

# Japanese Military 'Comfort Womens' as an Exception of system

: the Nature of Japanese Military 'Comfort Womens'  
Presented in official Documents Military Japanese  
Government

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# Introduction

- The issue of Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' was known to the world by testimonies of the victims in 1990s. Since then, the research has centered on the 'comfort women,' the victims, rather than the system on comfort facilities created by the Japanese government and the military.
- Without understanding the changes of general administration system resulted from the Japanese total mobilization system during the war regime, the research has continuously created a sort of self-consuming arguments like 'licensed prostitution' or 'prostitute' regarding to 'comfort women.'
- The purpose of this study is to analyze the process of making comfort station system based on the official documents of Japanese army and Japanese government. Comfort stations were there and were the real place where the actual violence happened, and more importantly, the operating system for those comfort stations was inaugurated by Japanese government as well as Japanese army.



## System around of 'comfort women' that needs analysis

- regulations and laws concerning establishment of comfort station
- regulations and laws concerning qualification of 'comfort women' mobilized in 'comfort station' and their 'travel'
- regulations and laws concerning management of 'comfort station' and 'comfort women'
- regulations and laws concerning accidents and death, and 'returning'





## 2. Comfort Station as Military Facility : built 'comfort facility' through revising regulations on field canteen

1937. 9.21. [野戦酒保規程改正二関スル件]

**JS-1.** Revision of the regulations on the field canteens. Sept 21, 1937

The Grand Records of the Ministry of Army (Rikugunsho Dainikki), Collection A (Kou-juu), 1937

# Reason to establish comfort station

## Past study ;

- prevention of venereal disease among Japanese soldiers,
- prevention of sexual violence in war area,
- control soldiers providing women as morale booster



## In reality ;

- Plan to reorganize the military aiming a system for total war because Japanese army was inferior to the western army at the aspect of physics and technology, logistical service as well.
- In 1937, Japanese Army extensively reorganized the military system, having expected that a lot of reserve forces were mobilized due to long-lasting China-Japan war, it also recognized the need to prepare alternatives for soldiers' morale at the war field
- In order to prepare the probable problems of soldiers' morale, especially on sexual aspect, instead of giving reward and benefit such as returning home to the soldiers, Japanese Military chose to build 'comfort facility' in the army post because it costed the least of money





1931.9. **Manchurian Incident.**

Solider was in charge of managing hygiene control onto the old 'brothel'

- 1932.1.28. Naval Comfort station installed in Shanghai  
1934, 14places / 1936, 10 places

1937.7. **Second Sino-Japanese War**

Establishing comfort stations operated as regular parts of military facility

- 1937.9. 「 Revision of the regulations on the field canteens 」

1941.12. **Pacific War**

Facilities outside of the army were also under the military's control

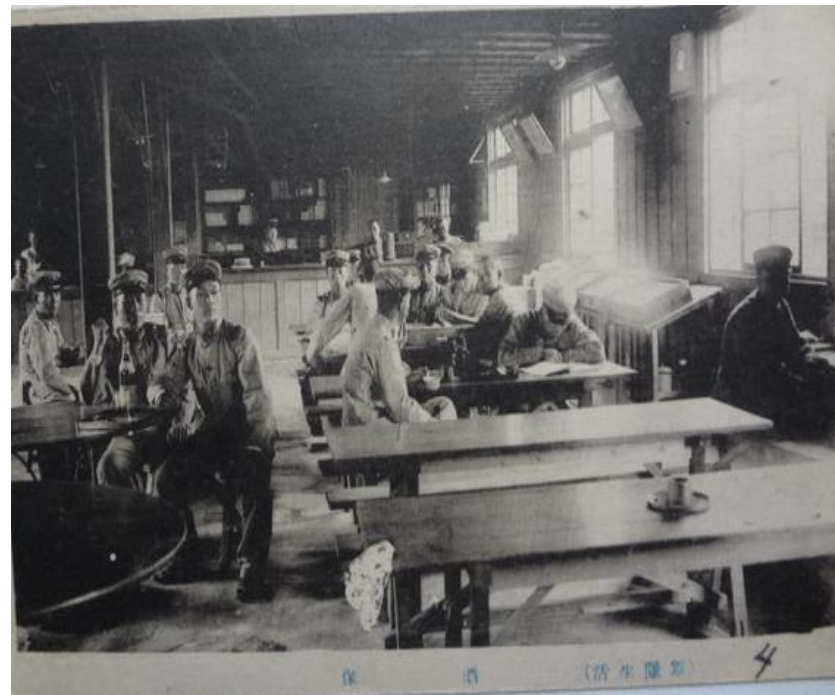
- 1943. 「營外施設規程」

- At this point, the nature of comfort station defined as Japanese Military Facility in the rear field



