

# **THE WOMEN OUTSIDE: Korean Women and the U.S. Military**

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A guide with discussion questions, background information, bibliography and resources to accompany the Third World Newsreel documentary "The Women Outside" by JT Takagi and Hye-Jung Park (1995 production/color/53 minutes)

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# "THE WOMEN OUTSIDE" Study Guide

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## THE WOMEN OUTSIDE Study Guide

### A) About the film **THE WOMEN OUTSIDE**

**THE WOMEN OUTSIDE** is a Third World Newsreel documentary, produced and directed by JT Takagi and Hye Jung Park. Released in 1995, it is a 53 minute color film which documents the lives of women who work in the brothels, bars and nightclubs surrounding the U.S. military bases in South Korea, and their journeys from the outskirts of Seoul to the inner cities of America. It depicts conditions that were in place till the end of the 1990s.

Known derogatorily in Korean society as "western princesses", for over 45 years, many poor women have been drawn to the bases in hopes of better lives, often deceived by false job ads, while some women have even been kidnapped. Once in the military "camptowns", it is difficult to escape. Most become burdened by debts to club owners and pimps, and considered "ruined" women, they are unable to re-enter Korean society. For many, the U.S. bases offer the best chance for a future: to marry a G.I. and start a new life in America is often the only way out of the camptowns and poverty.

**THE WOMEN OUTSIDE** is an intimate look at women who work or have worked in the South Korean military brothels and clubs - where over 27,000 women "service" the 37,000 (as of 1995) American soldiers stationed in this most militarized region of the world. Mixing interviews and archival footage, the film follows women who were abandoned with interracial and stigmatized children, others who were beaten and raped, and the "lucky" women who married soldiers and emigrated to America. In the U.S., some women find happy endings, but many more encounter abusive marriages, abandonment, and discrimination. Often women find themselves again in camptown-like situations, in bars and massage parlors found near the military bases throughout the United States.

Shot in and around U.S. military bases and camptowns in South Korea and in America, **THE WOMEN OUTSIDE** is a film that questions the role of the U.S. in South Korea, U.S. military policy and South Korean development - and their common dependency on the sexual labor of women. But **THE WOMEN OUTSIDE** is also a story of women's strength and sacrifice -in the shadow of U.S. military bases.

#### **Update as of 2009:**

Since this film was made, there have been changes in the population of women in the camptowns – but no significant changes in their conditions.

By the end of the 1990s, South Korea's economy, despite the 1997 economic crisis, had improved slightly for working class women. With more job possibilities in the cities, and a stronger won, the camptowns saw a decrease in Korean women, and club owners began trafficking in foreign women. For a period of time, Russian women were increasing in the area, but now, principally Filipina women, many who thought they were being recruited as entertainers, singers and dancers, are in the camptowns. In their cases, as they are beholden to their employer for their stay in Korea, deportation is an additional threat to their existence.

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### B) Discussion Questions to guide viewing THE WOMEN OUTSIDE

#### Good and Bad Women

- a. How is a woman defined as "good" and "bad"? (and are these definitions different in the U.S., Korea, and your own culture) Who constructs this dichotomy and why? Does this dichotomy of women as "good" and "bad" affect your own behavior and your judgement and behavior towards other women?
- b. Are men categorized as "good" and "bad" - why or why not?
- c. What are your views of women who work in sexual service in general, and for foreign military men in particular? How and why is prostitution considered different from other types of occupations?

#### Militarized Prostitution in South Korea

- a. In what historical and cultural settings do we see militarized prostitution proliferating? Why? Who benefits from militarized prostitution?
- b. What is the connection between prostitution and militarization in South Korea? Is there a difference between militarized prostitution and other kinds of prostitution?
- c. When, how and why did militarized prostitution develop in South Korea? What role did the U.S. play?
- d. What role did militarized prostitution serve for South Korean national economic development?
- e. Why would a national development model utilize the sexual labor of women? What might be the reasons this development model could be exercised in some countries and not others?
- f. What are the reasons that women engage in sexual labor? How does Korean culture and social institutions in particular shape Korean women's prostitution for foreign soldiers?
- g. What conclusions might one draw about the relationship between the state, military and women, especially poor women?

#### Women and Children in the Camptowns

- a. What are the different reasons women come to work in the military camptowns? Why would women have to stay?
- b. In the film, reference is made to the discrimination suffered by racially mixed children between Korean women and American servicemen. There is also discrimination within the society of clubwomen between those who relate to white servicemen and those who relate to black servicemen. Why would this be the case? Would the children's situation change if they were to go to the United States? Who is responsible for caring for the children?

#### U.S. Military men and Korean civilians

- a. It is commonly said that prostitution for military men develops wherever there are military bases, because "men will be men". How do we evaluate this claim? What historical evidence is there to support this argument?
- b. The prostitution around the U.S. military base in Greenham Common in England is smaller in scale than around the U.S. bases in Honduras, Puerto Rico, South Korea and previously in the Philippines. What are the factors which might explain this variance?
- c. How do the soldiers' attitudes affect the relations between them and Korean women? How does race, class and culture play roles here? How does media play a role? Discuss popular films about wars overseas

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and their depictions of U.S. soldiers, foreign civilians, especially Asian women. (Platoon, Heavy Metal Jacket, Deer Hunter)

### **Marriage and Migration**

- a. Why do Korean women working in clubs in the camptowns seek marriages to American servicemen?
- b. What problems are faced by former Korean clubwomen who emigrate to the United States as spouses of U.S. servicemen? How are they treated and viewed in the U.S.? How do Koreans treat and view the women?
- c. In the film, Prof. Cynthia Enloe states that a military system depends on two kinds of women - 1) women in the entertainment industries, and 2) women who are military wives - and that they are considered to be two separate kinds of women. She goes on to say that when the women in the entertainment industry become the wives, the contradictions of the military's view of women are unveiled. What does she mean? Why would it be important to the military to have two kinds of women? Why might it be important to society to categorize and separate out women into these two groups?

