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THE FACTS

The purpose of this paid public comment is to present historical facts.

***At the end of April, an advertisement purporting to tell "The Truth about Comfort Women" appeared in the* Washington Post.**
The claims contained in these statements, though, were anything but the "truth."
Rather than being based on "facts," they appeared, if anything, to be the products of "faith."
The people of Japan have the highest respect for the United States as a fellow democratic nation
and as a strong and reliable ally. For democracy to operate effectively, though, the freedom of speech, thought, academic research,
and religion must be guaranteed so that individual citizens can draw their own appropriate conclusions.
To enable this, people must have access to correct facts, rather than fallacies, distortions, biases, and factual errors.
This public comment seeks to present a number of historical facts relating to "comfort women" that have not been adequately brought to light so as to enable the readers of this respected publication to draw their own conclusions.

FACT 1

No historical document has ever been found by historians or research organizations that positively demonstrates that women were forced against their will into prostitution by the Japanese army. A search of the archives at the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, which houses wartime orders from the government and military leaders, turned up nothing indicating that women were forcibly rounded up to work as *ianfu*, or "comfort women."

On the contrary, many documents were found warning private brokers not to force women to work against their will.

Army memorandum 2197, issued on March 4, 1938, explicitly prohibits recruiting methods that fraudulently employ the army's name or that can be classified as abduction, warning that those employing such methods have been punished. A Home Affairs Ministry directive (number 77) issued on February 18, 1938, states that the recruitment of "comfort women" must be in compliance with international law and prohibits the enslavement or abduction of women. A directive (number 136) issued on November 8 the same year, moreover, orders that only women who are 21 years old or over and are already professionally engaged in the trade may be recruited as "comfort women." It also requires the approval of the woman's family or relatives.

Army memorandum 2197, issued on March 4, 1938

A historian who claims that the number of "comfort women" reached 200,000—a contention frequently quoted in the US media—believes, on the other hand, that the memorandum offers proof of the army's active involvement.

FACT 2

There are many newspaper articles, moreover, that demonstrate that these directives were dutifully carried out. The August 31, 1939, issue of Dong-A Ilbo, published in Korea, reports of brokers who forced women to become *ianfu* against their will being punished by the local police, which was under Japanese jurisdiction at the time. This offers proof that the Japanese government dealt severely with inhumane crimes against women.

悪徳紹介業者ノ跋扈
農村婦女子ニ言誘拐
被害女性ノ自宅ヘ突然訪ヒ
釜山刑事奉天ノ剛急行

Unscrupulous Brokers Run Rampant

Abduction of Rural Women and Girls

More than 100 Women Victimized

Pusan Police Officers Dash Off to Mukden

PUSAN - Unscrupulous brokers have been conspiring to abduct women from poor families by promising them generous rewards in Manchuria (where Japanese soldiers are claimed to be visiting brothels in swarms). Forty-five such brokers were found to be working in Pusan, where they lured unsuspecting young women away from their families and sold them into prostitution in Manchuria. Over 100 women have already been victimized. Intensive investigation by Pusan police has revealed the identity of a Mukden dealer involved in these activities, and six officers were dispatched in the evening of August 20 to the city to arrest this dealer. The arrest is expected to fully expose the nightmarish activities of these brokers.

FACT 3

There were admittedly cases, though, of breakdowns in discipline. On the island of Semarang in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), for instance, an army unit forcibly rounded up a group of young Dutch women to work at a "comfort station." The station was shut down under army orders, though, when this incident came to light, and the responsible officers were punished. Those involved in this and other war crimes were subsequently tried in Dutch courts and received heavy sentences, including the death penalty.

FACT 4

House Resolution 121 sponsored by US Representative Mike Honda and other changes of Japanese maltreatment of "comfort women" are mostly based on testimonies by former *ianfu*. In none of their initial statements are there references to their being coerced to work by the army or other units of the Japanese government.

Their testimonies have undergone dramatic changes, though, after the start of the anti-Japanese campaign. Those who testified in a House of Representatives public hearing first reported that they were whisked away by brokers, but then later claimed that their abductors wore clothing that "looked like police uniforms."

FACT 5

The *ianfu* who were embedded with the Japanese army were not, as is commonly reported, "sex slaves."

They were working under a system of licensed prostitution that was commonplace around the world at the time. Many of the women, in fact, earned incomes far in excess of what were paid to field officers and even generals (as reported by the United States Office of War Information, Psychological Warfare Team Attached to U.S. Army Forces, India-Burma Theater, APO 689), and there are many testimonies attesting to the fact that they were treated well.

There are records of soldiers being punished for acts of violence against the women. Many countries set up brothels for their armies, in fact, to prevent soldiers from committing rape against private citizens. (In 1945, for instance, Occupation authorities asked the Japanese government to set up hygienic and safe "comfort stations" to prevent rape by American soldiers.)

Sadly, many women were made to suffer severe hardships during the wretched era during World War II, and it is with profound regret that we contemplate this tragic historical reality.
At the same time, we must note that it is a gross and deliberate distortion of reality to contend that the Japanese army was guilty of "coercing young women into sexual slavery" in "one of the largest cases of human trafficking in the 20th century," as the House Resolution claims. After all, two-fifths of the approximately 20,000 ianfu during the war were Japanese women, as detailed in an academic paper by historian Ikuhiko Hata.
We are interested, foremost, in sharing the truth with the American public. Criticism for events that actually occurred must be humbly embraced. But apologies over unfounded slander and defamation will not only give the public an erroneous impression of historical reality but could negatively affect the friendship between the United States and Japan. We ask only that the Facts be objectively regarded so that we may share a correct perception of history.

Translation of an article demonstrating that there was no organized or forced recruitment
:Misconceptions about comfort women and the Japanese military **http://www.sdh-fact.com/CL02_1/31_S4.pdf**

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We, the undersigned members of the Committee for Historical Facts, endorse the public comment presented above

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