

Left Behind: Untold Stories of Former Korean Sex Workers in Post-WWII Taiwan

Yoshihisa Amae*

ABSTRACT

After WWII, Koreans in Taiwan were repatriated to newly liberated Korea; however, not all left the island. According to “The Register of Korean Expatriates in Taiwan (臺灣韓僑登記名冊)” of 1947, 358 Koreans remained, including 48 young women who were heads of their households. Among these women, a third married local men, with another third labeled as “to be deported.” As the Nationalist government allowed Koreans to stay in Taiwan if they had a “proper job,” it is inferred that these women did not meet this requirement. Many had previously worked as prostitutes, with some believed to have been “comfort women” in the Japanese military.

Drawing on government archival documents from Academia Historica and the National Archives Administration, as well as personal interviews conducted with elderly members of the Korean community in Taiwan, this article explores the postcolonial lives of the young Korean women who remained on the island, whether by choice, chance, or coercion. Of the 48 women listed in the 1947 Register, only one is openly acknowledged as a former comfort woman, with two others allegedly so, while the rest may have worked as prostitutes.

This article challenges the binary distinction between “comfort women” and “prostitutes,” commonly viewed as distinct, if not opposing, categories. While different, the two groups share significant similarities. Both comfort women and prostitutes were trafficked overseas against their will and subjected to great hardship, and many comfort women were formerly prostitutes within the Japanese empire. The article concludes that these women were victims not only of Japanese imperialism and patriarchal forces that coerced them into prostitution but also of the Confucian ideals of female chastity, which hindered their return home after the war.

Keywords: Korean Diaspora, Comfort Women, Prostitutes, Japanese Empire, Colonial/Postcolonial Taiwan, WWII

* Adjunct Researcher at the Center for International Reconciliation Studies, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan
來稿日期：2024 年 4 月 26 日；通過刊登：2024 年 9 月 18 日。

01. Introduction
 02. Who Are the Hanqiao and Why They Matter
 03. Koreans in Postwar Taiwan: 1947 Register as Entry Point
 04. Taiwanese Police Records
 05. Korean Sex Workers in Prewar Taiwan
 06. From Prostitutes to Comfort Women
 07. Toyokawa Akiyoshi: A Korean Collaborator
 08. Data from Travel Permits from Taiwan to China
 09. Korean Comfort Women Survivor Testimonials
 10. Women Left Behind
 11. Conclusion: Beyond the Binarism of Prostitutes versus Comfort Women
-

--In the memory of Sök Hwak-sil (1927-1950)

1. Introduction

On March 28, 1950, a woman was found dead in her apartment in Changhua (彰化), central Taiwan. According to local news reports, a blood-stained knife was discovered at the scene. The deceased was a 23-year-old Korean woman named Sök Hwak-sil (石確實). Neighbors described her as an “unclean woman” who was married to a Taiwanese man but was living with two Korean men. On the night she lost her life, neighbors reported hearing a cry before someone slammed the door and rushed downstairs.¹ The police later detained Kim Il-che (金日濟) and Chang Sŭng-do (張承道), who admitted to being with Sök that evening. Chang told the police that he had left the site earlier that evening and was unaware of what had happened. Kim, on the other hand, stated that Sök had killed herself while he was in the bathroom. He told the police that Sök was in love with him and had asked him to marry her. According to Kim, when he refused, Sök lost all self-control and stabbed herself in the chest.² Due to insufficient evidence, Kim was not indicted, and the case was dismissed.

¹ *Taiwan minsheng ribao* [Taiwan People's Voice Daily], March 31, 1950, p. 5.

² *Taiwan minsheng ribao* [Taiwan People's Voice Daily], April 7, 1950, p. 4.

This article focuses on young Korean women like Sök who, instead of returning to newly liberated Korea, stayed in Taiwan during the post-WWII period. They are ethnic Koreans, known as *hanqiao* (韓僑) in postwar Taiwan, who were allowed to stay as long as they had “proper employment (正當職業).”³ Those who had a local spouse were also permitted residency, while the rest faced deportation.⁴ “The Register of Korean Expatriates in Taiwan (臺灣韓僑登記名冊 hereafter 1947 Register),” compiled by the Korean Association in Taiwan (臺灣韓僑協會) in February 1947, contains personal information of 358 compatriots in Taiwan, 48 of whom were young women in their early and mid-twenties.⁵ They are all heads of household (戶長) with no other family members listed. They arrived in Taiwan after 1928, with most coming between 1937 and 1945, and all but a few were teenagers at the time of their arrival. Given that it is unusual for so many young women to be traveling alone, it is assumed that most of them were trafficked to Taiwan in the 1930s and 40s as sex workers—specially as prostitutes (*shōgi*) and barmaids (*shakufu*).⁶ All but one woman were without jobs (the column for occupation

³ “Hanqiao chuli banfa dagang 〈韓僑處理辦法大綱〉 [Outline of Measures for Handling Overseas Koreans],” (June 10, 1946), in Pei-ping Xie, ed., *Zhanhou qiansong waiqiao fanguo shiliao huibian 1: Hanqiao bian* [Repatriated Migrants after World War II: A Documentary Collection, Vol. 1: Koreans] (Taipei: Academia Historica [Hereafter as AH], 2008), pp. 54-55.

⁴ A Korean woman was ordered to be deported after being caught engaging in prostitution. See “No. 392: Wei hanqiao nūzi Cui Yingzi feifa juliu mimi maiyin qingyu xianling chujing you 〈392：為韓僑女子崔英子非法居留秘密賣淫請予限令出境由〉 [No. 392: Restrict departure of Korean woman Ch’oe Yōng-ja’s illegal residence and secret involvement in prostitution, please issue an order for her deportation],” (August 29, 1951), 6. Hanqiao guanli 〈6. 韓僑管理〉 [6. Management of Korean Expatriates], Collection Number (Hereafter as CN): 04070251, in Gugsapyeonchan-wiwonhoe [National Institute of Korean History], ed., *Jungguk daeman sojaj hanguksa jaryo josabogo II* [Report on the Survey of Materials on Korean History in China and Taiwan II] (Gwacheon: Gugsapyeonchan-wiwonhoe, 2007), Online Database: Korea History Database, http://db.history.go.kr/id/fs_014. This woman is not listed in the 1947 Register.

⁵ “Taiwan hanqiao dengji mingce 〈臺灣韓僑登記名冊〉 [The Register of Korean Expatriates in Taiwan],” (February 10, 1947), *Hanqiao diaocha yu dengji* 《韓僑調查與登記》 [Investigation and Registration of Korean Expatriates], Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives (Taipei: AH), CN: 020-110400-0010.

⁶ The prewar Japanese state controlled the sex industry through a licensing system. The licensed prostitution system, legalized in Japan in 1900, was later expanded to its colonies: Taiwan in 1906 and Korea in 1916. Licensed prostitutes had to register with the police and could only work at their registered brothels. They were obligated to undergo weekly health checkups and physical examinations and were suspended from work if they did not pass. Barmaids worked in restaurants (*ryōriten*) serving alcohol. While they were not prostitutes, sexual transactions sometimes occurred. Unlike licensed prostitutes, who were required to live in brothels, barmaids were not permitted to live at their workplaces to prevent illegal sex, and their movements were not restricted. A licensed prostitute’s contract lasted for four years and could not be renewed with the same employer. However, barmaids and geisha (*geigi*) were not subject to these restrictions. See Jungwon JIN, “Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan],” *Taiwanshi yanjiu* [Taiwan Historical Research] (Taipei) 17: 3 (September 2010), pp. 127-128.

in the 1947 Register is left blank). Of the 48 women, 16 had a “should be deported (應行遣送)” stamp beneath their names, while another 18 were marked as “married to a citizen of the Republic of China (已與中華民國人結婚).” Six women were listed under “Whereabouts Unknown (去向不明者).”

Why did so many young women stay in Taiwan after WWII instead of returning to the motherland? What were their postwar lives like? What can we learn about any connection to the infamous “comfort women” of the Japanese military? This article attempts to answer these questions using relevant literature, including testimonials from former Korean comfort women, as well as a careful reading of relevant government archive materials, primarily from the Academia Historica (國史館 hereafter AH) and National Archives Administration (國家發展委員會檔案管理局 hereafter NAA).⁷ However, since the written records are very limited, I have drawn on information gathered from personal interviews conducted with senior members of the Korean community.

2. Who Are the Hanqiao and Why They Matter

While several works examine Korean sex workers and comfort women in colonial Taiwan,⁸ none focus on their postcolonial lives. In fact, there are very few studies on *hanqiao* in postwar Taiwan.⁹ Early postwar records indicate that

⁷ The NAA was established to manage and preserve government records, as well as to ensure public access, in accordance with the Archives Act, which was passed in December 1999 and came into effect in January 2002.

⁸ Some of the representative works are as follows: Jungwon JIN, “Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan],” pp. 107-149; Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” in Osaka Sangyō Daigaku Sangyō Kenkyūjo, ed., *Kindai shakai to baishun mondai* [A Study of Modern Prostitution] (Osaka: Osaka Sangyō Daigaku Sangyō Kenkyūjo, 2001), pp. 81-116; Takashi Komagome, “Taiwan shokuminchi shihai to Taiwanjin ‘ianfu’ [Colonial Rule of Taiwan and Taiwanese ‘Comfort Women’],” in VAWW-NET Japan, ed., *‘Iantfu’: Senji seibōryoku no jittai I: Nihon, Taiwan, Chōsen hen* [“Comfort Women” and the Actual Situation of Wartime Sexual Violence, Vol. I: Japan, Taiwan, and Korea] (Tokyo: Ryokufu shuppan, 2000), pp. 118-155.

⁹ Seong-su An, “Jidujiao chuango yu Taiwan gangshi de hanren yimin: Yi Jilong Hanguo jiaohui wei zhongxin [Propagation of Christianity and Korean Immigration in Taiwan Port City: A Focus on Korean Church in Keelung],” (MA thesis, National Taiwan Ocean University, 2011); Junghwa minguk haninhoe [Korean Association in ROC], *Daeman hanin 100nyeonsa* [Centennial History of Koreans in Taiwan] (Incheon: Daeman hanin 100nyeonsa pyeonchan wiwonhoe, 2019); Yoshihisa Amae, “Taiwan kankyō no posuto koroniaru: Yim Du-uk Taiwan kankyō kyōkai rijichō wo chūshin ni [Postcolonial Bodies: A Tale of

there were 2,199 Korean civilians in Taiwan when the war ended in August 1945,¹⁰ most of whom opted to return to Korea which was liberated from Japanese rule after 35 years. According to records, 1,971 civilians left Taiwan on April 24, 1946;¹¹ however, 1947 Register documents 358 individuals who remained. The actual number was likely larger, as people were able to travel across borders with relative ease in the early postwar period.¹² Smuggling was rampant between Taiwan and Japan, particularly the Ryukyu Islands, as well as between Taiwan and Korea and Taiwan and mainland China until tensions in the Taiwan Strait heightened in the late 1940s.¹³ There were also people hiding on the island to avoid deportation. The numbers are inconclusive, as some were waiting to be repatriated, with 16 out of 358 marked as “willing to return to their homeland (自願回國).”

In postwar Taiwan, *hanqiao*, as an ethnic minority, experienced liminality between their “motherland” Korea—both real and imaginary—and their new “homeland” Taiwan where they had settled since the end of WWII. Korean women faced dually marginalized based on their ethnicity and gender. Among them, former sex workers were considered the marginals of the marginalized, as the sex industry was stigmatized in the Confucius society which held female chastity in high regard.¹⁴ It is therefore not difficult to imagine their intersectionality — that is, the multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage these women experienced due to their race, sex, class, and socioeconomic status —

Yim Duuk and Ethnic Koreans in Postwar Taiwan, 1945-1970],” *Ritsumeikan Ajia Nihon kenkyū gakujutsu nenpō* [Annual Review of Asia-Japan Research at Ritsumeikan] (Ibaraki) 1 (June 2020), pp. 28-47.

¹⁰ “Hanqiao zhanhuan jizhong qingshi an 〈韓僑暫緩集中請示案〉 [On Temporarily Easing Concentration of Korean Expatriates],” (January 15, 1946), *Hanguoren chuli qingxing* 《韓國人處理情形》 [Situation of Handling Koreans], Taiwan Provincial Chief Executive’s Office Archives (Nantou: Taiwan Historica [hereafter as TH]), CN: 00306510041003.

