




Spring 5-22-2021

## **The Treatment of South Korean Women Has Changed Since Japan's Military Comfort System Because of Stronger Laws and More Diverse Support Groups**

Arianna Daria Fiorentini

Follow this and additional works at: [https://research.library.fordham.edu/international\\_senior](https://research.library.fordham.edu/international_senior)

 Part of the [East Asian Languages and Societies Commons](#)

---

The Treatment of South Korean Women Has Changed Since Japan's Military Comfort System  
Because of Stronger Laws and More Diverse Support Groups

Arianna Fiorentini

[afiorentini@fordham.edu](mailto:afiorentini@fordham.edu)

Asia Track

Thesis Advisor: Michael Marme

Seminar Advisor: Caley Johnson

## **Abstract**

During the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), the Japanese government condoned the forced recruitment and transportation of approximately 200,000 Korean women to be sex slaves for the Japanese Army. Korean “comfort women” suffered greatly under the system and the issue was not known to the public until the early 1990s, when Korean feminist leaders helped 200 Korean “comfort women” survivors come forward and share their experiences. Historians and feminist scholars addressing the “comfort issue” have thoroughly described the comfort system, the conditions Korean “comfort women” faced, and how gender, patriarchy, colonialism, and class come into play in the system’s existence and maintenance. One question left unanswered in the existing research is whether or not the treatment of South Korean women has changed since the comfort system. I argue that attitudes toward South Korean women have changed because of the creation and implementation of new laws, and diverse groups support of sexual violence survivors. Using the case studies: Japan’s military comfort system, the Burning Sun Scandal, and the Nth Room Scandal, I analyze what groups supported sex abuse victims and who was being punished under the law, for what crime, and for how long to show the changing treatment of South Korean women in society. By doing so, I illustrate how sexual exploitation is defined, experienced, and dealt with in Korean society, and explain why South Korean women are treated in a certain way, so we can understand why abuse occurs and make efforts to prevent it.

## Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	3
II.	Literature Review.....	7
III.	Case Studies.....	11
	A. Korean Mobilization for War Effort.....	12
	B. Japan’s Military Comfort System.....	13
	C. South Korea’s Industrialization (1953-1973).....	16
	D. South Korea’s Road to Democracy (1960-1993) .....	18
	1. Public Sentiments.....	20
	2. Punishment.....	22
	E. Burning Sun Scandal.....	25
	1. Punishment.....	27
	2. Public Sentiments.....	29
	F. Nth Room Scandal.....	31
	1. Punishment.....	32
	2. Public Sentiments.....	35
IV.	Analysis.....	36
	A. Comparison of Punishments.....	36
	B. Comparison of Public Sentiments.....	39
V.	Conclusion.....	42
VI.	Works Cited.....	43

## Introduction

Korea was occupied by Japan from 1910 to 1945, and under Japanese rule, railways, ports, and factories were built and industrialization accelerated. Today, there is an ongoing debate between Japan and South Korea about whether Japan's colonialism helped Korea modernize via industrialization. Japanese conservatives argue that Japanese colonialism helped industrialize Korea and South Koreans argue Korea would have achieved modernization on its own, and that colonization did not aid the country, but forestall its path to modernization.<sup>1</sup> Korea became a protectorate of Japan in the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905. The Korean King Sejong was forced to abdicate the throne to his son Sunjong and the Japanese installed Yi Wan-yong as prime minister to rule the Korean government. Koreans resisted and fought with Japanese troops from 1907 to 1910, but they were simply outnumbered and outgunned. In 1910, Japan formally annexed Korea in the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1910. The first phase of Japanese colonialism was a military one bent on eliminating resistance and erasing Korea's ethnic and cultural identity. Korean resistance continued in early colonization and "the Japanese arrested as many as 50,000 Koreans in 1912 and 140,000 in 1918."<sup>2</sup> Although many Koreans resisted Japanese colonization, many embraced Japan, believing that under the country's leadership, Korea would modernize. In addition, Japan set out to repress Korean culture and traditions, creating a system where the Japanese benefitted from policies and Koreans did not.<sup>3</sup> The second phase allowed for some freedoms for Koreans. In the final phase, the Japanese tried to assimilate Koreans into Japan (e.g., requiring Koreans to take a Japanese name), and mobilized Koreans to its war effort.<sup>4</sup> The Japanese needed soldiers and laborers, including "comfort women." "Comfort women" were

---

<sup>1</sup> Lee (2013), pp. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup> Cumings (2005), p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 143-148.

<sup>4</sup> All information from Lee (2013), pp. 5-6.

forced into sexual slavery for Japanese soldiers. The majority of women recruited were from impoverished backgrounds, and they were either forcibly taken from their homes, sold to Japanese recruiters by their parents, or lied to about the type of work they would be doing. Korean “comfort women” were raped and beat when they refused to have sex with Japanese soldiers. They were forced to service as many as 60 men in one day, and most women were unpaid for their services. Their pain did not end after Japan surrendered in 1945, as many women suffered from syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases, had post-traumatic stress disorder and severe trauma, and were ashamed of their colonial past (because of patriarchal customs).<sup>5</sup>

After the end of World War II, Korea was divided into North Korea and South Korea, and each half had its own government. The Republic of Korea, South Korea, was established in 1948. In 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea, beginning the Korean War. The war would end in three years solidifying the border between North and South Korea on the 38th parallel. The rest of the 20th century would bring South Korea rapid economic growth, eventually allowing the country to become one of the world’s richest nations, and a series of autocratic rulers until 1987, when the country saw the beginning of peaceful democratization.<sup>6</sup> South Korea’s road to democracy and rapid industrial growth would allow for important issues to emerge in the early 1990s. Korean women’s groups latched on to the “comfort women” issue in their fight to end sex tourism by Japanese men and prostitution in U.S. bases in South Korea. They protested the Japanese government and demanded the government compensate “comfort women” for their suffering. The Japanese government would eventually apologize to “comfort women” and set up a fund with non-governmental money to compensate victims. The fund

---

<sup>5</sup> All information from Yoshimi (1995), pp. 91-107; 139-44.

<sup>6</sup> Cumings (1995), pp. 305-95.

allowed Korean “comfort women” to be recognized publicly, but it came 50 years after World War II. Despite the fund, many Korean “comfort women” still desired a formal apology from Japan and legal compensation.<sup>7</sup> Currently, the Japanese government has faced no legal responsibility for its war crimes, and with only 25 registered Korean “comfort women” alive today,<sup>8</sup> still wishing for a sincere apology and legal compensation, we are left to wonder if they will ever get their justice.

The sexual exploitation of women still exists today and in recent years, a series of sex abuse crimes have occurred in South Korea, despite women’s groups calls for the end of sexual violence against women. I wanted to see why these crimes were occurring, and looked at the public’s reactions and the South Korean government’s response to these crimes. I argue that attitudes toward South Korean women have changed because of new and stronger laws in place to deter sex abuse crimes, and diverse groups support of sexual abuse victims. Until we understand the ways in which sexual exploitation is defined, experienced, and dealt with in South Korean society, we cannot understand why Korean women are treated the way they are in Korean society or hope to end the sexual exploitation of women in South Korea. This task is necessary because it can help us to understand why sex abuse occurs, and what the consequences are for not having strong laws on sex abuse crimes.