# Syuho(酒保) Canteen (PX):

- a shop selling daily necessities and personal items operated mainly for military personnel, military related civilian in the area of army station post, buildings, and ships.
- Regulations on canteen are established by Ministry of the Army
- Officer of canteen(solider who is in charge of bookkeeping of the army unit) manages canteen





- Amending regulation on the field canteen(PX), article 1 in order to have comfort facilities where the air fighters are posted, and based on this amended regulation, the other regulations on the field canteen were revised
- 
- Being possible to have 'comfort facility' in the area of canteen which is an organization for army supply and support, and this facility is operated under 'regulation on army quarters'

威風靈驗  
會計整理  
(決行)

昭和拾貳年九月拾日

# 第五九號

(決行) 行決後  
覽同  
(部)局

連帶

局長 (部) 局  
軍務  
兵務  
整備

執行指定

決裁指定

件名

大政務

官與參

書記官

主務局

昭和十二年九月廿一日

經手第八三號

野戰酒保規程改正ニ関スル件

野戰  
野戰酒保規程  
第一條 野戰  
地ニ於テ軍  
必要ノ需  
確且廉價  
スルヲ目的

改正理由  
野戰酒保利用者ノ範  
ヲ明瞭ナラシメ且對  
間ニ於テ慰安施設ヲ  