### **The Movement to Eradicate Militarism and Military Prostitution in South Korea**

- a. What are the barriers to decreasing or ending U.S. military presence in South Korea?
- b. What are the barriers to the elimination of militarized prostitution?
- c. Would ending militarism or the removal of military bases in South Korea lead to the eradication of militarized prostitution?
- d. One argument against the eradication of militarized prostitution is that the women in the camptowns would be without an income. What other social changes might have to accompany the reduction or eradication of militarized prostitution?

## **C) BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE WOMEN OUTSIDE**

### **1) Militarized Prostitution in South Korea**

The development of militarized prostitution in South Korea was based on several factors: the large U.S. military presence, South Korea's economic needs and its dependent relationship on the United States, Korean confucian patriarchy, and a tradition in Korea of using women for the national interest.

#### **U.S. Military Presence in South Korea**

Since the end of the Korean war in 1953 and the enacting of the Mutual Security Treaty in 1954, the U.S. has maintained a large number of military troops, bases and weapons in South Korea. Until 1992, the U.S. also stationed nuclear warheads there. U.S. troop presence in South Korea has ranged from a high of 50,000 right after the Korean war to 37,000 (1996) and its current level of 28,500 in 2009. In addition, the numbers are temporarily increased by the annual "Team Spirit"\* exercises which bring up to 200,000 U.S. and South Korean forces together. Initiated in 1976, these 3 month long joint war games are aimed at North Korea, and are held near the border and in civilian areas, often resulting in civilian accidents.

In 1996, "Team Spirit" was temporarily suspended as talks with North Korea were underway.

The alliance between U.S. and South Korea is unique in Asia - about 85% of the Republic of Korea's armed forces are under the operational command of the American general who heads the U.S.-Korea Combined Forces Command. By treaty, should there be an attack against South Korea, the U.S. would go to war immediately in its defense.

Originally the mission of the U.S. military in South Korea was to preserve the security of South Korea, with the U.S. presence maintaining a "tripwire" frontline against North Korea, China and the former Soviet Union. Later, the mission has been redefined as preserving the security of the entire pacific region, and since 2001, has been defined as serving the U.S. defense goal of "Strategic Flexibility", wherein the South Korean bases are sites from which U.S. troops and weapons can be immediately deployed anywhere in the world. The peninsula is still as a flashpoint in the Pacific, due to the high number of troops present: alongside the 28,500 U.S. troops are 540,000 South Korean troops facing 700,000 North Korean troops on the other side of the DMZ (DeMilitarized Zone).

To maintain the U.S. troops in South Korea, the South Korean government spends 300 million dollars in direct contributions annually and 1.6 billion in indirect aid.(1995 figures) The U.S. military uses hundreds of acres of choice land throughout the country rent-free, maintaining 99 bases and installations. For U.S. taxpayers, the bill is 3 billion annually in direct costs and up to 19 billion including related costs.

\*The 2009 war games were known as "KEY RESOLVE/FOAL EAGLE"

#### **South Korea's Economic Needs**

In 1953, Korea was devastated by the Korean war, and the United States pumped in economic and military aid to rebuild South Korea. In the 1960s, South Korea began an export-oriented, state-led industrialization. It was highly dependent on foreign markets, especially on aid and investment from the U.S. and Japan. By 1978, the U.S. had paid out a total of \$4.5 billion in straight grants to South Korea. The authoritarian government of the dictatorial Park Chung Hee promoted the influx of foreign currency, encouraged sex tourism catering to foreign military personnel and businessmen, and encouraged Koreans to work abroad. Korean women were especially encouraged to work in Japan in the entertainment (sex) industry. By pursuing these strategies, by the early 1980's, South Korea became a "Newly Industrialized Country" (NIC), with a reputation as an "Asian Dragon" along with Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

### **Korean Confucian Patriarchy and Gendered Development of Post War South Korea**

In early Korea, patrilineage was not the basic unit of society in Korea, and women held certain economic and lineage rights. Since the end of the Koryo period (918-1392), however, Korean society has been based on Confucian principles, which stress the hierarchal order of the human world, and accords a specific status to each member of a family. Assigned the lowest status, a woman must obey her father, then her husband, and finally, her son. The Confucian patriarchal principles confined women to the home and family, and restricted them from the public. While a woman could not divorce her husband, she could be divorced by her husband for loquaciousness, grave illness, adultery, undue jealousy, theft, disobedience towards the parents-in-law, and failure to give birth to a son.

From the 15th century onwards, Korean women were also oppressed by an enforced "chastity ideology". This ideology forbade widows and divorcees from remarrying, and awarded special recognition to women who kept their chastity. Strict enforcement of this ideology led to women taking their lives when raped, and attached shame to the raped women.

The legacy of Confucian patriarchy extended legally into the 1990's. Only in 1991 were laws passed in South Korea that gave daughters equal rights to inherit family property, and gave divorced and separated women the right to child custody.

### **Kisaeng**

Throughout the Koryo period, thousands of Korean women were given by the state as forced tributes to China. In addition, records of professional entertainers called kisaeng and the institution of the kisaeng system date back to this time and continued until the end of the Yi dynasty (1392 to 1910) and the start of the Japanese occupation. The kisaeng women were generally from the lower classes, and were taken as government slaves. They were chosen for their youth and beauty, and trained in special institutes to work as entertainers and sexual consorts for government officials and foreign emissaries.

### **Japanese Occupation and Sexual Slavery**

During the Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1945), a licensed prostitution system was introduced into Korea, which became the basis for later state-regulated prostitution in the country and established most of the present prostitution districts. As Japan's aggression into Asia accelerated and continued throughout World War II, Korean women were lured, kidnapped and used as military sexual slaves, or "chungshindae", the so-called "comfort troops". Forced to serve Japanese soldiers sexually, approximately 100,000 to 200,000 Korean women were taken to the war fronts. Korean women, along with other women from Japan's colonies in Asia and some Dutch women, were taken to China, Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Indonesia, Borneo, the Philippines and other Pacific islands. Many women died or were injured from being raped 20 - 50 times a day; many others died from disease and starvation. At the end of the Pacific war, the retreating Japanese forces killed the women, or left them to starve and die. Those women who survived usually did not return home, as they felt ashamed and feared rejection by their families. Hundreds of surviving women live in secrecy and isolation, still suffering physical and emotional pain.