In the literature review, I explain that Professor Yoshiaki Yoshimi has contributed immensely to the “comfort women” issue by finding documents that prove the Japanese government’s involvement in recruiting Korean “comfort women.”<sup>9</sup> George Hicks was the first to write a book describing Japan’s military comfort system in English. Professor Yuki Tanaka

---

<sup>7</sup> All information from Min (2003), pp. 941-46.

<sup>8</sup> Smith and Choi (2018).

<sup>9</sup> Yoshimi (1995), p. 7.

explored the role of United States occupation forces in Japan and the treatment of Japanese comfort women.<sup>10</sup> Professor Chunghee Sarah Oh argued that the comfort system was able to exist and work because of both Japanese colonialism and Korean patriarchy.<sup>11</sup> Professor Pyong Gap-min found that colonial power, gender hierarchy, and class contributed to the suffering of Korean “comfort women.”<sup>12</sup>

Then, I describe how Korea’s industry rapidly developed, its peasant population’s movement away from the countryside, and eventually how this shift became forced by Japan to mobilize Korean “comfort women” to the war effort. I explain how Korean “comfort women” were recruited and how they were treated during the war and after it, how South Korea’s economy began to rise in the 1960s, how South Korea struggled for democracy and how that struggle coincided with Korean feminist movements in the 1980s, how women’s groups supported Korean “comfort women,” and how the Japanese government faced no legal punishment. I discuss the K-pop sex abuse scandal that occurred at the night club, Burning Sun; explain who was sentenced, for how long, and for what crime they were found guilty of. I also show how the public and government’s support of the club’s victims was mixed. I illustrate how in the Nth Room Scandal, women were blackmailed into joining a digital sex ring, and explain why the scandal was important: it was the first time that the police and military gave up the identity of suspects, and it was the catalyst for laws to be created targeting those who commit digital sex abuse crimes.

In my analysis, I compare who is punished; for how long and changes made to the law, as well as who is supporting sexual violence victims and to what degree. I conclude that the

---

<sup>10</sup> Tanaka (2001).

<sup>11</sup> Soh (2008).

<sup>12</sup> Min (2003), p. 938.



treatment of women under South Korean society has changed because of the implementation of new and stronger laws and the support of sexual violence survivors from governmental officials, police officers, celebrities, and women's groups.

## Literature Review

Yoshiaki Yoshimi, professor of modern Japanese history, has been concerned with questions of Japanese war crimes and responsibility throughout his career. He became interested in the “comfort women” issue in 1990 when the Korean “comfort women” survivor, Kim Hak-sun came forward and courageously shared her story. Inspired by her testimony, Yoshimi extensively searched the Japanese Self-Defense Agency archives for evidence. What he discovered was shocking: wartime documents proving the Japanese government's involvement in the planning, construction, and operation of comfort stations. These documents were instrumental to the Japanese government's decision to admit its involvement in the “comfort women” issue and make an apology to Korean “comfort women” survivors in 1992. Yoshimi went on to compile his research in his book *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*. Yoshimi argues that Japan's military comfort system was a violation of international law, the Japanese government continues its crimes by denying its involvement in the comfort system, and that the Japanese citizens are also responsible for rectifying the issue with “comfort women.”<sup>13</sup>

George Hicks learned of the “comfort women” issue in 1991 when a class action lawsuit against the Japanese government made the front page of international news. His book *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in The Second World War* is

---

<sup>13</sup> All information from Yoshimi (1995), pp. 7-8.

one of the earliest publications of the “comfort women” issue and includes detailed interviews from “comfort women” survivors. Hicks helped bring attention to the “comfort women” issue to the world by publishing the book in English.<sup>14</sup> He also explains how Japan’s military comfort system was a highly disciplined system that involved the beating of soldiers by their superiors.<sup>15</sup> In the military, soldiers are subordinate and must obey orders from their officers, yet are supposed to dominate the enemy on the battlefield. This contradictory dynamic and the belief that having sex with a virgin before war would ensure a soldier’s protection from death and injury contributed to the maintenance of comfort stations.<sup>16</sup> Because soldiers were subjected to military beatings, comfort stations offered an escape from Japan’s strict disciplinary system. In addition, the belief that a soldier should have sex with a virgin before war created a ritual of going to comfort stations.<sup>17</sup>

History Professor Yuki Tanaka is interested in “comfort women” and Japan under United States military rule. His earlier work *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II* considered whether or not war makes women victims of sexual violence. His later book *Japan’s Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation* explores why the United States did not persecute the Japanese military for its war crimes.<sup>18</sup> In addition to exploring this question, Tanaka forms a narrative of the sexual violence committed by the U.S. occupation troops against Japanese women through official reports and the testimonies of Japanese sexual violence survivors. Despite the U.S. and Allied forces use of

---

<sup>14</sup> Hicks (1995), p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Hicks (1995), p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> All information from Hicks (1995), p. 70.

<sup>17</sup> All information from Hicks (1995), p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> Tanaka (2003), p. xvii.

military controlled prostitution, Tanaka affirms that Japan must take responsibility for the rape and sexual slavery that happened under the military comfort system.<sup>19</sup>

Chunghhee Sarah Soh is a professor of anthropology, specializing in issues of women, gender, and sexuality. In her book, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*, Soh argues that the Japanese military and Korean patriarchy are to blame for the sexual violence against Korean “comfort women.” She illuminates the importance of socioeconomic status, discovering that many of the “comfort women” from Korea were poor, uneducated young women from rural farming communities.<sup>20</sup> Soh challenges the idea that the Japanese military comfort system was just a war crime, arguing that the system is more complex and an example of structural gendered violence.<sup>21</sup>

In her journal article, “The Korean ‘Comfort Women’: Movement for Redress,” Soh seeks to evaluate the Korean comfort movement for redress, noting how the women’s movement helped survivors and brought the “comfort women” issue to the attention of the international community. The rapid democratization of South Korea in the 1980s resulted in a democratic government in 1993 and allowed for the women’s movement. The women’s movement took up the comfort issue because it related to women’s fight against sex tourism in Korea. The women’s movement was essential to the Korean “comfort women” issue gaining public consciousness both domestically and internationally. It also allowed for Korean “comfort women” survivors to come forward and tell their story. Soh notes that the reason the “comfort women” issue remained undiscussed in Korean society for so long is because of traditional Korean patriarchy, which expects women to be chaste until marriage. Due to mounting pressure from the international

---

<sup>19</sup> Tanaka (2003), p. 181.

