

ATIS Research Report No. 120

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Original Annotation Link: <http://www.kyeol.kr/node/168>

Image Link: http://archive.history.go.kr/image/viewer.do?system_id=000001040232

*Translated the original text with editing and added supplementary explanation.

During and after WWII, the Allied Forces produced documents on the “comfort women” for the Japanese military, which have historical significance. Research Report No. 120, created by the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS) is the most detailed report among the relevant documents produced by Allied Forces (by the U.S. and other countries), which have been discovered so far.

This report was disclosed to the public in 1992 for the first time, soon after Hak-sun Kim publicly testified about her ordeal in 1991. Angered by the Japanese government’s denial of the “comfort women” history, Grant K. Goodman, professor from the University of Kansas, released this report that he had obtained when he served as a Military Intelligence Service Language Officer in the US Army during the wartime.¹ Prior to Goodman’s release of the document, the National Institute of Korean History (NIKH) acquired the report from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in the US on January 28, 1992, through Dr. Seonju Bang, a Korean American historian.

ATIS’ Research reports were generally submitted to high-ranking officials in the Allied South West Pacific Area command and the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. There are two versions of the Research Report, No. 120: it was first published in February 1945 and then republished in November in the same year. In the latter version, descriptions on the “comfort women” system were expanded to include documents seized from the Japanese armed forces on the establishment and operation of the “comfort stations.” While the initial version was created to collect information needed to defeat the enemy during the war, the purpose of the later version was to prepare for the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, a critical part of the postwar settlement.

Another noted difference between the two versions is that the former mostly relied on POWs’ statements whereas the latter contained substantial and specific information including the “comfort station” regulations testified by former “comfort station” owners. In particular, the “comfort station” section in the November version has a subsection on regulations (i.e., Regulations) which compiles regulations at five different “comfort stations,” which provides us a general idea of the Japanese military “comfort station” system. Among the five locations, regulations at the “comfort station” in Manila are the most extensive and detailed: The Manila “comfort station” regulations are comprised of 52 provisions. The general regulations (p.9) prescribes that every aspect of “comfort stations” including establishment, suspension, close of business and compensations for damages would be controlled by the Japanese military. This clearly indicates that the “comfort stations” were part of the Japanese military’s subsidiary facilities.

The second item in the report discusses Burma based on the statements given by a former business owner who was captured and became a POW. The report clearly shows that various

¹ Goodman, Grant K. *Journal of Japanese Studies* 30, no. 1 (2004): 183-86. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25064463>.

Japanese authorities—not only the military but also the Japanese Government-General in Korea—were involved in the establishment and operation of the “comfort stations.”

In sum, Research Report no. 120 is the most extensive and detailed material among English language documents on “comfort stations” that have been discovered thus far. It also indicates that the Allied Forces were highly interested in the issue of “comfort stations” to the extent that they published investigation reports in two separate versions. The report’s historical significance is mainly due to its inclusion of documents produced by the Japanese military as well as the perspectives of the Allied Forces. It is one of the rare documents that contain detailed descriptions on how the Japanese military operated “comfort stations.”