¹¹ Pei-ping Xie, ed., *Zhanhou qiansong waiqiao fanguo shiliao huibian 1: Hanqiao bian* [Repatriated Migrants after World War II: A Documentary Collection, Vol. 1: Koreans], p. 684. Additionally, there were 1,313 former Korean soldiers and civilian employees of the Japanese military. According to local news, 850 of them left Taiwan on March 20, and the remaining 463 departed on March 23. See *Taiwan xinshengbao* [Taiwan Xinsheng Daily News], March 23, 1946, p. 4.

¹² Among the 54 Korean individuals who applied for residential cards between May and November 1947, 48 were not listed in the 1947 Register. See *Hanqiao diaocha yu dengji* [Investigation and Registration of Korean Expatriates], Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, CN: 020-110400-0010.

¹³ For details, see Masaie Ishihara, *Kūhaku no Okinawa shakaishi: Senka to mitsubōeki no jidai* [The Blank Social History of Okinawa: The Era of Looting and Smuggling] (Tokyo: Banseisha, 2000).

¹⁴ Katrina Maynes, “Korean Perceptions of Chastity, Gender Roles, and Libido: From Kisaengs to the Twenty First Century,” *Grand Valley Journal of History* (Allendale) 1: 1 (February 2012), p. 3.

under both prewar Japanese and postwar Chinese Nationalist regimes, as well as the complex problems that arose from these intersecting factors.

Giving voice to those rendered voiceless and socially marginalized is an important task in the humanities. The stories of young Korean women in postwar Taiwan enhance our understanding of the island's past by adding another layer of human experience. Furthermore, they shed light on responsibilities of colonialism and war induced by the Japanese empire.¹⁵ Koreans in postwar Taiwan, including the young women discussed in this article, are remnants of Japanese imperialism, as their dislocation would not have occurred without the imperial structure into which the Korean nation was forcibly incorporated and the demands it created.

3. Koreans in Postwar Taiwan: 1947 Register as Entry Point

The 1947 Register lists Korean expatriates by city and province, providing the following information: name, gender, age, birthplace, occupation, and time of arrival in Taiwan (or China).¹⁶ Sök Hwak-sil, whose tragic death was discussed earlier, was 21 years old, originally from South P'yöngan Province (平安南道), and arrived in Taiwan (or China) in "1942."¹⁷ She is marked as "should be deported." Sök is among the few who came from the northern part of the Korean peninsula; only 33 northerners are listed, which is less than 10 percent of all individuals recorded. Kim Il-che and Chang Söng-do, who were implicated in Sök's death, are among them.¹⁸ Other young women who were single like Sök at the end of WWII mostly hailed from the southern provinces, particularly Kyöngsang Province (慶尙道), which is divided into North and South. Eighty

¹⁵ For discussions among Japanese intellectuals on this issue, see Eika Tai, "Japan's Colonial Responsibility and National Subject Formation," *Jinken Mondai Kenkyū* [The Journal of Human Rights] (Osaka) 12/13 (March 2013), pp. 77-96.

¹⁶ The place of their arrival can be other parts of China, and not Taiwan, as it is written, "*laihua nianyue* 來華年月 [year and month arriving to (the Republic of) China]. The date of their arrival is written in the Year of the Republic (*mingguo* 民國).

¹⁷ The exact month of her arrival is not provided. According to the newspaper that reported her death, Sök arrived in Taiwan in "March 1947." She most likely came to Taiwan via mainland China in 1947.

¹⁸ Kim and Chang arrived in Taiwan in November 1946 from Hainan Island, where they had worked as train conductors for a mine owned by a Japanese company. Kim Il-che 金日濟, interviewed by the author, Kaohsiung City, October 19, 2016.

percent of the women listed are from this province (see Figure 1, striped region).¹⁹

The high concentration of single women from Kyōngsang Province is striking. This region appears to have been a hotbed of sex trafficking, with records indicating that a significant number of women from Kyōngsang became comfort women. Of the more than 170 women who came forward after 1991 as former comfort women, 97 were from North and South Kyōngsang Provinces, compared to 27 from North and South Chōlla Province (全羅道) and 10 from North and South Ch'ungch'ōng Province (忠清道).²⁰ Coincidentally, Fujinaga Takeshi, a Japanese expert on modern Korean history, notes that there was a widespread rumor in the city of Kyōngju (慶州), North Kyōngsang Province, in the summer of 1939 that “a man surnamed Ch'oe (崔)” was trafficking large numbers of women to Taiwan, and many brothel owners from North and South China as well as Japan were flocking to Kyōngju to purchase women.²¹ According to statistics from the Government-General of Taiwan, which Fujinaga consulted in his research, 70 percent of the women arriving from Korea in 1939 were from Kyōngsang Province.²²

Another detail gleaned from the 1947 Register is that all 48 women were relatively young, with an average age of 24.8 years; the youngest was 21, and the oldest 36.²³ Eighty-two percent arrived in Taiwan after 1936 (58% arrived between 1936 and 1941, and 24% between 1942 and 1945). Their average age at the time of arrival was 18.²⁴ Additionally, nearly 40 percent of the women were “married to a citizen of the Republic of China.”²⁵ In Tainan City, for example,

¹⁹ Out of the 48 women, the birthplaces of 10 were unknown. The percentage of people from Kyōngsang Province among the total 358 listed in the Register is 41 percent.

²⁰ Young-hoon Rhee, ed., Chizuko T. Allen, trans., *Anti-Japan Tribalism: The Root of the Korean Crisis* (Honolulu: PacRim Marketing Group, 2024), p. 235.

²¹ Takeshi Fujinaga, “Senjiki Chōsen ni okeru ‘ianfu’ dōin no ‘ryūgen’ ‘zōgen’ wo megutte [Concerning the ‘Rumors’ and ‘Fabrications’ of the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Wartime Korea],” in Toshihiko Matsuda and Jungwon JIN, eds., *Chiiki shakai kara miru teikoku Nihon to shokuminchi: Chōsen, Taiwan, Manshū* [Imperial Japan and Its Colonies From the Perspective of Local Communities: Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria] (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2013), p. 741.

²² Takeshi Fujinaga, “Senjiki Chōsen ni okeru ‘ianfu’ dōin no ‘ryūgen’ ‘zōgen’ wo megutte [Concerning the ‘Rumors’ and ‘Fabrications’ of the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Wartime Korea],” p. 742.

²³ Two of the names are listed without an age. The age in the 1947 Register may reflect the person’s “Korean age,” which starts at one at birth and increases with each New Year, not on birthdays.

²⁴ The arrival dates of 14 women are unknown.

²⁵ Six women are listed as “Whereabouts Unknown” and, therefore, have no marks. Unless they were married, they would have received a “should be deported” stamp.



Figure 1: Cities and Provinces in Korea

Note: Created by the author, 2024.



Figure 2: Cities, Counties, and Townships in Taiwan

Note: Created by the author, 2024.

five out of seven women were married to local men,²⁶ as were all three women in Tainan County. While the possibility of genuine romance cannot be entirely ruled out, these marriages were most likely arrangements of convenience to avoid deportation.

4. Taiwanese Police Records

Police records in the NAA offer insights into why these women remained in Taiwan. Three Korean women were documented by the Tainan City police in

²⁶ No information is provided for the two other women, except their gender and an incomplete address.

an August 1946 report titled “Investigation Form of Koreans Expatriates.”²⁷ The investigation reveals personal data of these women, including age, place of birth, and current address. It also lists their level of education, prewar and current occupations, date of arrival in Taiwan, reasons for coming, willingness to return to Korea, and reasons for wanting to stay in Taiwan.

Yi Chun (李春) was one of the three women investigated. She was 22 years old, single, and illiterate. In the prewar period, she was employed as a “barmaid in a restaurant (料理店酌婦)” and was described as currently being a “prostitute in a club (遊樂館妓女).”²⁸ The document states that she “was duped into coming to Taiwan (被人欺騙來臺)” in 1941 and was unwilling to return to Korea because she has “no relatives in Korea, no job, and no confidence in having a stable life there (本國並無親戚回國無職業不自信生活安定).” She owed the brothel owner 2,000 yuan, which amounted to a year’s salary for a low-skilled laborer.

Yi’s name appears in the “Whereabouts Unknown” section at the end of the 1947 Register. The Tainan police document reveals her original (prewar) address in Taiwan as “Sengetsurō (鮮月樓),” a Korean brothel in Taichung, before she moved to Tainan. It is likely that Yi left Tainan and went into hiding after the police investigation to avoid deportation. In addition to Yi, eight other Koreans are listed under “Whereabouts Unknown,” five of whom were women in their early twenties.

One of these women, Chǒng Chin-ok (鄭今玉), also appears in the Tainan City police record. She was married to a Chinese lieutenant surnamed Hu (胡) and expressed a desire “not to return to Korea (不要回韓).” Chǒng arrived in Taiwan in 1942 to “visit a friend (訪問友人)” and was unemployed in both the prewar and postwar periods.²⁹ According to the document, Chǒng was living with Hu, but their marriage procedures had not yet been completed. It is possible that Chǒng run away later, leading to her inclusion in the “Whereabouts Unknown” section of the 1947 Register.

²⁷ “Dianfa tainanshi hanqiao diaochabiao 〈電發臺南市韓僑調查表〉 [Telegraphic Dispatch: Investigation Form of Korean Expatriates in Tainan City],” (August 14, 1946), *Hanqiao guanli* 《韓僑管理》 [Management of Korean Expatriates], Tainan City Government Archives (New Taipei: National Archives Administration [hereafter as NAA]), CN: A376610000A/0035/B065.1/1/13/003.

²⁸ Barmaids is a euphemism for unlicensed prostitutes.

²⁹ This information cannot be taken at face value, as it is unlikely that a teenage girl would travel alone to “visit a friend” in 1942.

Sök Hwak-sil's postwar trajectory resembles those of these women, as she also moved frequently. She married a Taiwanese man in Kaohsiung and was still married at the time of her death in 1950, despite living in a different city with two Korean men. Neighbors reported seeing the three of them going to movies and living together in a small apartment. One neighbor recalled that Sök often cried but would not reveal what was troubling her.³⁰ Police records found in NAA indicate that she lived in Tainan for a while before moving to Kaohsiung in December 1949 after her marriage.³¹ Another document reveals that she was admitted to a mental hospital in Taipei in November 1947 for just over a month.³² According to the 1947 Register, Sök arrived in Taiwan (or China) in 1942, meaning she was only 16 or 17 at the time of her arrival. Her address in Taichung City is adjacent to Sengetsurō, a Korean brothel. Similar to ex-Korean comfort women whose testimonials we will examine later, single women like Yi and Sök seem to have moved from one city to another to evade arrest and deportation.

5. Korean Sex Workers in Prewar Taiwan

According to the Japanese census, there was only one Korean woman in Taiwan in 1920. The number of female Korean has grown rapidly thereafter, surpassing that of male Korean by 1925. By 1932 and continuing through 1943, the female Korean population outnumbered their male counterparts significantly (see Figure 3).³³ While most men worked in the fishery industry, women predominantly found employment in the “hospitality industry (接客業

³⁰ *Taiwan minsheng ribao* [Taiwan People's Voice Daily], March 31, 1950, p. 5.

³¹ “Jiansong hanqiao Shi Que-shi riqiao Rujiao Chiyo deng dongtaibiao ge yifen 〈檢送韓僑石確實日僑入角チヨ等動態表各乙份〉 [Enclosed are one copy each of the activity records for Korean expatriate Sök Hwak-sil and Japanese expatriate Irisumi Chiyo],” (January 6, 1949), *Riqiao guibi huiji* 《日僑規避回籍》 [Japanese Expatriates Evading Repatriation], Academia Historica Archives (New Taipei: NAA), CN: A202000000A/0036/474/1262/31/024.

³² “Zhun Tainan xianzhengfu dian wei hanqiao Shi Que-shi qianzhu gaiqu xi zhizhao jufuyou 〈准臺南縣政府電為韓僑石確實遷住該區希知照具覆由〉 [The Tainan County Government is hereby authorized by telegram to confirm the relocation of Korean expatriate Sök Hwak-sil to the specified area and to provide notification and a response],” (March 4, 1948), *Waiqiao huji yidong dengji an* 《外僑戶籍異動登記案》 [Case of Registration for Foreign Nationals' Household Record Changes], Taipei City Government Archives (New Taipei: NAA), CN: A379000000A/0037/133.53/1.

³³ No statistics are available after 1943.

