

STORY OF SONG SIIN DO
Korean Former "Comfort Woman" Resident in Japan
By
Support Group for Lawsuit of
Korean Former Comfort Women Resident in Japan



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Former 'comfort woman' files lawsuit seeking apology

Song Siin Do's History before a "Comfort Station"

Song Siin Do was born in Chung-chong Province, Korea, on August 29th, 1922. Her father died when she was 12 (hereinafter the age is counted in the Chinese way). After his death, she moved to Shindonan(?) with her mother and younger sister because her mother became a "concubine" to a man who was running a pharmacy there.

When she was 16, she was forced to get married to a stranger who was 10 years senior to her. Having loathed the first wedding night, she ran away from the bridegroom. However, she could not stay at her mother's house, so the following morning she headed for Taejon to see her friend.

In Taejon where she was working as a housemaid, she was lured by an elderly Korean woman to work at the battle-grounds. The woman told Siin Do that "if you work at the battlefield for Imperial Japan, you can make a lot of money and live on your own without marriage." Her previous sour experience convinced her that she wanted to become independent. Although she did not know what she would do for a job, she followed that Korean woman. Actually, she ran away from the bridegroom to avoid the "wedding night," involving sex, and decided to stand on her own legs. Therefore, working as one of the so-called "comfort women" was the very last thing on her mind.

She was then taken to Pyongyang where there were many girls about her age or their late teens brought together from different places. During the journey, she felt uneasy because she was unable to get a direct answer when she asked the woman what kind of a job she would be doing. However, after seeing so many girls and knowing she was not alone, she felt somewhat relieved.

In fact, Pyongyang was like a transit point for "comfort women." Siin Do and a dozen or so girls were now handed over to a Korean man, a "flesh traffic trader," in Pyongyang and taken to Tianjin, China. The trader said to the girls: "Buy kimono and things you want without worrying about money." However, they learned later that all those expenses covering food, drink and accommodation became their debt at high interest. Siin Do found herself to be deeply in debt for a striped kimono and other small articles which she had bought at that time.

A South Korean woman living in Miyagi Prefecture filed a suit with Tokyo District Court against the government Monday seeking an apology and compensation for being forced to provide sex for Japanese soldiers during World War II.

It is the first suit filed by a former "comfort woman" living in Japan.

Yuko Nakashita, one of the lawyers representing the woman, said, "We did not specify the amount of money for compensation because if the Japanese government really feels sorry, they will provide an appropriate amount

of compensation."

Song Siin Do, 71, said she was sent from Pyongyang to China in 1938 when she was 16 and forced to provide sex for Japanese soldiers for seven years.

She was left behind in China when the war ended, she said.

"I wanted to tell people my experiences while I am alive. I hope the same thing will never happen again," she said.

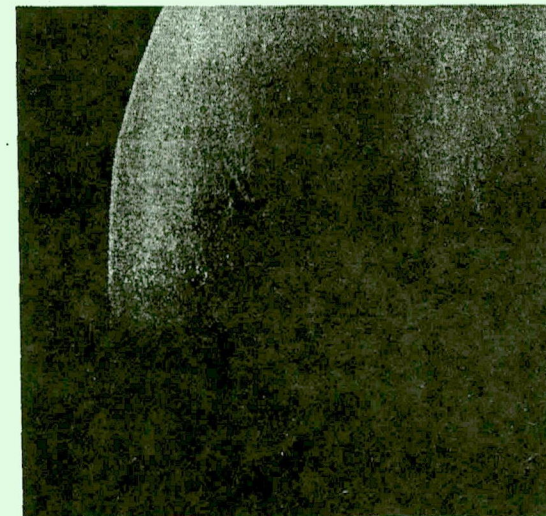
Nakashita said the Japanese government has an obligation to pay compensation to So.

Cho Sei Young, second secretary of the South Korean

Embassy in Tokyo, said "The South Korean government supports the plaintiff from the bottom of its heart."

He said that So is one of five South Koreans who were comfort women and are currently living outside South Korea. A bill which will enable the South Korean government to pay ¥1 million each to former comfort women is likely to be enacted this month, he said.

Historians estimate that about 100,000 to 200,000 women, mostly from the Korean Peninsula, were forced to provide sex for soldiers of the former Imperial Japanese Army.



To be taken in the 1960s.