

Dennis Halpin

Visiting Scholar, US-Korea Institute at SAIS and former House Foreign Affairs Committee staff

Dr. Peipei Qiu will discuss her new book, *Chinese Comfort Women: Testimonies from Imperial Japan's Sex Slaves* (Oxford Oral History Series), followed by a panel discussion on the legacy of Comfort Women with **Dr. Peipei Qiu**, **Dennis Halpin**, and **Mindy Kotler**, Asia Policy Point, and moderated by **Jenny Town**, Assistant Director, US-Korea Institute at SAIS.

A light lunch will be provided. This event is open to the public and press. Lunch will start at 12:00 p.m.; program will start at 12:30 p.m. Please RSVP below.

Dr. Peipei Qiu is Louise Boyd Dale and Alfred Lichtenstein Professor of Chinese and Japanese and Director of Asian Studies Program at Vassar College. She has received degrees from Peking University (B.A. in Japanese and M.A. in Japanese Studies) and Columbia University (Ph.D. in Japanese Literature) and has focused her research on comparative studies of Japanese and Chinese literature, women in East Asian literature and societies, and Taoist influence in Japanese and Chinese literature and cultures. She is the recipient of a number of grants and awards, including the Japan Foundation Fellowship for Professional Researchers, Japan Foundation Dissertation Research Fellowship, Japan Society for the Promotion of Sciences Fellowship, and the National Endowment for Humanities Fellowship (US). Professor Qiu is the author of *Bashô and the Dao: The Zhuangzi and the Transformation of Haikai*, and *Chinese Comfort Women: Testimonies from Imperial Japan's Sex Slaves*. Her scholarly articles and translations have been published in English, Chinese, and Japanese.

Developments in the Joint Application for Inclusion in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register and Overview of China's Comfort Women Application Documents

Shiro Takahashi (Professor, Meisei University)

1. Overview of the comfort women-related documents that China filed for registration as part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

Led by private organizations and researchers, preparations to make a joint application for documents related to comfort women to be registered as part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Register are underway. On June 1, 2015, the South Korean newspaper Hankyoreh featured a report with the following headline: "Experts from North Korea, South Korea, and China Jointly Demand an Apology for the Japanese Military Comfort Women System—Critique of 'Sex Slaves' at the International Academic Meeting Held at Yanbian University in China, including Participants from North Korea." There were three participants from South Korea, three from North Korea, and five

from China, including Su Zhiliang, Professor of History and Director of the Research Center for Chinese "Comfort Women" at Shanghai Normal University.

The South Korean news agency Yonhap News also featured a report on June 2 of the same year with the following headline: "China, South Korea, and North Korea Join Forces on the Comfort Women Issue: Adding More Pressure on Japan!" This article noted that 11 scholars from China, South Korea, and North Korea, as well as an expert who is active in Japan, attended the "International Academic Meeting on the Imperial Japanese Army's Comfort Women System" held in China that day. The sole participant from Japan was Professor Puja Kim from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

Furthermore, the "Asian Solidarity Conference on the Issue of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan" was held in Seoul from May 18 to May 20, 2016, and it was attended by activists from the Philippines, the Netherlands, Taiwan, China, South Korea, Hong Kong, East Timor, Indonesia, Japan, and the U.S, which are all believed to be involved in preparing the joint application. On May 20, an announcement was expected to be made regarding the joint application for comfort women-related documents to be registered as part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, but no such announcement has been made yet.

The comfort women-related documents that China filed two years ago for registration as part of the UNESCO's Memory of the World Register include the following: "Dictated Records of Comfort Women," from the Research Center for Chinese "Comfort Women" at Shanghai Normal University; and "Materials on the Conditions of Comfort Women," from the archives office of Qinhuangdao City, Hebei Province. "Dictated Records of Comfort Women" is a document published by Professor Su Zhiliang's Research Center for Chinese "Comfort Women" at Shanghai Normal University, which is playing a central role in this joint application. It is likely to be one of the core materials for the joint application (please see the report by the present author's co-researcher on the issues surrounding Professor Su Zhiliang's studies on Chinese comfort women based on testimonies).

The comfort women-related documents that China filed two years ago for registration as part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Register are as follows.