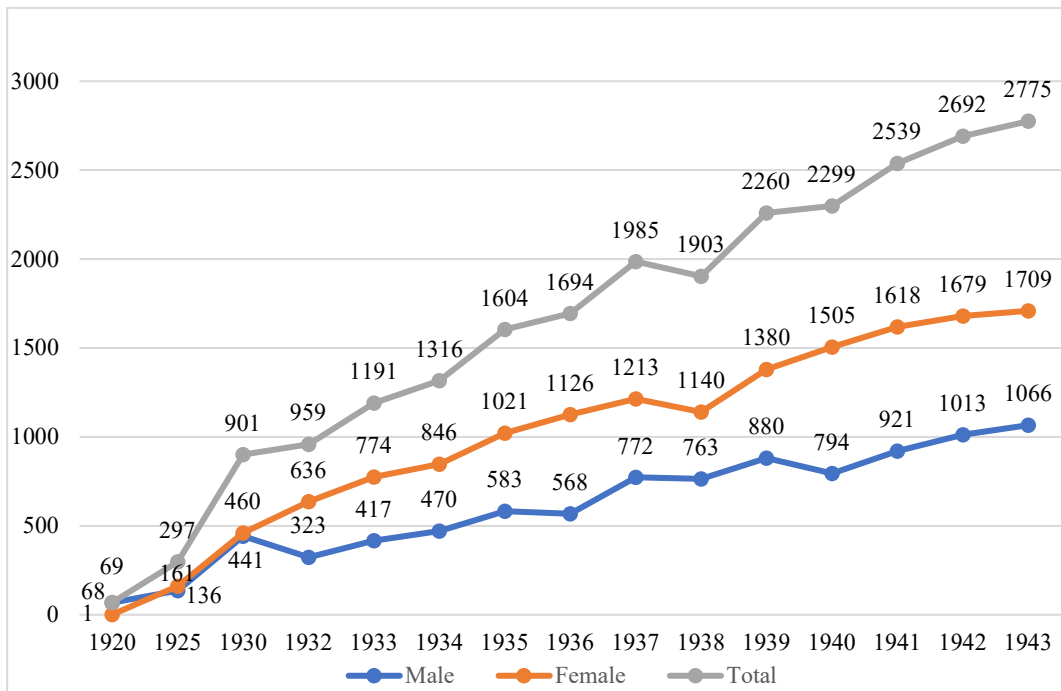


Figure 3: Korean Population in Taiwan

Sources: Taiwan sōtoku kambō rinji kokusei chōsabu [Temporary Census Bureau, Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan], ed., *Kokusei chōsa kekkahyō Shōwa go-nen, zentō-hen* [National Census Results, Showa Year Five, Island-Wide Edition] (Taihoku: Taiwan sōtoku kambō rinji kokusei chōsabu, 1934), p. 22; “Meiji sanjū hachi-nen ikō kakunenbetsu kokō [Annual Household Census Since Meiji year 38]”; Taiwan sōtokufu [Governor-General of Taiwan], ed., *Taiwan kokō tōkei* [Taiwan Household Statistics] (Taihoku: Taiwan sōtokufu, 1944), pp. 108-109.

sekkyakugyō)” as prostitutes and barmaids.³⁴ The number of Korean licensed prostitutes (129) even exceeded that of Taiwanese prostitutes (119) by 1930.³⁵ Nevertheless, the vast majority of licensed prostitutes were Japanese, numbering

³⁴ Hospitality industry was a euphemism for sex and entertainment industry.

³⁵ Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 94. This was not the case for “unlicensed prostitution,” however. Taiwanese women dominated the industry, which primarily served Taiwanese male customers. Since the late 1920s, colonial authorities began registering unlicensed prostitutes in Taiwan as “barmaids (*shakufu*).” See Fujinaga Takeshi, “Teikoku Nihon to shokuminchi kōshō seido: Taiwan no jirei wo chūshin ni [Imperial Japan and the Colonial Licensed Prostitution System: Focusing on the Case of Taiwan],” *Teikoku shisutemu no seiji bunka teki hikaku kenkyū* [Comparative Studies of the Political and Cultural Aspects of Imperial Systems] (Kyoto) 11 (September 2005), p. 2.

871 in 1930.³⁶ The number of Korean licensed prostitutes continued to rise in the 1930s and 40s, peaking at 249 in 1940. Although the number dropped to 185 in 1942 (with no data available after 1942), Koreans comprised nearly 25 percent of the total number of licensed prostitutes in Taiwan during 1939, 1940, and 1941.³⁷

The high percentage of Korean sex workers in Taiwan can be attributed to regulations concerning licensed prostitution in the Japanese Empire. In Taiwan, the minimum age for prostitution was set at 16, whereas it was 17 in Korea and 18 in Japan.³⁸ Korean historian JIN Jungwon notes that among the 1,618 women brought to Taiwan from Korea as prostitutes during the Japanese period, ages 16 and 17 represented the largest groups, with 235 (14.5%) and 243 (15%) respectively.³⁹ The influx of Korean sex workers into Taiwan coincided with the expansion of licensed prostitution in colonial Korea. The number of licensed prostitutes in colonial Korea, both Japanese and Koreans, surged due to the economic boom generated by World War I, with Korean licensed prostitutes increasing from 585 in 1913 to 1,314 in 1919.⁴⁰

³⁶ Takeshi Fujinaga, "Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to 'ianfu' no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of 'Comfort Women' in Colonial Taiwan]," p. 94.

³⁷ Takeshi Fujinaga, "Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to 'ianfu' no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of 'Comfort Women' in Colonial Taiwan]," p. 94.

³⁸ Takeshi Fujinaga, "Chōsen shokuminchi shakai to 'ianfu' seido no seiritsu katei [The Establishment of the "Comfort Women" System in Korean Colonial Society]," in VAWW-NET Japan, ed., *"Ianfu" senji seibōryoku no jittai I: Nihon, Taiwan, Chōsen hen* ["Comfort Women" and the Actual Situation of Wartime Sexual Violence, Vol. I: Japan, Taiwan, and Korea], p. 204. Although the Japanese government ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children in 1925, which prohibited sex trafficking of women under 21, it kept the minimum age for prostitutes in Japan at 18 and excluded its colonies from the convention's application. See Xiu-zhen Liao, "Nihon shokumin tōchika no Taiwan ni okeru kōshō seido to shōgi ni kansuru shogenshō [Events Relating to Licensed Prostitutes and Prostitutes in Taiwan Under Japanese Colonial Rule]," in Ajia joseishi kokusai symposium jikkō iinkai, ed., *Ajia joseishi: Hikakushi no kokoromi* [Asian Women's History: An Attempt at Comparative History] (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1997), pp. 416-417.

³⁹ The third largest group was 18 years old, with 167 girls (10%), and 54 girls (3%) were under 16. See Jungwon JIN, "Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan]," p. 137, Figure 6. However, the numbers in the figure only add up to 1,155, not 1,618. No explanation is provided.

⁴⁰ Takeshi Fujinaga, "Shokuminchi kōshō seido to nihongun 'ianfu' seido [Colonial Licensed Prostitution System and the Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' System]," in Noriyo Hayakawa, ed., *Shokuminchi to sensō sekinin* [Colonialism and War Responsibility] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2005), p. 34. It is worth noting, however, that the numbers of prostitutes and barmaids were much lower in colonial Korea compared to Japan proper. For example, in 1930, Japan had 52,117 prostitutes and 75,535 barmaids, whereas Korea had 3,205 and 1,685, respectively. The population ratio between Japan and Korea in 1930 was approximately

Many young women were forced into prostitution against their will. Reports of girls being kidnapped or duped into prostitution appeared in Korean newspapers as early as the late 1910s.⁴¹ Poverty compelled families in rural areas to sell their daughters into indentured prostitution,⁴² while brokers trafficked these girls abroad to areas like China, Japan, Taiwan, and Sakhalin to maximize their profits.⁴³ It is said that Korean prostitutes were particularly popular among Japanese men, who perceived them to be “docile” and “better looking” than Japanese women.⁴⁴ These vulnerable girls endured hard labor and conditions akin to slavery, resulting in significant physical and psychological suffering. Notably, the *Taiwan nichinichi sinpō* reported at least five suicide attempts by Korean prostitutes between 1926 and 1934, alongside an incident in which a drunken soldier severely injured a Korean prostitute by stabbing her.⁴⁵

Another factor contributing to the overrepresentation of Korean women in Taiwan’s sex industry was social change in Japan. Beginning in the 1920s, a social movement against licensed prostitution emerged in Japan, making it increasingly difficult for Japanese women to enter the business, let alone travel to Taiwan to work as prostitutes. JIN argues that Korean girls filled this gap.⁴⁶ There were 21

three to one. See Masaru Tonomura, “Shōgitō shūsengyō to ianfu no yōin kakuho: Nihon naichi to Chōsen tonō hikaku [Role of Prostitute Brokerage in the Recruitment of Comfort Women : A Comparison between Japan Proper and Colonial Korea],” *Ryūkoku daigaku keieigaku ronshū* [The Journal of Business Studies Ryukoku University] (Kyoto) 61: 2 (April 2022), p. 31.

⁴¹ Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi kōshō seido to nihongun ‘ianfu’ seido [Colonial Licensed Prostitution System and the Japanese Military ‘Comfort Women’ System],” p. 35.

⁴² Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 99. In 1926, the advanced payments for Korean girls were 250-300 yen for a three-year contract (occasionally rising to 400 or 500 yen), compared to 1,000-2,000 yen for girls sold into prostitution in Japan. See Yūko Suzuki, Yōng-ae Yamashita, and Masaru Tonomura, eds., *Nihongun “ianfu” kankei shiryō shūsei, jō* [Collection of Relevant Documents on Comfort Women of the Japanese Army, Vol. 1] (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2006), p. 821.

⁴³ Yoshiaki Yoshimi and Hirofumi Hayashi, eds., *Kyōdō kenkyū nihongun ianfu* [A Joint Research on Japanese Military Comfort Women] (Tokyo: Ōtsuki shoten, 1995), p. 216.

⁴⁴ Takeshi Fujinaga, “Chōsen shokuminchi shakai to ‘ianfu’ seido no seiritsu katei [The Establishment of the “Comfort Women” System in Korean Colonial Society],” p. 205.

⁴⁵ *Taiwan nichinichi sinpō* [Taiwan Daily News], October 12, 1927, p. 5.

⁴⁶ Jungwon JIN, “Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 139. While the data shows a decrease in the number of Japanese licensed prostitutes in Taiwan during the 1920s, their numbers were still much higher than those of Koreans. See Jungwon JIN, “Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 124, Figure 4.

Korean brothels on the island, with major cities typically hosting two or three each.⁴⁷ In addition, there were twice as many “restaurants” employing Korean barmaids.⁴⁸ Notably, all but one of the 21 brothels were owned by Korean men, three of whom shared the surname “Ch’oe.”⁴⁹

The brothel business was lucrative, allowing some owners to gain financial power and ascend to positions of leadership within the local Korean community in Taiwan. One such example was Kim Ch’an-ho (金贊瑚), owner of Chōkarō (朝花樓), a Korean brothel in Takao (present-day Kaohsiung), who was elected president of the local Korean association in March 1938.⁵⁰ Yang Ō-su (梁魚壽), co-owner of Senkarō (鮮花樓), a Korean brothel in Taihoku (present-day Taipei), became president of the Taiwan Korean Association in Taihoku in 1937.⁵¹ Both Kim and Yang seem to have returned to Korea after the war, as their names do not appear in the 1947 Register. Kil Yōng-bin (吉英彬), co-owner of Sengetsurō, another Korean brothel in Takao, left Taiwan soon after the war but later returned.⁵²

6. From Prostitutes to Comfort Women

When the Japanese military began establishing comfort stations for the soldiers in the Asia-Pacific region during the 1930s and 40s, many women were

⁴⁷ Jungwon JIN, “Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 133, Table 3.

⁴⁸ Close to 50 Korean restaurant owners are recorded between 1933 and 1942. See Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 90.

⁴⁹ It is not clear if they were related or if one of them is the same Ch’oe who is rumored to be trafficking girls to Taiwan from Kyōngju. See footnote 21.

⁵⁰ In the same meeting in which Kim was elected, association members raised 500 yen as a donation to the military in celebration of the fall of Nanjing in December 1937. See *Taiwan nichinichi sinpō* [Taiwan Daily News], March 21, 1938, p. 7.

⁵¹ Meitetsu Haruyama, ed., *Taiwan tōnai jōhō hontōjin no dōkō* [Intelligence Inside Taiwan: Trends of the Islanders] (Tokyo: Fuji shuppan, 1990), p. 41.