<sup>20</sup> Soh (2008), p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Soh (2008), p. 236.

community, in 1993, the Japanese government admitted that part of the recruitment process for “comfort women” included coercion and that these women were transported to comfort stations. A compensation plan that used money from nongovernmental funds was drafted the following year and went into effect in 1996, despite disapproval from feminist activists.<sup>22</sup>

Pyong Gap-min is a professor of sociology. He wrote “Korean ‘Comfort Women’: The Intersection of Colonial Power, Gender, and Class” to address whether Japan’s colonization of Korea or gender hierarchy caused more suffering to Korean “comfort women.” Min argues that it is problematic to look at the Korean “comfort women” issue through one aspect because it misrepresents the victim’s experiences and discovers that colonial power, gender hierarchy, and class are intertwined and that all three made the life of a Korean “comfort women” miserable. First, Korean “comfort women” were forced into sexual slavery and were victims of abuse in comfort stations. Second, the patriarchal system in Japan allowed for the establishment of comfort stations and patriarchal customs in Korea contributed to the suffering of Korean “comfort women” because women felt ashamed to share their stories due to the stigma around sexual abuse victims and remained silent. Third, the socioeconomic background of a “comfort women” made them more vulnerable to be victims of forced sexual slavery.<sup>23</sup>

“Comfort women” survivors call for Japan’s sincere apology and the government to compensate all its war victims. Some historians and feminist scholars take it further: Yuki Tanaka desires Japanese history to be accurately recorded and the historical processes of Japan’s development be examined<sup>24</sup> while Sarah Soh insists that the sexual exploitation of women will not end until there are transformations to the ‘masculinist sex culture’, the sex industry, and the

---

<sup>22</sup> All information from Soh (1996), pp. 1227-37.

<sup>23</sup> All information from Min (2003), pp. 938-40.

<sup>24</sup> Tanaka (2001), p. 181.

gender wage gap.<sup>25</sup> In addition, feminist movement leaders believe pressure on the international community is the only way to get the Japanese government to take responsibility.<sup>26</sup>

So far, no one has compared the treatment of South Korean women under Japan's military comfort system to modern day examples of forced prostitution. Most likely because the horrific acts done under the authority of the Japanese government were done during a time of war. However, it is possible to compare Japan's military comfort system to the Burning Sun scandal and the Nth Room scandal because all three case studies deal with sexual exploitation, and what happened to Korean women during Japan's military comfort system influenced a feminist movement in the 1980s that was committed to gender equality, basic rights, and the end of sexual violence. This movement has not gone away, as Korean women group's still call for the end of sexual violence against women and their support for sexual violence survivors have not waivered, as women's group were quick to protest when the Burning Sun and Nth Room scandals emerged. I chose to explore the Burning Sun and Nth Room scandals because of their connection to Korean women's groups, and because the scandals are gruesome, recent, and famous outside of South Korea. In looking at who was punished and who supported victims in Japan's military comfort system, the Burning Sun scandal, and the Nth Room scandal, we can see how the treatment of South Korean women has changed; in doing so, we can begin to understand how sexual exploitation is dealt with and why South Korean women are treated the way they are, and more broadly why sex abuse occurs.

## **Case Studies**

---

<sup>25</sup> Soh (1996), p. 1240.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

### **Korean Mobilization for War Effort**

The movement of poor farmers to the city made “comfort women” vulnerable to recruitment. Korea experienced rapid industrialization from 1935 to 1945. In 1936, 594,739 Koreans worked in industry and by 1943, that number had more than doubled to 1,321,713 people. This figure is a result of population movement. Korea was an agrarian society with the majority of the population working the land. However, due to a depression and new land ownership, there was a surplus peasant population.<sup>27</sup> Most Korean farmers “[rented] all or part of the land they worked.”<sup>28</sup> Debt, poverty, uncompensated labor, and insecurity made it increasingly difficult for peasants to farm. The result was peasants moving away from the countryside because there was no work and they needed higher wages to support their families.<sup>29</sup>

By 1937, the shift of peasants from the land became a forced movement. The Japanese government mobilized Korean labor for the Second Sino-Japanese War, a war of Japanese aggression fought in China. Koreans were sent to Japan, Manchukuo (modern day Manchuria), and northern Korea.<sup>30</sup> In 1941, 1.4 million Koreans were working in Japan; “770,000 [Koreans] were in the labor force: 220,000 were in construction work, 208,000 in manufacturing, 94,000 in mining, and the remainder in agriculture.”<sup>31</sup> In addition, 2.5 million youths were mobilized to join patriotic organizations. By 1942, Koreans were forced into mandatory conscription. The Japanese government drafted laborers by placing quotas on each province based on population and local officials were in charge of filling quotas for the Japanese. However, not everyone

---

<sup>27</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 170-76.

<sup>28</sup> Cumings (2005), p. 182.

<sup>29</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 176-82.

<sup>30</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 176-77.

<sup>31</sup> Cumings (2005), p. 177.

recruited would be working as a miner or factory worker, some Koreans were taken and forced to work as “comfort women.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Japan’s Military Comfort System**

“Comfort women” were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese government for the Japanese Army from 1932 to 1945. Comfort stations emerged throughout China in large numbers as a result of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The stations were built to prevent Japanese soldiers from raping the population and contracting sexually transmitted diseases, like syphilis, soft chancres, and lymphogranuloma inguinale.<sup>33</sup> However, rape continued and sexually transmitted diseases persisted. It is estimated that there were 80,000 to 200,000 Korean “comfort women.” Korean “comfort women” were mostly recruited through deceit and coercion. The women were young and uneducated and looking for jobs. They were led to believe that they would be working in hospitals or cleaning uniforms, and receiving good pay. Desperate to find work or leave the countryside, the young women believed the procurers and did not realize they had been lied to until it was too late: they were on a boat or in a comfort station. Some Korean “comfort women” were kidnapped. They were either grabbed off the street or taken from their home without the permission of their parents.<sup>34</sup> The Japanese government was not directly responsible for the recruitment of “comfort women,” recruitment agents were hired to find women to serve, but the government was aware of how women were recruited and asked for the careful selection of recruitment agents, as well as discretion in recruiting women to preserve the honor of the Army.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 177-79.

<sup>33</sup> All information from Yoshimi (1995), pp. 45-49.

<sup>34</sup> All information from Yoshimi (1995), pp. 91-107.

<sup>35</sup> Yoshimi (1995), p. 59.

Korean “comfort women” were brutally assaulted in comfort stations.<sup>36</sup> If “comfort women” refused to have sex, they were assaulted and then raped. “Comfort women” were expected to have sex with Japanese soldiers throughout the day and night and depending on who a comfort woman typically served, a high-ranking officer or a low-ranking soldier, “comfort women” could have sex with as many as seven to eight or up to 60 men, respectively, in a day. “Comfort women” were not allowed to leave stations, but some reported having a day off once a month or being allowed to go on walks for two hours, and it was extremely hard to escape due to constant surveillance. Even if they could escape, they would have had to survive in a country where they did not know the language and were unfamiliar with (it was impossible to return to Korea with documentation from the Japanese Army).<sup>37</sup> In order to prevent menstruation, some “comfort women” were sterilized during an operation against their will,<sup>38</sup> and pregnant women were forced to take pills causing abortion.<sup>39</sup> “Comfort women” were also subjected to medical examinations twice a week to check for sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>40</sup> However, Japanese soldiers were only required to get examined once a month. This double standard allowed Japanese soldiers to continue having sex, even when they probably had a sexually transmittable disease. Japanese soldiers viewed contracting a disease as dishonorable, so they hid their sickness and continued to go to comfort stations, infecting women.<sup>41</sup> If a “comfort woman” had a “mild” case of a disease, they were forced to continue working.<sup>42</sup> These working conditions and

---

<sup>36</sup> Min (2003), p. 941.

