

Nomination form

International Memory of the World Register

Archives about “Comfort Women” for Japanese Troops

2014-49

1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

“Comfort women” is the general term for women afflicted with sexual servitude by Japanese troops, most of whom were sex slaves recruited forcibly by Japanese army. During the Japanese Aggressive War upon China and other countries from 1931 to 1945, the “comfort women” system was enforced on a large scale. The archives about “comfort women” stored in several archive agencies in China were created by Japanese themselves during the war, or by puppet regimes set up in Japanese occupied areas, others were created by Chinese government when taking over the property occupied by Japanese troops, investigating the loss in warfare and bringing the Japanese war criminals to trial after the war. These archives are of great historical value because they unequivocally disclose the historical fact that Japanese troops set up “comfort women lodge” and forcibly recruited “comfort women” in China and Southeast Asia during the war.

2. Nomination and contact details

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

Central Archives of China

Liaoning Provincial Archives of China

Jilin Provincial Archives of China

Heilongjiang Provincial Archives of China

Shanghai Municipal Archives of China

Nanjing City Archives of China

Qinhuangdao Municipal Archives of Hebei Province, China

Research Center for Chinese “Comfort Women” of Shanghai Normal University, China

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

China’s Central Archives, Liaoning Provincial Archives, Jilin Provincial Archives, Heilongjiang Provincial Archives, Shanghai Municipal Archives, Nanjing City Archives,

Qinhuangdao Municipal Archives of Hebei Province and Research Center for Chinese “Comfort Women” of Shanghai Normal University are the owners and keepers of the nominated documentary heritage.

2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

Hongmin Wang

2.4 Contact details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>		
Hongmin Wang	21 FengshengHutong, Beijing, 100032		
<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Facsimile</i>	<i>Email</i>	
86-10-66173675	86-10-66175532	hmwang@saac.gov.cn	

3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

If inscribed, the exact title and institution(s) to appear on the certificate should be given

Name: **Archives about “Comfort Women” for Japanese Troops**

Institutions: Central Archives of China

Liaoning Provincial Archives of China

Jilin Provincial Archives of China

Heilongjiang Provincial Archives of China

Shanghai Municipal Archives of China

Nanjing City Archives of China

Qinhuangdao Municipal Archives of Hebei Province, China

Research Center for Chinese “Comfort Women” of Shanghai Normal University, China

Identification details: : The nominated documents are original, unique and non-renewable.

Value of being original. For example, the documents from headquarters of military police of the Japanese Kwantung Army and the Central Bank of Manchuria were recorded by Japanese troops themselves. And these documents were created in the Japanese-occupied areas. Hence, they have value of being original. Take correspondence files of Japanese troops as an example. In the occupied areas, Japanese troops adopted extremely strict letter censorship. The letters between Japanese troops in China and their family were secretly checked by military police censors. Letters with any authentic description of battlefields or anything that might upset troops’ morale would be burnt. Before the letters were burnt, military officers would make a hand-written copy of them to keep a record. These letter copies contain details about “comfort women” and “comfort women lodge” recorded by Japanese troops. Another example is a

document from the Central Bank of Manchuria recording that a force of Japanese troops spent 532,000 yen on setting up “comfort women lodge” in four months. The document clearly records that the “comfort women lodge” was approved by the Kwantung Army Headquarters, revealing that Japan and the Japanese army directly controlled and implemented this “comfort women” system in a planned way.

The judicial organs of the People’s Republic of China investigated more than 1000 Japanese war criminals under detention from 1952 to 1956. Of them, 8.5% admitted that Japanese troops set up “comfort women lodges,” and 61% acknowledged having sex with “comfort women” in their written and oral confessions. The majority of “comfort women” were Chinese, with 31% from Korea Peninsular and others from Japan and Indonesia. After the war criminals were released in batches and went back to Japan as from 1956, most did not withdraw their confessions, including the crime of raping “comfort women”. A number of the war criminals established the Association of Returnees from China, which strongly criticized wars of aggression and was committed to a peaceful China-Japan relationship. When Japan surrendered in August 1945, Japanese troops intentionally destroyed the archives detailing the Japanese Aggressive War upon China in an organized way, which makes the written and oral confessions by war criminals about the use of “comfort women” all the more important as origin of the archives.

