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**Did Corporations Also set up "Comfort Stations"?
– "Comfort Stations" in Hokkaido's Mines**

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Introduction

Today, I would like to report on the existence of “comfort stations” , in Hokkaido’s mines from 1939 to 1945, not only from the point of view of the aggression and colonisation of Korea by Japanese imperialism and the expansion of the Japanese national sexual control system, but also from the perspective of the relation between “comfort stations” and Korean forced labor. In my research, I mainly refer to documents from corporations that set up “comfort stations” and to Japanese newspaper articles. I also refer to some official documents from the Japanese Government and to eye-witness testimonies from people who were there at the time.

The issue of “comfort stations” set up in mines has barely been researched compared to the issue of the Japanese military “comfort station” system, which has been widely researched since the early 1990s. On the issue of “comfort stations” in mines, Hideko Nishida, a researcher in the history of Hokkaido, published a paper in 2003 with the title “Senjika Hokkaido ni okeru chôsenjin ‘rômu ianhu’ no seiritu to jittai - kyousei renkou tonô kankeisei ni oite- “ (“ Korean ’ Comfort Women Laborers’ in Wartime Hokkaido - in Relation to Korean Forced Labor”). Her paper gave me such a shock that I felt very strongly that, as a resident Korean woman in Japan, I should start researching this issue. I have continued my research into this issue to the present.

Revealing the facts and considering the problems of the issue of “comfort stations” in mines has hardly been looked at in relation to the field of research of the Japanese military “comfort stations” system. Neither has it been done as part of the research on Korean forced labor. However, I believe the issue of “comfort stations” in mines is an important key to connecting those two areas of research. I hope my research can contribute to revealing the historical facts on “comfort stations” in mines.

1 “Chôsen Ryôriya” in Hokkaido

—The expansion of the licensed prostitution system to Korea and “Chôsen Ryôriya” in Hokkaido

First of all, I would like to present an overview of the background to “comfort stations” in Hokkaido’s mines.

I am holding up a picture from the 1920s of a “Chôsen Ryôriya”, which means a “Korean eating-house” in Japanese. “Chôsen Ryôriya” were established in areas where a sizeable population of Koreans resided, such as in Tokyo and Osaka. It became clear from certain testimonies, that will be discussed later, that the “Chôsen Ryôriya” were not only places that provided food and alcohol but were also de facto brothels.

Why were such facilities set up in Japan? To answer this question, we should consider the history of Japan’s licensed prostitution system and its expansion to Korea in the course of Japanese aggression towards that country. As Yon-Ok Song, a Korean modern history researcher, pointed out, Japan’s Yûkaku (a red-light district under the licensed prostitution system) already existed in Korea in the 1880s; Japan’s licensed prostitution system had been exported to Korea in the course of Japanese aggression. Korean girls and women became the target of traffickers in Korea and those traffickers, both Japanese and Korean, relocated to Japan, including the island of Hokkaido. “Chôsen Ryôriya” in Hokkaido mainly existed in urban areas such as Sapporo city, Otaru city and Kushiro city, according to newspaper articles at that time. One of those newspapers reported in 1938, that 50 “Chôsen Ryôriya” and 50 to 80 “Syakufu”, the Japanese word for barmaid, existed in Sapporo city.

Mr. Gap-Su Chong gave the following testimony.

“I think that I came to notice such houses from the start of the Manchurian Incident. About 20 could be found in the area of Toyohira, Minami Ichijô and Susukino at that time. Many Koreans came to mines such as Yayoi Mine, Toyoha Mine and Chitose Mine near Sapporo. Those Koreans had free time, relative to the Koreans who were forced to do harsh physical labor [during late 1930s-1945], so they were able to go to Sapporo. “Chôsen Ryôriten” were set up in of this. In Sapporo, there was a Yûkaku along Daimon street. Koreans opened eating-houses outside the Yûkaku in areas such as Toyohira, Minami-Ichijo and Susukino because they were not allowed to set up a business inside the Yûkaku [because they were not Japanese]. These houses were called “eating-houses” which did not reflect the reality of what happened there.

They [the traffickers of the “Chôsen Ryôriya”] all went to Korean rural villages, where there was no food and gave the adults two or three bales of wheat and millet and a little money, saying “I will take your daughter to Hokkaido and give her a good job so she can send you back plenty of money”. Then they brought those daughters to Hokkaido to use at “Ryôriya”. It was like selling human flesh piece by piece. The girls had to stand outside on frosty nights to draw in customers and they were hardly allowed to go to the bath...it was horrible.