<sup>37</sup> All information from Yoshimi (1995), p. 139-44.

<sup>38</sup> Hicks (1995), p. 165.

<sup>39</sup> Hicks (1995), p. 96.

<sup>40</sup> Yoshimi (1995), p. 44.

<sup>41</sup> All information from Yoshimi (1995), p. 71-72.

<sup>42</sup> Yoshimi (1995), p. 149.



long hours left many “comfort women” with sexually transmitted diseases, uterine diseases, and sterility. Others had lasting psychological trauma and depression.<sup>43</sup>

Some “comfort women” were paid for their services while others were not. The women who were paid received different wages, depending on whether they had received a cash advance during recruitment and who they served. For example, high-ranking officers paid more. If given a cash advance over 1500 yen, “comfort women” received 40% of their pay, if given a cash advance under 1500 yen, 50% of their pay, and if given no cash advance, 60% of their pay. For those who received pay, they could not keep their wages because comfort station operators forced the women to pay for clothing and cosmetics, so the money ended up back in the hands of the operators. Also, if “comfort women” became pregnant, they were expected to pay 50% of the cost and if it was an illness, they had to bear 100% of the cost.<sup>44</sup> After World War II, the value of Japanese yen decreased, so even if “comfort women” had savings, their savings were worthless. Some former “comfort women” also said that they were not able to take out their saved earnings from banks after the war.<sup>45</sup> So, despite some “comfort women” getting paid during the war, virtually all “comfort women” left the war with no money.

“Comfort women” continued to suffer after the war. In Korean society, women were expected to be chaste until marriage. Women who lost their virginity before marriage “were considered sullied, made to feel ashamed, and ostracized by their own families.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, many women lived in fear that their families or partners would find out about their colonial past and hate them for it. As a result, after reuniting with family, some “comfort women” left home while others remained unmarried. Other “comfort women” married or became second wives, and some

---

<sup>43</sup> Yoshimi (1995), p. 193.

<sup>44</sup> All information from Yoshimi (1995), p. 142.

<sup>45</sup> All information from Hicks (1995), p. 92.

<sup>46</sup> All information from Soh (1996), p. 1229.

married and then divorced.<sup>47</sup> This result was an issue because Korean women relied on their husband for economic survival. If they remained unmarried because they did not want to marry or if they divorced, they could not lead economically productive lives, as they had no savings, and had to rely on their family members.<sup>48</sup>

### **South Korea's Industrialization (1953-1973)**

When South Korea was established in 1948, it was one of the poorest nations. The country had been devastated by Japanese occupation and the Korean War (1950-1953). As a result of war and its little capital, the country relied heavily on foreign aid from other countries, namely the United States. The South Korean president from 1948 to 1960, Syngman Rhee, wanted an industrial economy with “a full-blown, self-reliant industrial base with steel, chemicals, machine tools, and the electric energy to run them.”<sup>49</sup> To achieve this goal, President Rhee advocated for import substitution industrialization, meaning South Korea should decrease its foreign dependency through domestic production. However, with little capital, President Rhee was able to convince the United States to help South Korea industrialize by supplying the country with monetary aid. It is estimated that \$12 billion US dollars went to Korea from 1945 to 1965.<sup>50</sup>

President Park Chung-hee gained control over South Korea through a military coup in 1963. He wanted to end South Korea's reliance on foreign aid and wanted the country to pursue a market economy, however, there were no natural resources South Korea could export, so the country focused on the export of manufactured goods, specifically light-manufacturing

---

<sup>47</sup> All information from Yoshimi (1995), pp. 192-93.

<sup>48</sup> All information from Hicks (1995), p. 165.

<sup>49</sup> Cumings (2005), p. 305.

<sup>50</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 305-06.

industries, like textiles. One of Park's methods to expand the economy was economic planning, and he created a series of five-year plans throughout his presidency to industrialize South Korea.<sup>51</sup> The Park government also focused on getting foreign investment. In 1965, South Korea began to normalize relations with Japan in 1965, and in the normalization, South Korea received 800 million dollars in grants and loans from Japan, and Japanese advanced technology.<sup>52</sup> South Korea also deployed its military in the Vietnam War, and, in return, the United States gave South Korea foreign aid. It is believed that the U.S. gave South Korea \$1 billion in the years 1965 to 1970 and it is believed "that this arrangement annually accounted for between 7 and 8 percent of Korea's GDP in the period 1966-69 and for as much as 19 percent of [South Korea's] total foreign earnings."<sup>53</sup> The Vietnam War was also an opportunity for South Korea's economy to prosper, as "Vietnam absorbed 94 percent of Korea's total steel exports and 52 percent of its export of transportation equipment."<sup>54</sup> As South Korea gained more capital and technology, it transitioned into more advanced manufacturing.

In 1973, President Park became interested in developing the heavy and chemical industry. The government began investing in industrial facilities that could help produce metal, steel, machinery, ships, and cars. President Park essentially decided who would control these industries, as he would call chaebol leaders, South Korean owners of large industrial conglomerates, and tell them what to do: build ships or steel mills, etc. The goal was to lower South Korea's dependence on imports by building domestic parts and then having the public buy

---

<sup>51</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 311-14.

<sup>52</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 320-21.

<sup>53</sup> Cumings (2005), p. 321.

<sup>54</sup> Cumings (2005), p. 322.

the Korean product, rather than a foreign one. The end result was industrial self-reliance.<sup>55</sup> This transition from dependence to self-reliance coincided with the democratization of South Korea.

### **South Korea's Road to Democracy (1960-1993)**

South Korea suffered from dictatorships until 1987. On August 15, 1948, South Korea was formed. President Rhee was the first South Korean president. He introduced direct presidential elections, and had the constitution amended to remove term limits. His presidency ended because of the April Revolution, where hundreds of thousands of people called for Rhee's resignation. On April 29, 1960, Rhee and his wife left for exile in Hawaii. Following the April Revolution, the Democratic Party took over and put a bicameral parliamentary system into effect. However, due to social turmoil caused by a drive to the left and a stagnating agrarian economy, the military stepped in. On May 16, 1961, Park Chung Hee and a group of officers seized power in a military coup. The Park government, as mentioned previously, began economic development, and economic progress ensured Park's reelection in 1967. But, under the Yushin system, Park declared himself president for life in 1972.<sup>56</sup>

In 1979, the South Korean economy ran into a brief period of crisis. Due to sharp increases in oil prices, idle assembly lines, an enormous debt, and rising labor costs, "the economy lost 6 percent of the GNP in 1980," and exports did not bounce back until 1983.<sup>57</sup> Tensions worsened when the owner of YH Trading company, a factory, which used women workers to make wigs, shut down the facility and fled to the United States. The women were on a sit-down strike and were attacked and evicted by the police. Mass protests led by students and

---

<sup>55</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 322-25.

<sup>56</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 345-63.