⁵² Jungwon JIN, “Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 133, Table 3. For Kil’s postwar activities, see Yoshihisa Amae, “Taiwan kankyō no posuto koroniaru: Yim Du-uk Taiwan kankyō kyōkai rijichō wo chūshin ni [Postcolonial Bodies: A Tale of Yim Duuk and Ethnic Koreans in Postwar Taiwan, 1945-1970],” p. 38.

recruited from Japan and its colonies as “comfort women.”⁵³ Initially, the military required comfort women to be “professional sex workers aged over 21 from Japan proper.”⁵⁴ However, as the demand grew, non-professional women were also recruited from Korea and Taiwan—often through deceptive means—and shipped to occupied territories and even dangerous frontlines, along with Japanese comfort women.⁵⁵ The job was intense and perilous, but the compensation was substantial,⁵⁶

⁵³ For the estimated number of Japanese military comfort women, which ranges from 60,000 to 200,000, see Ikuhiko Hata, *Ianfu to senjō no sei* [Comfort Women and Sex in the Battle Zone] (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2005), pp. 397-406.

⁵⁴ Komagome Takashi, however, believes that such a requirement did not apply to women in the Japanese colonies, namely Korea and Taiwan, given that the Japanese government did not adhere to the 1921 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children within its colonies. See Takashi Komagome, “Taiwan shokuminchi shihai to Taiwanjin ‘ianfu’ [Colonial Rule of Taiwan and Taiwanese ‘Comfort Women’],” p. 134. Tonomura Masaru, a scholar of modern Korean history, argues that the military would have preferred experienced, professional sex workers over inexperienced women for the smooth management of the comfort stations. Military officials would not have wanted women recruited against their will, for if this became publicly known, it could tarnish the reputation of the imperial army. See Masaru Tonomura, “Shōgitō shūsengyō to ianfu no yōin kakuho: Nihon naichi to Chōsen tono hikaku [Role of Prostitute Brokerage in the Recruitment of Comfort Women : A Comparison between Japan Proper and Colonial Korea],” p. 41.

⁵⁵ The Allied forces captured 20 Korean “comfort girls” in August 1944 in the mopping-up operations after the fall of Myitkyina in Burma. According to this declassified US Army report, approximately 800 Korean girls arrived in Rangoon in August 1942 in groups of 8 to 22, from which they were distributed to various parts of Burma, usually to fair-sized towns near Japanese Army camps. See “US-11 Japanese Prisoner of War Interrogation Report No. 49: Korean Comfort Women, 1944,” (October 1, 1944), *Comfort Women Resource Center*. Available at: https://international.ucla.edu/cks/care/us_allieddocs/250902, accessed October 15, 2024. During the Battle of Ramou, 10 to 14 women lost their lives fighting alongside the soldiers. See Toyomi Asano, “Kita Biruma Yunnan sensen ni okeru nihongun no sakusen tenkai to ‘ianfu’ tachi [“Comfort Women” and the Japanese Military’s Operations on the Yunnan Front in North Burma],” in Gunjishi gakkai, ed., *Nichū sensō sairon* [Revisiting the Sino-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Kinseisha, 2008), p. 309.

⁵⁶ For instance, Mun Ok-chu (文玉珠), a former Korean comfort woman, deposited 26,145 yen in her military postal savings account between March 1943 and September 1945 while working in Burma. See Ok-chu Mun, *Biruma sensen Tate shidan no ‘ianfu’ datta watashi* [I Was a “Comfort Woman” of the Tate Division in the Burma Front] (Tokyo: Nashi no kisha, 1996), p. 206. A diary of “Mr. Park (朴),” a receptionist at the Kikusui Club (菊水俱樂部), a comfort station in Singapore, reveals that he visited the bank to wire 11,000 yen to one of the Korean girls who used to work at Kikusui. See Byeong-jik An, ed., Kazuo Hori and Kan Kimura, trans., *Biruma Singapōru no jūgun ianjo* [Comfort Stations in Burma and Singapore], p. 159. Available at: *nadesiko-action*, http://nadesiko-action.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/comort_women_diary.pdf, accessed January 15, 2024. According to Mun, in those days, one could buy a small house in Taegu for 1,000 yen. See Ok-chu Mun, *Biruma sensen Tate shidan no ‘ianfu’ datta watashi* [I Was a “Comfort Woman” of the Tate Division in the Burma Front], p. 76. A former Navy Lieutenant Colonel recalls that the women came to the war front with an advance payment of 4-5,000 yen and were on a one-year contract. Some paid it back in a matter of three to six months. They accumulated a considerable amount of savings, on average, 5,000 to

compelling many debt-ridden women to seek overseas opportunities as comfort women. Data indicates that within a decade after Japan's invasion of Manchuria in September 1931, the number of prostitutes in Japan decreased by 25,000, while the number of barmaids and geisha dropped by nearly 40,000.⁵⁷

Some brothel owners in Taiwan viewed Japan's expansionism as an opportunity and took their employees to South China and Southeast Asia for profit. Okubira Keidō (奥平恵道), an Okinawan man who ran a barber shop in Denryōchō (田寮町), a popular red-light district in Keelung, recalls:

When the war [the Sino-Japanese war] began, they [the military] said there were no women in China. "Bring them over, so that we can boost our morale..." That is when the madam of the brothel in Gijūchō (義重町) took several women and went to China. She told people around her, "I'm going to make lots of money over there!" However, the women who came back later told me it was so distressing. They had to take in 20 to 30 men a day. These comfort women were all exhausted.⁵⁸

Another account from a 1955 magazine article, written by a former Navy Lieutenant Colonel, shares the testimonial of a female brothel owner in Tainan:

I went to Manila in December 1942. My establishment was in Tainan, and at the

10,000 yen; some saved 30,000 yen. See Minoru Shigemura, "Tokuyōin toiu na no butai [A Unit Called Special Task Force]," *Bungei shunjū* [Annals of Art and Culture] (Tokyo) 33: 22 (December 1955), p. 225. The aforementioned US Army report also mentions that while the income of the girls varied depending on how much of a debt they owned, the comfort station master received 50 to 60 percent of their earnings. On average, a girl would earn 1,500 yen per month. See "US-11 Japanese Prisoner of War Interrogation Report No. 49: Korean Comfort Women, 1944," p. 3. The same report also notes that the Army issued an order in late 1943 stating: "Certain girls who had paid their debt could return home. Some of the girls were thus allowed to return to Korea."

⁵⁷ Yuki Fujime, "Nihonjin 'ianfu' wo fukashi ni suru mono [What Makes Japanese "Comfort Women" Invisible]," in VAWW-NET Japan, ed., *Sabakareta senji seibōryoku* [Wartime Sexual Violence Under Trial] (Tokyo: Hakutakusha, 2002), p. 102. For more details, see Ikuhiko Hata, *Ianfu to senjō no sei* [Comfort Women and Sex in the Battle Zone], p. 30, Table 2-2. Hata notes that the case was different for Korea: the number of licensed prostitutes in Korea, which reached 7,900 in 1937, remained almost the same in 1942. He infers that, in Korea, those who were recruited as military comfort women were mostly inexperienced women, not professionals. See Ikuhiko Hata, *Ianfu to senjō no sei* [Comfort Women and Sex in the Battle Zone], p. 409.

⁵⁸ Mamoru Akamine, ed., *Okinawa sekimin no Taiwan hikiage shōgen shiryōshū* [A Collection of Testimonies and Documents of "Okinawans" Who Repatriated From Taiwan] (Naha: Kokusai insatsu, 2018), pp. 175-176.

time, the mood to advance to the south was so strong that navy officers from Takao and Tainan visited us often. So, when the war broke out and Manila fell, I immediately visited the Navy headquarters in Taihoku and asked for permission to open a store in Manila. It was not until the end of 1942 that I got permission. I quickly gathered 13 women in my place, and together with a chef, a hairdresser, a carpenter, and a plaster worker, 30 of us departed from Takao by the year's end.⁵⁹

According to her, they traveled to Manila on a Navy vessel. In Manila, they were assigned a "freemason temple," which they converted into a comfort station for Navy officers. There were four or five other comfort stations for enlisted sailors. The Army, being larger in size, had one comfort station for officers and a dozen for enlisted men. Business flourished, and the number of women later grew to 20. However, after the American counterattack in September 1944, the Navy ordered that all "special task force (*tokuyōin*)" return to Japan.⁶⁰

While there are no documents or testimonials suggesting that any of the 21 Korean brothel owners in Taiwan took their employees overseas as comfort women, it is possible that some Korean sex workers in Taiwan also became comfort women. JIN Jungwon, who examined the family registers of brothel owners in Taiwan, found that among the 43 women at Chōsenrō (朝鮮樓) in Tainan, 15 returned to Korea, and while the other 27 were sold to other Korean brothels. She infers that some of these women eventually became comfort women.⁶¹ Another brothel in Tainan, named Sengetsurō, had 64 women registered under the Korean owner Ch'oe. When Ch'oe returned to Korea in 1942, 24 women also returned home,⁶² but the fate of the remaining 40 remains uncertain.

7. Toyokawa Akiyoshi: A Korean Collaborator

As noted earlier, in addition to Korean brothels, nearly 50 restaurants were

⁵⁹ Minoru Shigemura, "Tokuyōin toiu na no butai [A Unit Called Special Task Force]," p. 223.

⁶⁰ *Tokuyōin* (特要員) was a term used in the Navy for comfort women. Minoru Shigemura, "Tokuyōin toiu na no butai [A Unit Called Special Task Force]," p. 224.

⁶¹ Jungwon JIN, "Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan]," p. 120, footnote 32.

⁶² Jungwon JIN, "Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan]," p. 120, footnote 32.

run by Korean owners in colonial Taiwan. These establishments employed barmaids whose primary role was to serve beverages and entertain customers. Although it was illegal, many of these women also engaged in sex work. “Toyokawa Akiyoshi (豊川晃吉),” a native of Jeju Island, is mentioned in declassified army documents as one of the three contact persons responsible for procuring comfort women for the Southern Expeditionary Army Group (*Nanpō sōgun* 南方總軍) deployed in Borneo. He operated a restaurant in Keelung named Meigetsutei (明月亭).⁶³

According to Zhu De-lan, a Taiwanese expert on comfort women, Toyokawa, aside from his own family members, had a total of 43 individuals (30 employees and 13 co-inhabitants) registered under his household between March 1933 and October 1944, 38 of whom were female and 5 males. Among the 38 females, 21 were below the age of 20 (11 from Korea; 8 from Okinawa, and 2 from Japan); and 11 between 21-25 years old (4 Koreans; 5 Okinawans, and 2 Japanese); and 6 between 26-35 years old (5 Koreans and 1 Okinawan). Of the individuals registered, 17 stayed in Taiwan for less than one year, while 25 remained for over a year.⁶⁴ Zhu speculates that these women were brought in from Korea and Japan, later shipped to Borneo to serve as comfort women after staying at Toyokawa’s establishment.⁶⁵ NHK crews, who visited Keelung and interviewed Toyokawa’s wife, confirmed that he went to Borneo with five women (four Koreans and one Okinawan) but no additional details are known.⁶⁶

Toyokawa likely gained the favor of the local Military Police Corps (Kempeitai), which designated him as one of the three procurers of comfort women due to his patriotic attitude.⁶⁷ According to a *Taiwan nichinichi sinpō*

⁶³ NHK, “Dokumentarii special: Ajia no jūgun ianfu 51nenme no koe [Documentary Special: Asian Military Comfort Women — Voices 51 Years Later],” Broadcasted on December 28, 1996. Available at: <https://vimeo.com/869794198>, accessed May 15, 2024.

⁶⁴ De-lan Zhu, *Taiwan weianfu* [Taiwan’s Comfort Women] (Taipei: Wunan, 2009), pp. 333-334.

⁶⁵ De-lan Zhu, *Taiwan weianfu* [Taiwan’s Comfort Women], p. 335.

⁶⁶ NHK, “Dokumentarii special: Ajia no jūgun ianfu 51nenme no koe [Documentary Special: Asian Military Comfort Women — Voices 51 Years Later],” Broadcasted on December 28, 1996. Available at: <https://vimeo.com/869794198>, accessed May 15, 2024.

