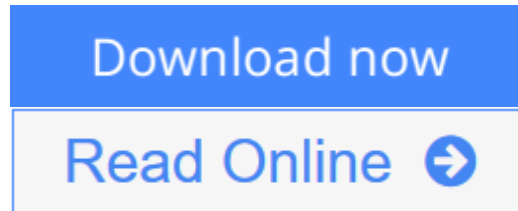


Comfort Women Speak: Testimony by Sex Slaves of the Japanese Military : Includes New United Nations Human Rights Report (Science and Human Rights Series, 1)

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During World War II, an estimated 200,000 girls and young women were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese imperial military - which was authorised by the highest levels of Japan's wartime government. The system resulted in the largest and most methodical mass rape of women in recorded history. Japan's Kem pei tai political police tricked or abducted females as young as eleven years old and imprisoned them in military rape camps known as comfort stations situated throughout Asia. These comfort women were forced to service as many as 50 Japanese soldiers a day. They were beaten, starved, made to endure abortions or injections with sterilizing drugs. Only a few women survived and those that did suffered permanent physical and emotional damage. Little was known about the true scope of this crime against humanity until 1991, when after almost fifty years of silence, seventy-four year old Kim Hak-Soon told the world about her experiences as a comfort woman. Her testimony gave others the strength to come forward. The Washington Coalition for Comfort Women (WCCW) carefully transcribed and translated the stories of nineteen survivors and these are now presented in this book. This not simply a history book. Comfort Women Speak documents the lives of nineteen courageous women who continue to fight to bring to account one of the most powerful governments in the world.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

From about 1933 until the end of WWII, the Japanese military conscripted an estimated 200,000 women to work in "Comfort Stations" or brothels where Japanese soldiers could receive sex on demand. Frequently lured from their homes with promises of high-paying factory work, these women, most of whom came from countries like Korea and the Philippines (which were under Japanese rule at the time), were imprisoned in the comfort stations for as long as eight years, received no money for their services and suffered torture or even death if they refused to comply with the soldiers' demands. Because those who survived were too traumatized and ashamed to speak of their experience, the history of the comfort women remained largely unknown until 1991, when one survivor spoke out and brought the attention of human rights activists to the women's plight. Here the Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues has compiled an oral history comprised of interviews with 19 surviving comfort women, who describe their ordeals in harrowing detail. They were routinely underfed and forced to service up to 50 soldiers a day. While their responses to their experience range from anger to resignation, all feel that their lives were permanently blighted as a result. As the first volume in a series on science and human rights issues, these testimonies make a powerful case for the apologies and reparations that the Japanese government has yet to grant. Readers dedicated to human rights, and women's rights in particular, as well as Korean-Americans will form a solid if modest market for this moving document, whose text is complemented by articulate photographs by Soon Mi Yu.

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Review

"Failure to address crimes of a sexual nature committed during the war has added to the level of impunity with which similar crimes are committed today - UN Special Rapporteur GJ McDougall

About the Author

CHRISTOPHER SIMPSON, editor of the series, is an associate professor specializing in information literacy at American University's School of Communication. He has authored several books concerning genocide, international human rights laws, and national security.

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