<sup>57</sup> Cumings (2005), p. 378.

workers erupted, and on October 26, 1979, President Park was assassinated by the director of the Korean intelligence agency (KCIA), Kim Chae-gyu.<sup>58</sup>

On December 12, 1979, Chun Doo-hwan, the chief of the Defense Security Command, organized a coup with General Roh Tae-woo to seize power. Chun made himself head of the KCIA, and in May, hundreds took to the streets of Kwangju to protest, however, demonstrators, who were made up of students, women, and laborers, were attacked and suppressed by soldiers. Chun inaugurated himself as president in February 1981.<sup>59</sup> His regime was widely unpopular, but Chun did improve Korean labor by removing controls on organizing, which allowed “unions [to increase their membership by 64 percent.”<sup>60</sup> The “last straw” was in June 1987 when it was revealed to the public that a female activist was sexually assaulted, tortured, and ultimately murdered by the police. Her death caused public outrage and once again, students, women, and laborers took to the streets to protest for a directly elected presidency.<sup>61</sup>

On June 29, Roh Tae-woo promised there would be direct presidential elections in December 1987. This announcement solidified Roh as a popular choice for the election, and he ended up winning the presidency largely in part because the opposing party was split between two candidates: Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam. He also blamed Chun for the coup and the Kwangju Rebellion. However, Roh’s presidency was only partial democratization, as the military still coexisted with the ruling party. In 1990, Kim Young-sam merged his party with President Roh’s Democratic Justice Party creating the Democratic Liberal Party. He was elected in 1993, marking the end of military control of the government. President Kim also indicted Chun and

---

<sup>58</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 378-79.

<sup>59</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 380-83.

<sup>60</sup> Cumings (2005), p. 392.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

Roh for their involvement in the coup of 1979 and the Kwangju Rebellion, further proving his commitment to democracy.<sup>62</sup>

After the Kwangju Rebellion, women's activism significantly increased because of women's ability to organize in labor unions and newfound gender consciousness. Women's activism stems from young women factory workers in the 1970s who protested the military regime and the state's use of violence against laborers. Their work influenced the feminist movement of the 1980s. As a result of these protests, middle-class women realized the plight of working-class women and became aware of the suffering of women. The 1980s saw a merge of poor working-class and middle-class women to create a feminist movement that largely coincided with human rights and democracy. Now, diverse women's groups protested against the government, and in their fight they also claimed that to reach a true democratic society, sexual violence needed to be eradicated. The women's groups were interested in gender equality, and expanded the fight for democracy to include social issues, like basic rights and sexual violence.<sup>63</sup>

### **Public Sentiments**

The "comfort women" issue emerged into public consciousness in the 1990s when South Korean women's groups were protesting against sex tourism, prostitution, and sexual violence against women.<sup>64</sup> Professor Yun Chung-ok of Ewha's Women's University established the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, known as the Korean Council, calling for women's sexual freedom and self-determination on November 16, 1990.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> All information from Cumings (2005), pp. 392-95.

<sup>63</sup> All information from Nam (2000), pp. 94-110.

<sup>64</sup> Min (2003), p. 941.

<sup>65</sup> Hicks (1995), p.137.

The Korean Council was made up of 36 different women's organizations.<sup>66</sup> The Korean Council was responsible for raising public awareness about the "comfort women" issue.<sup>67</sup> In May 1990, Korean women's group demanded that:

1. "the Japanese government acknowledge the fact that [the military] forced Korean women to accompany troops as comfort women;
2. the Japanese government issue an official apology for these practices;
3. the Japanese government disclose all acts of brutality [committed by the government or military];
4. a memorial to the people victimized be erected;
5. survivors or their families be compensated; and
6. in order to prevent the recurrence of these wrongs, the facts be taught as part of history education."<sup>68</sup>

The statement was issued right before South Korean President Roh Tae-woo left for Japan to meet with the Prime Minister.<sup>69</sup> In 1990, the Japanese government refused to acknowledge that "comfort women" were forcibly made to serve the Japanese Army, however, the Korean Council is believed to have "helped more than 200 Korean surviving victims in South Korea and other Asian countries to come forward to tell the truth."<sup>70</sup> Most notably Kim Hak-sun, who on August 14, 1991, announced she would be publicly testifying her experience as a "comfort woman."<sup>71</sup> In December, it was revealed that Kim Hak-sun and two other former "comfort women" would be suing the Japanese government.<sup>72</sup> In an interview with *Nyuusu 21*, Kim Hak-sun responded "I wanted to sue for the fact that I was trampled upon by the Japanese military and have spent my whole life in misery. I want the young people of South Korea and Japan to know what Japan did in the past" when asked about the class-action lawsuit.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Min (2003), p. 941.

<sup>67</sup> Yoshimi (1995), p. 33.

<sup>68</sup> Yoshimi (1995), p. 34.

<sup>69</sup> Hicks (1995), p. 180.

<sup>70</sup> Min (2003), p. 941.

<sup>71</sup> Hicks (1995), p. 188.

<sup>72</sup> Soh (2003), p. 209.

<sup>73</sup> Yoshimi (1995), p. 33.

Although women's groups made the public aware of "comfort women" and tried to get Japan to apologize and compensate victims, not everyone was supportive of the issue. For example, Japanese conservatives were against the Japanese government apologizing and against compensation for victims. They believed the 1991 lawsuit was motivated by economic gain, that everyone suffered during the war, including Japanese women, and that all reparations between South Korea and Japan had been settled in 1965. Japanese progressives, however, disagreed and provided personal donations to the Asian Women's Fund and wrote messages to comfort women survivors.<sup>74</sup> Despite this fact, South Korea and Taiwan denounced the fund, survivors and activists, because they wanted the compensation to come directly from the Japanese government and an apology from the Emperor.<sup>75</sup> Only seven of the 200 surviving Korean "comfort women" ended up accepting the fund's money.<sup>76</sup>

## **Punishment**

The Japanese government has apologized to and compensated former South Korean "comfort women" for the abuses they experienced under colonial rule. The 1965 treaty between Japan and South Korea, which excluded "comfort women," settled all reparations from Japan's occupation of Korea.<sup>77</sup> On December 6, 1991, three Korean "comfort women," including Kim Hak-sun, filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government.<sup>78</sup> However, in 2001, the lawsuit was dismissed.<sup>79</sup> In mid-1992, the Japanese government admitted its involvement in the "comfort

---

<sup>74</sup> All information from Soh (2003), pp. 216-23.

<sup>75</sup> Min (2003), p. 946.

<sup>76</sup> Soh (2003), p. 228.

<sup>77</sup> Soh (1996), p. 1230.

<sup>78</sup> Soh (2003), p. 209.

<sup>79</sup> Soh (2003), p. 217.



women” issue and apologized.<sup>80</sup> The statement came out a year after Professor Yoshimi found documents proving the government’s direct involvement in the operation of comfort stations.<sup>81</sup> Despite admitting involvement, the Japanese government denied using coercion to recruit Korean “comfort women” and refused to consider any possibility of compensation for victims until 1993. The Korean government agreed that it would provide monetary compensation to “comfort women” in 1993. In the summer of 1993, the Japanese government admitted that it used coercion to recruit Korean “comfort women” and that it transported Korean women overseas to serve as “comfort women” for the Japanese military. In 1994, Japan agreed to pay its war victims compensation with non-government funds.<sup>82</sup> In July 1995, the Japanese government established the Asian Women’s Fund.<sup>83</sup> The fund was made up of voluntary donations and some government money.<sup>84</sup> The fund’s compensation to survivors was organized as follows:

<b>Atonement Money</b> (2 million yen per person)	<b>Medical Welfare/Support Projects</b> (Up to 3 million yen per person)
From Contribution by the Japanese People	From Contribution by the Japanese Government
Letter from the AWF President	Letter from the Prime Minister of Japan
Messages from Japanese Contributors	

**Table 1.** Source: Soh (2003), p. 222.

Additional responsibilities included compiling materials on “comfort women” for the historical record and the promise of conferences and workshops that address the contemporary issues of violence against women. Atonement projects began in 1996 and ended in 2002. 364 “comfort women” survivors from South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and the Netherlands received

<sup>80</sup> Soh (1996), p. 1234.