得ルコトヲモ認ムル  
要スルニ依ル

衣履課

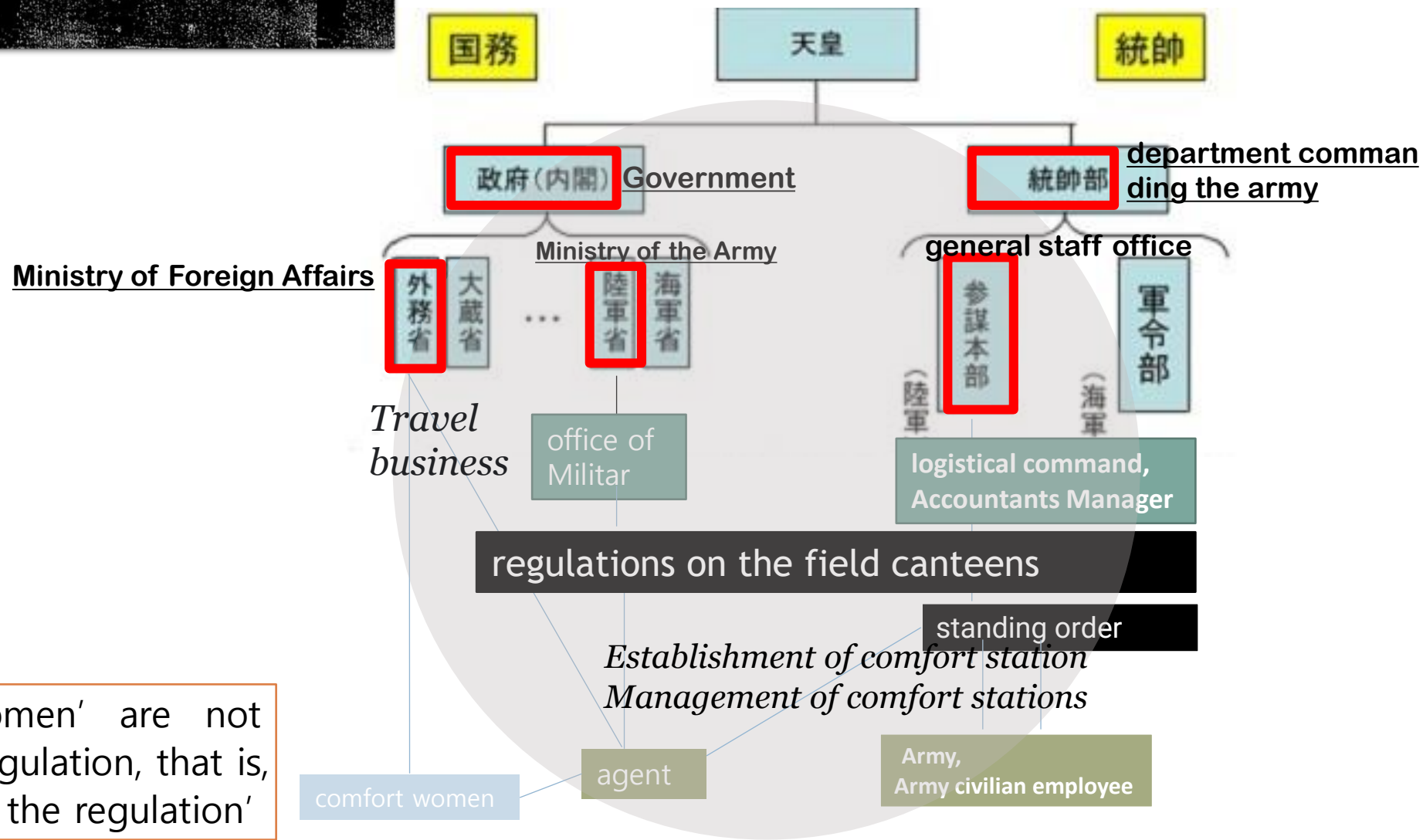
陸軍

確且廉價ニ販賣スル  
ヲ目的トス  
前項外野戰酒保  
要ナル慰安施設ヲナスコ  
トヲ得  
第二條 本規程ニ於テ所管  
所屬長官ノ意義ヲ

0955



Rationale regulation concerning establishment and operation of comfort station



- 'comfort women' are not under this regulation, that is, 'exception of the regulation'



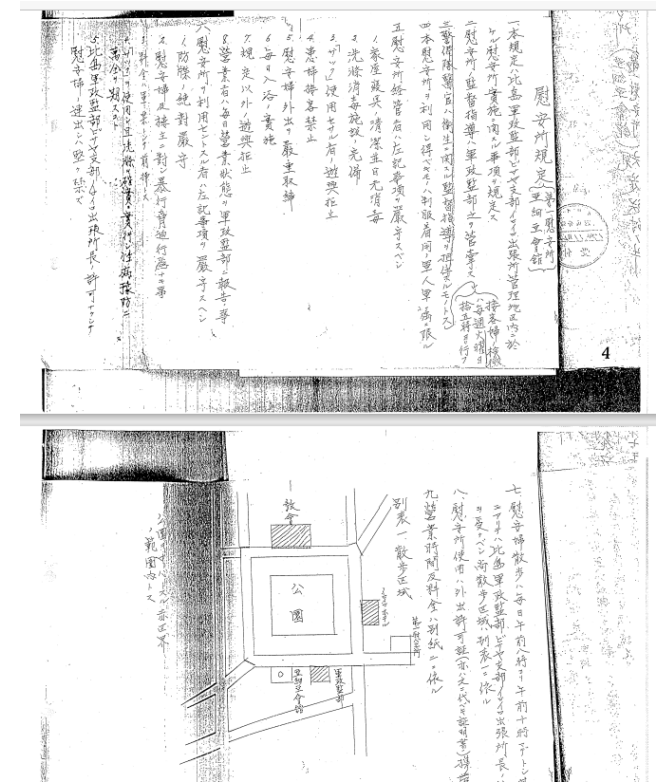
# Comfort station: Established by revised regulations on the field canteen

## Rear facility of the army

- No clear distinction like army's direct operation, managed by the army, or used by the army
- But only the operating and managing style is different, depending on each army unit's 'regulation of army quarters'



JS-25. Sending of the  
comfort station  
regulations  
(慰安所規定送付ノ件)





### 3. Mobilization of ‘comfort women’: treated as major supplies, but it has no relationship with the existing system.

1938.1.19. 群馬県知事発内務大臣・陸軍大臣宛「上海派遣軍内陸軍慰安所二於ケル酌婦募集二関スル件」

1938.2.24. 内務省発警第五号 「支那渡航婦女の取扱に関する」



# Qualification of 'comfort women'

Who becomes 'comfort women'?