The history of the military sexual slavery became publicly known only in 1991, when survivors came forward and offered personal testimonies about their experiences to confront the Japanese government and demand a formal apology and reparations. After four years of sustained pressure, the Japanese government in 1995 finally acknowledged and informally apologized to the women. No official apology or reparation has been made as of 2009. The movement for an official apology and compensation from the Japanese government continues, with weekly protests by survivors and their supporters continuing outside the Japanese embassy in Seoul.

### **The U.S. Military and Militarized Prostitution**

After Korea was liberated from Japan, the U.S. occupied South Korea (1945-1948), and instituted new laws prohibiting the trafficking in women (1946- U.S. Military Government Ordinance Nol. 70) and licensed prostitution (1947-Law No.7, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs). However the presence of a foreign army still led to an expansion of prostitution, and the first militarized prostitution for the U.S.troops was recorded in 1948 in Pusan, South Korea.

In 1950, when the American troops returned to Korea during the Korean war, camptowns of bars and brothels were established around military bases. With the enactment of the Mutual Security Treaty in 1954, after the war ended, permanent bases were established, and the camptowns also became "permanent".

In 1973, the Korea International Tourism Corporation (KITC, later the Korea National Tourism Corporation) began issuing an official identification card - "Certificate of Employment in Entertainment Service" to prostitutes. According to a 1984 survey by a christian women's group, the Korea Church Women United, women were required to attend a KITC-sponsored "orientation program". The survey states that the program consisted of lectures by "renowned persons and professors" on "how valuable the foreign exchange women earn was to our economic development; how to behave with their foreign customers...", and were told to take pride in their "devotion to your country, since your carnal conversations with foreign tourists is neither prostituting yourself nor the nation but is an expression of your heroic patriotism". (1)

Also in 1973, the then Korean Minister of Education made a public statement in Japan about sex tourism, euphemistically termed "kisaeng tours", that "The sincerity of girls who have contributed with their sex\* to their fatherland's economic development is indeed praiseworthy" (2)

With South Korea's development as an "Asian Dragon", the country is no longer dependent on the income derived from military prostitution, though the sex industry in general in South Korea is a growth industry. With the weakening of the dollar, camptown life has become less attractive. Militarized prostitution, at a peak from the 1960s through the mid-1980s, is no longer an important avenue for foreign income, and has fallen to the bottom of the prostitution hierarchy, relegated to poor women with the least options for other work. The practice of kidnapping and inveigling women through false job advertisements is still standard, however, and 27,000 women still fill the nearly 180 camptowns in South Korea.

In 1992, Yoon Kum-Yi was murdered by Private Kenneth Markle, and her death led to massive protests resulting in the first time prosecution of a U.S. soldier for murder in the Korean courts. In turn, this led to the re-mobilization of anti-American forces, the growth of the women's movement and the movement to change the Status of Armed Forces Agreement (SOFA) which regulates the relationship between the U.S. military and Korean civilians.

Sex tourism, which peaked in the 1980s, continues, though the Japanese recession has had some affect on the business. Options for women remain limited, and the domestic sex industry has enlarged. U.S. troops remain in South Korea, and the camptowns, though smaller than previously, remain. By the end of the 1990s, South Korea's economy, despite the 1997 crisis, had improved slightly for working class women. With more job possibilities in the cities, and a stronger won, the camptowns saw a decrease in Korean women, and club owners began trafficking in foreign women. For a period of time, Russian women were increasing in the area, but now, principally Filipina women, many who thought they were being recruited as entertainers, singers and dancers, are in the camptowns. In their cases, as they are beholden to their employer for their stay in Korea, deportation is an additional threat to their existence.

(1) Korea Church Women United: 1984, (2) Matsui, 1984:68

\* a much coarser term is used, referring to the woman's sexual organs

## **2) Women and Children in the Camptowns**

### **Women in the Camptowns**

While documentation of the conditions within the camptowns is sparse, a great deal of anecdotal information exists. Most of the women interviewed by this project and other film and book projects said they originally came to the camptowns from very poor families, usually from the countryside. Some women migrated voluntarily, leaving the farm areas first for factory work in the cities. Many women then left their onerous and low paying factory jobs which often involved forced sex with foremen, to seek better paying work around the U.S. military bases. Through sex work, many women supported their families, and sent their brothers to school.

Some women were literally kidnapped and forced into sex work against their will; others were deceived by false job advertisements that promised waitressing. The most common reason women expressed for remaining in the camptowns after such experiences was the loss of their "respectability". Women who have been raped and who have been forced into sex work are blamed and ostracized in Korean society. The shame that is attached to the women and their work makes it impossible for the women to return home. Further, once a woman is brought to a brothel or club, the owner pays a fee to the job agency or kidnappers; that fee becomes a debt that the woman must repay, along with the cost of her room and board. Women are beaten and held as prisoners unless they repay their debts.

Issues common among the women interviewed included broken family settings, previous experiences of rape, physical and sexual abuse, unwed pregnancy, divorce or abandonment by husbands.