<sup>81</sup> Yoshimi (1995), p. 7.

<sup>82</sup> All information from Soh (1996), pp. 1235-37.

<sup>83</sup> Soh (2003), p. 210.

<sup>84</sup> Soh (1996), p. 1237.

monetary and symbolic compensation from the fund in its seven years of operation. The Korean government also compensated “comfort women” victims, giving survivors US\$26,000 each in 1998.<sup>85</sup>

On March 1, 2007 Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced there was no evidence Japan had Korean sex slaves.<sup>86</sup> On March 27, Prime Minister Abe apologized for his statements.<sup>87</sup> On February 20, 2014, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said Japan had the intention of reviewing the testimonies of Korean “comfort women” to check their validity.<sup>88</sup> However, on March 14, Prime Minister Abe affirmed that the Japanese government’s apology to comfort women would not be retracted.<sup>89</sup> On December 28, 2015, Prime Minister Abe and South Korean President Park Geun-hye agreed that Japan will pay one billion yen (US\$8.3 million) to a fund for surviving “comfort women” and South Korea will remove the “comfort women” memorial in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul. President Park also said that South Korea would settle the “comfort women” “dispute,” if Japan committed to its reparations.<sup>90</sup> In August 2016, “comfort women” survivors sued the Korean government for signing the 2015 agreement without consulting the views of survivors and argued that the agreement nullified their rights to seek compensation from Japan. The case was dismissed by the courts on June 15, 2018.<sup>91</sup> Japan transferred the money successfully in September 2016.<sup>92</sup> However, on November 21, 2018, South Korea decided to disband the fund because of disapproval from former “comfort women”

---

<sup>85</sup> All information from Soh (2003), pp. 210-32.

<sup>86</sup> Onishi (2007), “Abe Rejects Japan's Files on War Sex.”

<sup>87</sup> Onishi (2007), “Japan Leader Who Denied State Role in Wartime Sex Slavery Still Apologizes.”

<sup>88</sup> Lies (2014).

<sup>89</sup> “Japan's Shinzo Abe Says No Review of Sex Slaves Apology” (2014).

<sup>90</sup> All information from “(4th LD) Park Calls for Fresh Ties with Japan over Landmark Deal on Comfort Women” (2015).

<sup>91</sup> All information from Ko (2018).

<sup>92</sup> “Japan Completes Transfer of ¥1 Billion to South Korean 'Comfort Women' Fund” (2016).

and other Korean citizens.<sup>93</sup> The fund was formally dissolved in July 2019.<sup>94</sup> As of today, the Japanese government has not acknowledged its legal responsibility.

### **Burning Sun Scandal**

On January 28, 2019, Korean news source MBC's News Deck reported that club goer Kim Sang-kyo was assaulted at Burning Sun, a nightclub in Gangnam, Seoul by staff and police in November 2018.<sup>95</sup> Kim visited the club on November 25, 2018 and relayed the events of the night on Instagram saying "The woman hid behind me. She seemed to have been sexually harassed. She held my shoulders and when I tried to ask for help from the club's bodyguards, the club executive and guards started beating me up."<sup>96</sup> MBC's News Deck also released CCTV footage showing the alleged drugged woman being dragged by security and Kim being beat up by bodyguards.<sup>97</sup> Kim also claimed he was beat up by police officers and was charged for criminal battery, indecency, obstruction of police duties, and defamation.<sup>98</sup> Kim posted a petition to the Korean website Cheong Wa Dae, calling for an investigation into whether the police receive bribes from Burning Sun.<sup>99</sup> Following the news, The Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency (SMPA) announced it would investigate the club, including claims of drug use.<sup>100</sup> The club was shut down on February 17, 2019.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> "South Korea Says It Will Dissolve Japan-Funded 'Comfort Women' Foundation" (2018).

<sup>94</sup> "South Korea Formally Closes Japan-Funded 'Comfort Women' Foundation" (2019).

<sup>95</sup> Kang (2019), "Seungri Remains Silent on Burning Sun Controversy."

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> "CCTV Burning Sun" (2019).

<sup>98</sup> Kang (2019), "Seungri Remains Silent on Burning Sun Controversy."

<sup>99</sup> Yoon (2019), "Seungri's Reputation in Peril over Alleged Assault at His Club."

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Kim (2019), "Burning Sun Probe Expands to All Gangnam Clubs."

On February 26, 2019, Korean news outlet SBS funE, affiliate of SBS, reported on chats from mobile messaging app KakaoTalk from December 2015.<sup>102</sup> The chats indicated that Lee Seung-hyun, more commonly known as Seungri, ordered his employees, Mr. Kim and Yoo In Suk, former CEO of Yuri Holdings, to find prostitutes to bribe investors with.<sup>103</sup> At the time of this scandal, Seungri was a part of a famous Korean pop boy group called Big Bang. Many Korean citizens were shocked with Seungri's involvement in the case and the scandal drew a lot of attention due to its connection with various Korean pop singers. The women involved in prostitution were revealed to be sex trafficked and victims of sexual abuse.<sup>104</sup> MBC's News Deck reported that

“numerous women – including underage teenagers groomed for prostitution – were drugged by club employees, before being subjected to violent sexual assault that was so severe, a discreet clean-up crew nicknamed the “incinerators” were on call to remove blood and other incriminating evidence using forensic-grade chemicals.”<sup>105</sup>

On February 27, 2019, Seungri was questioned by the SMPA and denied drug use and his involvement in procuring prostitutes.<sup>106</sup> On March 11, 2019, SBS funE reported that two more singers, Jung Joon Young and former F.T. Island member Choi Jung Hoon, were in the chatroom and that Mr. Jung was sharing illegally filmed sex tapes to the chat.<sup>107</sup> It was revealed that Mr. Jung illegally filmed at least ten women up until the end of 2015.<sup>108</sup> The chats also suggested that the police were watching out for the men.<sup>109</sup> Both Seungri and Jung Jun Young went to the SMPA station on March 14, 2019 for questioning.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> Kwen and Lee (2019).

<sup>103</sup> Yoon (2019), “[Newsmaker] Police Target Seungri in Sex-Trade Investigation.”

<sup>104</sup> Tai (2019).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Shim (2019).

<sup>107</sup> Yoon (2019), “Police Seek Arrest of Jung Joon-Young in K-Pop Scandal.”

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ser and Sohn (2019).

<sup>110</sup> Kang (2019), “Troubled K-Pop Stars Questioned over Sex-Related Allegations.”