Their debts soon increased from about ten yen to tens of yen. Although they rarely committed suicide, they regularly got venereal disease. The traffickers forced them to work even if they got venereal diseases, giving them injections of liquid silver. They became shrivelled up after two or three years of work.

There was no way to escape. And since the police took bribes from the traffickers, and were in fact hand-in-glove with them, even if she was able to escape and get to a police station, they would simply admonish her and send her back to the house again. The traffickers sold on those girls who had contracted serious venereal diseases to other traffickers working in rural area, applying layers of make-up onto their faces. Even if the traffickers noticed that they had been deceived and had bought a girl with a venereal disease, they could not complain about it after signing the contract.

If someone earned a lot of money in that kind of business, the relatives or friends of him/her would start their own businesses, so such houses would increase in that area. As it was an easy and lucrative business, people from the same province in Korea, knowing someone who had already set up their business in Japan would follow them to the very same area of Japan. For instance, there were many traffickers from Busan in Sapporo and many from Keijou in another town. The numbers of these houses increased in big cities such as Sapporo, Hakodate, Otaru, Asahikawa and Obihiro. There were one or two houses even in small towns in rural areas” . [Chousenjin Kyouseirenkou Shinsou Chousadan (The Investigation Team on the Truth about Forced Korean Laborers), 1974, *Chousenjin Kyouseirenkou, Kyouseiroudou no Kiroku - Hokkaido, Chishima, Karafuto Hen (Documents of Korean Forced Labor - Hokkaido, Chishima, Karafuto)*, Gendaishi Syuppankai.]

In addition to this testimony, many newspaper articles at that time indicate that Korean women in Hokkaido were forced by traffickers to work at brothels that were called “Chôsen Ryôriya” .

—Intensification of sex industry regulations and the police’s sexual control system

The “Chôsen Ryôriya” in Hokkaido were under police control as they were deemed by them to be part of the sex industry. “Otaru Shimbun” reported in 1938 that there were over 52 “Chôsen Ryôriya” in Sapporo, and that the Sapporo police station, that controlled those “Chôsen Ryôriya” , recommended that the Korean traffickers set up facilities similar to clinics so that people could have health counselling. However, what “health counselling” meant at that time, was an examination for venereal disease. The background of this police regulation was the desire to prevent the spread of venereal diseases among Japanese men who would be expected to fight in the Second Sino-Japanese War as soldiers. Orders such as this resulted in the intensification of sex industry regulations and the decline in licensed prostitution in the main islands of Japan. In fact, it was reported in one newspaper that a self-governing union of “Chôsen Ryôriya” and other eating-houses (“Chôsen Jichi Hoken Kumiai”) had been organized on the 30th March 1938 to force employees to be examined for venereal disease under the control of the Sapporo police station. This union later became “Sapporo Kyouwa-kai” . However, “Kyouwa-kai” was a government

supported agency organized to regulate and control Koreans in Japan. It was under the control of the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Home Affairs at that time, and was an important organization for the Japanese Government to promote the policy of Japanese imperialisation of Korea. More research is clearly needed here on the change from a self-governing union to a government supported “Sapporo Kyouwa-kai” . It is also known that influential Koreans were usually appointed as executives of local branches of the “Kyouwa-kai” .

In Hokkaido, a prefectural health center was set up after the enactment of the Venereal Disease Prevention Law in April 1938 which aimed to force women to have examinations for venereal diseases. After this, in July 1938, the Hokkaido prefectural main police office enacted “The Guidelines for Controlling Businesses Concerned with the Sex Industry” which decided on regulations involving the operations of eating-houses, such as the approval or rejection of new eating-houses and the reduction of business hours. Then, in October 1939, the office enacted “The Guideline for Controlling Ryôriya and Insyokuten” [Insyokuten also means eating-house in Japanese] which decided on regulations such as “It is not permitted to employ a barmaid under the age of 18” and “It is not permitted, for the time being, to employ any new Korean barmaids” . These regulations were not kept to, as I will discuss later.

