

On the Recruitment of Prostitutes for “comfort stations” of the North China Expeditionary Army, no. 1

Author: Governor (Chief of Prefectural Police Headquarters) of Ibaraki Prefecture

Recipients: Minister of Home Affairs; Minister of the Army; Prefectural Governors; Commanding Officer, Regimental District of Mito; Mitoura Military Police Commander; Chiefs of Prefectural Police Departments

Date: February 14, 1938

File: Documents for Approval, Office of the Minister of Home Affairs (1938), Vol. 1

Locations: Shanghai (China), Ibaraki (Japan)

Keywords: Mobilization

Annotation Source: Northeast Asian History Foundation

Annotation Link: http://contents.nahf.or.kr/id/NAHF.iswc.d_001_0040_0090

Annotation:

This document is a notice issued by the Governor (Chief of prefectural police headquarters) of Ibaraki Prefecture regarding the regulation of the “comfort women” recruiting agents within the Prefecture. The gist of the document is as follows:

Wakayama prefecture investigated a suspected case involving a brothel owner in Kōbe, Tōshichi Ouchi who recruited two prostitutes from Mito for Shanghai “comfort stations” and sent them to Kobe. There was a lack of clarity in Ouchi’s statement that his recruitment activity occurred through a Mito-based middleman Matsuyoshi Okawa who was commissioned by the Shanghai Expeditionary Army. That being said, the recruitment of prostitutes (sex trade workers) against public order and decency would disgrace the Imperial Army. Therefore, the chiefs of prefectural police departments including Wakayama prefecture were instructed to rigorously regulate the “comfort women” recruitment activities.

A form attached to this document contains contract conditions (duration, wage, methods of paying off the advance money, interest, penalty for breach of contract, return to home country, etc.). The duration of the contract is 2 years and women between the ages of 16 and 30 were recruited. This document reveals that local authorities considered the recruitment of “comfort women” at the request of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army as a disgrace to the Japanese military and attempted to control the recruitment activities.

Attachments:

- Documents on the statements of Tōshichi Ouchi, a recruiting agent of “comfort women” for the Japanese Army
- A contract form, a promissory note

Sources:

WAM Collection (Police_009)

Collection of the Asian Women’s Fund, Vol. 1, pp. 47-52.

Sourcebook by Suzuki, Yamashita, and Tonomura, Vol. 1, pp. 130-133.

Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, A05032040800

Note:

The names of the two recruited women and their personal information are redacted in the

Sourcebook by Suzuki, Yamashita and Tonomura, Vol. 1.