⁶⁷ “Nanpō haken tokōsha ni kansuru ken 〈南方派遣渡航者に関する件〉 [On People Dispatched to the South],” (March 1942), *Rikuumitsu Daiinikki* 《陸軍密大日記》 [Army Classified Documents] No. 22, 2/3, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, National Archive of Japan, Ref.: C01000379100. The other two were Japanese, one male and one female. The man was the owner of a brothel in Keelung and had formerly been a corporal in the Military Police Corps. See De-lan Zhu, *Taiwan weianfu* [Taiwan’s Comfort Women], p. 330.

article from May 1943, Toyokawa—referred to as “president (of the Korean Association in Keelung 半島人協和會)”—led a contingent of 150-member to attend the Keelung Shinto Shrine. This was in response to the military’s announcement that they would accept applications for the Navy Special Volunteers System from subjects of the Japanese colonies, including Koreans. Toyokawa also made formal visits to the Naval Affairs Office and the Military Police Corps in Keelung, donating money to each agency.⁶⁸

After the war, Toyokawa did not return to Korea. Like other Koreans and Taiwanese who had adopted Japanese names during colonial rule, Toyokawa changed his name back to “Yim Du-uk (任斗旭).”⁶⁹ According to the 1947 Register, where his name appears first, he was 40 years old, originally from Jeju Island, South Chōlla Province, and had arrived in Taiwan in June 1924. Yim served as the president of the Korean Association in Taiwan and facilitated the settlement of Korean fishermen and their families in Taiwan.⁷⁰ The fates of the women listed in his family register during the Japanese era remain largely unknown, except for one, Tatsu (龍) from Miyazaki Prefecture, Japan, who became Yim’s wife and bore him three children.⁷¹

8. Data from Travel Permits from Taiwan to China

There is additional data suggesting that comfort women who were trafficked overseas from Korea via Taiwan were experienced sex workers. Fujinaga Takashi’s study shows that in 1939, 577 Korean women (an increase from 110 in the previous year) moved from Korea to Taiwan, while 656 Korean women (compared to 165 the year before) were shipped from Taiwan to mainland

⁶⁸ See *Taiwan nichinichi sinpō* [Taiwan Daily News], May 16, 1943, p. 2. Earlier that year, Toyokawa led a 50-member contingent of Koreans to visit wounded soldiers at the Army Hospital in Keelung after attending the Keelung Shrine. They donated magazines to the patients. *Taiwan nichinichi sinpō* [Taiwan Daily News], March 12, 1943, p. 3.

⁶⁹ De-lan Zhu, *Taiwan weianfu* [Taiwan’s Comfort Women], p. 332.

⁷⁰ For more, see Yoshihisa Amae, “Taiwan kankyō no posuto koroniaru: Yim Du-uk Taiwan kankyō kyōkai rijichō wo chūshin ni [Postcolonial Bodies: A Tale of Yim Duuk and Ethnic Koreans in Postwar Taiwan, 1945-1970],” pp. 28-47.

⁷¹ Kim Chwa-ja (金佐子), interviewed by the author, Kaohsiung City, December 31, 2018.

China.⁷² The same study indicates that out of the 1,869 women (and men) who received a travel permit from the Government-General of Taiwan to travel to South China between November 1938 and January 1940 as “employees of comfort stations (慰安所従業員/慰安所關係),” 607 were Koreans (see Figure 4).⁷³ These figures suggest that Taiwan served as a midpoint in a triangular sex trade between the Japanese Empire and South China. Of the 577 women who arrived from Korea in 1939, 321 (55.6%) were classified under the “commercial sector (商業),” which included the “hospitality industry,” while 221 (38.3%) were categorized as “unemployed (無職).” In 1940, among a total of 432 individuals, 168 (38.8%) belonged to the “commercial sector,” and 232 (53.7%) were “unemployed.” As for Korean women who traveled from Taiwan to China, among the 656 in 1939 and 143 in 1940, 53 (8%) and 73 (51%) were recorded as “unemployed,” respectively.⁷⁴ These data indicate that, during these two years, nearly half (38-53%) of Korean women were categorized as “unemployed,” with the notable exception of those who went to China in 1939 (8%). Fujinaga infers that the unemployed women may have been inexperienced individuals recruited through deception and abduction.⁷⁵

⁷² Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 102.

⁷³ Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 102. This number might include comfort station managers and other male employees, as the gender of the employers is specified by using the Chinese character “婦 (women)” only on two occasions. Fujinaga points out that the surge in the number of women from November 1937 to March 1938 and from October 1939 to December 1939 coincides with the Japanese military operations in China, namely the Guangdong Operation and the Nanning Operation. See Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 105. This data differs from that of Komagome, who calculated the total numbers as 1,590 (807 Japanese, 523 Koreans, and 260 Taiwanese). See Takashi Komagome, “Taiwan shokuminchi shihai to Taiwanjin ‘ianfu’ [Colonial Rule of Taiwan and Taiwanese ‘Comfort Women’], pp. 140-141.

⁷⁴ While the remaining women were classified under the “commercial sector,” in 1939, 451 women (446 departing from Takao and 5 from Taihoku) were categorized as having “other jobs.” Among these, 437 went to Guangdong Province. See Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 104, Table 13-2.

⁷⁵ Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 105.

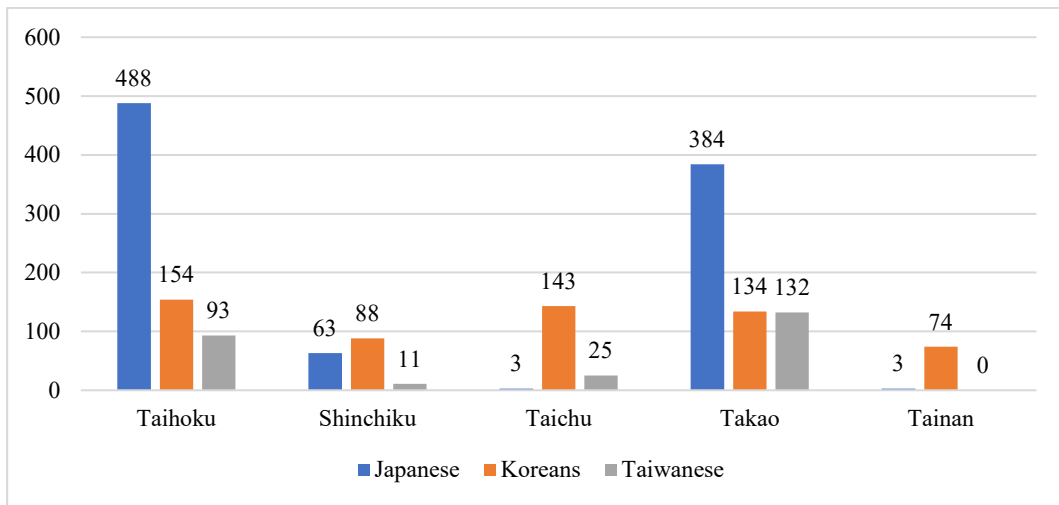


Figure 4: Number of Comfort Women Traveling to South China from Five Prefectures (*shū*) in Taiwan, November 1938 - January 1940.

Note: I did not include in this figure Hōko/Penghu (澎湖) Prefecture and Taitō/Taitung (臺東) Prefecture, which had 73 (57 Japanese, 13 Koreans, and 3 Taiwanese) and 1 (Korean) respectively.

Source: Takeshi Fujinaga, “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 106.

There were also Koreans trafficked to Okinawa from Taiwan as comfort women. At the end of 1944, an Okinawan doctor on Miyako Island, sent by the military to Taipei to procure medical supplies, boarded a military vessel that carried 53 Korean comfort women on his return to Miyako. The ship, which departed from Keelung, was attacked by a US plane the next morning off Yonaguni Island, killing 46 women and 2 military personnel who were escorting them.⁷⁶

9. Korean Comfort Women Survivor Testimonials

The 1947 Register and government archive police records provide personal information about Korean women but not their stories. Unlike comfort women

⁷⁶ Okinawa kyōiku iinkai [Okinawa Board of Education], ed., *Okinawa kenshi* [History of Okinawa Prefecture] (Tokyo: Tosho kankō kai, 1989), Vol. 10, pp. 260-262.

survivors, whose experiences are well-documented due to the attention following Kim Hak-sun's (金學順) public testimony in 1991, little is known about ex-Korean sex workers like Yi Chun and Sök Hwak-sil, who did not return to Korea. Personal testimonials by Korean comfort women survivors are thus valuable sources for understanding the postwar lives of these women who were left behind in what was once the outer territories of the Japanese Empire.

In the collection of testimonials compiled by the Korean Council in 2000, there are three testimonials (out of a total 34) by ex-Korean comfort women who were brought to Taiwan during the war;⁷⁷ all three managed to return to Korea after the war.

Yi Ok-gun (李玉粉), born in 1926 in North Kyōngsang Province, was the only girl in the family. She recounted being duped by “a Japanese man and a Korean man” who brought her to Taiwan together with around 30 other girls. At just 12 years old, she was taken to Shōka (present-day Changhua) comfort station, which she described as “the headquarters of comfort stations on the island.”⁷⁸ Initially, there were 40 women, but on the second day, seven women were sent elsewhere. According to her, the master of the comfort station was a Japanese man in his 40s. After realizing that Yi had not yet reached 14, which was the minimum age to take a customer by law in Taiwan [sic],⁷⁹ he assigned her to work as a maid in the comfort station. Horrified after discovering what the women were forced to endure there, Yi fled to a local police station, where the authorities helped her contact her family in Korea. However, when a police officer visited her mother, she denied that her daughter was missing, likely out of fear. The police chief then decided to hire Yi as a nanny, but when he and his family were recalled to Japan in 1942, he failed to pay her wages and reported her to the military. She was subsequently taken away and sent to Takao, where she was forced to serve as a comfort woman in the military barracks for the “special attack unit (*tokkōtai*).”⁸⁰ At the *Tokkōtai* comfort station, Yi, along with 40 other comfort women, were

⁷⁷ Korea Chongshindae's Institute, ed., Zhenlie Jin and Yibing Huang, trans., *Beilüewang qinglüe zhanzheng de weianfu* [Comfort Women in Invaded Areas and Battlefields] (Beijing: Zhongguo Wenshi chubanshe, 2001).

⁷⁸ Apart from these testimonials, there is no other evidence to prove that a comfort station existed in Changhua.

⁷⁹ This may be an error. According to the law, the minimum age would have been 16 for *shōgi* (prostitutes) and 12 for *geigi* (geisha) and *shakufu* (barmaids). See Jungwon JIN, “Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan],” p. 127.

⁸⁰ This special attack unit was called *Shinyōtai* (震洋隊), a troop of one-man motorboats, each loaded with a ton of high explosives.

compelled to have sex with 20 to 30 soldiers daily. The men used condoms, and the women underwent physical checkups bi-monthly. As US air raids intensified, the women spent the night in shelters with the soldiers, entertaining them by singing, dancing, and serving alcohol. It was during this time that Yi learned to play the violin and sing *gunka* (Japanese war songs). The soldiers would slap the women when dissatisfied with their performances.⁸¹

Yi was 21 years old when the war ended. She vividly recalls listening to the surrender broadcast on August 15. The next day, the owner of the comfort station and the female manager fled. While Japanese soldiers were repatriated, the Korean women were abandoned, becoming vulnerable to exploitative Taiwanese men who coerced them into working in bars, wearing Chinese dresses, serving alcohols, and singing Chinese songs. They frequently had to relocate to evade the authorities. Eventually, after more than a year, Yi and another ex-comfort woman managed to escape and were rescued by an American ship repatriating Koreans released from US POW camps.⁸² They arrived in Busan four days later, where Yi was reunited with her family.⁸³

Pak T'u-ri (朴頭理) and Kim Pun-sŏn (金分善) are two other women who ended up in Taiwan as comfort women. Park, like Yi, was sent to Shōka, while Kim was taken to Shinchiku (present-day Hsinchu 新竹) and later to Manila. Their wartime experiences were similar, as the Japanese female manager of the comfort station collected money from soldiers and treated the Korean girls harshly, forcing them to serve 20 to 30 men daily. Kim, however, recalls some sympathetic Japanese soldiers who befriended the girls. One officer named Yamamoto (山本), distinguished by “three (or four) stars on his shoulder,” was especially kind: he purchased Kim a ticket to Korea and assisted her in shipping her luggage.⁸⁴

Pak returned to Korea after the war with a Korean man working at the comfort station. Although she wished to marry him, she abandoned the idea upon

⁸¹ Korea Chongshindae's Institute, ed., Zhenlie Jin and Yibing Huang, trans., *Beilüewang qinglüe zhanzheng de weianfu* [Comfort Women in Invaded Areas and Battlefields], p. 101.

⁸² Korea Chongshindae's Institute, ed., Zhenlie Jin and Yibing Huang, trans., *Beilüewang qinglüe zhanzheng de weianfu* [Comfort Women in Invaded Areas and Battlefields], p. 103.