2. Korean forced labor and “comfort stations” in mines in Hokkaido

—Korean forced labor by Hokutan and provisions for setting up “special comfort stations”

As you know, a large number of Koreans were forcibly mobilized as laborers to maintain Japan’s key industries, especially after the enactment of the National General Mobilization Law in 1938. The first corporation which mobilized a large number of Koreans in Hokkaido was Hokkaido Tankou Kisen Kabushiki Gaisya (Hokkaido Colliery & Steamship Co., Ltd.), or Hokutan for short.

Hokutan started to forcibly take Koreans to Hokkaido in October 1939, and it was Hokutan who also enacted “The Guidelines for the Training and Treatment of Imported Laborers” as a guide for the use of Korean forced laborers. These guidelines were enacted on the first day of October 1939. They included a provision stating that “Special comfort stations can be set up in accordance with the actual circumstances, if the consent of the authority can be obtained.” Although this guideline was included both in the manuscript of Hokutan’s 70 years annals and in a compilation of historical materials relating to Korean forced labor, no one has paid any attention to it so far.

It seems that “the authority” referred to in the provision is the Hokkaido prefectural main police office, which would later give permission for the opening of new “Chôsen Ryôriya” for the Hokkaido Colliery Mining Congress. This will be discussed later. This guideline confirms that the company were well prepared for the setting up of “special comfort stations” even before they had begun forcibly taking Korean labourers to the mines.

—Korean forced labor in mines, a request for the setting up of “Chôsen Ryôriya” and

the approval of the Hokkaido prefectural government seen from newspaper articles

I would also like to consider the conduct of some other corporations, using newspaper articles which appeared at the time.

The “Otaru Shimbun” reported on the 13th October 1939 that the mining stations of various corporations, such as Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Mitsui and Syouwa-Denkou, had requested permission to set up “Chôsen Ryôriya” at 26 mining stations in 18 different kinds of mines, in order to give “consolation” to Korean forced laborers. In this article, it was also reported that the security section of the Hokkaido prefectural government would “likely grant permission for some of the stations but, even so, the government would not give overall permission”. However, legally speaking, it must have been hard for the government to grant permission for setting up new “Chôsen Ryôriya”, owing to the intensification of the regulations regarding the sex industry through the guidelines that I mentioned before. How then did the government address the requests from these corporations?

The next day, the “Oraru Shimbun” also reported that the government had “established a policy to relocate the old “Ryôriya” to mines, and that it would transfer “Chôsen Ryôriya” as necessary”. The first half of this article reported that “There has been a problem as to how to clear the “Chôsen Ryôriya” out of the cities of Hokkaido in order to protect Hokkaido’s reputation as a tourist destination. From these articles, it is likely that the request to set up “Chôsen Ryôriya” in mine stations that were far from city areas was like killing two birds with one stone because the government wanted to clear “Chôsen Ryôriya” from city areas to maintain their beauty as tourist sites.

After three months of these reports, “Otaru Shimbun” reported on 21st January 1940 that, “The security section of the Hokkaido prefectural government granted permission that the six mining stations of Yûbari, Takigawa, Kushiro, Monbetsu, Bibai and Iwamizawa would be allowed [to set up “Chôsen Ryôriya”] in a ratio of one to 500 laborers, limiting the number of women to up to three in each house. The government are likely to disapprove of taking more barmaids from their native country [to the houses] so the barmaids will only be women who are already employed in Hokkaido”. The documents of the Hokkaido government concerning this policy haven’t yet been brought fully to light, but it is evident that the government granted permission to set up “Chôsen Ryôriya” in order to satisfy the demand of the corporations. This is because it has been shown that the “comfort stations” that were called “Chôsen Ryôriya” were actually set up in mine areas and Korean women were forced to work there as “comfort women”. This will be discussed later.

—Setting up “comfort stations” in mines

From newspaper articles

Now, using newspaper articles from the time, I’d like to consider the actual process of setting up “Chôsen Ryôriya”, or “comfort stations” in mines for corporations.

“Hokkai Times”, on the 14th Feb 1940, reported that the Yûbari police station had granted permission for the opening of a “comfort station” in Hokutan Yûbari mining station with the headline,

“Delicious Local Dishes; Beautiful Korean Women Serve; Iko No Ie to open in Yûbari shortly” . The headline calls the establishment “Iko no ie” , meaning ‘a rest house’ . These words were often used to indicate a brothel at that time. In my opinion, it is a deceptive name coming from the male perspective and meaning a place where men can rest and be comfortable and obscuring the actual situation of the sexually exploited women who were called “comfort women” .

