun-e); earnings (Lee Sang-ok of South Korea, Park You-nian, Kim Sun-ok); savings and transfer of money home (Moon Ok-chu, Park Sun-e, Park You-nian, Ha Sang-suk); exchange of correspondence (Moon Ok-chu, Park Do-ri,

Gil Won-ok); and liberty restrictions such as going for shopping and watching movies (O O-mok, Moon Ok-chu, Lee Tok-nam, Park Do-ri).

(3) Those cases in which the Koreans brokered and accompanied Korean women to warfront and ran comfort stations for themselves. As Lt. Col. Archie Miyamoto, Lt. Col. of the U.S. Army (Ret.), wrote by referencing Japan's Foreign Ministry consulate documents, it is the Koreans who managed comfort stations with Korean women while it is the Japanese who operated comfort stations with Japanese women.²

3. Limitations of the investigations and stretched interpretations

Commercial publication of Book A brought about a result that 19 women represented 110 women who stood up at the beginning, 239 women who were officially registered by the South Korean government, and finally 200,000 women whom more than a few individuals and groups claim. In this sense, the Korean Council achieved its objective.

The Japanese mass media often conduct public opinion polls. They normally consider confidence interval and confidence level of a population, randomly contact approximately 2,000 persons, and come up with representative opinions based on the collect responses from 50% or so of the surveyed,

In the case of the self-proclaimed comfort women, the 40 women in Books A and BI and BII are not randomly sampled from a population of, say, 110, 239, or 200,000. Their testimonies, therefore, contain sample coverage bias. Because those 40 women independently comprise the whole population for themselves, it should not be stretched to interpret that they are a part of all other comfort women. What it points to is the limitation of the investigations.

As for the stereotypical statement of those 40 women that they had been treated as subhuman, it should be merely interpreted as their claim because of lack of testimonial evidence provided by third parties. It is, therefore, appropriate—from the vantage point of a big picture—to conclude that many a woman in Books A and BI and BII fell victim to malicious brokers and operators of comfort stations/brothels.

4. Life of the self-proclaimed comfort women in post-liberation days

Those 40 women gave, in a greater or lesser degree, their accounts of life after the Korean Peninsula was liberated. There is no reason to question the credibility of their accounts. For, adding the “illogical contradictory statements and distortion of facts” to their post-liberation days would not serve as any corroborating evidence to accuse the Japanese government.

The investigators seem to have paid some attention to the women’s life at the time of the interviews. Their assumption was probably that those women were living a life tougher than common women were because of their sufferings in the past.

4.1. Historical background of the Korean Peninsula

The Allied Powers defeated Japan in August 1945, which liberated the Korean peninsula from Japan’s rule. The conflicts of interest of the Allied Powers, however, divided the peninsula into South Korea and North Korea over the 38th parallel. North Korea proceeded under the totalitarian regime while South Korea tried to build a democratic system. The Korean War broke out and continued for three years from 1950 till the armistice agreement was signed in 1953. The Koreans, as a result, could not freely cross the north-south border. It was since mid-1960s when South Korea began to enter a high economic growth period under President Park Chun-hee. Though the president was assassinated in 1970s, the nation was committed to democratization from 1980s. The democratization provided women with opportunities to voice their opinion.

4.2. Periods as comfort women, time of returning home, and marriage and childbirth

Table (1) below shows testimonial data of the periods as comfort women and the year they returned home as well as their marriage and childbirth.

4.2.1. Periods as comfort women

The self-proclaimed comfort women left home after being traded for money, by deception, or for making money. The periods they were at comfort stations or brothels vary from two months to a half year for the shortest, nine years for the longest, with the average of approximately three years and four months. More than a few of them stayed where they were after the motherland liberation, some of whom got repatriated decades later.