⁸³ Korea Chongshindae's Institute, ed., Zhenlie Jin and Yibing Huang, trans., *Beilüewang qinglüe zhanzheng de weianfu* [Comfort Women in Invaded Areas and Battlefields], p. 104.

⁸⁴ Korea Chongshindae's Institute, ed., Zhenlie Jin and Yibing Huang, trans., *Beilüewang qinglüe zhanzheng de weianfu* [Comfort Women in Invaded Areas and Battlefields], p. 341.

discovering he had a family in Seoul.⁸⁵ All three women experienced unhappy postwar lives, unable to tell their families the truth about their pasts and instead claiming they had worked in factories. Many comfort women survivors suffered from loneliness due to failed marriages and social discrimination, with some forgoing marriage altogether, knowing that they could not conceive due to damaged wombs.

None of the three appear in the 1947 Register, indicating that they likely left Taiwan by the time the survey was conducted. While it is impossible to determine the exact number, it appears that the majority of women brought to Taiwan to work in local brothels or comfort stations had left the island either before or after the war.⁸⁶

10. Women Left Behind

After the comfort women issue came into light in Korea in 1991, women's group activists in Taiwan began searching for former comfort women on the island, identifying 48 survivors.⁸⁷ Among them was a Korean woman, named Noh Myōng-sŏn (盧命仙), who lived in the southern seaport of Donggang (東港), Pingtung County.⁸⁸ According to interviews conducted by the Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation, Noh was brought to Taiwan by a Korean broker along with nine other young girls when she was "16 years old."⁸⁹ Her name appears in the 1947 Register, which lists her as being 27 years old, from South Chungcheong Province, and having arrived in Taiwan in "April 1936."⁹⁰ Noh is marked as "should be deported."

⁸⁵ Korea Chongshindae's Institute, ed., Zhenlie Jin and Yibing Huang, trans., *Beilüewang qinglüe zhanzheng de weianfu* [Comfort Women in Invaded Areas and Battlefields], p. 268.

⁸⁶ Among the 1,974 Koreans who were repatriated from Taiwan in 1946, 1,146 (58%) were women. See Peiping Xie, ed., *Zhanhou qiansong waiqiao fanguo shiliao huibian 1: Hanqiao bian* [Repatriated Migrants after World War II: A Documentary Collection, Vol. 1: Koreans], p. 684.

⁸⁷ Women's Rescue Foundation, ed., *Taiwan weianfu baogao* [A Report on Taiwan's Comfort Women] (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 1999), p. 84.

⁸⁸ Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation, "Noh Myōng-sŏn," June 1 and June 15, 1992, audio material C103 and C105, National Taiwan University Library. The interview was conducted in Taiwanese Hokkien. I thank Ms. Yvonne Lin for providing the Chinese transcript.

⁸⁹ Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation, "Noh Myōng-sŏn," June 15, 1992, audio material C105.

⁹⁰ The Chinese character for her name in the 1947 Register is "盧明仙".

Noh was trafficked to Taiwan by a “male ginseng seller” who deceived her into believing that Taiwan was a fun place with plenty of money. Her parents consented to her departure because a fortune teller had predicted that their daughter would die at age 17. The girls were not told what they would be doing in Taiwan. It took a week to reach Taiwan on the ship that was loaded with many Japanese soldiers. Noh was forced to serve as a comfort woman in Nantou (南投) for Japanese soldiers for “two years,” before being taken to Manila, where she remained until the war ended in 1945.⁹¹ In Nantou, there were two restaurants/bars: one was run by a Korean and another by a Japanese. In Manila, where there were more Japanese soldiers, she was compelled to have sex with 40 soldiers daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Korean manager kept all the earnings for himself and would physically abuse the girls whenever they refused to work.

After the war, Noh and the other girls were brought back to Taiwan. However, the Korean manager died shortly thereafter, leaving them to fend for themselves. Unable to return to Korea, she worked as a maid at a travel agency in Donggang for 10 years.⁹² At age 28, Noh married a local Taiwanese man from Donggang who was 40 years old.⁹³ However, since she could not tolerate the husband abusing his children from the previous marriage (two girls and three boys), after 10 years she left him and moved to Tainan, where she worked as a maid in a hotel and also cooked and did laundry for other people.⁹⁴ Noh was unable to have her own children because the Korean manager had forced her to take contraceptive drugs while she was a comfort woman. In 1982, she remarried another Taiwanese man from Donggang, who was kind and treated her well. Their

⁹¹ In her own words: “去馬尼拉也是賺日本兵。我先在南投做兩年，才被帶馬尼拉，戰後就回來臺灣……。” She later mentioned staying in Manila for “one year;” however, no exact dates were provided during the interview. Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation, “Noh Myōng-sōn,” June 1, 1992, audio material C103.

⁹² When asked if she ever thought of returning to Korea, Noh replied that when she was 33, they heard that a ship was coming, so they went to Keelung and waited there. After three months she gave up and returned to Donggang. Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation, “Noh Myōng-sōn,” June 15, 1992, audio material C105.

⁹³ Noh’s marriage is confirmed in the Kaohsiung County police records, July 10, 1948, *Keyi fenzi kaoguan: Diaocha waidie, jianfei keyi fenzi an* 《可疑分子考管：調查外諜、奸匪可疑份子案》 [Examination and Management of Suspicious Persons: Investigating Cases of Foreign Spies and Bandits and Suspicious Persons], National Police Agency, Ministry of the Interior Archives (New Taipei: NAA), CN: AA01010000C/0037/301.1/0004, Available at: <https://aa.archives.gov.tw>.

⁹⁴ Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation, “Noh Myōng-sōn,” June 1, 1992, audio material C103. However, when Noh was interviewed a second time, she said she left the marriage because “she did not get along with the children.” Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation, “Noh Myōng-sōn,” June 15, 1992, audio material C105.

marriage lasted until he passed away in 1988. Noh had never disclosed her past to either of her husbands and knew little about the fates of the other Korean girls, except for one who visited her “40 years ago.”⁹⁵ In the interview, she expressed that she would rather stay in Taiwan because she is already old, does not speak Korean, and does not know where her younger brother is living.⁹⁶ She also said she has already been naturalized (我已經歸化做臺灣人了).⁹⁷

Noh is the only Korean comfort woman publicly known to have remained in Taiwan.⁹⁸ However, there are two other women listed in the 1947 Register who are also believed to have been comfort women: Kim Yǒng-ae (金英愛) and Ch’oe San-su (崔三守). According to the 1947 Register, Kim Yǒng-ae, aged 22 and from North Kyōngsang Province, is marked as “willing to return to the homeland.”⁹⁹ My source, Yi Yǒng-ja (pseudonym), a senior member of the Korean community, informed me that Kim remained in Taiwan after the war and ran an inn in Yilan County, which she inherited from a Taiwanese man with whom she had a relationship. The inn was popular with lumberjacks working in the nearby Mount Taiping (太平山). Yi, who lived there as a child, recalls Kim asking her to call the “*nee-chan* (姉ちゃん)” for the male customers.¹⁰⁰ She remembers her pocket being full of coins as tips by both the girls and the men.¹⁰¹ Eventually, Kim fell in love with a retired soldier named Son (孫), who once served in the ROC military. Son, who came to Taiwan in 1949, was born and raised in Manchuria and had a Korean mother. Kim sold the property, married Son, and the two moved to Keelung where Son worked as a Chinese teacher in the Korean School. She died in 1997 and is buried alongside her husband in a public cemetery in Keelung.¹⁰²

Ch’oe San-su is another alleged comfort woman survivor I learned about from the same source. Ch’oe, from South Kyōngsang Province, was 24 years old

⁹⁵ Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation, “Noh Myōng-sōn,” June 1 and June 15, 1992, audio material C103 and C105.

⁹⁶ Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation, “Noh Myōng-sōn,” June 1, 1992, audio material C103.

⁹⁷ Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation, “Noh Myōng-sōn,” June 15, 1992, audio material C105.

⁹⁸ Noh, along with two other women, testified at a press conference organized by the Taipei Women Rescue Foundation on August 14, 1992. See *Lianhe bao* [United Daily News], August 15, 1992, p. 1.

⁹⁹ It is unclear when Kim arrived in Taiwan. The date of arrival to China (來華年月) is listed “as same as (同)” alongside five minors who were “born in Taiwan (在臺出生).” This is probably an error, as all others in the Register who were “born in Taiwan” are minors.

¹⁰⁰ *Nee-chan*, a casual term for “older sister” in Japanese, is used here to refer to prostitutes.

¹⁰¹ Yi Yǒng-ja 李榮子 (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Kaohsiung City, August 26, 2023.

¹⁰² Yi Yǒng-ja (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Kaohsiung City, August 26, 2023.

when she came to Taiwan in “April 1936,” the same date listed for Noh in the 1947 Register. As both women are recorded as living in Kaohsiung County, Ch’oe could have been the friend who visited Noh after the war. She, like Noh, is marked as “should be deported.” Ch’oe was the surrogate mother of my source,¹⁰³ but due to her neglect and abuse, the father, who worked on the ship and was often absent, arranged for another woman to care for the child.¹⁰⁴ However, there is no concrete evidence to confirm that they were indeed ex-comfort women. My source learned about their past indirectly through neighbors in the Korean community who spoke of them as “comfort women.” Neither Kim nor Ch’oe had children of their own.

Through my conversation with senior members of the Korean community, many of whom are second-generation *hanqiao* born in the 1930s, I discovered that adoptions were common in the early post-WWII Korean community. Many women were unable to conceive and thus adopted Taiwanese children. Their infertility might have been linked to the fact that many young women who remained in Taiwan were former sex workers. Given that a number of women had married Korean men before the 1947 Register was compiled, it is reasonable to assume that the actual number of single women who remained in Taiwan after WWII exceeded 48.¹⁰⁵

11. Conclusion: Beyond the Binarism of Prostitutes versus Comfort Women

More than 50 young single Korean women remained in Taiwan after WWII. Based on circumstantial evidence, these women were mostly ex-sex workers who were trafficked to Taiwan in the 1930s and 40s. While the full picture is not clear, some were sent to South China and other territories in the Asia-Pacific as comfort women via Taiwan. The 1947 Register lists 48 names — 16 marked for deportation,

¹⁰³ My source told me that her biological mother was also a comfort woman. She became mentally ill not long after giving birth to her and was subsequently deported to Korea. Others, however, told me that Yǒng-ja was adopted from a Taiwanese family.

¹⁰⁴ Yi Yǒng-ja (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Kaohsiung City, August 26, 2023.

¹⁰⁵ There are about 20 women in the Register who are married to Koreans and under 25 years old. Most of them likely married after the war ended in August 1945.

18 married to local men, and 6 with unknown whereabouts. These marriages were likely arranged to help the women stay legally on the island.

Why did they not return to Korea after the war? Perhaps they lacked the means, became bound by new contracts, or were coerced into forced marriages. It is also possible that some did not wish to return, particularly if they had been sold by their families or duped into prostitution. For many, home was not a place of longing, but one of shame and rejection.¹⁰⁶

What these women could not foresee was that, after decades of neglect, women like them who were forced to serve Japanese soldiers would become national symbols, commemorated as “daughters of the nation” through statues and memorials.¹⁰⁷ Through mass media and global activism, “comfort women,” or “sex slaves,” became a symbol of anti-Japanese sentiment and a global reference for women’s rights violations. Historian Carol Gluck referred to this as a “traveling trope.”¹⁰⁸ Ironically, when the world was finally ready to hear their stories, many survivors could no longer “speak,”¹⁰⁹ as their voices were often overshadowed by nationalistic and activist narratives that shaped them into “perfect victims.”¹¹⁰

Were Sök Hwak-sil and other 47 women in the 1947 Register prostitutes or comfort women? We do not know, and perhaps it does not matter, as the difference between the two is not as significant as is commonly believed. Many comfort women and prostitutes were deceived by recruiters offering legitimate

¹⁰⁶ Yi Yōng-ok, a comfort woman survivor, noted: “At that time, a woman’s chastity was considered more important than her life. How could I tell people I was raped daily by many soldiers? It would have been a great humiliation to my parents. Many times, I regretted coming back home alive. It would have been better for me to die there...” See Pyong Gap Min, “Korean ‘Comfort Women’: The Intersection of Colonial Power, Gender, and Class,” *Gender and Society* (Newbury Park) 17: 6 (December 2003), p. 950.

¹⁰⁷ Yuha Park, *Comfort Women of the Japanese Empire: Colonial Rule and the Battle over Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2025), pp. 88-89.