## 1 . Plan of Japanese Military

"16 to 30 of age, debt in advance from 500won to 1000won, 2 years of employment, Military pays commission of 10% among debt in advance"

1938.1.19., 上海派遣軍内陸軍慰安所における酌婦募集に関する件



Licensed Prostitute: older than 18, therefore the above age limitation is not corresponded to licensed prostitution

## 2. Notification from Chief officer of Ministry of Home

"the one who is older than 21 and already engaged in prostitution, and confirmed acceptance in person" (police act article 5 by Ministry of Home),

1938. 2.24., 内務省発警第五号 支那渡航婦女の取扱に関する件



which is not applied to the occupied area such as Chosun, and Taiwan



### 3 . In 1944, Jop ads on Newspapers in Chosun

"Mainichi simbun, 1944.10.27 age:18-31 no restriction on business

Keizyou simbun, 1944. 7.26 age:18-31 no restriction on business



朝鮮總督府機關紙  
"毎日新報"  
1944年10月27日広告

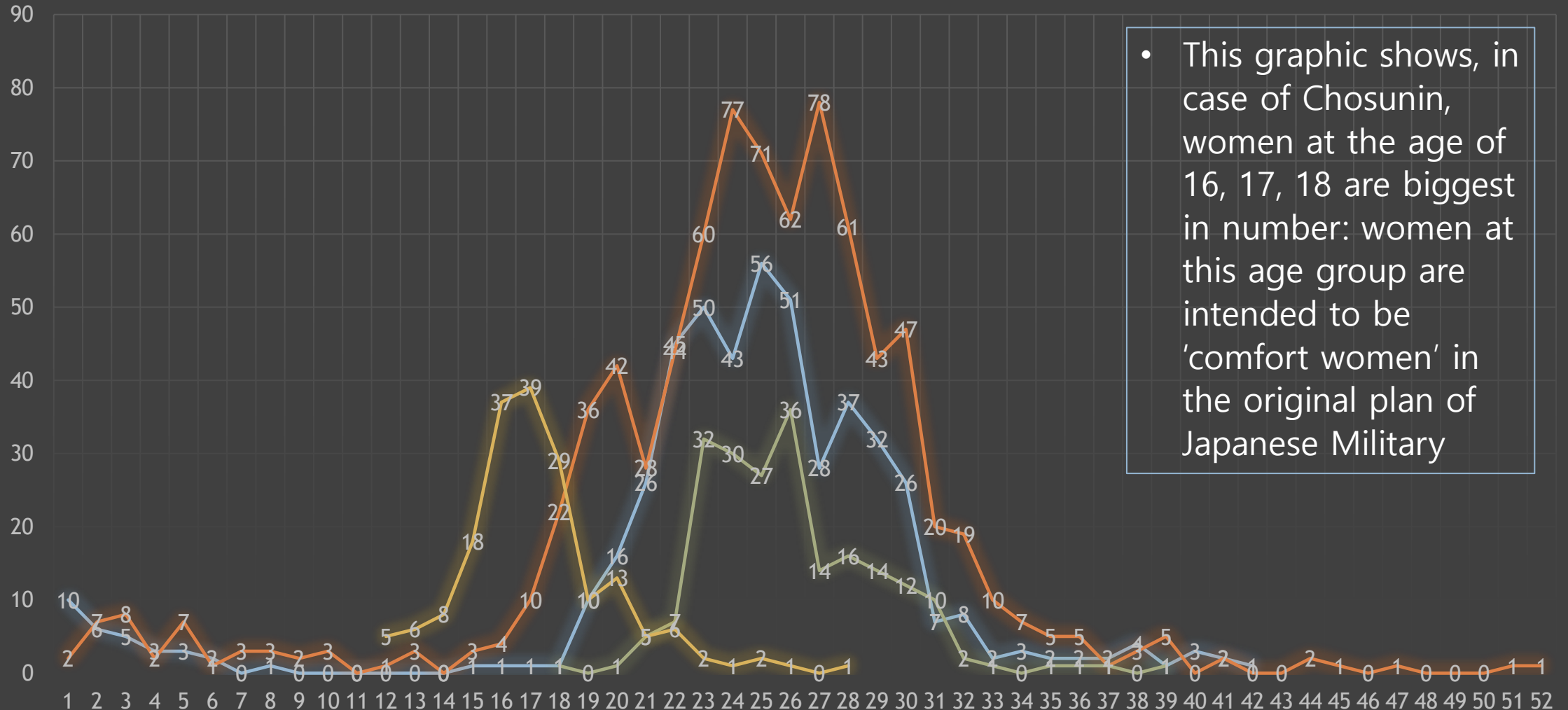
新聞"京城日報"  
1944年7月26日



# Age distribution of (so called) Chosunin 'comfort women'

## 조선인 위안부 연령

— 아유타야 인원 — 상하이부녀공제회 — 유수명부 — 신고서



• This graphic shows, in case of Chosunin, women at the age of 16, 17, 18 are biggest in number: women at this age group are intended to be 'comfort women' in the original plan of Japanese Military