4.2.2. Marriage and childbirth

Most of the women who stayed single were strongly ashamed of their blemished virginity and chastity as Yun Do-ri and Jang Soo-wol narrated. Their belief is probably nurtured by Confucian values to respect one's husband and parents that had been prevailing since the days of Joseon Dynasty which was characterized by the Yangban class and patriarchy. Misogyny, however, was generally observed both in Japan and other nations while chastity was imposed upon women.

Those who stayed single were 20% of the total women ($8 \div 40 \times 100$). This rate seems to be higher in comparison of Japan's national census statistics of 2015: Men is 23.4% and Women 14.1%.

Their enduring hardships under foreign sky did not necessarily make them distrust for men. Those women were young when they returned home. Quite a few of them were encouraged by their families and neighbors to get married. 29 women found their spouses or partners to live with.

As for an infertility rate among couples, it is generally believed to be about 10%. A 2015 survey done by Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security and Research indicates as many as 29.3% of them were concerned about their infertility. It may not be appropriate to compare the situation of decades ago to today, those women's infertility rate comes to approximately 27.5%. This rate does not draw a quick conclusion that their infertility is attributable to their employment practice; most of them claim they had tended to as many as 20 to 30 men a day. Yet, 11 of them had become pregnant and delivered babies more than once.

12 of them adopted children regardless of the presence of partners. It is believed to be attributable to their maternal instinct and their want of a social life structure. That fact should be understood as noteworthy and socially commendable despite the social turmoil they went through after the

liberation of the motherland.

Married, concubine, or cohabitation: 29 (excepting marriages prior to becoming comfort women; one of them only lived with a partner)

Single: 8

Unknown: 3

Childbirths: 11

Infertile: 8 (including one miscarriage)

A husband went missing immediately after marriage: 1

Unknown: 3

Adoption of children: 12

Table (1)

Book A:

1. Kim Hak-sun: For 3 months till fall of 1941; married, one daughter and one son; returned home in June 1946
2. Kim Tok-jin: 1937-1940 (February or March); returned home a month or so later; concubine, two sons and one daughter
3. Lee Yon-suk: 1939 (December)-1945 (August); returned home in January 1946; co-habitation, infertile, divorced
4. Ha Sun-nyeo: 1940 (or 1938)-1942; returned home in 1946; co-habitation
5. O O-mok: 1937-1945; returned home in 1945; married to a widower, infertile, divorced, adopted a girl
6. Hwang Geum-Joo: 1941-1945; returned home in early December 1945; single, adopted three orphans
7. Moon Bil-gi: 1943-1945; returned home in August 1945; concubine, reared

younger sister's grandchild

8. Lee Yong-soo: 1945 (January)-1945 (August); returned home in 1946; married in 1989, divorced

9. Lee Ok-pun: 1942-1945 (August); returned home in 1947; single

10. Moon Ok-chu: 1940-1941, 1942 (July)-1945 (August); returned home in 1945; married twice, adopted the former husband's son

11. Lee Sun-ok: Married and divorced before 1938, 1938-1944; returned home in early 1945; cohabitation

12. Lee Sang-ok: 1936-1942; returned home in December 1946; married, miscarried

13. Lee Tok-nam: 1939-1942; returned home in 1945; Single, adopted younger sister's child

14. Lee Yong-nyeo: 1942-1945; returned home in April 1946; cohabitation, infertile, adopted her partner's son

15. Kim Te-son: 1944 (November-December); returned home in 1945; cohabitation, two daughters

16. Park Sun-e: Married and delivered a son before 1942, traded by her husband; 1942-end of 1943; returned home in January 1944; married, three children

17. Choi Myong-sun: 1945 (January-July); returned home in 1945; married, one son, remarried, three daughters and a son

18. Kang Duk-kyung: 1944 (fall)-1945 (August); one child before 1945; returned home in January 1946; single

19. Yun Do-ri: 1943 (September)-1945 (August); did not leave Pusan; single

Book BI:

1. Park Yong-sim: 1938 (August)-1944 (September); returned to North Korea; married, infertile, adopted an orphan
2. Song Sin-do: Married before 1938, four children before 1945, 1938-1945; went to Miyagi, Japan; lived with a partner
3. Kim Hak-sun (*mentioned earlier)
4. Lee Gye-wol: 1937-1939 (March); returned to North Korea at the end of 1940; single, adopted a child
5. Kak Kim-nyeo: 1939 (fall)-1941 (November); went to North Korea; married, a child
6. Park Do-ri: 1940-1945; returned home in 1945; concubine, married later, a son and three daughters
7. Kim Yon-suk: 1940-1945 (spring); returned to North Korea in 1945; married, infertile
8. Hwang Geum-Joo (*mentioned earlier)
9. Park Ok-son: 1941-1945; went to north of North Korea; married, a daughter and a son; returned home in 2001
10. Lee Ok-son: 1943-1945; returned home in 2000; immediately after marriage, her husband went missing
11. Moon Bil-gi (*mentioned earlier)
12. Kang Duk-kyung (*mentioned earlier)

Book BII:

1. Park You-nian: 1938 (August)-1945; returned home to North Korea in March 1946; cohabitation, a son, adopted a few girls, cohabitation again
2. Sim Dar-om: 1939-1940, 1940-1945; returned home later; unknown
3. Gil Won-ok: 1940-1941, 1941-1945; returned home after 1945; married, left home; cohabitation, adopted a child
4. Moon Ok-chu (*mentioned earlier)
5. Jang Soo-wol: 1941 (September)-1945 (June); returned home in North Korea before August 1945; single
6. Kim Bok-dong: 1941-1945; returned home after August 1945; married, infertile, re-married
7. Kim Gun-ja: 1942 (March)-1945; returned home after August 1945; cohabitation
8. Kim Sol-an: 1944-1945; returned home after August 1945; married, three sons, divorced, re-married, six abortions
9. Lee Sang-ok: 1943-fled before 1945 (?); lived in North Korea after 1945; unknown
10. Kang Il-chul: 1944-1945; lived in Jilin after August 1945; married, a son; re-married, a daughter and two sons; returned home in 2000
11. Lee Jong-nyeo: 1943 (July)-1945; lived in North Korea after August 1945; unknown
12. Pei Pong-gi: Married twice before 1944; 1944-1945 (March); lived in Okinawa thereafter; single
13. Ha Sang-suk: 1944 (May)-1945; lived in China after August 1945;

cohabitation, infertile, cohabitation again, married, infertile

14. Kim Sun-ok: 1943-1945 (?); lived in China after August 1945; returned home in 2005; married, two daughters and a son; re-married, two daughters, adopted a boy

4.3. Occupations

Almost all self-proclaimed comfort women returned home in the Korean Peninsula after the motherland liberation, excepting a few who stayed under foreign sky. Some found their families at home while others discovered they were gone. A few of them took up jobs after landing in Pusan and Inchon to bring home some money. Many of them changed jobs frequently. Some of them seriously succeeded in their business by settling down in one place. One lost her fortune later as she became a debt guarantor for a friend. Many a woman took up homemaking after finding her partner. It is true that they got through painful hardships up until 1990s. I dare say, at the risk of offending some people, the way they lived deserves great praise. Following is a list of occupations they had.

Trafficking heroin, contraband, and U.S. dollars; selling American commodity goods and insurance policies; peddling clothes, fish, and groceries; running pubs, restaurants, a general store, a boarding house, food stalls, and an inn; working as employees of pubs, restaurants, factories, farms, and cooperative farms; becoming housemaids and live-in housemaids, a singer, a nurse, Kisaeng, a lumberjack, and a prostitute for U.S. troops.

A sidebar comment is nine of the South Koreans were welfare recipients at the time of the investigations. Two of the six who live in North Korea seem also to be on welfare.