It has also been confirmed that the phrase “comfort station” was actually in use in newspaper articles of the time. One such example is from an article on 25th Feb 1940 in the “Yûbari Times” which reported the opening of a “comfort station” in the Hokutan Yûbari mining station with the headline “[Hokutan Yûbari mining station] To Open Comfort Station for Korean Coal Mining Soldiers” .

In relation to the articles on the actual opening of “comfort stations” , the “Yûbari Times” reported on the opening of the “comfort station” in the Hokutan Yûbari mining station on 17th March 1940. The article said “The first unit of 10 beautiful Korean women, who will work at the recently opened Chôsen Ryôriten named “Iko No Ie” , have just arrived in Yûbari. The Ryôriten is situated on top of the Fukuzumi hill in the Yûbari mining station for use as as a comfort station for Korean industry soldiers. The women have been assigned to three separate Iko No Ie. However, five more women are needed. Those women will arrive shortly” .

However, it was not only Hokutan Yûbari mining station. A “Yûbari Times” article on the 28th Feb 1940, observed that a “comfort station” was also opened at Mitsubishi OoYûbari mining station. It reported the number of Korean women who were used as “comfort women” as 12. It was also reported on the 25th August 1940 that the opening of a “comfort station” at Hokutan Heiwa mining station had been permitted by the authorities.

From the documents of corporations

Next, looking at documents from corporations, I’d like to consider the actual situation of setting up “comfort stations” . As Hideko Nishida pointed out in her paper, some mining stations made reports on “comfort stations” under the heading of “Sex issues” in “Survey report with relation to Hantô-jin [an insulting term for Korean] laborers” published on 26th Dec 1940 by the Japan Mining Association. For example, Utashinai mining station operated by the Sumitomo Mining Industry Co., Ltd reported, “We have started to let them [Korean laborers] use the Korean restaurant, using a ticket system, as it was recently opened in the suburbs” . It means that the corporation made Korean laborers use the “comfort station” using a ticket system. Sorachi coal mine operated by Hokutan also reported “We selected appropriate Hantô-jin and provided a building and other facilities to let them manage a Korean eating-house which is the Hantô-jin’s comfort station ([There are] five Hantô-jin women)” . It means that the corporation made the Korean traffickers manage the “comfort station” . As to Yûbari coal mine, also operated by Hokutan, it reported that, “There are three Korean eating-houses and a dozen barmaids. We haven’t had any complaints so we assume that they are satisfied with this situation” .

In “Survey report with relation to the labor logistics of Hantô laborers” that was published in Dec 1941, one year after the aforesaid survey report, each corporation made more specific reports on the

“comfort stations” . For example, Sunagawa mining station operated by Mitsui Mining Industry Co., Ltd reported that, “We made [someone] manage three Korean eating-houses that were designated as our corporation’s ones. We deployed 16 Hantô-jin barmaids. We decided on the amusement expenses by ourselves. However, we charged a medical practitioner with the examination of the barmaids, instead of our corporation’s medical office, in order to get out of any responsibilities for medical treatment” . Yûbari coal mine operated by Hokutan reported that, “We located comfort stations in the center of the Hantô laborer’s residential area (dormitories and company houses). We not only let the buildings at no charge, but supplied and controlled goods, and decided the amusement expenses by contract. As of today, we have established four bars, one licensed Soba eating-house and have engaged 16 Hantô barmaids. We have been making them have an examination at our coal mine hospital once a month, as well as making them use condoms, made available in each dormitory at no charge (However, they rarely use [condoms])” .

Ponbetsu mining station operated by Sumitomo Main Company and another mining station operated by Syouwa-Toyosato Co., Ltd, both reported that “comfort stations” were rarely used by Korean laborers. It seems that more “comfort stations” were set up by other big corporations such as Mitsubishi, although reports on such big corporations are lacking.

For example, a report from Nisso-Teshio coal mine, which was in Tenhoku coalfield some distance from the Ishikari coalfield among which the Yûbari mining stations in the north existed, was not included in the report on this survey. However, a document concerning the “comfort station” of the Nisso-Teshio coal mine has been found, as Nishida pointed out. This was a copy of a letter of appreciation sent to the head of the Teshio police station from the Nisso-Teshio coal mine station. The letter said they appreciated having “special care” from the head and the officers of Teshio police station for the opening of the “Chôsen Ryôriya” and that they would be careful regarding its management because of its being “different from ordinary eating-houses” . The letter also said they would like the head and the officers of the Teshio police station to attend the opening ceremony of the “Chôsen Ryôriya” and to stay the night. The letter shows the collusive relationship between the corporation and the police.