Value of being unique. Researches and studies on “comfort women” in World War II require all sorts of information about both victims and perpetrators to objectively restore and record authentic history. Victims suffered severe spiritual and physical trauma from being “comfort women”, and immediate and explicit records from them are extremely rare. Thus, documents of perpetrators describing the victimization have the value of being unique in restoring historical truth. For example, at Jilin Provincial Archives there are 25 items about how the Japanese troops recruited “comfort women”. Major content of these documents includes statistics on proportional allocation of “comfort women” to Japanese troops in Nanjing and the surrounding areas in 1938, statistics of Japanese troops’ use of “comfort women” within 10 days, records of public funds used by the Imperial Japanese army for “purchasing” “comfort women”, records of Japanese troops’ atrocities on “comfort women” and records of Korean “comfort women” in “comfort women lodge”. Take the archival documents from military police of Japanese Central China Expeditionary Army as an example. Among these documents, a report on asking for adding more “comfort women” recorded the facts that during the 10 days of mid-February 1938, 8929 Japanese soldiers visited “comfort women lodges” in Zhenjiang, which was 3195 more than the previous ten days; the 109 “comfort women” in Zhenjiang served 15000 Japanese soldiers, which equaled to one woman for 137 Japanese soldiers. This ratio of “comfort women” to Japanese soldiers recorded by Japanese army clearly reflects how serious women were abused under the “comfort women” system.

As mentioned above, all the archival documents nominated this time are original, unique and non-renewable. They truthfully reflect human beings’ memory of the “comfort women” system implemented by Japan in wartime.

The nominated documents narrate about the fact that Japanese troops recruited “comfort women” forcibly and set up “comfort women lodge” in the occupied areas during the aggressive war (1931-1945), some of which were created in warfare, including the remains discovered after being burnt and buried when Japan was defeated in the war, and others were created by the then

China's government when taking over the occupied property and investigating the loss in warfare, or by PRC government in bringing the Japanese war criminals to trial after the war.

3.4 History/provenance

Japan gradually embarked on the path of militaristic expansion after the Meiji Reform. The “comfort women lodges” and “comfort women” that were coerced into sexual servitude to Japanese soldiers came into existence in about January 1932 when Japanese troops attacked local Chinese troops (“January 28 Incident” called by historians). After Japanese troops invaded and occupied Northeast China in the 1930s, “comfort women lodges” for Japanese soldiers were set up everywhere in Northeast China. After Japan launched the full-scale aggressive war upon China since July 1937, the “comfort women” system was spread widely in occupied area in China. Most of the victims were Chinese and Korean women as well as Japanese women. With the expansion of Japanese occupied area to Southeast Asia after the breakout of Pacific War in December 1941, the “comfort women lodges” also further spread to the above area and women from Southeast Asia as well as European and American countries became the victims of this system until the surrender of Japan in August 1945.

In terms of the timeline, most of the files about “comfort women” of this nomination were created during the Japanese aggressive war against China (1931-1945), others were created during ROC National Government (1945-1949) and the early period of PRC since 1949. In terms of the source, there are files of military police of Japanese troops in occupied area, files of agencies of puppet governments propped up by Japan, files of agencies of foreign concessions, and files of Chinese government in taking over the occupied property and investigating the loss in warfare, and files of inquisition of the Japanese war criminals. The archives mentioned above were stored in the archive agencies who propose this nomination.

4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name	Address
Central Archives of China	No.2 Shuangpo Road, Haidian District, Beijing. Post Code: 100095, Tel: 86-10-66173675, Fax: 86-10-66176354, Email: hmwang@saac.gov.cn
Liaoning Provincial Archives	No.45 South Heping Street, Heping District, Shenyang. Post Code: 110006, Tel: 024-23251859, Fax: 024-23252611

Jilin Provincial Archives No.63 Min'an Road, Nangan District, Changchun. Post Code: 130041, Tel: 86-431-88553779, Fax: 86-431-88957722

Heilongjiang Provincial Archives No.48Wenchang Street, Nangang District, Harbin. Post Code: 150001, Tel: 86-451-87701820, Fax: 86-451-87701820

Shanghai Municipal Archives No.326 Xianxia Road, Changning District, Shanghai. Post Code: 200336, Tel: 86-21-62751700, Fax: 86-21-62951562, Email: lait63@hotmail.com

Nanjing City Archives No.41 East Beijing Road, Nanjing. Post Code: 210008, Tel: 86-25-86636383, Fax: 86-25-83638691, Email: bgs@archivesnj.gov.cn

Qinhuangdao Municipal Archives No.260 Haiyang Road, Qinhuangdao. Post Code: 066000, Tel: 86-335-3220072

Research Center for Chinese "Comfort Women" of Shanghai Normal University

No.100 Guilin Road, Shanghai. Post Code: 200234, Tel: 86-21-64323825, Email: zhilsu@163.com

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name	Address
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Telephone	Facsimile	Email
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4.3 Legal status

Provide details of legal and administrative responsibility for the preservation of the documentary heritage

The nominated documentary heritage is owned and managed respectively by the Central Archives, Liaoning Provincial Archives, Jilin Provincial Archives, Heilongjiang Provincial Archives, Shanghai Municipal Archives, Nanjing City Archives, Qinhuangdao Municipal Archives of Hebei Province, and Research Center for Chinese "Comfort Women" of Shanghai

Normal University. The copyright is protected by China's laws and regulations of archives management and intellectual property. The above-mentioned Archives and University have administrative rights and ownership of these "comfort women" archives.