5. Memories of their life

Provided below are several comments the self-proclaimed comfort women made toward life. It is regrettable the investigators failed to characterize the women's personalities. Relevant descriptions not longer

than several lines. Their thoughts, endorsed and enriched by strong will and long experience, might have provided men and women of all ages with valuable insights. (*Underlined by author)

Kim Tok-jin: “The Japanese should be blamed but I hate much more those Koreans who became their pawn. I have a lot to say to our government, which must compensate for us.”

Lee Yon-suk: “Not only the Japanese but also the Koreans trampled one another to go on living. Both are to be blamed. ... I am not concerned about getting reparations. For, I may go away tomorrow.”

Hwang Geum-Joo: “My wish is to live an independent life until the end while not being ignored by others and at the same time offering assistance for the people in hardship.”

Lee Tok-nam: “People are supposed to live by accepting their fate. They will lose happiness of today if they have eyes bigger than one’s stomach. I no longer entertain a big dream. When I was young, I had a bad temper. Because I spent my younger days there (*Southeast Asia), I am reluctant to meet people. All I want now is to lead a quiet life.”

Kim Te-son: “I think that all the sufferings are attributable to sins of our ancestors. It is because of the poverty of our country in which we were born. Even if I was married when I was young, I might have become a comfort woman in one way or another. It is fate that I was born in those days.”

Park Sun-e: “I made public my past experiences because I thought it would be of service to my country. Our people must never be enslaved by a foreign country again.”

Yun Do-ri: “I would like to be born again as a woman. It would be nice for me to study hard under the good care of parents, to get married to a good man, and to bear a child.”

Sim Dar-om: “The Buddha statue on the altar truly evokes a profound sense of wonder. It gives me everyday wisdom of this and that. I can live a good life day after day because the Buddha makes me act like a human and gives me an opportunity to get along with other people.”

Gil Won-ok: About her adoption of a boy a stranger gave a birth to, “I am deeply indebted to Lord for my son whom I raised to make him go to the graduate school of a college of theology.”

Kim Sol-an: “My (*second) husband is a college graduate. He said he would not mind it (*after I had my elder sister disclosed my past to him). He said what had happened in the past would not matter any longer. I thought in my heart that one who studied hard are different from others.”

Kang Il-chul: “Those licensed prostitutes went to warfront to earn money. We were forced to go there.”

Ha Sang-suk: “I worked at a cotton-spinning company in China from 1962 to about ten years ago. I was mentioned in the newspaper as a model employee. I worked hard because I did not want the Chinese to consider the Koreans were incapable of doing work. I was awarded in 1992 for having a happy family.”

A sidebar comment: Kang Duk-kyung studied painting after she moved in the House of Sharing in 1992.

6. The Korean Council policies and a personal comment

The personal life of those self-proclaimed comfort women was probably a secondary matter for the Korean Council that had a social cause to criticize Japan. As mentioned earlier, nine of those women were on welfare when their testimonies were published. Many researchers would probably lose no time in asserting, “It is their experience of the past that brought about their welfare status of today. That is why a hard blow of justice must be delivered to the perpetrators.” Have the council’s campaigns with great public fanfare really improved their circumstances? Had

rationing a portion of the donated money and setting up the House of Sharing sufficiently satisfied those women?

Tsukasa Yajima, the House's employee in charge of international affairs, blew the whistle to the Kyodo News on May 28, 2020 that the donated money had not properly been used for the women in the house. He wrote in 2005 an interesting observation about the life of nine women as follows (Book BI, pp. 255-257). What Yajima narrated is, in no way, a case of improvement of their situations.

“A verbal brawl takes place among them over small things, which is the clash of their egos. Visitors who come to the House often comment each woman appears like any ordinary grandma. I would say all of them are fearless and greedy, not to mention making underhanded tricks more than anyone else does. It is true everyone is two-faced. But when you encounter the women's hidden nature, you would find them extremely uncomfortable and musing, at the same time.”