China's "Comfort Women" Application Documents (Excerpt)

1. Central Archives: War crime testimonies
2. Liaoning Province Archive Office: Photos related to comfort stations
3. Jilin Province Archive Office:
 - (1) Telegram from the Central Bank of Manchou, Anshan Branch
 - (2) Survey Report on the Status of Public Order Restoration in the Nanjing Military Police Jurisdiction

- (3) Dongning Military Police Headquarters: "Ideological Offenses Monthly Report" (October 1942; first half of the year)
- (4) Jining Provisional Military Police: "Ideology Countermeasures Monthly Report"
- (5) Military Police Survey: Chart of Offenses by Military Personnel (1944)
- (6) Survey Chart of Crimes by Servicemen and Civilian Employees of the Army (1944)
- (7) Military police stationed in China: "Communication Censorship Monthly Report" (February 1941)
- (8) Kwangtung military police: "Postal Censorship Monthly Report"
- (9) Survey Chart of Crimes by Japanese Servicemen (1944)
- (10) Beian Area Censorship Division: "Postal Censorship Monthly Report" (1941)
- (11) Java Military Police Headquarters: "Servicemen Crime Questionnaire" (1943)
- (12) Java Military Police: "Questionnaire on Crimes by Servicemen and Civilian Employees of the Army" (January)
- (13) Java Headquarters: "Military Police Monthly Report (January 1944)"

4. Heilongjiang Province Archive Office: Publications on comfort stations and comfort women

5. Shanghai City Archive Office:

- (1) Historical documents on the Daiichi Saloon
- (2) Materials regarding the taking of comfort women by force and the establishment of comfort stations
- (3) Publications on comfort women and comfort stations

6. Nanjing City Archive Office: Historical documents regarding the establishment of comfort stations in Nanjing

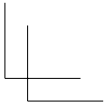
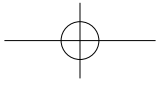
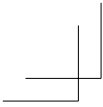
7. Qinhuangdao City Archive Office: Materials on the Conditions of Comfort Women

8. Research Center for Chinese "Comfort Women" at Shanghai Normal University:

- (1) Dictated Records of Comfort Women
- (2) 24 photographs taken by Tetsuo Aso, Moriyasu Murase, etc.

2. Problems with the documents that China filed for registration as part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

I have been studying documents, mainly on war propaganda, that are held in the national archives of countries such as the U.S., U.K., and Canada for many years. Based on the information published



on the websites of UNESCO and other organizations, I would like to express my opinion on problems that I have found with the documents regarding the so-called *jugun-ianfu* (comfort women) that China filed two years ago for registration as part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

The Chinese registration application published on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register website states that the materials submitted were evidence of the coercive recruitment of comfort women. However, my examination of the documents has revealed the issues described below.

1. One basic problem is that China claims that the photographs of the "Yangjiazhai comfort station" from Shanghai are "the actual photographs and their copyright belong to China," whereas they were, in fact, taken by Tetsuo Aso while he was serving as an army doctor. The photographic film is now held by his daughter, Kuni Amako, an obstetrician living in Fukuoka City.

In section 2.5.4 of "Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage," UNESCO specifies the following:

The "rule of law" is respected. . . . copyright legislation [and] moral rights . . . are consistently observed and maintained with integrity and transparency.

The unauthorized use of photographs without the owner's permission and the submission of an application falsely claiming that China holds the copyright to the photographs constitute violations of the above guideline.

Additionally, in the guidelines for the selection criteria for the Memory of the World Register, UNESCO asks the following:

Has its [the documentary heritage item's] identity and provenance been reliably established? Copies, replicas, forgeries, bogus documents or hoaxes can . . . be mistaken for the genuine article.

This guideline has also been violated.

2. Although section 4.4.3 of "Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage" specifies that "The IAC [International Advisory Committee] will also require that the documentary heritage be accessible," China is only partially making public the historical documents it has submitted.

There are various schools of thought about historical facts and their evaluation, and objective verification is essential. If registration of the materials as part of the Memory of the World Register is accepted based on China's one-sided claims despite China's refusing to make public materials and have them verified objectively, UNESCO's international trust and authority will be significantly diminished.

3. Some of the documents that China filed for registration were actually extracts of very small portions of documents, which makes it impossible to position or assess them within the overall

context of the relevant document. This in turn makes discussions and decisions on the authenticity of their content impossible.

Next, I would like to point out specific problems in the key historical materials submitted with regard to the so-called *jugun-ianfu*.

1. The only basis for China's explanation of a photo of a "ship for transporting comfort women" is that the character "慰" is printed on the side of the ship. However, during the war, the "慰" character was mostly used not to stand for "慰安婦" (comfort women), but to stand for "慰問団" (entertainment group), who were singers and comedians who performed at various locations.

The person in the center of the nine individuals who are standing with the ship in their background appears to be a performer, and a well-known Japanese singer named Taro Shoji can be seen on the far left in the back row. According to *The Military Singing Entertainment Groups* (Hakusuisha) by Makoto Baba, Taro Shoji was chosen to be the leader of the "Artists Entertainment Group for Imperial Army Soldiers in Manchuria," which was hosted by Tokyo Nichi Shimbun newspaper and backed by the Army Ministry. The Chinese characters "大興" that are printed on the upper side of the ship refer to a place called Daxing in Heilongjiang Province, and this ship is believed to have been travelling along the Amur River. It would arrive at, depart from, or pass by Daxing while transporting the entertainment groups.