Prostitution is illegal in South Korea, but the Food Hygiene Law, administered by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, requires registration of women in the camptowns as "entertainment receptionists" or "hostesses". The Enforcement Ordinance, Article VIII, Item 2, prescribes the job as "women who drink with the patron and entertain the patron with songs and dances".(1) Of the estimated 27,000 women working in camptown prostitution, about 18,000 are registered with the government.(2) The Korean National Tourism Corporation also regulates the camptowns by posting signs stating that bars and clubs are for foreigners only; Korean nationals can enter the establishments only if they are accompanied by foreigners. This rule allows Korean women accompanied by U.S. soldiers to enter the clubs, but bars other Koreans from entering. Women work in the clubs 7 days a week, usually from 5 PM to 4 AM. They are paid according to two systems: a salary system and a piecemeal system. The latter is based on a percentage of the drinks a soldier buys and a percentage of the price of sexual services. Women are often forced to continue working in the clubs because the cost of their rooms, clothing and food that they must pay to the owners are higher than their incomes; they remain in perpetual debt.

The sexual health of the women workers is also regulated by the South Korean government. The women must carry the government issued health cards which must be validated to show soldiers and military police they do not have sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). These cards are renewed by the local government clinic when the women are examined during the required weekly or bi-weekly checkups.

If a woman does not carry an updated card, she is barred from work. If she is found to have an STD, she is sent to a medical detention center that the women term the "monkey house", until she recovers. In addition, women are given AIDS tests every three or four months. No current information is available on the numbers of women testing HIV positive or on what happens to such women. In 1988, it was reported that half of the HIV positive Koreans worked in the clubs.(3) Soldiers are not required to be tested nor to show proof of their sexual health.

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The club scene is different at different bases, ranging from small, primitive towns of bars only patronized by soldiers to large nightclub areas that are popular with couples visiting from the capital city Seoul and foreign tourists as well. Often the camptowns are segregated between white and black soldiers, and as a result, the women are also divided between those who socialize with white soldiers and those who are with the black soldiers. Women who relate to the black soldiers are deemed to be socially "below" the women who relate to the white soldiers.

(1) Shin: 1991,(2) Sturdevant, 1988:16,(3) Women's Rally, Korea 1988

### **Children in the camptowns**

There is little hard data regarding the interracial children born to Korean women working in the camptowns and American soldiers. In part, this is due to the fact that many of the children are not registered at birth. In Korea, as in many Asian countries, a record is made of all births and deaths in one's hometown. If a child is born out of wedlock, especially to a foreign soldier who has disappeared, the mother may not register the child. However, this means that the child does not have a legally documented existence - he or she is stateless and cannot attend Korean schools. Typically, these children are forced to work around the bars, join gangs and engage in illegal activity. Most women are unable to track down the children's fathers. When they do - few fathers are willing to acknowledge their children. If the child is acknowledged, however, he or she is allowed to attend the American schools on the base. As mentioned in the film, however, the level of discrimination is extremely high. An interracial child is less likely to be able to finish school or obtain work because of discrimination.

### **Other Sex Industries in South Korea**

It is commonly believed that the militarized prostitution helped to spur the development of the "entertainment" industry in countries like Korea, the Philippines and Thailand. This "entertainment" industry includes sex tourism (or kisaeng tourism) and other forms of domestic prostitution. Studies have pointed out two factors which have directly contributed to the expansion of women's sexual services: the militarization of a society, especially the presence of foreign military bases; and the growth of tourism. (1) A large segment of tourism to Korea is, in fact, sex or kisaeng tourism. According to the Ministry of Tourism and the Korea National Tourism Corporation, the figure of 11,108 tourists in 1961 increased to over one million in 1978; and in 1988, during the Olympic games, 2.34 million tourists came to South Korea. The majority of the tourists were from the U.S. and Japan, and 73 % were male, with 31% in tour groups. (2) Professor Shin infers from these facts that the tours were mostly sex tours, which are highly advertised in Japan, offering weekend packages including airfare, hotel, meals and women's sexual services.

The "entertainment" industry targets both Korean nationals and foreign men. In a 1989 study by the Seoul YMCA, the number of establishments offering sexual services in Korea was more than 400,000, which included barber shops, restaurants and tearooms. The number of women in sexual labor was as many as 1.2 to 1.5 million, which corresponded to one-fifth of the total number of South Korean women in the 15-29 age bracket. The total sales of the entertainment industry was estimated to reach more than 4 trillion won, or 5% of the GNP. (3)

Some analysts have noted that South Korea created a peculiar development model for third world countries - one that specifically involved the sexual labor of women around the military bases, and the export of women "entertainers" to other countries. Similar situations exist in other Asian countries. In the Philippines and Thailand, in particular, sex industries were spurred by the "Rest and Recreation" use of their countries by the American military during the Vietnam War. After the war, R&R was replaced by sex

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tourism and the export of women to work in the entertainment industries abroad.

(1) Shin: 1991, (2) Shin: 1991, (3) Shin: 1991

### **Sex Trafficking of Women to the United States**

One by-product of the U.S. military presence in South Korea and other Asian countries has been the growth of sex trafficking of women to the U.S. From the mid 1970s, prostitution organized by Koreans began making a strong appearance in many urban areas and around U.S. military bases in the United States.

Police reports from various cities indicate that Korean women are entering the U.S. sex industries in a variety of ways. Some are being brought to the U.S. deliberately, through sham marriages to servicemen paid for their participation. Other women marry servicemen legitimately, but once divorced or abandoned in the U.S., are preyed upon by organized prostitution rings around military bases. They are then brought to work in clubs or massage parlors in various American cities. Additionally, other women are recruited by advertisements in Korean American newspapers.

Many military bases within the United States have bar areas nearby that resemble the camptowns of South Korea. The clubs use Asian names and employ Asian women, most of whom had been formerly married to servicemen. In the late 1970s, police in the Houston area cited that 20-35% of the prostitutes were of Korean origin (1), and in 1994, the New York City Midtown Enforcement Director, William Daly, stated to the producers of this film that most of the 200 massage parlors closed by his office in New York's midtown area were filled with women of Korean origin. The law enforcement officers characterize the Korean massage parlors as less coercive than other brothels which rely on immigrant women. However, they cite the presence of drugs and gambling video games that keep women tied to the parlor through debt.

