

Lola Masing's History and Activities

1928, December 8	Born in San Jose of Antique Province in Panai Island, the Philippines. The mother passed away one month after giving birth.
1942, April 17	Kawamura Detachment of the Japanese army landed to the area of San Jose. Lola Masing and her father took refugee.
May	Landing of the Garrison, Independent Infantry 33 rd Battalion (Led by Commander Taga as of November 16, 1943)
June	Returned from the mountains and soon afterwards violated by Japanese soldiers who entered the house at night. Her father (carpenter, age 30 at the time) was murdered in resistance.
September	Small-troop garrisons were placed at three points around the copper mountains
1943, December	It was issued in December 29 that the San Jose Garrison moves to Davao, Mindanao Island. Since then until the arrival of the United States Army, the San Jose garrison was kept under the control of the 170 th Battalion, 4 th Company of the Independent Infantry Regiment. Lola Masing was recaptured by Col. Okumura.
1945, June	Liberation
1992, September	Maria Rosa Henson came out
November	Lola Masing took the first interview by a Japanese lawyer in Iloilo City.
1993, February	Took a Japanese lawyer's interview in Antique in order to file a case in Japan
April 2	Filed a case at the Tokyo District Court along with 17 other survivors
October 15	Presented the opening disposition at the first oral hearing at Tokyo District Court. Reported afterward with Lola Henson at Tsu Catholic Church and a Ueda City University gathering.
1996, December 15	Participated in the "Victims Reject - Stop the Asian Women's Fund!" 12.15 Assembly
December 16	Testified at Ursula School in Sendai for middle and highschool audience
1998, October 9	Tokyo District Court dismissed all claims
2000, December 6	Tokyo High Court dismissed the case of an appeal
December 7-	Participated in the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal. During this period, lola issued a statement rejecting the offer from Asian Women's Fund
December 20	Made an appeal to the Supreme Court
2001, April 19	Submitted a Statement of Reasons for Appeal to the Supreme Court
August 31	Support Concert for Lola Masing, Tokyo

Testimony of Tomasa Salinog (Lola Masing)

Opening Deposition

Tokyo District Court First Oral Hearing, October 15, 1993

I was 13 in 1942 when Japan took occupation over the Philippines (Japanese troops came to the area around San Jose the same year on April 17) and my father and I took refuge in the mountains. After hearing the governor's announcement that our city was safe, we decided to return to our home. The whole town was full of Japanese soldiers. My house was near a Japanese garrison. Two weeks after our return, two Japanese soldiers entered the house late at night and tried to take me away. When my father resisted, a soldier later found was Captain Hirooka took my father's head with a sword. I ran to my father to rescue him. It was when I held him in my arms that I found his head was severed. Although I was crying hard, the Japanese took no pity and dragged me out of the house. My father's corpse was left behind.

I was confined in a room inside a two-story building on Gobierno Street. The next morning, before dawn, Captain Hirooka and other soldiers raped me. Captain Hirooka came first. When the next soldier came and I again resisted, I was suddenly hit in the head to fall unconscious. After 3 days, Japanese soldiers returned and everyday I was raped by two to five soldiers. Sometimes it seemed as if I had lost sanity. I simply sat dazing in the air for hours taken by a constant memory of my father and how he was murdered.

One day a soldier left the key on the table, and I ran to a shack where a husband and a wife were living. They hid me in their house, and I helped out with the housework. But a Japanese soldier Okumura soon found me and took me away by threatening to kill the couple unless they handed me over.

Okumura took me to his house and treated me like a slave ordering me to wash and clean. He raped me every time he came home. He also let his friends rape me whenever they visited him. But I did not think much of escaping, because for me it was relatively better to stay with one soldier than to face the possibility of being dragged back into the big house to be raped by numerous Japanese. I also thought that Okumura would kill me if I attempted to escape.

I was liberated when the Japanese troops completely left San Jose.

I have been living alone since then. I have never thought to marry because I was too deeply hurt by the Japanese soldiers. Feelings of shame fill me up whenever I remember the experiences of being disgraced from the time of the Japanese occupation. I cried every time I remembered how my father was killed and how I was made a sex slave. No matter how many years may have passed since the wartime hardship, I still often sit for hours thinking of my father.