In total, from newspaper articles and the corporation’s reports, it has been confirmed that there were 13 mining stations which had “comfort stations” within the Ishikari coalfield.

From testimonies

I would like to look now at the testimonies on “comfort stations” , although there are no direct testimonies from women who were forced to be “comfort women” in the “comfort stations” of corporations in Hokkaido. This will be discussed in the final part of my presentation. Therefore, I would like to look at a few indirect testimonies on “comfort stations” .

The following is the testimony of Mr. Myong-Bong Kang, who was forcibly brought to the Yûbari mining station operated by Hokutan. It is from the book by the Chousenjin Kyouseirenkou Shinsou Chousadan (The Investigation Team on the Truth about Forced Korean Laborers), 1974, entitled, *Chousenjin Kyouseirenkou, Kyouseiroudou no Kiroku - Hokkaido, Chishima, Karafuto Hen*

(Documents of Korean Forced Labor - Hokkaido, Chishima, Karafuto), Gendaishi Syuppankai).

“We were brought to the Yūbari mining station at the age of 24 or 25. We were allowed some free time about once a month, but we couldn’t go over to the train station [to escape from the mining station] as there was a guard there. Moreover, the coal mine was surrounded by mountains and there was only one road out.

There was a “Chōsen Ryōriya” there, but to be honest, I didn’t feel like relaxing there because nasty people had been used as lackeys by the coal mine to go to Korea and deceive girls at the age of 17 or 18 under the pretext of giving them jobs. Actually, they forced them to take customers on the night they arrived at [the coal mine]. We were interested in women because we were 24 or 25 years old then. However, it was impossible for us to enjoy ourselves with them, fellow Korean, who were in such a situation.

If you wanted to go out to have fun [at the “Chōsen Ryōriya”], you had to go there under the close observation of the bosses. Such “Ryōriya” were set up among the dormitories, not in the town, because it was a place to let people who had been “recruited” (forcibly brought) relax. [The bosses] took them there to let them enjoy themselves. There was a guard on watch at the only road in the mountains, so if you wandered off the road, you saw only mountains. That was how I escaped [from the coal mine]. I hid in the corner of a row of houses after I had pretended to go out to take a piss when I was on a break. After that, I climbed mountains at night and hid in the snow in the daytime, walking at night for several days. I was desperate to escape from there.”

Mr. Kang’s testimony suggests that the Korean girls who were forced to be “comfort women” at the Yūbari mining station operated by Hokutan were teenagers who had been deceived into coming from Korea by traffickers, not women who already worked at the “Chōsen Ryōriya” in Hokkaido’s cities. Moreover, a Japanese woman who had witnessed Korean women at the “comfort station” at the mining station of Mitsui Ashibetsu testified that she could not talk with them in Japanese, so they used body language. I will discuss this later. Therefore, it is suspected that some Korean women were actually brought from Korea by traffickers contrary to the policy of the Hokkaido prefectural government, and that the Hokkaido prefectural main police office neglected the situation by not supervising the traffickers.

As Mr. Kang testified, the “comfort stations” were set among dormitories. In 2012, with the guidance of Mr. Takao Aoki, the head of Yūbari Area Documents Research Office, I went to Hokkaido to research in the districts of Yūbari and Ashibetsu. In accordance with the map, I looked at the place where the “comfort stations” had actually existed. It was established from the map that five “comfort stations” had existed halfway up the mountain among the Kyouwa-dormitories where the Korean forced laborers had been put to live.

The next testimony, from Shirou Sugiyama’s, “Kataritsugu Minsyu-shi” (A Handed Down History of our People), 1993., is from a Korean man who lived in Japan and who actually went into the “comfort station” in the coal mine of Mitsui Ashibetsu. Korean laborers had been brought to the coal mine since 1941 and he had been forced to work at the coal mine, but had continued to live in Hokkaido after Japan’s defeat. According to his testimony, the dormitories where Korean laborers were put were built alongside the Ashibetsu River and the “comfort station” was on the opposite

bank of the river.