## Punishment

On March 11, 2019, Seungri resigned from the entertainment industry on Instagram.<sup>111</sup> On March 13, 2019, Mr. Jung confessed to taking illegal videos of women and sharing them online and quit the entertainment industry. The next day, former F.T. Island member Choi Jung-hoon left his group and resigned from the Korean pop industry. In addition, former Highlight member Yong Jun-hyung announced his decision to leave the group on Instagram, stating he was not in the main chatroom, but was aware of the shared illegal videos. The 17 women who were hired as prostitutes for investors in December 2015, allegedly by Seungri, admitted to prostitution and were charged on April 25, 2019.<sup>112</sup> On August 14, 2019, former police officer Kang Mo was sentenced to one year in prison for receiving a bribe of 20 million won by the former co-CEO of Burning Sun Lee Seong-hyun to not investigate the club for allowing a minor to enter.<sup>113</sup> However, Mr. Kang was acquitted on February 7, 2020 in his second trial because of a lack of evidence proving he accepted the money.<sup>114</sup> On August 22, 2019, the former co-CEO of Burning Sun, Lee Moon-ho, was sentenced to one year and six months in prison and three years of probation for taking drugs at the club starting from the year 2018.<sup>115</sup> However, a second trial on November 28, 2019 reduced his prison sentence to one year.<sup>116</sup> As of September 28, 2019, out of the 40 police officers believed to be involved in the Burning Sun scandal, only 12 were

---

<sup>111</sup> @seungriseyo (2019).

<sup>112</sup> Yoon (2019), “Women Tied to Seungri Get Charged.”

<sup>113</sup> Kim (2019), “버닝썬-경찰 유착고리' 전직 경찰관 1심서 징역 1년” [“Former Police Officer ‘Burning Sun Police Collision’ 1 Year Imprisonment”].

<sup>114</sup> Kim (2020), “버닝썬 유착' 전직 경찰관, 2심서 무죄로 뒤집혀” [“Former police officer of 'Burning Sun adhesion' turned over to innocence in second trial”].

<sup>115</sup> Kim (2019), “마약 투약' 버닝썬 이문호 대표 1심서 징역형 집행유예” [Lee Moon-ho, CEO of Burning Sun's ‘drug medication’”].

<sup>116</sup> Jo (2019), “마약 투약' 버닝썬 이문호 대표 2심서 실형 선고 받고 법정구속” [“‘Drug administration’ Lee Moon-ho, CEO of Burning Sun, was sentenced to imprisonment and arrested in court”].

disciplined.<sup>117</sup> In addition, of the four officers sent to Burning Sun to handle the disturbance with Mr. Kim, only one was fired, for an unrelated incident, two were reprimanded, and one was warned.<sup>118</sup> The SMPA concluded that there was not enough evidence to support the claim that the police officers had assaulted Mr. Kim and the investigation was closed.<sup>119</sup> Senior police officer Yoon was indicted by the prosecution on October 29, 2019 for bribery, obstruction of business, and the concealing of evidence.<sup>120</sup> He is alleged to have helped cover up illegal activities taking place at Burning Sun, as well as tipping off Seungri and Yoo In-Suk about police inspections.<sup>121</sup> An employee of Burning Sun was sentenced to prison for four years and six months and asked to pay 683,000 won on December 6, 2019 for distributing and taking drugs at the club.<sup>122</sup> Seungri's arrest warrant in May 2019 was dismissed and a second arrest warrant that was issued on January 10, 2020 for charges of embezzlement, the arrangement of sexual services for investors, as well as himself, the distribution of nude photos of three women, and illegal overseas gambling was also dismissed.<sup>123</sup> Seungri was indicted by the prosecution on January 31, 2020,<sup>124</sup> but because he entered the military on March 9, 2020, the case was transferred to military court. In the hearing of his first trial, which occurred on September 16, 2020, Seungri denied all charges against him, except for admitting he violated the Foreign Exchange Transaction Act.<sup>125</sup> The date for his next trial has yet to be announced.<sup>126</sup> Yoo In Suk admitted to procuring women for investors in

---

<sup>117</sup> Kim (2019), “‘김상교 폭행 의혹’ 경찰 등 3명 파면...버닝썬 연루 12명 징계” [“Kim Sang-gyo's assault suspicion' 3 policemen were dismissed...Disciplined 12 people involved in Burning Sun”].

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> “Senior Police Officer Indicted over Nightclub Scandal” (2019).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Jo (2019), “‘마약 투약 혐의’ 버닝썬 직원 1심서 징역 4년 6개월” [“4 years and 6 months in prison for 1 trial by Burning Sun employee for ‘drug medication charges’”].

<sup>123</sup> Ock (2020).

<sup>124</sup> Lee (2020), “Seungri Indicted on Overseas Gambling, Prostitution Mediation Charges.”

<sup>125</sup> Kang (2020).

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

December 2015 on April 25, 2019 and was indicted by the prosecution on January 31, 2020.<sup>127</sup> Mr. Yoo's trial date has not been announced yet.<sup>128</sup> Ex-singers Jung Joon-young and Choi Jong-hoon were sentenced to five years and two years and 6 months in prison, respectively, for sexual assault in their second trial on September 24, 2020.<sup>129</sup> Both men's sentences were reduced from the first trial, which sentenced Mr. Jung to six years and Mr. Choi to five.<sup>130</sup>

### Public Sentiments

When the scandal first came to light, many were most concerned with possible police corruption. On popular website Nate, a Korean netizen wrote “the point is what relationship the club and the police have and how deeply involved Seungri was in it. That's what the public wants to know!!” in response to an article from Top Star News talking about Seungri's apology on Instagram.<sup>131</sup> Another Korean netizen agrees, affirming that “what the public wants is an explanation on the date rape drugs and the police bribery that went on in the club.”<sup>132</sup> A commentator posted on Naver in response to a woman, who made headlines in February 2019 for claiming Mr. Kim sexually harassed her and that he should not be trusted, saying “The club is trying to cut every tail they can... They're really intent on burying this entire scandal as a simple sexual harassment scandal, aren't they? They haven't reported a thing on the drugs and police bribery yet.”<sup>133</sup> This Korean netizen is critiquing South Korean media for reporting solely on the

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Kim (2019), “Seung-Ri's Business Partner Admits Pimping.”

<sup>129</sup> Baek (2020), “대법, '집단 성폭행' 가수 정준영 5년·최종훈 2년6월 형 확정” [“Supreme Court Confirms Sentence of ‘Group Sexual Assault’ Singer Jung-Jun Young 5 years, Choi Jong-hoon 2 years and 6 months”].

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> “Big Bang Seungri Releases Apology Letter on ‘Burning Sun’ Scandal” (2019).

<sup>132</sup> “Burning Sun, Female Victim of Sexual Assault Claims Complete Opposite Opinion, ‘Kim-ssi is Fooling the Country’” (2019).

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

sexual assault claims and not focusing on the alleged drugs and police bribery believed to be related to Burning Sun.