The war killed my father and took away the only member of my family. Unable to attend school, I have sewed to make my own living. Sexual slavery had destroyed my life and my future.

When I was young, I have been offered the likings of a number of men but I refused them all. It is because memories of rape and violence haunt my images of any possibilities of sex. One man that I refused insulted me saying 'you would rather serve those hundreds of Japanese' and threw stones at my house. I wanted to have

children of my own, but I chose not to get married because of these experiences.

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Speaking out has hurt me even more. My neighbors tell me 'You were lucky that you were raped because you can this way seek monetary compensation. You are making money out of the war.'

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I am now old and alone living in poverty. I will probably not live much longer because I do not have enough to eat while my health is failing. I only wish justice would come true. I have suffered more than enough. My body has weakened and my health is deteriorating day by day. I therefore plead to the Japanese government and the judges present today not to let justice come with any longer delay. I ask you to please not let me die without knowing whether my human rights and justice would be recovered.

Tokyo District Court – Verdict, October 9, 1998
Vehemently sob when the court dismissed all claims

From the speech made at a gathering right after the verdict:
'I am too ashamed to return home. If this is what happened, I wish I never took on this trial which took so many years.'

Women's International War Crimes Tribunal, December 2000

Response to an interview by reporter Kazuko Watanabe:
'I couldn't possibly enter into marriage when I thought of the possibilities of being abused by the husband and of going through the same experiences again.'
'I felt truly proud that the world trusted and recognized my testimony. I was satisfied with the judgment which recognized the Emperor's responsibility'.
'I demand the Japanese government to recognize the crimes it has committed. There is not much time left for us. I hope justice will come before I die...'

Shinno Daily Newspaper, December 19, 2000
I was able to tell those neighbors who watched a TV news about the tribunal, 'see, there is no falseness to what I have been saying'

Submissions to the Supreme Court:
Affidavit, April 4, 2001
Statement of reasons for appeal, April 19, 2001

(Summary)

I found upon liberation and return home that my house was falling apart and was in no condition to live in. I was only 16 and did not know what to do. I discovered my father's bones in reconstructing the house. I fell to the ground and cried and cried.

I made my living by using a sewing machine that my mother had left. There were many cases in the Panai Island where women were being divorced because of the

condemnation after marriage of their experiences with the Japanese soldiers. I therefore decided not to marry. But I raised four children out of various circumstances. Every night, I get visions of my father, how he was murdered and everything else that the Japanese army has done.

I continue to fight for my own dignity. I am quite affected by the loss in the two previous cases. But I believe that there are other places to fight. The Supreme Court is among them. I continue fight because I firmly believe that there are other ways. The two losses do not let me down. There are other venues through which my prayers would come true that my dignity would be recovered.

The death of my father takes up a big space in my mind. What a terrible death he had to face. I think that I must continue to fight also for my father. My life as a woman has been destroyed. My body hurts everywhere. I think I may have recovered had my father been with me alive. The injustice committed against my father hurts me very deeply.

I am happy that I was able to participate in the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal. The Japanese government continues to deny its responsibility. I am angry that it denies its crimes and neglects to apologize. And I am happy that this Tokyo Tribunal came issued a guilty verdict.

However, is there no justice for people like my father who have been massacred?

I am angry that even though I have told the truths, they have not yet been recognized.

Notification of the refusal to accept Asian Women's Solidarity Fund

In December 2000, I participated in the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo and was finally able to feel that justice has been realized. It was a feeling I had never been able to experience before. At the same time, I recognize that the compensation fund offered by the Asian Women's Fund cannot pay for the violation of rights I have experienced for being a woman as well as the grave forms of crime that have been committed against me. The Japanese government needs to be tried for the Imperial Army's wartime responsibility towards my father and myself.

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I came out in 1992 as a former 'comfort woman'. After ten years of struggling fights for justice, the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal established justice that I had been wishing for. It was the first court that listened to us and restored our dignity for the pursuit of truths.