2. The photograph that China describes as a "comfort station in Heilongjiang Province" shows a stage set up in the middle where something like a movie is being shown. This is more likely a photo of the auditorium where the entertainment group performed, rather than a comfort station. The person who took the photo, as well as when and where it was taken, remain unclear.

3. The "Telegram from the Central Bank of Manchou, Anshan Branch" dated March 30, 1945 states that the branch manager of the bank reported to the Main Office Treasury Department that the "Communication Department (Unit 7990) in Zhuhai Province, Xuzhou, sent 252,000 yen to the Anshan Accounting Headquarters as funds for hiring "female entertainers." "Female entertainers" were singers and dancers who sang and danced to boost the morale of the troops and were completely different from comfort women. The telegram also states that "the recipient is Tsuru Yonei," which means that this is an exchange of money between a Chinese military clique and a Japanese civilian contractor. This is not evidence for comfort women, coercive recruitment, or sex slaves.

4. The "Monthly Report of Japanese Military Crimes" (1943) prepared by the military police states that a Japanese officer "assaulted comfort women at a comfort station." However, there is "a report of an illegality" in this description, indicating that the officer was subject to punishment. In other words, this document proves that comfort women were legally protected and were not sex slaves.

5. China says that "the Japanese army confessed to their crime of treating women as sex slaves," referring to a Japanese soldier's letter to his family that was included in the "Postal Censorship Monthly Report" prepared by the Japanese army's Beian Area Censorship Division. However, the letter states that "an infinite number of women followed their lovers," indicating that comfort women had freedom of movement, were not subject to coercive recruitment, and were not sex slaves.

6. The testimonies given by Lieutenant General Shinnosuke Sasa and Lieutenant Colonel Saburo Hirose about raping women are introduced as leading examples of testimonies by former Japanese servicemen. However, their testimonies show that the comfort women were at comfort stations for financial reasons and that they were paid. Neither of the testimonies indicate that there was any coercive recruitment of comfort women to force them to become sex slaves. How were the officers interrogated? Did they receive legal protection? If they were put on trial, the minutes should be available, but no such records have been made public.

7. The "Japanese military's records of comfort women" (25 records) from the Jilin Province Archive Office, which China additionally submitted, also do not prove coercive recruitment or that the women were sex slaves.

8. One of the 25 records of comfort women called the "Survey Report on the Status of Public Order Restoration in the Nanjing Military Police Jurisdiction," which was prepared by the military police in 1938, describes the number of Japanese soldiers and comfort women in the Nanjing area. The report also explains how the Japanese military treated the illnesses and injuries of Chinese citizens free of charge. The report says there were 25,000 Japanese soldiers and 141 comfort women. However, the 141 comfort women did not serve all of the Japanese soldiers, and there are no descriptions proving that the comfort women were coercively recruited or that they worked as sex slaves.

9. The report prepared by the Shanghai City police in 1938 states that pro-Japanese Chinese were involved in the coercive recruitment of comfort women, but the document includes no evidence regarding these "pro-Japanese Chinese." In fact, it does not even include the word "Japan." This document only describes Chinese women being forced to become prostitutes by other Chinese.

The additional *jugun-ianfu* documents that China filed included a document called "Testimonies of 1,000 Japanese War Criminal Soldiers Questioned by the Chinese Communist Party," which states the following:

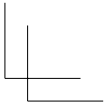
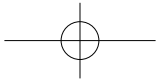
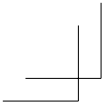
More than 1,000 Japanese war criminals were questioned by the Chinese Communist Party administration between 1952 and 1956. Of these, approximately 8.5% acknowledged "having established comfort stations" and 61% testified to "having had sexual relationships with comfort women."

However, none of the documents provides evidence of the coercive recruitment of comfort women or of them being treated as sex slaves.

At the beginning of the *jugun-ianfu* documents that China additionally filed, the following statement is made.

"Comfort women" were women who were sexually enslaved by the Japanese Imperial Army. Most of them were forced to become sex slaves by the Japanese army.

However, comfort women were not coercively recruited, but rather conducted a sex service business protected by law. During the war, many warring countries had similar facilities and there is no evidence that the Japanese comfort women system was unique.



In conclusion, the problem is that China is patching together fragmentary information in documents that do not prove coercive recruitment or the existence of sex slaves in a farfetched attempt to prove such things. China's application for UNESCO's Memory of the World Register is nothing short of political propaganda. Additionally, the submission of photographs from unknown sources, as described earlier, does not satisfy the selection criteria established in one of the guidelines for UNESCO's Memory of the World Register: "Has its identity and provenance been reliably established?" If these materials are accepted, the original purpose of the Memory of the World Project, which is to protect the world's documentary heritage from conflicts, would be subverted, and this would raise concerns that UNESCO is being used politically. Hence, the application should be dismissed.