The Rainbow Center in New York has had many women come to its doors whose experiences were similar: married to servicemen, abused or abandoned, finding work in a massage parlor (brothel), and, in an attempt to leave the parlor, and ending up either in hospitals or in shelters.

(1) Patricia Klausner, 1987

### **3) U.S. Military Men and Korean Civilians**

Most of the American soldiers in Korea are on their first tours in the army. In general, they are young high school graduates who have left their home towns for the first time, and are in contact with non-American culture for the first time. Korea is not a choice tour of duty for many soldiers because they must face constant alerts and monthly drills, especially near the DMZ (the DeMilitarized Zone, which is actually a heavily militarized border between North and South Korea), and they must confront a foreign language and culture. Until recently, the U.S. Army did not offer "command sponsored tours of duty" in Korea, which meant that married soldiers would bring their families at their own expense. The most accessible social activities for soldiers are those provided in the camptowns surrounding the bases, known as "villes" to the soldiers. In the camptowns, soldiers find liquor, food, entertainment and sexual services provided by Korean women. Condoms are free and provided at the military base gates, and liquor is very cheap.

Originally, the U.S. military worked to create an American-like atmosphere for its soldiers on its bases, and confined men largely to the bases and camptown areas. Only in the 1980s, did the army start to encourage soldiers to explore Korea and Korean culture. The army also began to provide programming on its own AFKN television and radio stations that introduced Korean customs, history and language.

The overall relationship between Korean civilians and the U.S. military is defined by an agreement called "The Status Of U.S. Armed Forces Agreement" (SOFA). SOFA determines how conflicts between U.S. troops and Korean civilians are dealt with. The agreement, first signed in 1966, abrogates South

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Korean sovereignty, and in most cases, the U.S. military is permitted to decide whether a serviceman charged with a crime will be given over to the local authorities or not. Since the end of the Korean war, the custody of most soldiers accused of crimes against civilians have not been handed to local authorities, although the crimes include violence, robbery and murder. The Korea Report (1992) cited 40,000 crimes had been committed by U.S. soldiers against Korean civilians between 1954 and 1974; only 200 crimes were processed in the Korean courts. The Yoon Kum-Yi case in 1992 (as discussed in the film) represented the first time an American serviceman, Kenneth Markle, charged with the murder of a Korean club woman, was handed to Korean authorities for trial under Korean law. This unprecedented action was due primarily to the mass protests that erupted across the country.

### **4) The Movement to Eradicate Militarism and Military Prostitution in South Korea**

The movement to end the U.S. military presence in South Korea and the unequal relationship between the two countries began to grow as the result of the Kwangju massacre of 1980. In the massacre, 2,000 civilians were killed by South Korean troops which were under the command of the U.S. General leading the U.S.-Korea Combined Forces Command. Grassroots groups in Korea demanded that both the Korean government and the U.S. military accept responsibility for the massacre, apologize and provide reparations to the victims' families. Only in the 1990s did the South Korean government officials accept responsibility, while the U.S., although citing sympathy for the victims, has not admitted its role in the massacre. The event, however, was a milestone in awakening a Korean national conscience and consciousness. Until 1980, Koreans tended to view the U.S. as a "big brother", and the "liberator" of South Korea from communism. After the repression and massacre in Kwangju in 1980, however, many Koreans began to reassess the relationship between Korea and the U.S. as well as the dependency and the inequality inherent in it. In 1987, with the blossoming of workers, students and farmers movements for democratization, the call for "U.S. troops out of Korea" reached its pinnacle. However, with the change from a military dictatorship to a "democratic civilian" presidency in 1987, and the increased living standards of the country, the call for U.S. withdrawal began to diminish.

In 1992, the murder of Yoon Kum-Yi re-mobilized anti-American sentiments. Ms. Yoon was brutally murdered and her body severely mutilated by Private Kenneth Markle. Previously, out of the estimated 40,000 crimes committed by U.S. soldiers against Koreans, only 200 had been handed over to the Korean court system. The murder of Ms. Yoon resulted in the first time that a U.S. soldier was prosecuted in the Korean courts, and this was due solely to the massive protests that erupted in response to the horrific details of her death. A massive women's movement and a movement to "Eradicate Crimes Committed by U.S. Military" grew, calling for changes in the Status of Armed Forces Agreement (SOFA), which determines how crimes against civilians by U.S. soldiers are handled.

On a direct services level, several organizations have arisen to provide aid and community to women working in the camptowns. Duraebang, in English known as "My Sister's Place", is based in Uijongbu and Saeumto is based in Tongduchon. Both organizations are both advocates and community centers for women in the military camptowns, providing counseling, English language classes, job training, lunch programs and children's day/night care.

Finally, there is a current movement growing in both South Korea and the U.S. to finally end the Korean War through a peace treaty, in the hopes of bringing peace, the demilitarization of the peninsula, and eventual reunification. For further information, please see (see [www.endthekoreanwar.org](http://www.endthekoreanwar.org) and <http://spark-korea.org/>, [www.nodutdol.org](http://www.nodutdol.org), and [http://www.spark946.org/bugsboard/lee/mj\\_english\\_intro.htm](http://www.spark946.org/bugsboard/lee/mj_english_intro.htm))

### 5) Marriage and Migration

Marriage to an American G.I. is an alternative many women seek to escape from militarized prostitution. For some, it is the only option, since women who have worked in the clubs have difficulty marrying Koreans. However, most women promised marriage are abandoned when their soldier-boyfriends are transferred out of Korea; women are often left to raise their interracial children alone in the camptowns.

Marriages between U.S. servicemen and Korean women peaked at 3,000 a year in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1993, an average of 1200 couples were marrying each year. It is estimated that 100,000 Korean women have come to the U.S. as wives of servicemen since the 1950s. Although many Korean women married to American servicemen have worked in clubs in South Korea, it would be misleading to characterize all of them as former prostitutes. However, within Korean and Korean American communities, there is a social stigma attached to intercultural couples. A racially mixed couple is assumed to be a G.I. and a former prostitute.

