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Grandma's Secret

——The Story of Taiwanese Comfort Women

In Grandma's closet lay hidden a painful past of a generation of women.

It's a secret she has never told anyone in fifty years.

A tragedy caused by war, it is the tearful trampling of womanhood.

After fifty long years, fourteen Taiwanese "comfort women"

bare out what has been hidden in the depths of their hearts:



In World War II, the Japanese Government forcibly and deceitfully recruited young girls in their occupied territories (Mainland China and Southeast Asia) and colonies (Taiwan and South Korea) to serve as comfort women in the army. These women became tools for sexual appeasement of the Japanese Imperial Army. What was then paradise to the Japanese soldiers was hell on earth, a place without redemption, for these poor women.

This wartime truth had been covered up since the end of the war. In Taiwan, it was not until 1992 when this secret saw light of day with the discovery in Japan of three clandestine telegrams requesting for additional Taiwanese comfort women and accusations made by women, now grandmothers, who were victimized by deceit and who spoke out with courage. For them, this secret has remained hidden in their hearts for already half a century!

The Women's Rescue Foundation has since 1992 conducted investigations and has represented Taiwanese comfort women in divulging the truth and in demanding a formal apology and compensation from the Japanese Government. The foundation has collected results of investigations and made filmed documentation of the accounts of fourteen Taiwanese women who had been deceived and had suffered in the Japanese army. The personal accounts of Taiwanese men recruited into the Japanese Imperial Army corroborate the tearful accounts made by these grandmothers on the torments and violence they were subjected to.

There were at least one thousand of these Taiwanese women who suffered under the collective slavery system of the Japanese Government during the war. Many of them have since died. It has been confirmed that there are 45 still-surviving Taiwanese comfort women, many of whom are living in poverty or are bedridden. We represent them in publicizing their plight to the world and filing cases demanding a national apology and compensation from the Japanese Government. We deeply appreciate these fourteen women for their bravery in standing up and speaking about the agony they have endured for half a century.

They are our grandmothers, mothers and sisters. They are women of courage.

A History of the Victimization of Women Fifty Years Ago

Ninety-Minutes of Tearful Accounts!

(1) The First Veiled Accusers

In 1992, three grandmothers first appeared to make a public accusation of the Japanese Government for its wartime adoption of collective slavery system. Sadly, these women had to speak with their identities hidden.

(2) Hakka Sisters in the Mountains of Hsinchu

In the mountains of Hsinchu, Hakka women continue their traditional lifestyle of forbearance, hard work and thrift. Far away from the hubbub of the city, they recall things that happened some fifty years ago. They bring us to the site of their sufferings, Hainan Island off the coast of Southern China.

(3) The First Comfort Woman to Expose Herself With Courage

Ah T'ao, that's how we call her. Just like any grandmother, she was gripped with fear and shame the first time we met her. But she later became the first Taiwanese comfort woman to bravely stand up before international mass media and demand national compensation and formal apology from the Japanese Government. In her, we see feminine courage, a strong sense of awareness and ability for growth despite everything that happened . . .

(4) Aboriginal Women Forced to Provide Sex Services

Taiwan's aborigines were mainly distributed in mountainous areas around Hualien and Taitung. Yet, in spite of their isolation, aboriginal women were not spared from the brutalities of the Japanese soldiers . . .