

Stop exhibiting the Comfort Women statue: a symbol of falsehood and hostility.

Ever since a woman named Kim Hak-soon claimed to be a victim of Japanese comfort women on August 14, 1991, the Korea Council's assertion that "the Japanese military forcibly dragooned young Chosun girls, sexually assaulted them, forced them into sexual slavery and in some cases even murdered them" became the normative understanding in Korea.

Moreover, on December 14, 2011, the Korea Council erected a so-called "Peace Statue" on a sidewalk across from the Japanese Embassy in Seoul to commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of their 'Wednesday Rally.' Today, more than 150 identical statues are installed across Korea, with 30 more exported overseas. And these states are being displayed in various parts of Japan under the guise of "freedom of expression." Nowhere in the world would one find such a swift proliferation of identical monuments aside from Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's statues in North Korea.

The comfort women statue is merely a symbol of falsehood and hatred that reflects the sculptor's distorted historical perception and is utilized to propagate comfort women fraud. The sculptors, in their note, "promise engraved on an empty chair," claimed, "The Japanese, under its colonial rule, committed heinous crimes by deceiving or forcibly dragging budding Chosun girls and women into the battlezone and sexually enslaving them." Thus, suggesting that these women were victims of a war crime.

The Gay McDougall's UN Human Rights Commission report issued in 1998 partially defines war crimes as "sexual violence, including rape, committed by the enemy or occupational forces during an international conflict." Therefore, acts such as kidnapping, rape, and murder of women in hostile countries during international disputes or armed conflicts are considered war crimes.

Chosun, however, was not an occupied territory then, and the women of Chosun were regarded as Japanese citizens. In addition, comfort stations were legally run brothels established and operated to prevent war crimes against women in occupied territories. The comfort women were professionals who earned income by signing a contract with the station owner. Most of their customers were Japanese soldiers; thus, many posted their Japanese stage names on the front door to attract more visitors. This alone indicates that they were professionals in the wartime sex industry, not victims of war crimes.

The sculptors further suggest that their eleven-year-old daughter was used as a model for the statue to depict victims of the comfort women in their early teens.

However, to work as a comfort woman, one had to sign a contract with their master before leaving the country and, upon arrival at the destination, had to submit a consent form, family register, seal certificate, business license, and two photos to the local consulate police. It was impossible to deceive the actual age as the family register was viewable by people other than their parents. More importantly, however, the Japanese law then required comfort women to be above the age of 17; hence, girls between 13 and 15 were not eligible to become comfort women, to begin with.

As mentioned above, numerous comfort women statues at home and abroad have been reproduced and installed based on distorted and fabricated information on comfort

women's history. The same goes for the sculpture displayed here in Nagoya at the "After 'Freedom of Expression?' exhibit.

Without a doubt, freedom of expression should most definitely be respected. Nevertheless, expression based on lies is not worthy of such respect. While the comfort women statue purports to symbolize peace, it frankly delivers more division and stirs hostility, and no peace can be achieved founded on a fallacy.

In light of these facts, we strongly urge sculptors Kim Un-sung and Kim Seo-kyung to cease displaying the comfort women statues in the said exhibit immediately.