¹⁰⁸ Carol Gluck, “What the World Owes the Comfort Women,” in Jie-Hyun Lim and Eve Rosenhaft, eds., *Mnemonic Solidarity: Global Interventions* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), p. 141.

¹⁰⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Subaltern Talk: Interview with the Editors,” in Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, eds., *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 287-308. Spivak explains that “speak” is not the same as “talk,” and that speaking and hearing together complete the speech act. Also, see C. Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 181-190.

¹¹⁰ For example, see C. Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*, pp. 103-105; and Yuha Park, *Comfort Women of the Japanese Empire: Colonial Rule and the Battle over Memory*, pp. 98-99.

jobs or sold into prostitution due to family poverty. They were trapped in indentured servitude, sexually exploited, and suffered long-lasting physical and psychological trauma. It is incorrect to assume that all prostitutes entered the profession voluntarily and therefore do not deserve sympathy, while comfort women were all forced by the Japanese military into becoming “sex slaves” and thus deserve greater empathy. It would also be incorrect to conjecture that the lives of comfort women were worse than those of prostitutes.¹¹¹ In many cases, prostitutes became comfort women, making it difficult to clearly separate the two groups. Furthermore, the military comfort women system did not emerge in isolation; it was supported by a network of licensed prostitution within the Japanese empire. As some works have pointed out, the comfort women system was an extension of the licensed prostitution system that had existed in Japan since the Meiji period.¹¹²

It should also be noted that “military comfort women” outlived the Japanese Empire. During the Korean War, the Korean Army established “special comfort units,” and thousands of women—many of them from orphanages and impoverished backgrounds—were exploited as “US military comfort women (*migun wianbu*)” near American bases in South Korea under the Cold War setting.¹¹³

¹¹¹ It is often believed that one of the differences between comfort women and prostitutes is the number of men they had to service each day. There were cases where prostitutes in prewar Japan and its colonies had to serve 20 to 30 men daily. See Yōn-ok Song, “Kōshō seido kara ‘ianfu’ seido e no rekishiteki tenkai [Historical Development From the Licensed Prostitution System to the ‘Comfort Women’ System],” in VAWW-NET Japan, ed., *‘ianfu’: Senji seibōryoku no jittai I: Nihon, Taiwan, Chōsen hen* [“Comfort Women” and the Actual Situation of Wartime Sexual Violence, Vol. I: Japan, Taiwan, and Korea], p. 32 and footnote 20.

¹¹² Yōn-ok Song, “Kōshō seido kara ‘ianfu’ seido e no rekishiteki tenkai [Historical Development From the Licensed Prostitution System to the ‘Comfort Women’ System],” pp. 20-41; and Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Kaishun suru teikoku: nihongun “ianfu” mondai no kitei* [Empire of Prostitution: The Foundation of the Imperial Japanese Army’s “Comfort Women” Problem] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2019).

¹¹³ See C. Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*, pp. 215-217; Young-hoon Rhee, ed., Chizuko T. Allen, trans., *Anti-Japan Tribalism: The Root of the Korean Crisis*, pp. 211-217; and Jeong-ja Kim, *Kankoku kichimura no beigun “ianfu”: kokka bōryoku wo tou josei no koe* [“Comfort Women” in US Military Base Villages in South Korea: Women’s Voices Accusing State Violence] (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2023). Surprisingly, postwar Koreans referred to sex workers serving U.S. servicemen near military bases, as well as civilians, as “comfort women” (*wianbu*) until the 1960s. By the 1970s, civilian sex workers were no longer called “comfort women,” although the term “US comfort women” appeared in government documents until the 1990s. See Young-hoon Rhee, ed., Chizuko T. Allen, trans., *Anti-Japan Tribalism: The Root of the Korean Crisis*, p. 215.

Whether Sök was a prostitute, a comfort woman, or both, her untimely death in 1950 — be it by suicide or homicide — was undoubtedly connected to her past of being forced to sell her body. Her failed marriage and mental illness reflect the enduring trauma. Women like her were victims not only of imperialism and capitalism, which commodified female bodies for men's sexual pleasure and transported them overseas, but also of patriarchal ideology and Confucius notions of female chastity that justified men's dominance and denied women agency.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, the Cold War and Korea's division made it impossible for someone like her, from the North, to return home. Whether Sök wanted to return, we may never know. For many women like her, however, "home" had become a distant and unattainable place, as their lives were adrift like small boats on the turbulent seas of empire.

¹¹⁴ Chizuko Ueno, *Nashonarizumu to jendaa* [Nationalism and Gender] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2012), p. 103.

References

- Lianhe bao* 《聯合報》 [United Daily News]
- Taiwan minsheng ribao* 《臺灣民聲日報》 [Taiwan People's Voice Daily]
- Taiwan nichinichi sinpō* 《臺灣日日新報》 [Taiwan Daily News]
- Taiwan xinshengbao* 《台灣新生報》 [Taiwan Xinsheng Daily News]
- “Nanpō haken tokōsha ni kansuru ken 〈南方派遣渡航者に関する件〉 [On People Dispatched to the South],” (March 1942), *Rikuamitsu Daiinikki* 《陸軍密大日記》 [Army Classified Documents] No. 22, 2/3, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, National Archive of Japan, Ref.: C01000379100.
- Academia Historica (AH) Archives 「國史館」 檔案, CN: A202000000A/0036/474/1262/31/024. New Taipei: National Archives Administration (NAA).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives 「外交部」 檔案, CN: 020-110400-0010. Taipei: Academia Historica (AH).
- National Police Agency, Ministry of the Interior Archives 「內政部警政署」 檔案, CN: AA01010000C/0037/301.1/0004. New Taipei: National Archives Administration (NAA).
- Tainan City Government Archives 「臺南市政府」 檔案, CN: A376610000A/0035/B065.1/1/13/003. New Taipei: National Archives Administration (NAA).
- Taipei City Government Archives 「臺北市政府」 檔案, CN: A379000000A/0037/133.53/1. New Taipei: National Archives Administration (NAA).
- Taiwan Provincial Chief Executive's Office Archives 「臺灣省行政長官公署」 檔案, CN: 00306510041003. Nantou: Taiwan Historica (TH).
- NHK, “Dokumentarii special: Ajia no jūgun ianfu 51nenme no koe 〈ドキュメンタリースペシャル：アジアの従軍慰安婦：51年目の声〉 [Documentary Special: Asian Military Comfort Women — Voices 51 Years Later],” Broadcasted on December 28, 1996. Available at: <https://vimeo.com/869794198>, accessed May 15, 2024.
- Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation 臺北市婦女救援基金會, “Noh Myōng-sŏn 盧命仙,” June 1 and June 15, 1992, audio material C103 and C105, National Taiwan University Library.
- Kim Il-che 金日濟, interviewed by the author, Kaohsiung City, October 19, 2016.
- Kim Chwa-ja 金佐子, interviewed by the author, Kaohsiung City, December 31, 2018.
- Yi Yōng-ja 李榮子 (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Kaohsiung City, August 26, 2023.
- An, Byeong-jik 安秉直, ed., Kazuo Hori 堀和生 and Kan Kimura 木村幹, trans., *Biruma Singapōru no jūgun ianjo* 《ビルマ・シンガポールの従軍慰安所》 [Comfort Stations in Burma and Singapore] (2013). Available at: *nadesiko-action*, http://nadesiko-action.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/comort_women_diary.pdf, accessed January 15, 2024.
- “US-11 Japanese Prisoner of War Interrogation Report No. 49: Korean Comfort Women, 1944,” (October 1, 1944), *Comfort Women Resource Center*. Available at: https://international.ucla.edu/cks/care/us_allieddocs/250902, accessed October 15, 2024.
- Akamine, Mamoru 赤嶺守 (ed.)
- 2018 “Okinawa sekimin” no Taiwan hikiage shōgen shiryōshū 《「沖縄籍民」の台湾引揚げ証言・資

料集》[A Collection of Testimonies and Documents of “Okinawans” Who Repatriated From Taiwan]. Naha: Kokusai insatsu.

Amae, Yoshihisa 天江喜久

- 2020 “Taiwan kankyō no postcolonial: Yim Du-uk Taiwan kankyō kyōkai rijichō wo chūshin ni 〈台湾韓僑のポストコロニアル：任斗旭・台湾韓僑協会理事長を中心に〉 [Postcolonial Bodies: A Tale of Yim Duuk and Ethnic Koreans in Postwar Taiwan, 1945-1970],” *Ritsumeikan Ajia Nihon kenkyū gakujutsu nenpō* 《立命館アジア・日本研究学術年報》[Annual Review of Asia-Japan Research at Ritsumeikan] (Ibaraki) 1: 28-47.

An, Seong-su 安城秀

- 2011 “Jidujiao chuanbo yu Taiwan gangshi de hanren yimin: Yi Jilong Hanguo jiaohui wei zhongxin 〈基督教傳播與臺灣港市的韓人移民：以基隆韓國教會為中心〉 [Propagation of Christianity and Korean Immigration in Taiwan Port City: A Focus on Korean Church in Keelung].” MA thesis, National Taiwan Ocean University.

Asano, Toyomi 浅野豊美

- 2008 “Kita Biruma Yunnan sensen ni okeru nihongun no sakusen tenkai to ‘ianfu’ tachi 〈北ビルマ雲南戦線における日本軍の作戦展開と「慰安婦」達〉 [“Comfort Women” and the Japanese Military’s Operations on the Yunnan Front in North Burma].” In Gunjishi gakkai, ed., *Nichū sensō sairon* 《日中戦争再論》[Revisiting the Sino-Japanese War], pp. 296-322. Tokyo: Kinseisha.

Fujime, Yuki 藤目ゆき

- 2002 “Nihonjin ‘ianfu’ wo fukashi ni suru mono 〈日本人「慰安婦」を不可視にするもの〉 [What Makes Japanese “Comfort Women” Invisible].” In VAWW-NET Japan, ed., *Sabakareta senji seibōryoku* 《裁かれた戦時性暴力》[Wartime Sexual Violence Under Trial], pp. 88-108. Tokyo: Hakutakusha.

Fujinaga, Takeshi 藤永壮

- 2000 “Chōsen shokuminchi shakai to ‘ianfu’ seido no seiritsu katei 〈朝鮮植民地社会と「慰安婦」制度の成立過程〉 [The Establishment of the “Comfort Women” System in Korean Colonial Society].” In VAWW-NET Japan, ed., *‘Iantfu’: Senji seibōryoku no jittai I: Nihon, Taiwan, Chōsen hen* 《「慰安婦」：戦時性暴力の実態 I — 日本・台湾・朝鮮編》 [“Comfort Women” and the Actual Situation of Wartime Sexual Violence, Vol. I: Japan, Taiwan, and Korea], pp. 196-231. Tokyo: Ryokufu shuppan.
- 2001 “Shokuminchi Taiwan ni okeru Chōsenjin sekkyakugyō to ‘ianfu’ no dōin 〈植民地台湾における朝鮮人接客業と「慰安婦」の動員〉 [A Statistical Study on Hostess Service Trade of Koreans and the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Colonial Taiwan].” In Osaka Sangyō Daigaku Sangyō Kenkyūjo, ed., *Kindai shakai to baishun mondai* 《近代社会と売春問題》 [A Study on Modern Prostitution], pp. 81-116. Osaka: Osaka Sangyō Daigaku Sangyō Kenkyūjo.
- 2005 “Shokuminchi kōshō seido to nihongun ‘ianfu’ seido 〈植民地公娼制度と日本軍「慰安婦」制度〉 [Colonial Licensed Prostitution System and the Japanese Military ‘Comfort Women’ System].” In