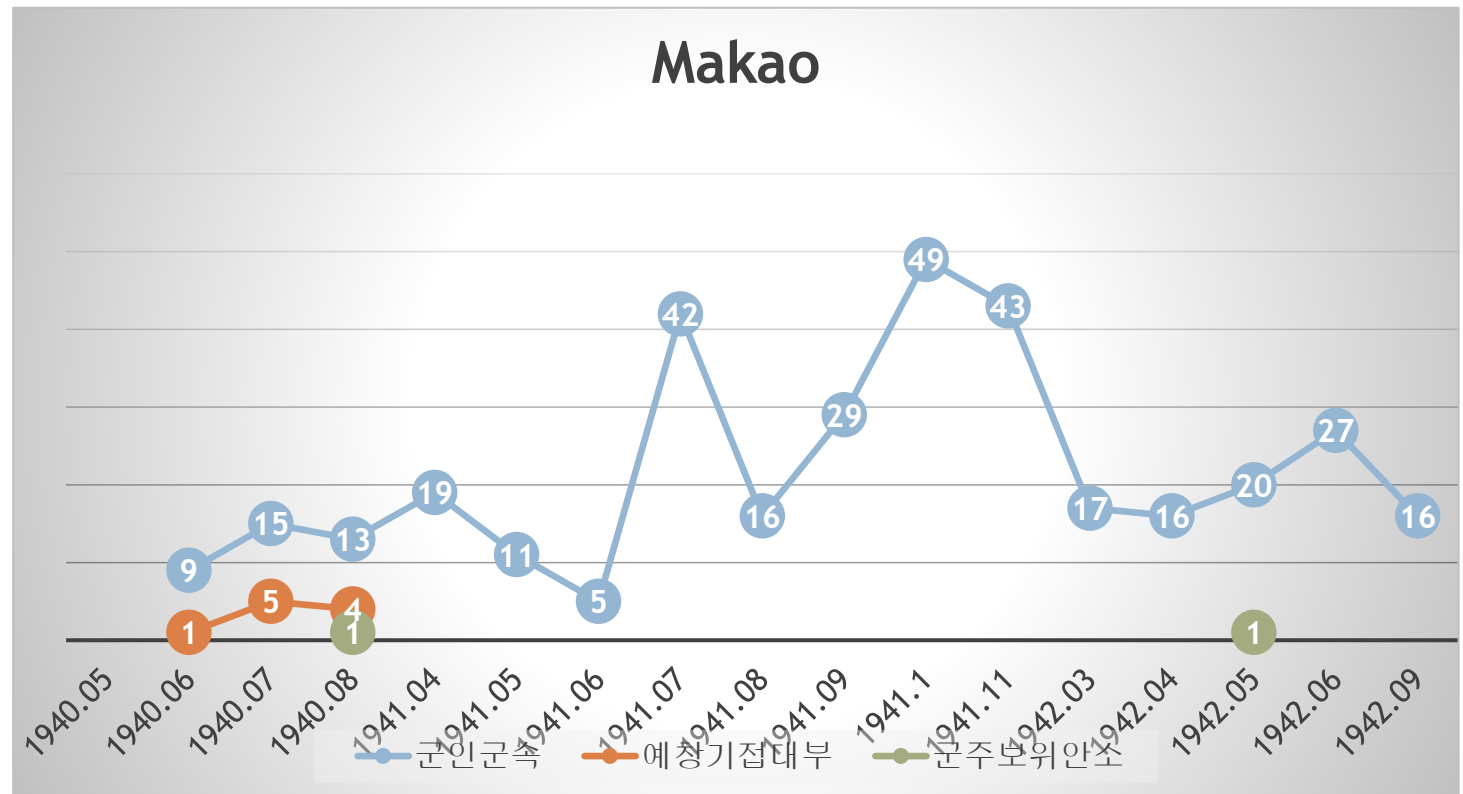


# Level of durability and level of expendability

- The reason Japanese mobilize the young women appears clearly on the graphics. From 1940 to 1942, as for 'comfort women' mobilized during earlier times from O-mun, HongKong, 10 of them had to serve 347 soldiers all the two years
- As for Japanese Military, mobilization (of 'comfort women') itself generates expenses. Then, when it comes to mobilize comfort women, Japanese Military had to have a certain standard on durability, how long they can use, so they think the younger as well as un-consumed is the best for reducing the cost of operating comfort women system. Therefore, preference was on Chosun in and Taiwanese rather than 21 years old or more Japanese licensed prostitutes

