

South East Asia Translation and Interrogation Center (SEATIC) Interrogation Bulletin no. 2, a Secondary report based on the original reports

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Original Annotation Link: <http://www.kyeol.kr/node/195>

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This 13-page report, dated November 30, 1944, has nine sections in total: Effect of Allied Propaganda upon the Japanese Army in Burma; A POW's essay; Detailed Criticism upon one issue of the "Gunjin Shimbun" by a POW; The notorious Colonel Maruyama; Disregard of troops' welfare by Japanese officers; Difficulties due to reinforcements from different Depots; Average age of reinforcements to Burma; A pacifist in the Japanese Army; and, A Japanese Army Brothel in the forward area. Among these, two sections, that is, section 4 on the notorious Colonel Maruyama and section 9 on "comfort stations" in the frontline, are relevant to the "comfort women" issue.

This document is created by the South East Asia Translation and Interrogation Center (SEATIC), an organization similar to the ATIS (Allied Translator and Interpreter Section). The Allied Forces established multiple organizations to wage psychological warfare and to interrogate POWs in various regions. This SEATIC Interrogation bulletin no. 2 is the most well-known document related to the "comfort women" issue among the SEATIC records.

Its author is the Psychological Warfare Division of SEATIC. This report is a secondary report based on different sources of information including interrogation reports (e.g., OWI's Interrogation report no. 49 created based on direct interrogations of twenty Korean "comfort women").

Colonel Maruyama was the Japanese Army's captain of defense in Myitkyina, and therefore the "comfort station" in Myitkyina was under his control. Maruyama were invariably negatively depicted both by the Japanese soldiers and the "comfort women." According to the reports, Maruyama was a regular at the "comfort station" and a well-known drunkard. Rumor had it that he spent hours in his "foxhole" with his favorite "comfort woman" even when "it was necessary to stay under cover." Also, Maruyama had a negative impact on the operation of "comfort stations" by cutting the fees charged at the "comfort stations" and the percentage of "comfort women's" takings from 60% to 50%.

Section 9 "A Japanese Army Brothel in the forward area" presents essential information related to the "comfort women" issue." This section is mainly based on two sources: the interrogation of a former "comfort station" owner Eibun Kitamura, labeled here as M.739, and the OWI interrogation report no. 49. The latter has been widely known whereas the former report has not been discovered yet. Although there is little difference in terms of their overall description of the "comfort station," Section 9 and the OWI report no. 49 differ from each other for the following reasons: first, the SEATIC bulletin no. 2 is four pages long while the OWI report no. 49 is six pages long; second, the SEATIC bulletin no. 2 contains specific numbers and nationalities of the "comfort women" whereas the report no. 49 does not. The former states that there were twenty-two Koreans at Kyoei "comfort station," twenty Koreans at Kinsui "comfort station," and twenty-one Chinese at Momoya "comfort station"; and third, another difference between the two reports concerns the description of the "comfort women's" return to home. The no. 49 report says that some "comfort women" were able to return home on orders of the

military in late 1943. However, the bulletin no. 2 says that even though the “comfort women” were supposedly able to return home once they paid off the debt, no women who worked for the “comfort station” operated by M.739 actually returned home due to the war situation.

The most notable aspect in this report, when compared to the no. 49 report, is that it hardly contains subjective opinions based on prejudice unlike the no. 49 report. The bulletin no. 2 focuses on facts drawn from Kitamura’s statements and no. 49 report and present them in a dry tone. Given this, this document exposes the limits and problems of the no. 49 report while it presents valuable information about the “comfort women.”