- Noriyo Hayakawa, ed., *Shokuminchi to sensō sekinin* 《植民地と戦争責任》 [Colonialism and War Responsibility], pp. 7-38. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- 2005 “Teikoku Nihon to shokuminchi kōshō seido: Taiwan no jirei wo chūshin ni 〈帝国日本と植民地公娼制度：台湾の事例を中心に〉 [Imperial Japan and the Colonial Licensed Prostitution System: Focusing on the Case of Taiwan],” *Teikoku shisutemu no seiji bunka teki hikaku kenkyū* 《帝国システムの政治・文化的比較研究》 [Comparative Studies of the Political and Cultural Aspects of Imperial Systems] (Kyoto) 11: 1-2.
- 2013 “Senjiki Chōsen ni okeru ‘ianfu’ dōin no ‘ryugen’ ‘zogen’ wo megutte 〈戦時期朝鮮における「慰安婦」動員の「流言」「造言」をめぐって〉 [Concerning the ‘Rumors’ and ‘Fabrications’ of the Mobilization of ‘Comfort Women’ in Wartime Korea].” In Toshihiko Matsuda and Jungwon JIN, eds., *Chiiki shakai kara miru teikoku nihon to syokuminchi: Chōsen, Taiwan, Manshū* 《地域社会から見る帝国日本と植民地：朝鮮・台湾・満州》 [Imperial Japan and Its Colonies From the Perspective of Local Communities: Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria], pp. 723-755. Kyoto: Shibunkaku.
- Gluck, Carol
- 2021 “What the World Owes the Comfort Women.” In Jie-Hyun Lim and Eve Rosenhaft, eds., *Mnemonic Solidarity: Global Interventions*, pp. 111-154. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gugsapyeonchan-wiwonhoe 국사편찬위원회 (國史編纂委員會) [National Institute of Korean History] (ed.)
- 2007 *Jungguk daeman sojae hanguksa jaryo josabogo II* 《중국・대만소재 한국사 자료 조사보고 II (中國・臺灣朝鮮歴史資料研究報告 II)》 [Report on the Survey of Materials on Korean History in China and Taiwan, Vol. II]. Gwacheon: Gugsapyeonchan-wiwonhoe. Online Database: Korea History Database, http://db.history.go.kr/id/fs_014.
- Haruyama, Meitetsu 春山明哲 (ed.)
- 1990 *Taiwan tōnai jōhō hontōjin no dōkō* 《台湾島内情報・本島人の動向》 [Intelligence Inside Taiwan: Trends of the Islanders]. Tokyo: Fuji shuppan.
- Hata, Ikuhiko 秦郁彦
- 2005 *Ianfu to senjō no sei* 《慰安婦と戦場の性》 [Comfort Women and Sex in the Battle Zone]. Tokyo: Shinchōsha.
- Ishihara, Masaie 石原昌家
- 2000 *Kūhaku no Okinawa shakaishi: Senka to mitsubōeki no jidai* 《空白の沖縄社会史：戦果と密貿易の時代》 [The Blank Social History of Okinawa: The Era of Looting and Smuggling]. Tokyo: Banseisha.
- JIN, Jungwon 陳延浚
- 2010 “Zai zhimindi Taiwan shehui jiafengzhong de Chaoxianren changjiye 〈在殖民地臺灣社會夾縫中的朝鮮人娼妓業〉 [Standing in the Gap of Society: Korean Prostitutes in Colonial Taiwan].” *Taiwanshi yanjiu* 《臺灣史研究》 [Taiwan Historical Research] (Taipei) 17(3): 107-149.
- Junghwa minguk haninhoe 중화민국한인회 中華民國韓人協會 [Korean Association in ROC]
- 2019 *Daeman hanin 100nyeonsa* 《대만한인 100 년사 (韓人在臺百年史)》 [Centennial History of Koreans in Taiwan]. Incheon: Daeman hanin 100nyeonsa pyeonchan wiwonhoe.

Kim, Jeong-ja 金貞子

- 2023 *Kankoku kichimura no beigun "ianfu": kokka bōryoku wo tou josei no koe* 《韓国・基地村の米軍「慰安婦」：国家暴力を問う女性の声》 [“Comfort Women” in US Military Base Villages in South Korea: Women's Voices Accusing State Violence]. Tokyo: Akashi shoten.

Komagome, Takeshi 駒込武

- 2000 “Taiwan shokuminchi shihai to Taiwanjin ‘ianfu’ 〈台湾植民地支配と台湾人「慰安婦」〉 [Colonial Rule of Taiwan and Taiwanese ‘Comfort Women’].” In VAWW-NET Japan, ed., *‘ianfu’: Senji seibōryoku no jittai I: Nihon, Taiwan, Chōsen hen* 《「慰安婦」：戦時性暴力の実態 I——日本・台湾・朝鮮編》 [“Comfort Women” and the Actual Situation of Wartime Sexual Violence, Vol. I: Japan, Taiwan, and Korea], pp. 118-155. Tokyo: Ryokufu shuppan.

Korea Chongshindae's Institute 韩国挺身队研究会 (ed.) Zhenlie Jin 金镇烈 and Yibing Huang 黄一兵 (trans.)

- 2001 *Beiluewang qinglüe zhanzheng de weianfu* 《被掠往侵略战场的慰安妇》 [Comfort Women in Invaded Areas and Battlefields]. Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe.

Liao, Xiu-zhen 廖秀真

- 1997 “Nihon shokumin tōchika no Taiwan ni okeru kōshō seido to shōgi ni kansuru shogenshō 〈日本植民統治下の台湾における公娼と娼妓に関する諸現象〉 [Events Relating to Licensed Prostitutes and Prostitutes in Taiwan Under Japanese Colonial Rule].” In Ajia joseishi kokusai symposium jikkō iinkai, ed., *Ajia joseishi: Hikakushi no kokoromi* 《アジア女性史：比較史の試み》 [Asian Women's History: An Attempt at Comparative History], pp. 414-428. Tokyo: Akashi shoten.

Maynes, Katrina

- 2012 “Korean Perceptions of Chastity, Gender Roles, and Libido; From Kisaengs to the Twenty First Century.” *Grand Valley Journal of History* (Allendale) 1(1): 1-19.

Min, Pyong Gap 閔丙甲

- 2003 “Korean ‘Comfort Women’: The Intersection of Colonial Power, Gender, and Class,” *Gender and Society* (Newbury Park) 17(6): 938-957.

Mun, Ok-chu 文玉珠

- 1996 *Biruma sensen Tate shidan no 'ianfu' datta watashi* 《ビルマ戦線楯師団の「慰安婦」だった私》 [I Was a “Comfort Woman” of the Tate Division in the Burma Front]. Tokyo: Nashi no kisha.

Okinawa kyōiku iinkai 沖縄教育委員会 [Okinawa Board of Education] (ed.)

- 1989 *Okinawa kenshi* 《沖縄県史》 [History of Okinawa Prefecture], Vol. 10. Tokyo: Tosho kankō kai.

Park, Yuha

- 2025 *Comfort Women of the Japanese Empire: Colonial Rule and the Battle over Memory*. London and New York: Routledge.

Rhee, Young-hoon 李榮薰 (ed.), Chizuko T. Allen (trans.)

- 2024 *Anti-Japan Tribalism: The Root of the Korean Crisis*. Honolulu: PacRim Marketing Group.

Shigemura, Minoru 重村実

- 1955 “Tokuyōin to iuna no butai 〈特要員と言う名の部隊〉 [A Unit Called Special Task Force].” *Bungei shunjū* 《文芸春秋》 [Annals of Art and Culture] (Tokyo) 33(22): 221-225.

Soh, C. Sarah

- 2008 *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Song, Yŏn-ok 宋連玉

- 2000 “Kōshō seido kara ‘ianfu’ seido e no rekishiteki tenkai 〈公娼制度から「慰安婦」制度への歴史的展開〉 [Historical Development From the Licensed Prostitution System to the ‘Comfort Women’ System].” In VAWW-NET Japan, ed., *‘ianfu’: Senji seibōryoku no jittai I: Nihon, Taiwan, Chōsen hen* 《「慰安婦」：戦時性暴力の実態 I — 日本・台湾・朝鮮編》 [“Comfort Women” and the Actual Situation of Wartime Sexual Violence, Vol. I: Japan, Taiwan, and Korea], pp. 20-41. Tokyo: Ryokufū shuppan.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty

- 1996 “Subaltern Talk: Interview with the Editors.” In Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, eds., *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, pp. 287-308. New York: Routledge.

Suzuki, Yūko 鈴木裕子, Yōng-ae Yamashita 山下英愛, and Masaru Tonomura 外村大 (eds.)

- 2006 *Nihongun “ianfu” kankei shiryō shūsei, jō* 《日本軍「慰安婦」関係資料集成：上》 [Collection of Relevant Documents on Comfort Women of the Japanese Army, Vol. 1]. Tokyo: Akashi shoten.

Tai, Eika

- 2013 “Japan’s Colonial Responsibility and National Subject Formation.” *Jinken Mondai Kenkyū* 《人權問題研究》 [The Journal of Human Rights] (Osaka) 12/13: 77-96.

Taiwan sōtoku kambō rinji kokusei chōsabu 臺灣總督官房臨時國勢調査部 [Temporary Census Bureau, Office of the Governor-General of Taiwan] (ed.)

- 1934 *Kokusei chōsa kekkahyō Shōwa go-nen, zentō-hen* 《國勢調査結果表：昭和五年（全島編）》 [National Census Results, Showa Year Five, Island-Wide Edition]. Taihoku: Taiwan sōtoku kambō rinji kokusei chōsabu.

Taiwan sōtokufu 臺灣總督府 [Governor-General of Taiwan] (ed.)

- 1944 *Taiwan kokō tōkei* 《臺灣戶口統計》 [Taiwan Household Statistics]. Taihoku: Taiwan sōtokufu.

Tonomura, Masaru 外村大

- 2022 “Shōgitō shūsengyō to ianfu no yōin kakuho: Nihon naichi to Chōsen tono hikaku 〈娼妓等周旋業と慰安婦の要員確保：日本内地と朝鮮との比較〉 [Role of Prostitute Brokerage in the Recruitment of Comfort Women : A Comparison between Japan Proper and Colonial Korea].” *Ryūkoku daigaku keieigaku ronshū* 《龍谷大学経営学論集》 [The Journal of Business Studies Ryukoku University] (Kyoto) 61(2): 25-46.

Ueno, Chizuko 上野千鶴子

- 2012 *Nashonarizumu to jendaa* 《ナショナリズムとジェンダー》 [Nationalism and Gender]. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Women’s Rescue Foundation 婦女救援基金會 (ed.)

- 1999 *Taiwan weianfu baogao* 《臺灣慰安婦報告》 [A Report on Taiwan’s Comfort Women]. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 1999.

Xie, Pei-ping 謝培屏 (ed.)

- 2008 *Zhanhou qiansong waiqiao fanguo shiliao huibian 1: Hanqiao pian* 《戰後遣送外僑返國史料彙編 1：韓僑篇》 [Repatriated Migrants after World War II: A Documentary Collection, Vol. 1: Koreans]. Taipei: Academia Historica.

Yoshimi, Yoshiaki 吉見義明

- 2019 *Kaishun suru teikoku: nihongun "ianfu" mondai no kitei* 《買春する帝国日本軍「慰安婦」問題の基底》 [Empire of Prostitution: The Foundation of the Imperial Japanese Army's "Comfort Women" Problem]. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Yoshimi, Yoshiaki 吉見義明 and Hirofumi Hayashi 林博史 (eds.)

- 1995 *Kyōdō kenkyū nihongun ianfu* 《共同研究：日本軍慰安婦》 [A Joint Research on Japanese Military Comfort Women]. Tokyo: Ōtsuki shoten.

Zhu, De-lan 朱德蘭

- 2009 *Taiwan weianfu* 《臺灣慰安婦》 [Taiwan's Comfort Women]. Taipei: Wunan.

回不去的女人們： 隱匿於二戰後臺灣的前韓籍性工作者

天江喜久

摘 要

二戰結束後，在臺韓人被遣返回光復後的韓國，然而並非所有人都歸國。根據 1947 年的〈臺灣韓僑登記名冊〉記錄，共有 358 名韓國人留在臺灣，其中包括 48 名登記為戶長的年輕女性。在這些女性中，約有三成與臺灣本地男子結婚；另有三成則被標註為「應行遣返」。由於國民政府僅允許擁有「正當職業」的韓國人留臺，可推斷這些女性未符合相關規定：許多人曾從事性工作者，其中一些可能曾在日軍軍營中擔任慰安婦。

本文根據國史館與國家檔案局的官方資料，以及作者在韓僑社群中進行的私人訪談，聚焦於梳理戰後留在臺灣的年輕韓國女性的生命故事——無論她們是出於自願、非自願，或是僅因機緣巧合而留下。在 1947 年的登記名冊裡，48 名女性中僅有一人在公開記錄中被確認為前慰安婦，另有兩人據稱是前慰安婦，其餘女性則可能為娼妓。然而，作者認為「慰安婦」與「娼妓」的二元劃分並不準確。無論是慰安婦還是娼妓，她們皆遭受人口販運而被迫來臺。許多慰安婦在日本帝國時期曾為娼妓。這些女性不僅是日本帝國主義和父權體制的受害者，同時也受到儒家貞潔觀念的束縛，而這些觀念使她們在戰後無法回到家鄉。

關鍵詞：朝鮮人／韓僑、慰安婦、娼妓、日本帝國、臺灣、後殖民