

OSS, Control Sheet for Intelligence Agencies: Questionnaire on the Far East No. 1322 (by Harry Baylor Taylor, Nov 8, 1943)

Annotation Source: Seoul Metropolitan Archive

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This document is a questionnaire filled out by an American missionary Harry Baylor Taylor who returned from China to the U.S. on a ship that left the port of Shanghai on September 19, 1943. This questionnaire was filled in and submitted to the U.S. government's Office of Strategic Services (OSS) on November 8, 1943. The OSS was an American intelligence agency established during WWII (June 1942) and its main tasks were to conduct espionage activities, to collect information, to prevent espionage, to assess and censor information, and to conduct psychological warfare and black propaganda during the war. Later, the OSS became the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The Office of War Information (OWI) which was established around the same period as the OSS took charge of gathering information in China-Burma-India theaters (CBI). The OSS Headquarters in Washington D.C. and branches in India (in New Delhi and Calcutta) and China (in Kunming and Xian) were in charge of activities regarding Korea.

American intelligence agencies including the OSS considered the issue of "comfort women" a useful tool in psychological warfare to degrade the Japanese military's morale, as well as to provoke an anti-Japanese sentiment among local populations under the Japanese occupation. The agencies assumed that while the Japanese military mobilized "comfort women" and sent them to the frontlines to boost their soldiers' morale, there would have been internal complaints and conflicts regarding the use of "comfort stations" or distribution of such service. Also, informing local residents of the fact that the Japanese military had been forcibly mobilizing local women in the occupied territories was a way to raise awareness about Japan's cruelty and to provoke anger in the local populations, thereby to cause a rift between Japan and its occupied areas. For this purpose, the OSS collected information from the Japanese POWs as to the existence of "comfort stations" and their experiences of visiting the facilities, the number and nationalities of "comfort women," and the relationship between the soldiers' morale and the "comfort stations." They also gathered extensive information about the "comfort women" mobilization process and the Japanese military's violence and insults against local women through the interrogation of civilians in the battlefields. In this context, Americans who stayed in the East Asian region under the Japanese occupation were considered as useful informants by the OSS. The OSS collected information using questionnaires for those Americans after they returned to the U.S.

Taylor stayed in Anking (or Anqing), China as a missionary and physician. The information that he witnessed regarding "comfort women" in China is found in section "B-9, Incidence of Disease" on p. 11. Taylor said that the cases of sexual disease increased in Anqing after the occupation of the area by Japan, due to the "comfort stations" permitted by the Japanese military. He asserted that the "comfort stations" were put under the control of the Japanese military. His statement indicates that the Japanese military maintained "comfort stations" as part of the military system in Anqing, China and that local residents were also aware of this fact.

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