At the beginning, the Korean Council campaigns were supposed to consist of the two pillars below, which operated as the two wheels of a cart.

(1) To pursue actions to demand Japan to take responsibilities for the comfort women

(2) To provide psychological and material support for those women

The Korean Council encouraged those women to take part in the Wednesday demonstrations in the nation, took them overseas to attend unveiling ceremonies of comfort women cenotaphs and statues, and arranged them to take the congressional and assembly witness stands. It is true that the council, by making public the women's past, could appeal human rights violations not only to Japan but also to the world. The pillar (1) has been partially successful.

Concerning the comfort women issue itself, Professor Chin Sung-Chung of the Seoul University said as follows in an opinion piece titled 'In Seeking Concrete Solutions for the Victims' (Book BII, pp. 381).

“It is the social conditions of war, racial prejudice, and patriarchy that brought forth the comfort women system. Eliminating them will be the fundamental solution to the problem.”

The three factors Professor Chin mentioned—metaphysical in some way—are concisely reviewed: (a) War breaks out of conflicts of interest as history has seen. Therefore, it is not necessarily rightful to blame Japan alone from a geopolitical point of view. (b) The racial prejudice Professor Chin mentioned is a criticism against Japan that colonized the Korean Peninsula and treated the Koreans as the second class citizens for the Japanese. The Western Powers exploited local people wherever they were in the modern age of colonial imperialism. This fact would be no excuse for Japan. (c) Patriarchy continued in every corner of the world into modern times. It exerted profound influence especially over the Koreans as a legacy of the Yi Dynasty rule for five centuries. It is not quite reasonable to blame Japan for patriarchy. It goes without saying that the comfort women system did not originate in the peninsula; the system must be understood as having evolved around prostitution in Japan from the 17th century.

Having said that, I believe what Professor Chin meant above should be interpreted as a future agenda for the Korean Council. Accordingly, his suggestion should not be identified with the pillar (1).

What about the pillar (2)? As far as their well-being is concerned, it is not necessarily true that the Korean Council has satisfied those women’s psychological and material needs while they were in the retirement period. It has controlled their behaviors and decision-making. It has divided their personality by elevating them to a group icon. In other words, those women have become a tool of the intellectuals without being provided any opportunity to pride themselves with their own insights into life.

Both a sincere person and an insincere person are remembered in history. It is the former not the latter the public will appraise. The Korean Council with a wrong judgement has left a major stain that cannot be wiped off. It is anyone’s guess how this incident regarding accounting irregularities comes to an end. The Korean Council must be back to square one and earnestly and seriously review the pillar (2) so that it can kickstart what needs to be done for those women. Time is running short.

“The whole truth” sounds nice, however, “Covering the truth” is a

shameful act.

A last note: Those who committed human rights violations must be held accountable. It is Japan's expansion of the theater of operations that prompted the Korean women to take on prostitution business in warfront after the introduction of the licensed prostitution system by Japan to the Korean Peninsula in 1916. The system—that imposed a variety of duties upon comfort station managers to protect the comfort women's right—was, none the less, something that tacitly gave an approval to human trade. It follows that the Japanese government was not faultless at the time. It is not appropriate, nevertheless, to criticize the system from today's point of view. As for the "subhuman treatments" the self-proclaimed comfort women narrated, it is reasonable to blame greedy comfort station/brothel managers for business malpractices.

Note 1: "Discourses on Terminologies Related to the Comfort Women (Licensed Prostitutes)" of April 2019, "My Thoughts on Film Shusenjo" of March 2010, "Korean Puzzle" of April 2020, "Development of the Seigiren Clatter" of June 2020, and "Outcry of Lee Yong-soo, the Self-Proclaimed Comfort Woman" of June 2020.

Note 2: Miyamoto, Archie. (2017). *Wartime Military Records on Comfort Women*. 2d Edition. Amazon Fulfillment, pp. 37-39