“There was a comfort station which the company built on the opposite bank of the river. I think there were about five comfort women. All of them were Korean. If you worked for the whole month and took no time off, you could get a ticket that you could use there. But the system was unreliable because the ticket was only available on and off. And the ticket was worth only one yen but it cost six yen to sleep with a comfort woman. I went there about three times. I also went out downtown in Ashibetsu several times. I had some friends who got a disease from women downtown. One day, some bosses from my company had a drinking party with the women at the comfort station. Each of them kept their favourite for themselves.”

This testimony was only one I could find concerning the actual experience of the “comfort station” at that time. It can be seen that the “comfort station” was a place “which the company built” and that there were about five Korean “comfort women” in that particular station. It can also be seen that the corporation used the “comfort station” as a means of bolstering the labor force. Moreover, it may be suspected that the bosses also used the “comfort stations” .

One woman testified that she had interacted with these “comfort women” when she was a teenager. She was the owner of a shop, which had been opened by her parents about 100 years ago and which stood diagonally opposite the “comfort station” . I met her in 2012. She said that, a) five or six Korean women, who wore ethnic clothes, were in the building, which was called “Korean Pî” , b) although she communicated by gesture, she didn’t talk with them because of the language difference, c) she was not sure when the “comfort station” was opened or who managed it, or whether they were Korean or not, d) a Japanese man and his wife prepared meals in the “comfort station” before Japan’s defeat, e) she heard them singing and a delicious smell came from the “comfort station” . She imitated how they sang and danced to the Korean folk song “Ari-rang” , f) They disappeared in the autumn 1945.

" Pî " is a derogatory term indicating "comfort station", which Japanese soldiers used to refer to the Japanese army’s "comfort stations". It is very interesting that the “comfort stations” owned both by the Japanese military and by the Japanese corporations were referred to in the same way. Judging from this testimony, the women in this “comfort station” were Korean women who probably hadn't lived for a long time in Japan, since this woman could not communicate with them verbally.

A map showing the location of the “comfort station” in this Mitsui Ashibetsu coal mine was provided by Takahiro Haseyama, director of the “Hoshi-no-furu-sato Centennial Memorial Hall” . The area where this “comfort station” had been situated has now become a private house. Using this map, we can calculate that about a quarter of what was previously the “comfort station” , remains.

–Characteristics of "comfort stations" in Hokkaido’s mines

In summary, it is estimated that there were at least 17 “comfort stations” in Hokkaido’s mines and between 90 to 96 “comfort women” , excluding those that cannot be confirmed, for example, those in urban areas.

Regarding the age of Korean women put in “comfort stations”, Ms. Hideko Nishida has estimated, based on the census data of 1940, that the women were mainly in the 10 to 20 age bracket, with about 40% being under 20 and the youngest only 14 years old. This means that the corporations which had set up “comfort stations” had violated both of the regulatory measures set up to govern them. One was “The Guideline for Controlling Ryôriya and Insyokuten”, enacted by the Hokkaido prefectural main police office in 1939, which stated, “It is not approved to employ a barmaid under the age of 18”. This was mentioned at the beginning of this paper. The other regulation was “The Regulatory Rules of Kashizashiki (lending parlors) and Shôgi (barmaids)”, enacted in 1916, which stated that 17 years old was the minimum age a woman had to be to be employed as a barmaid.

Next, concerning the actual establishment and management of the “comfort stations”, the way in which this proceeded took three patterns, as follows: a) “comfort stations” newly set up by traffickers employed by the corporations, b) “Chôsen Ryôriya” which were designated as “comfort stations” by the corporations, c) using general “Ryôriya” in urban area as “comfort stations”. The most common “comfort stations” in Hokkaido’s mines follow the a) pattern.

Other characteristics include: granting the free rental of buildings for the “comfort stations”; the company’s setting of the usage fees of “comfort stations”; the provision of “protection” i.e. condoms, for users; periodic examination of the “comfort women” for venereal disease; the fact that the “comfort stations” were set up near Korean forced labor dormitories for the purpose of preventing the women from escaping. Most of these characteristics are similar to those of the “comfort stations” in the “comfort women” system of the Japanese military.

All of these “comfort stations” in Hokkaido’s mines had to be operated under the approval of the police, so corporations and traffickers could not manage without the police’s permission. In these circumstances, it was confirmed that a wide range of “comfort stations” had been set up in Hokkaido, ranging from large coal mines such as Hokutan and Mitsui to medium and small coal mines such as Nisso-Teshio, with the co-operation and understanding of corporations, police and traffickers.

