

THE U.S. EASTERN REGION KOREAN AMERICAN MOVEMENT
IN SUPPORT OF THE "JUNGSHINDAE" VICTIMS

Prepared by the Korean American Coalition on Jungshindae
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The Korean American Coalition on Jungshindae* is the main group of Korean Americans working on the "Jungshindae" issue in the eastern region of the USA. This report will provide a brief summary of the previous activities of the Korean Americans in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area under the leadership of our organization. This report will also outline our future plans for activities and make some suggestions for effective strategies for all support groups working on the "Jungshindae" issue.

Our organization's history goes back to September 28, 1992 when 27 Korean Americans in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area, representing 14 different community and religious organizations, met together to form a support group for the Jungshindae victims. This loose coalition of different organizations started its activities under the name of "the Korean American Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Service by Japan."

To be more effective, our group was formally incorporated as a non-profit organization in February 1993 and renamed as the "Korean American Coalition on Jungshindae, Inc." (hereafter called KACJ). By adopting the word "coalition," we intended to open our membership to all Korean American individuals and organizations concerned with the Jungshindae issue. Currently, we have about 50 active members. KACJ adopted the following objectives:

- 1) To promote further investigations of the details of human rights violations of Korean women drafted for military sexual service by Japan during WWII.
- 2) To inform the general public about the gross violations of human rights of Korean women drafted for military sexual service by Japan during WWII.
- 3) To support the international movement for redressing Asian women victims of the military sexual slavery by Japan.
- 4) To prevent rape and sexual slavery during wartime.
- 5) To promote respect and safeguard for international human rights.

*"Jungshindae" is the Korean name under which the Korean women were drafted for the military sexual service by Japan. They were also called "Wianbu" or "Military Comfort Women."

As solutions to the Jungshindae issue, we already made the following demands to the Japanese government:

- (1) The Japanese government should fully disclose the historical facts and documents on the military sexual slavery.
- (2) The Japanese government should fully admit to its responsibility for the military sexual slavery and formally apologize for it.
- (3) The Japanese government should compensate to the surviving victims of military sexual slavery and the families of the deceased victims for their physical and psychological damages.
- (4) The Japanese government should take measures to include all the facts relating to the military sexual slavery and other war-time crimes in history textbooks in Japan.
- (5) The Japanese government should establish a special fund for building a memorial museum and monuments in commemoration of the sexual slavery victims.
- (6) The Japanese government should put the war criminals responsible for the sexual slavery on trial and punish them.

During the World War II, Japanese Americans settled in the West Coast states were force removed to relocations camps, which was a grave violation of their human rights. Beginning the late 1960s, third-generation Japanese Americans started the redress movement. Under the heavy weight of the public opinion aroused by the redress movement, the U.S. Congress established the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians in 1981 and heard testimony from 750 Japanese American victims. Based on the Commission's recommendations, the U.S. government made a formal apology to Japanese American citizens for this grave injustice and made reparations to those surviving victims with \$20,000 each in 1988.

In view of the processes of the settlement of the Japanese American internment case, we believe putting pressure on the Japanese government through public opinion is the best strategy of getting this government to accept all or most of the six demands given above. Accordingly, among the five major objectives of our organization specified on page 1, #(2) is the most important objective. For this objective, we published a resource booklet (128 pages) on the Jungshindae issue in Korean in November 1992 and already distributed approximately 2,000 copies. We also distributed video tapes of the BBC documentary on the Jungshindae issue. In addition, members of our Steering Committee wrote short articles for the newspapers and magazines. For example, one of our Steering Committee members, John Kim, Esq., contributed an article on the Jungshindae issue to the Korea Society newsletter which was mailed to about 10,000 Americans. I and other Steering Committee members also had a number of interviews with various media, including a half-hour interview with the UN radio.

Since the U.N headquarters is located in New York City, we have also campaigned actively to involve the UN in addressing the Jungshindae issue. We have been collecting petitions to the UN, asking this international organization to investigate the gross violations of human rights of tens of thousands of the Jungshindae victims through establishment of a special UN Tribunal, similar to the one formed to deal with the mass rapes in the former Yugoslavia. In order to draw the attention of the UN community, we also organized two mass demonstrations in front of the UN headquarters. The first rally was held on November 23, 1992 and the second one was held on March 1, 1993. Approximately 300 Korean Americans and other American friends participated in each rally. After finishing our rally at the UN, we marched to the Japanese Consulate General in New York--crying out justice for the Jungshindae victims and denouncing Japanese government's role in this "crime against humanity."

In preparation for this UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, we mailed on May 4, 1993 a petition signed by about 100 Americans to the UN Secretary General and heads of state in Japan, U.S., South Korea, and North Korea. The petition asked the respective governments to address the Jungshindae issue at the UN World Conference on Human Rights. Recently, we received a short response from the U.S. President Bill Clinton which stated that [I] "welcome your thoughts and promise they will be carefully considered." I also met South Korean official to UN before coming here.

In the coming months, KACJ plans to work on the following projects: (1) to discover U.S. documents, shedding light on the Japanese government's role in the military sexual slavery, in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.; (2) to publish an English booklet containing testimonies by several Jungshindae victims; (3) to contact and obtain increasing cooperation from various U.S. human rights and feminist organizations as well as Korean American ethnic organizations in the western region; (4) to continue our campaign at the UN to get a special Tribunal established for the Jungshindae victims; and (5) to obtain the support of some concerned U.S. Congressmen in helping our campaign.

Finally, we would like to offer some suggestions for the future directions of action and strategy for all supporting groups to work with.

First, as previously clarified, we believe the best way to pressure Japan to meet our demands is through international public exposure and publicity, although both political and legal actions may be helpful. This is why we should bring the Jungshindae issue to the UN and continue our public demonstrations before the Japanese embassies in greater numbers.

Second, we should increase our lobbying efforts at the legislative branch of each government related to this issue. We should ask each legislature to establish a special commission, comparable to the U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, to investigate the issue and redress the victims. It is especially important for the Japanese Diet to establish such a special commission to conduct its own investigation into the issue and possibly pass a special law to compensate the Jungshindae victims and prosecute the war criminals responsible for the military sexual slavery. There is much to be learned from the

recent redress of the interned Japanese Americans previously noted.

Third, we should establish a world-wide coalition of support groups to work for the Jungshindae victims. This coalition can start with the existing support groups in Korea, Japan, the US and other countries, and then reach out other human rights, church organizations and women organizations in the world. In order to promote such a coalition, we should increase our exchange of information and ideas.

Fourth, we should make efforts to convince all UN member nations that Japan is not qualified for a permanent membership on the UN Security Council until the Japanese government fully complies with our demands to redress the Jungshindae victims.

Fifth, existing support groups should exert greater efforts in discovering new pieces of documentary evidence that will prove the forced drafting of the Jungshindae women by Japan.

Sixth, we should try to increase our membership of concerned individuals who can have a big influence on public opinions such as eminent politicians, businessmen, and professors in both sexes.

In unity and through persistent struggles, we are certain that we shall overcome the difficulties and achieve real justice for the Jungshindae victims. Thank you.