Interracial or intercultural marriages face enormous obstacles including language and cultural differences, racism and anti-immigrant sentiment. Often posted to bases within the U.S., far from Korean American communities, the women are extremely isolated and generally unable to find ways to assimilate. There is a reportedly high rate of domestic abuse, but the military does not provide support systems to non-english speaking spouses who face crises. Even when a couple is situated near a Korean American community, prejudice and discrimination lead to the isolation of the women married to G.I.s. Only a few groups and agencies provide aid to the women in crisis. The Asian Women Center of NYC, its counterpart in San Francisco, the Korean Family Service Center in Manhattan and the Rainbow Center in Queens, NYC are among those few groups. (see Appendix) The divorce rate of Korean-G.I.marriages is estimated to be about 80% (1)

(1) AFSC:1988

### 6) The Case of Chong Sun France

On December 4, 1987, Chong Sun France was convicted of second degree murder and felonious child abuse of her son, Moses Krystowski, and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment. The difficult circumstances of Chong's life, however, actually began back in South Korea.

Chong Sun France grew up in rural poverty in Sosan. Her father was rarely employed and her family had to live in a tent. While a teenager, she began working as a maid to help support the family but stopped when she was molested by her employer. When Chong Sun found that a friend of hers had met and married a well-off foreign soldier while working in the military camptowns, she decided to follow her example. Chong Sun went to a camptown called Ahnjongri and worked in the clubs. She eventually met and married Danny France, an American soldier, and came to the U.S. in 1980. Although she had hoped to bring her family over, her husband became abusive and the marriage ended in divorce. Like many other Korean G.I. brides, the lack of language skills and legal help led to her losing custody of her child. Chong Sun later met another American, whom she married, and they had two children. Again, both physical and emotional abuse occurred - but this time, determined not to lose her children, Chong Sun fled the state with her 2 year old son Moses and 6 month old daughter, Esther.

Chong Sun moved to Jacksonville, North Carolina, the site of the large marine base Camp Lejeune, and a whole neighborhood of bars that served the soldiers. A friend had told her that she could find work there, and she did, as a bartender near the motel where she was staying. During the hours she had to work, Chong put her two children to sleep in bed, turned on the television, and locked the door. Chong did not have any friends or family in Jacksonville, nor the money to hire a babysitter while she went to work.

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On May 28, 1987, Chong returned home from work to find her son, Moses dead, the television and dresser toppled over on him. She attempted to call her former husband, knocked on the doors of another tenant and the motel owner, and then called the police. She cleaned up the room, fearful that a social worker might take her daughter away if the room was in disarray. When the police arrived, Chong said the death of her son was accidental. But in grief, she also screamed, "I killed my son". Chong was arrested and charged with second degree murder.

The court transcripts make clear that bias and misunderstanding were imbedded in Chong Sun France's case, starting with the police officers' actions upon their arrival and throughout the trial. One officer described Chong at her arrest as "sick", "crazed", "hateful" and "very hysterical". Although the officers and both prosecuting and defending attorneys stated that Chong's english was impossible to understand, no court interpreter was provided. The prosecution concluded that Chong had asphyxiated Moses by slamming him inside the dresser drawer and then tried to make it look like an accident, but simple forensic tests which might have clarified the situation were never done - like x-rays of the boy's body. The court did not have sufficient evidence to prove the alleged murder, but it found her guilty based on an assessment of the "kind of" mother and woman she was presumed to be- a club woman, an absconding wife, an irresponsible mother leaving her children home alone - an immigrant who could barely speak in her own defense. In the end, Chong Sun France was convicted and sent to the Correctional Institution for Women in Raleigh, North Carolina with a twenty year sentence. An appeal was attempted, but rejected.

In Jacksonville there is a small community of Korean Americans. However, as in Korea, there is little social contact between the Korean women who work in the bar areas or former club women who are now married to soldiers, and the rest of the Korean community. When the local community heard of Chong Sun France's unfair conviction and sentence, though, it was moved to rally to her defense. Then the NYC Rainbow Church, made up of Korean women mostly married to former G.Is, became involved and a Free Chong Sun France campaign was started. Groups across the country and in South Korea became involved, sending petitions and letters to the North Carolina governor, who finally called a special hearing to reassess the case and trial.

On December 31, 1992, after 6 years in prison, Chong Sun France was given clemency and released. Now living in New York, she works to help other Korean women at a community center.

## APPENDIX A

### A Short Chronology of Modern South Korean History

1904 - 1945: In 1904, before the Russo-Japanese war (essentially a war to win control of Korea and Manchuria), the Japanese government sent troops into Seoul and began to control the government. They forced the passage of many laws, including the legalization of prostitution in Korea. Japan took over the country with a forced treaty in 1905 and then annexed Korea in 1910. The United States agreed not to dispute this takeover in return for Japan's recognition of American control of the Philippines. During the 36 year Japanese occupation, Korean resources were diverted to Japanese use, and millions of workers were forced to Manchuria and Japan as slave labor. Between 100,000 - 200,000 Korean women, known as "chungshindae" or "comfort troops", were enslaved to sexually serve the Japanese soldiers. Koreans fought the Japanese, most notably during the March 1919 Uprising, and through guerilla resistance throughout the occupation.

1945 - 1948: With the defeat of Japan during World War II, its 36 year occupation of Korea was ended. U.S. troops entered Korea from the south, and Soviet troops (then war allies of the U.S.) entered Korea from the north to accept Japan's surrender. What was to be the armies' temporary occupation of the two halves of Korea resulted in a permanent division of the country as the Cold War began: the U.S. proposed a division of Korea along the 38th parallel, and the Soviets agreed. With the division, new laws were instituted on both sides. In 1946, female equality was proclaimed and prostitution abolished in the Soviet occupied northern portion of Korea. Two years later the U.S. occupied southern portion also abolished public prostitution, but at the same time, prostitution for the U.S. military began in Pusan.