Response to Questions

Regarding the first question, it cannot be said that the central government of Japan had not grasped the actual circumstances concerning “comfort stations” in mines. As I have shown, the permission of the police was necessary to set up a “comfort station”. I believe it is more accurate to think that some kind of report was made to and permission granted from the central government during the process. In support of this, I would like to refer to the document, “The Guidelines for the Training and Treating of Transferred Labor”, issued on February 13, 1942 to the director of each district, except the police general supervisor and Okinawa prefecture, by the “Central Kyowa-kai”, which was virtually under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Welfare at that time.

This document closely resembled the outline of the Hokutan Guidelines I mentioned earlier and stipulated that, “Special comfort station (for the purpose of sexual control) should be handled properly, by contacting the police authorities in accordance with the actual circumstances of each

region” . As the time when this document was issued was when the Japanese government had further expanded its policies on Korean forced labor, it can be seen that the Government considered the “special comfort station” as a means of improving the productivity of the Korean forced laborers, maintaining their numbers, preventing their decampment and as a security measure.

Moreover, what can be inferred from this document, issued by the actual central government, is that “comfort stations” were not only set up in Hokkaido but also in other regions that had Korean forced laborers. It can be seen that there were a wide range of problems relating to the sexual control of Korean forced laborers throughout the regions where these laborers were forced to serve, to the extent that the central government instructed local regions to decide whether to set up “special comfort stations” by contacting the police according to the actual circumstances in each region. In other words, it can be said that it was a double sexual control policy for Koreans; controlling not only the sexuality of Korean forced laborers, but also that of the Korean women who were forced to serve as “comfort women” . From this perspective, I think the issue of “comfort stations” in mines should not be considered as exceptional or existing only at the regional level in Japan, but as a part of Japan’s policy of all-out war based on war conduct and the economic depression.

Although here I have only researched the “comfort station” in Hokkaido, in the future, I would like to deepen my research on the “comfort station” system as related to the mines, factories and construction sites throughout Japan.

Regarding the second question, I think this issue has both commonality and difference with the fact that there are few Japanese women who testified that they were compelled to serve as “comfort women” .

Regarding the commonality, I think there is a problem of gender bias. In the case of the Japanese “comfort women” , the fact that women who were already in sexual slavery under the licensed prostitution system were forced to become “comfort women” has become clear. “Comfort women” in Hokkaido’s mines were also forced to work at sex trafficking facilities called “” Chôsen Ryôriya” before they were forced to be “comfort women” for the corporations. Since, even to the present moment, there is a strong gender bias judging women who were forced to be “comfort women” according to their previous record - was she a “virgin” or “prostitute” before - and of regarding the former as a victim and the latter, not, there have been few or no women who have come forward.

Regarding the difference, I suppose some women who were forced to be “comfort women” in Hokkaido’s mines had no choice but to stay in Japan, although it is unknown whether those women could return to Korea after Japan’s defeat or not. In such cases, I think that there has also been an aspect of ethnic discrimination, due to the discrimination against Koreans in Japan that has persisted deeply since Japan’s defeat, such women would not have been comfortable in giving their names. This is a different point from the problem of Japanese “comfort women” .

While doing this research, I learned a lot from Ms. Song Yon-Ok, a researcher of Korean modern history who has been examining the relationship between the licensed prostitution system and the “comfort women” system operated by the Japanese army. Her research made me realize that I have to look at the dichotomy which divides women into those who are victims and those who aren’t, as I mentioned above, from the standpoint of the women who were victimized by sexual violence.

I think that it is necessary to investigate the involvement and responsibility of corporations, the military, the police, the administrative agencies and traffickers using various documents' analysis in order to reveal the actual situation at that time, standing in the shoes of the Korean women who were forced to engage in the purchase of sexual services in the midst of the expansionist Japanese imperialism and the national sexual control system, without being distracted by the politics of language in such words as "barmaid" , "comfort women" , "Chôsen Ryôriya" and "comfort station" .

In the end, it is indispensable that we trace our history/herstory from the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity and class. Although my research is still young, I would like to continue doing my best to listen to the voices of Korean women, who could not speak up, and have their voices heard by current and future generations. Thank you very much for your attention.