## Form of mobilization of comfort women and Japanese army

347 of Japanese soldiers per  
10 of comfort women.  
For the two all years





## 4. Movement of 'comfort women' : presented as 'mark' beyond Japanese legal territory

1938.1.19. 群馬県知事発内務大臣・陸軍大臣宛「上海派遣軍内陸軍慰安所二於ケル酌婦募集二関スル件」

1938.2.24. 内務省発警第五号 「支那渡航婦女の取扱に関する」





**JS-22.** Matters concerning “comfort women”’s travel to occupied territories in the Southern areas (南方方面占領地ニ對シ慰安婦渡航方ノ件[外務大臣]), 1941.1.13

Therefore, there's no need to issue passport for (comfort women's) traveling, they traveled by military ships with identification issued by the military



## **5. Death of 'Comfort Women' : abandoned existence**

....not a human being but one of the listed item....



For the case of 'death' of comfort women?

- No guidelines or regulations for the case of comfort women's death in the documents issued by Japanese Military

새로운 위안부가 도착하였대서 푸름은 떠돌적 하였다.  
「아침에서 뼈이가 왔대지...」  
「응. 난 가 봤는대?」  
그것은 푸름을 근거리로 하고 있는 수송부대의 병정  
「어때?」  
「아직 정식으로 위안소를 열지 않았어. 그래서  
문...」  
「호오, 그것 좋군...」  
정식으로 문을 연 위안소에서는 한 회에 십원씩이다.  
는 헌병의 주머니에 들어가는 것이었고, 그래서 한 것이  
아침에서 온 위안부들은 여기 푸름에 전부터 있던 위  
터보다 더까지 대충고서 덩마 같이 쓰러진 위안부가 있던  
기에 바쁜 위안부도 있었다.  
수송부대의 두 병정은 관찰하는 틈틈을 찾아가서 군

But, for the case of missing a comfort woman, Japanese military police has no need to make a complex document because a comfort woman is not a human being but one of the listed item on the military supply and support...

손에 체결된 위안부는 여기에서 다른편 철벽 밑으로 동행이 체결다. 결국 이 추력사고로서 하루  
늦게 위안부 들은 푸름에 도착한 것이다.  
아라강은 철철살음이요 길이 험하기 짝이 없다. 일주일에 한번씩은 으레히 철벽에서 추력이  
달려나왔다. 병정이 법에게 물려간 일도 있었다. 위안부들이 아라강을 건너달 철벽에서 떨어  
진 추력사고로 많은 병정이 죽었다. 그중에는 기무라라는 공병도 끼어 있었다. 이를날 공병대  
의 장교는 상부에 보내는 보고서를 만들었다.  
보 고 서  
소속 제 일만 구천 육백 칠십 삼부대  
계급 상등병  
성명 기무라・메즈오  
우는 아라강에서 적기의 습격을 받아, 응감한게도 응전하였으나 불행히도 흉  
부 관통으로 백예의 전사를 하였음  
육군소위 야마다・시찌로오  
그러나 헌병은 위안부가 하나 없어졌다는데 대해서 공병대 같이 복잡한 보고서를 만들 필요  
가 없었다. 위안부는 인간으로서가 아니라 물품으로서 장부에 오르는 존재이었기에...  
36



1953, 수도문화사



# Conclusion

- Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' were the beings beyond legal territory while the war
- However they had no legal protection which provided to male soldiers
- The comfort station system of Japanese Military has made comfort women 'exception' of the related law (regulation), in order not to create one who needs to be protected by the law
- Damage of comfort women is beyond sexual abuse or exploitation toward women. In my opinion, real damage of comfort women is that the victims were regarded as a sort of non-existed, invisible thing by the comfort station system of Japanese Military and the law of Japanese Empire.