1948 - 1949: Despite the mass sentiment for a unified Korea, the U.S. and U.N. planned for separate elections in the South, and U.S.- backed Syngman Rhee was proclaimed president of the newly inaugurated Republic of Korea (R.O.K.), South Korea. The following month, Soviet-backed Kim Il Sung was proclaimed premier of the newly inaugurated Democratic People's Republic of Korea (D.P.R.K.), North Korea. The 38th parallel, a formerly arbitrary line between the two halves of Korea, became a permanent divide. U.S. and Soviet troops withdrew by 1949, but continued to actively sponsor economic, political, military and cultural projects in their respective spheres. The entire peninsula became a battleground as 'people's committees', made up of workers and peasants, struggled against the right wing - landlords, former Japanese collaborators and rich farmers. In the north, the people's committees were supported by the new government, in the south, they were attacked, arrested and killed by the government and right wing groups. Throughout the south, and particularly in Taegu, Yosu and Cheju Island, tens of thousands of peasants and youth were killed as the People's Army guerrillas fought against the police and right-wing militias, who were supported by the U.S. military.

1950 - 1953: The Korean war, essentially a civil war between the North and South, started on June 25th, 1950. The United States decided immediately to aid South Korea, and received United Nations approval and assistance from member countries, while China eventually aided North Korea. Fighting gradually became stalemated around the 38th parallel. During the war, impoverished women prostituted for the U.S. and Korean armies, forming what was known as "blanket brigades". The first camptowns of brothels for the troops were formed. By the end of the war, the death toll was 57,000 U.S. and U.N. troops, one million Chinese and 3 million Koreans. Both North and South Korea suffered massive destruction. To this day, 10 million families remain separated between the north and south, without contact for the past 43 years. An

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armistice agreement was signed at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953 by representatives of the U.N. Command (a U.S. general), the D.P.R.K. and China. No peace treaty was ever signed; the war is technically not over.

1954 - 1960: In 1953, the Mutual Security Treaty was signed between the United States and the Republic of Korea (South Korea), and enacted in 1954. This agreement permitted U.S. armed forces to stay in South Korea indefinitely, and the agreement itself was to be in force for an indefinite amount of time. Economic and military aid was provided by the U.S. to South Korea. Camp towns for prostitution around U.S. had developed during the Korean war, but with the "permanent" establishment of U.S. presence, the camp towns also became "permanent". The war's devastation and the losses of husbands and sons forced numerous women into prostitution around the bases. Authoritarianism, high inflation and skewed economic growth led to wide protests culminating in the April Revolution in 1960, which forced President Syngman Rhee out of office.

1960 - 1979: After one year of the liberal government of Chang Myon, General Park Chung Hee took power in a 1961 coup d'etat. His repressive military regime was accompanied by high economic growth with heavy capital investment by U.S. and Japan, and the development of an export-oriented industrial economy based on a large, cheap labor force. Government policies favored industrial development, and thousands of farmers became impoverished, abandoning their farms for the cities. Women began to leave rural villages for factories, with many then departing brutal factory conditions for the U.S. military base camp towns. By the 1970s, the sex industry had expanded tremendously in South Korea, to include sex tourism aimed at Japanese businessmen.

The U.S.-South Korea military relation also strengthened. The U.S. provided military aid to South Korea and paid for between 300,000 Korean troops to fight in Vietnam with the American forces. In 1976, "Team Spirit" began, an annual war game involving hundreds of thousands of U.S. and South Korean forces, and in 1978, the U.S.-Korea Combined Forces Command was established, putting most of South Korea's ground forces under the command of a U.S. general. In 1979, Park Chung Hee was assassinated by a member of the Korean CIA. During the interim government of Ch'oe Kyu- Ha, General Chun Doo Hwan took power through a coup d'etat.

1980: 20,000 Korean military troops from the U.S.-Korea Combined Forces were sent to the city of Kwangju to quell a civilian uprising. 2,000 people including school children were killed in a massacre for which military dictator Chun Doo Hwan and the U.S. military disclaimed responsibility. This event was a turning point in Korean reassessment of the U.S.-Korean relationship, and it spurred the growth of anti-american sentiment in South Korea.

1980 - 1987: Repressive military governance coupled with high economic growth still characterized South Korean development. The GNP rose from \$2.7 billion in 1962 to \$75 billion by 1983. Throughout the 1980s, South Korea experienced a 10 % annual growth, some portion of which was due to the booming sex industry, particularly sex tourism, also known as "kisaeng tourism". There was also massive growth in the democratization movement, the workers' movement, and the farmers' movement, concomitant with the rise of anti-americanism. The political repression, grievous working conditions and the debilitation of the agricultural sector led finally to mass protests in 1987, the largest ever experienced in Korean history. Military dictator Chun Doo Hwan was forced to step down, and the first somewhat democratic election was held in 1987, resulting in the election of a former military general, President Roh Tae Woo.

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1987 - 1996: South Korean economy continued to grow, but at a decreased rate as the world wide recession took hold. At the same time, in part due to the success of the 1987 struggles, more workers' unions were recognized leading to slightly better working conditions and higher wages. South Korea began to move away from a strictly export-oriented economy, diversifying its industrial base and becoming more high-tech oriented. Labor intensive industries began to move from Korea to other, even lower wage Asian sites. Korean companies themselves began to import lower wage workers to Korea from the Philippines and export manufacturing sites to other countries.

In 1993, the first civilian president in 33 years was inaugurated, Kim Young Sam. Under Kim some economic reforms were undertaken; former dictator Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo were tried and convicted for the 1980 Kwangju massacre as well as for accepting bribes. At the same time, however, students, independent labor unions and other activists were being harassed and arrested in record numbers. The National Security law was being used to arrest and silence activists - through "red baiting" charges of working on behalf of communist North Korea.