4.4 Accessibility

Describe how the item(s) / collection may be accessed

The nominated documentary heritage is open to the public. Usually the copies (digital files, microfilms and photocopies) are accessible, while the originals are provided on special conditions. The files which have not been digitized will be digitized gradually.

All access restrictions should be explicitly stated below:

For preservation purpose, access to the originals is restricted in most cases, but microfilm, photocopies and digitized copies are available to the public.

4.5 Copyright status

Describe the copyright status of the item(s) / collection

The originals of the nominated documentary heritage are kept respectively by the Central Archives, Liaoning Provincial Archives, Jilin Provincial Archives, Heilongjiang Provincial Archives, Shanghai Municipal Archives, Nanjing City Archives, Qinhuangdao Municipal Archives of Hebei Province and Research Center for Chinese "Comfort Women" of Shanghai Normal University. The copyright is owned by these Archives and University.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 Authenticity.

The nominated documentary heritage is all original documents.

For the archives created during 1931-1945, the files of military police of the Japanese Kwantung Army and the files of the "Central Bank of Manchuria" are from Jilin Provincial Archives and Qinhuangdao Municipal Archives of Hebei Province. Shanghai Municipal Police files and files of the Shanghai local puppet governments are from Shanghai Municipal Archives. The related photos are held by Shanghai Municipal Archives and Liaoning Provincial Archives.

The files of Nanjing municipal government of China during 1945-1949 are from Nanjing

City Archives.

The files of the People's Republic of China judicial agencies since 1949 are held by the Central Archives.

The related publications are the earliest editions published in China during 1931-1945. They are held by Shanghai Municipal Archives and Heilongjiang Provincial Archives.

Collections of Research Center for Chinese "Comfort Women" of Shanghai Normal University are oral accounts materials collected through investigation, and historic photos of "comfort women" and "comfort women lodge".

Because these archival documents mentioned above have been collected and arranged by archivists systematically, the characters and sources are trustworthy and authentic.

5.2 World significance

Japan enforced the "comfort women" system widely in the occupied area in China and South East Asia during the Aggressive War against China (1931-1945) and the Pacific War (1941-1945). They recruited "comfort women" forcibly to set up "comfort women lodges". The "comfort women" were from China, Japan, Korean Peninsula, Southeast Asia as well as European and American countries.

Japanese government started the investigation on "comfort women" problem from December 1991. On August 4, 1993, Yohei Kono, Chief Japanese Cabinet Secretary pronounced the investigation conclusion of the "comfort women" problem on behalf of the Japanese government, which was known as "Kono Statement". Kono stated that "the investigation shows that there had been 'comfort women lodges' in wide areas and a large number of 'comfort women'...Therefore, this is a problem the Imperial Japanese army had been involved in, which hurt the honour and dignity of many women terribly. The government should take this opportunity to express apology and regret to the so-called 'military comfort women' who suffered pains and physical and mental injuries regardless of their backgrounds." On March 3, 2014, Yoshihide Suga, the Chief Cabinet Secretary stated in the press conference that the Japanese government inherit the "Kono Statement" in 1993.

The "comfort women" problem has drawn wide attention of the international community. Many countries and international organizations have stated their standpoint about the "comfort women" issue. Delegates of Japanese civil organization reported the conditions of forcible recruitment of "comfort women" by Imperial Japanese army in warfare at UN Human Rights Commission in Feb 1992. In May 1992, the seminar of modern slavery of UN Human Rights Commission adopted the document to the UN Secretary-General for paying attention to the "comfort women" problem from the standpoint of international law. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in Vienna in June 1993. In this declaration, "comfort women" problem was recognized as "slavery of women in warfare" and should be condemned.

United States House of Representatives House Resolution 121 passed on July 30, 2007 condemned the forcible recruitment of "comfort women" from other Asian countries in World

War II. The US Senate passed the 2014 United States Federal Budget Bill on January 16, 2014 which included the resolution of the “comfort women” problem. This resolution condemned Japan for the forcible recruitment of “comfort women” from Asian countries in World War II and asked Japan to take historical and political responsibility and make formal apology.

The House of Representatives of the Netherlands passed unanimously a motion on Nov 20, 2007 requesting Japan to apologize for the forcible recruitment of “comfort women” in World War II and compensate the survivors.

Canadian House of Commons passed unanimously a resolution on Nov 29, 2007 requesting Japan to apologize for forcing more than 200,000 Asian women to be military prostitutes in World War II.

