

Maria Rosa Henson, the Filipina survivor

Testimony: Maria Rosa Henson

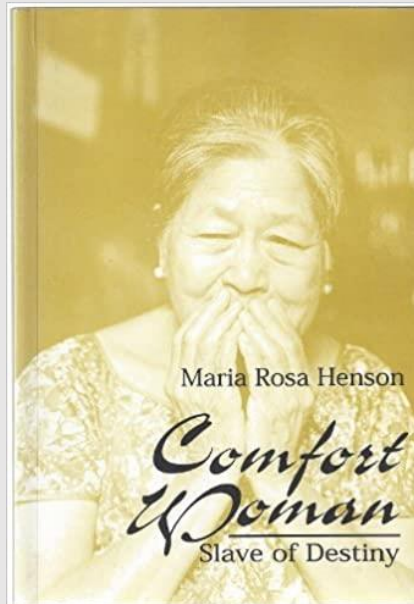
Author: Summary of her autobiography, *Comfort Women: Slave of Destiny*

Date: 1996

Location of national origin: The Philippines

Excerpt from autobiography:

Maria Rosa's autobiography tells of a horrific sequence of events that led to her captivity under Japanese Imperial Army soldiers stationed in her home country, The Philippines, and follows her journey during captivity at a comfort station as a young girl, and her eventual release to freedom. The following is an excerpt from her autobiography, *Comfort Woman: Slave of Destiny*.



Maria Rosa Henson, *Comfort Woman: Slave of Destiny*

"For one week, I went every day with my uncles to gather wood. I was happy to have fuel for cooking even though I got ant bites and bruises from walking past thorny trees and grass. One day in February 1942, at about eleven a.m., as I was preparing to bundle some dry branches that I had gathered, I was surprised by two Japanese soldiers who grabbed each of my arms. I cried out, but they refused to let me go. Then I heard someone shout, "Baka!" I thought the word meant cow, because baka is the Tagalog word for cow. It was only later that I found out it was a Japanese swearword that meant stupid. The shout came from another Japanese soldier who approached us and slapped the two soldiers who held me. He looked like an officer because he carried a long, curved saber. I thought he would save me, but he grabbed me from the soldiers and raped me.

When he was done, he passed me on to the two soldiers, who took turns raping me. Then they just walked away...

[After two weeks pass] I again joined my neighbors and my uncles in gathering wood. "I will not get out of the sight of my uncles and neighbors," I told myself. But as we reached the place

where we usually went, we saw Japanese soldiers. One of them was the same officer who had raped me. He grabbed me in full view of my uncles and neighbors. They could not do anything because they could get killed. .. After raping me, the officer just walked away.

... One morning in April 1943, I was asked by my Huk comrades to collect some sacks of dried corn from the nearby town of Magalang. I went with two others in a cart pulled by a carabao... As we approached the Japanese checkpoint near the town hospital of Angeles, the man beside me whispered, "Be careful, there are some guns and ammunition hidden in the sacks of corn." ... I Became very nervous, fearing that if the Japanese soldiers discovered the weapons, we would all get killed....

Finally, he allowed us to pass, but after we had gone thirty meters from the checkpoint he whistled and signaled us to return... [he] signaled that I was the only one to come back... I thought that maybe they would rape me. The guard led me at gunpoint to the second floor of the building that used to be the town hospital. It had been turned into the Japanese headquarters and garrison. I saw six other women there. I was given a small room... Japanese soldiers kept watch in the hall outside.... The following day was hell. Without warning, a Japanese soldier entered my room and pointed his bayonet at my chest... And then he raped me. When he was done, other soldiers came into my room... Twelve soldiers raped me in quick succession, after which I was given half an hour to rest. Then twelve more soldiers followed..."