1997-2009 In 1997, as all of Asia suffered financial crises, South Korea experienced a financial meltdown, brought on in part by the deregulation of its financial industries – done at the behest of the U.S. in order to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The result was devastating for the Korean people, and an IMF bailout led to a further globalization of Korean financial institutions, allowing for foreign (US and Japanese) take-overs of many Korean assets at the expense of Korea's industrial sector, including labor. At the same time, former democratic activist and new President Kim Dae Jung (elected in 1997), embarked on a Sunshine Policy towards North Korea, lowering tensions and increasing relations. In 2000, for which he won a Nobel Peace Prize, Kim held the first ever summit meeting with North Korean President Kim Jong Il. At that time, there was some tension between South Korea and the U.S., for as the Koreas increased their interactions, the U.S. under George Bush was raising tensions with North Korea over its nuclear activity.

In 2001, the U.S. changed its defense strategy, and began to make over its military presence in Korea to better serve its need for "strategic flexibility", with forces that could be rapidly deployed anywhere in the world. As of 2009, U.S. troops have been reduced to 28,500, with some bases closed, but others, near Pyongtaek, being expanded. This expansion has led to farmers and residents being evicted from their lands, despite a multi-year battle to resist the U.S. bases. During this time period, additional civilian deaths due to U.S. troop actions made headlines, and this, along with a popular resistance to the impending KorUS FTA (Korea-US Free Trade Act), which threatened the livelihood of farmers and thousands of workers, led to increased anti-American sentiment in Korea. On the other hand, the 2007 presidential election brought in a new, conservative president, Lee Myung Bak, who is very favorable to the U.S and less open to furthering relations with North Korea.

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### APPENDIX B

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"Camp Arirang", by D. & G. Lee. 30 min documentary following a former sex worker through the camptowns. Contact: Third World Newsreel (212)947-9277/ [tw@tw.org](mailto:tw@tw.org)

"Slaying the Dragon", by Deborah Gee for the Asian Women United, 60 min documentary on Asian women images in the media. Contact: Center for Asian American Media, [www.asianamericanmedia.org](http://www.asianamericanmedia.org)

## Appendix C

### Organizations In Korea: (partial listing)

Duraebang aka "My Sister's Place" ,  
Kosan-dong 116, Uijongbu-City, Kyungki-Do, 480-060  
(T) 0351 841-2609/6946 Fax 841-2608  
[www.durebang.org/htm/esub1-2.htm](http://www.durebang.org/htm/esub1-2.htm)

Korea Church Women United  
Korean Ecumenical Building, Room 1110, 136-56 Yunchi-Dong, Chongno-ku  
Seoul 110-740, South Korea  
Tel: 82-2-708-4370 Fax: 82-2-708-4186

Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan  
Kisayeon Building #305, Chungjung-ro 2 Ka 35, Sudaemun-Ku, Seoul 120-012  
(T) 365-4016 Fax 365-4017  
[http://www.womenandwar.net/english/menu\\_012.php](http://www.womenandwar.net/english/menu_012.php)

Korean Women's Organizations United  
Women's Peace House 2 Fl, Jangchong-dong 1 Ka 38-84, Joong-Ku, Seoul 100-391  
(T) 274-2883,2884,2885,2886,2887,2888 Fax 273-9539

The National Campaign for the Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea  
Yeonji-dong 136-46, Christian Building #708, Chongro-Ku, Seoul 110-470  
(T) 02 744-1211 Fax 3673-2296

National Committee for Democracy and Reunification  
Samwoo Building #301, Dongsomun-dong I Ka 43, Sungbuk-ku, Seoul 136-031  
(T) 747-4364-5 Fax 747-4363

Pyungtak Citizen's Committee for Democracy  
Bision 1-dong 633-1, 2 Fl, Pyungtaek, Kyungki-Do 450-150  
(T) 0333 51-3556 Fax 53-1473

Saewoomtuh  
362-27, Bosan-dong, Dongdoocheon City, Kyonggi-do 483-060 Korea  
[swoom@chollian.net](mailto:swoom@chollian.net)  
Tel: +82 31 867 4655 / Fax: +82 31 867 3031

Tongduchon Citizen's Committee for Democracy  
Saengyeon 2-dong 824-25, Tongduchon, Kyungki-Do 483-032  
(T) 0351 62-7652 Fax 63-9780

True Love Mission (Cham-Sarang Shim Teo)  
Sinjang 1-dong 634-11 (1 2/4), Songtan, Kyungki-Do 459-121

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### **Organizations in the U.S.**

#### **Boston**

Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Boston, Ma (617) 338-2350  
<http://www.atask.org/>

#### **California**

Asian Women's Shelter, SF/Oakland, Ca (415) 751-0880  
<http://www.sfaws.org/>

Center for Pacific/Asian Families, Inc., L.A., Ca (213) 653-4045  
<http://www.cpaf.info/>

#### **Midwest**

Korean American Women In Need (KAN WIN), Chicago, Ill  
<http://www.angelfire.com/il/kanwin/>  
Office: (773) 583-1392 / Fax: (773) 583-2454

Apna Ghar (Our Home), 4753 North Broadway, Suite 632, Chicago, IL 60640  
Office: 773-334-0173/ Fax: 773-334-0963  
<http://www.apnaghar.org/indexnew.shtml>

#### **New Jersey/New York**

Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAA AV)  
191 East 3rd Street, NY NY 10009 (212) 473-6485 <http://www.caaav.org/>

Manavi, New Jersey, (201) 334-7356 <http://www.manavi.org/>

NY Asian Women's Center, 39 Bowery, P.O. Box 375 , New York, NY 10002  
(212) 732-5230 <http://www.nyawc.org/>

Korean-American Family Services Center  
P.O. Box 541429, Flushing, NY 11354  
Tel: (718) 460-3801 / Fax: (718) 460-3965 / <http://www.kafsc.org/>

Rainbow Center Inc. of New York  
P.O. Box 540929, Flushing, New York  
718-539-6546 OR 718-539-5515 / Fax Number: 718-539-6547  
<http://www.rcnyc.org>