The European Parliament passed a resolution on Dec 13, 2007 requesting Japanese government to formally apologize for the “comfort women” problem and compensate the victims and their families.

On 24 July 2014, the UN Human Rights Committee published its concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Japan on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil Rights and Political Rights, which required Japan to investigate issues related to “comfort women” and express a public apology to the victims. The UN Human Rights Committee pointed out that on one hand, Japan admitted that Japanese military forcibly recruited, transported and managed “comfort women” against their will through coercion and intimidation during World War II; but on the other hand, Japan said the “comfort women” were not “forcibly deported”. Cornelis Flinterman, vice chairperson of the UN Human Rights Committee said: “We thought it is important to highlight this particular contradictory position, because it seemed to imply that there was no true human rights problem.” The Committee urged Japan to ensure “all allegations of sexual slavery or other human rights violations perpetrated by Japanese military during wartime against the ‘comfort women’ should be effectively, independently and impartially investigated and that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if found guilty, punished”. The Committee urged Japan to disclose all evidences available, make public apologies, and officially recognize its responsibilities, meanwhile make all efforts to condemn any attempts to defame victims or to deny the events.

5.3 Comparative criteria:

Does the heritage meet any of the following tests? (It must meet at least one of them.)

1 Time

Most of the files about “comfort women” held in the archive agencies mentioned above were created during the Japanese Aggressive War upon China (1931-1945), and the content of other files are also related to this period. Since Japan launched the aggressive war upon China in September 1931, with the extension and expansion of the war, the “comfort women” system was enforced comprehensively in Japanese occupied area in China. After the breakout of the Pacific

War in December 1941, the system was spread by Japanese troops to the occupied area in Southeast Asia until the surrender of Japan in August 1945. The archival documents related to “comfort women” are the products of Japanese aggressive war as well as the memory of China, Korea and other countries which had suffered the invasion of Japan.

2 Place

Some of the files about “comfort women” held in the archives repositories of the nominators were created in areas where “comfort women” existed, such as Shenyang and Changchun in Northeast China, Nanjing and Shanghai in east China, or the content of the files are related to areas where “comfort women” existed, such as the surrounding area of Nanjing, wide areas of North China, Central China and Northeast China. These archives disclose the number of locations where “comfort women” suffered tribulation, and also show the wide scope of “comfort women” system enforced by Japanese troops. The files about “comfort women” and “comfort women lodges” in Korea Peninsula and Java and Ambon of Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) disclose the international nature of “comfort women” problem.

3 People

During the Japanese Aggressive War upon China (1931-1945) and World War II, the Japanese government and army enforced “comfort women” system comprehensively in occupied area and forced women from China and other countries or regions which suffered the invasion of Japan to be “comfort women” for Japanese troops. This atrocity hurt the personality, humanity, dignity and honour of the women and brought them tremendous physical and mental pain.

The archives about “comfort women” are the true records of the humiliation and misery that “comfort women” were forced into. There were victims as well as victimizers. Among the “comfort women” for Japanese troops, there were women from China, Japan, Korean Peninsula as well as Southeast Asia, European and American countries. The files about “comfort women” held in the archive agencies mentioned in the nomination not only show the real conditions of the tribulation Chinese “comfort women” suffered, but also disclose the historical fact of the “comfort women” in other countries and regions.

4 Subject and theme

The archives about “comfort women” show the historical fact that Japan enforced “comfort women” system comprehensively and systematically to recruit “comfort women” and set up “comfort women lodges” in occupied areas during the aggressive war period (1931-1945), which disclose the historical fact of violation of human rights, outrage against humanity, violation of the rights of women and the international convention.

5 Form and style

Most of the files of this nominated documentary heritage are paper documents. And there are also some photos. Collections of Research Center for Chinese “comfort women” of Shanghai Normal University are historic photos and oral accounts.

6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance

The “comfort women” system was a bitter memory which have brought harm and pain to the people of China , Korean Peninsula and South East Asia countries. We hope that, by nominating the archives about “comfort women” for International Memory of the World Register, people around the world could have knowledge of the misery of the “comfort women”, and call on the safeguard of world peace and human rights.

6.0 Contextual information

6.1 Rarity

Because of the particularity of the “comfort women” problem, the original archives related to “comfort women” were not abundant. And after the defeat of war, Japan intentionally destroyed a large number of files in an organized way to cover up the historical truth and war crimes. Furthermore, some related archives have not been opened to public in Japan. So the existing available archival documents of “comfort women” are quite rare today. And this highlights the rarity of the archives about the “comfort women”.

6.2 Integrity

For the same reason, the existing available archival documents about “comfort women” are not only rare, but also dispersed in terms of location. However, these archives have formed the complete chain of evidence of the enforcement of “comfort women” system in Japanese troops as historical fact.