Other Korean citizens were more active in their anger with the scandal. Following International Women's Day on March 8th, protests erupted in South Korea. The women's group, Fireworks Femi Action, organized a protest in Gangnam calling for the end of sexual violence against women. Signs at the protest read "Let's end rape culture" and "Let's end the sex industry and entertainment industry that exploits women."<sup>134</sup> The protestors from various organizations, including Anti-Prostitution Human Rights Action Room, walked for 1.5km in the Gangnam club area, ending the march at Burning Sun. A passerby commented "I understand the purpose and justification, but it is a pity that it seems to be a radical method" when asked about the protest.<sup>135</sup>

Protests sprung up again in May, due to citizens' overall dissatisfaction with how the police had been handling the Burning Sun investigation. Women's groups were disappointed because a recent police report suggested that there were no ties between the police and sex industry and senior officer Yoon's charges of violating anti-graft laws were dropped.<sup>136</sup> Mr. Yoon "was mentioned in the group chatrooms with male Korean pop stars as someone who 'watched their backs' to cover illicit dealings" and evidence was found showing that Seungri and Yoo In-Suk treated Mr. Yoon to meals and golf trips.<sup>137</sup> The police concluded there was not enough evidence to warrant punishment. A representative from a women's group believes the

---

<sup>134</sup> Kim (2019), "버닝썬 앞에서 시위 벌인 불꽃페미액션" ["Fireworks Femi Action Protest 'Eradication of Club Sexual Violence' ahead of Burning Sun"].

<sup>135</sup> Kim (2019), "버닝썬 앞에서 시위 벌인 불꽃페미액션" ["Fireworks Femi Action Protest 'Eradication of Club Sexual Violence' ahead of Burning Sun"].

<sup>136</sup> Lee (2019).

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.



investigation's failure to find the truth and punish those involved "shows how infallible male power operates, and how easily women's calls for justice are silenced."<sup>138</sup>

### **Nth Room Scandal**

On March 20, 2020, 24-year-old man Cho Joo-bin was detained by the police for running an online sex blackmail ring.<sup>139</sup> He went by the alias Baksa, the Korean word for doctor. Mr. Cho hosted online chat rooms on the messaging app Telegram, where content included explicit photos and sexually explicit videos of women.<sup>140</sup> The messaging app is known for its encryption, where users' identities are able to remain hidden in chats, making it hard for an individual to trace the origin of content and content being shared.<sup>141</sup>

Mr. Cho allegedly targeted women on Twitter and other online platforms by pretending to be a modeling agency. He messaged women looking for modeling or escort jobs, claiming they had been selected for a part-time job and asked for their social security number so that they could start the job and get paid. Once "hired," the women were asked to send nude photos of themselves. These nude photos, along with personal information given to Mr. Cho, were then used to blackmail the women into doing more sexual and brutal acts. If the women refused, Mr. Cho allegedly threatened to share the women's nude photos and personal information to their family and to the internet.<sup>142</sup> To be "free" from blackmail, the women were required to do gruesome sex acts like carve the word 'slave' on their body with a knife, put objects on their genitals, defecate, and/or drink water from toilet bowls.<sup>143</sup> However, the blackmail did not stop

---

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> "Telegram Sex Offender's Case Sent to Prosecution" (2020).

<sup>140</sup> Seo (2020).

<sup>141</sup> Yoon and Hill (2020).

<sup>142</sup> All information from Seo (2020).

<sup>143</sup> Yoon and Hill.

and the victims were required to continue to send sex abuse photos and videos to the chats. 74 women were victims of the online sex ring and 16 of them were minors.<sup>144</sup>

Some of the content available required Telegram users to pay. People paid anywhere from US\$200 to US\$1200 in cryptocurrency to enter a chat room.<sup>145</sup> Higher payment meant “unlocking” more gruesome content. About 10,000 people were part of the pay-to-view chat rooms, including celebrities, athletes, and CEOs.<sup>146</sup> 260,000 people are believed to have accessed the chat rooms and seen sex abuse content.<sup>147</sup>

## **Punishment**

The Nth Room scandal’s six key suspects identities have been revealed to the public and all six suspects have been arrested and indicted for allegedly producing and distributing sex abuse materials online for profit. (1) Cho Joo-bin was brought to the police station under charges of blackmailing women, including minors, into performing sexual acts and selling their videos on chat rooms on March 20, 2020. After questioning, the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency (SMPA) sent his case to the prosecution’s office. As of March 20, the police have arrested 126 people related to the case and detained 19, including Mr. Cho.<sup>148</sup> On March 24, 2020, a 19-year-old man, surnamed Bae, who goes by the name ‘Lori Captain Tae-beom,’ was apprehended by the police. His chat rooms are known as the 2nd Nth Room and were modeled after God God’s, the original creator of the Nth Room chats. He is accused of possessing 76 sexually exploitative

---

<sup>144</sup> “Telegram Sex Offender's Case Sent to Prosecution” (2020).

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Lee (2020), “Sex Crime Chat Room Ignites Public Fury.”

<sup>147</sup> “Telegram Sex Offender's Case Sent to Prosecution” (2020).

<sup>148</sup> All information from “Telegram Sex Offender's Case Sent to Prosecution” (2020).

videos of three middle school girls and distributing them on Telegram.<sup>149</sup> On June 5, 2020, the court sentenced Mr. Bae to a minimum of five years and a maximum of ten years in prison. Two of his accomplices were sentenced to seven and eight years in prison, respectively, and are both banned from working with children, teens, and the disabled for ten years.<sup>150</sup> It was also revealed on March 24 that 38-year-old Jeon, known as ‘Watchman,’ was apprehended by the police for a different crime in November 2019. Mr. Jeon was responsible for finding paid members for God God’s chat rooms.<sup>151</sup> (2) On April 16, 2020, 18-year-old Kang-hoon’s, known as ‘Bu Ta,’ identity was revealed to the public.<sup>152</sup> Mr. Kang is accused of recruiting and managing paid members; distributing and producing sex abuse materials for Mr. Cho’s Nth room. His identity reveal marks the first time the police have announced the identity of a minor suspect.<sup>153</sup> (3) On April 28, 2020, 19-year-old Lee Won-ho’s, alias ‘Lee Ki Ya,’ identity was revealed.<sup>154</sup> Mr. Lee, an accomplice of Mr. Cho, is suspected of recruiting participants; producing and distributing sex exploitation videos. The military’s decision to disclose Mr. Lee’s name, age, and photo is significant because it is the first time the military has ever released any information on a military suspect.<sup>155</sup> (4) On May 13, 2020, 24-year-old Moon Hyung-wook’s, also known as ‘God God,’ identity was revealed. Mr. Cho modeled his chat rooms off of God God’s concept. (5) On June 22, 2020, Ahn Seung-jin’s identity was revealed on his way to the prosecutor’s office. The 25-

---

<sup>149</sup> All information from Lee (2020), ‘갓갓’ 모방 ‘제2n번방’ 운영자 또 있다...닉네임 ‘로리대장태범’ [“There is Another Operator of the 2nd Room”].

<sup>150</sup> All information from “Court Issues Maximum 10-Year Jail Term for Alleged Leader of Online Sex Abuse Ring” (2020).

<sup>151</sup> All information from Lee (2020), “갓갓’ 모방 ‘제2n번방’ 운영자 또 있다...닉네임 ‘로리대장태범’ [“There is Another Operator of the 2nd Room”].

<sup>152</sup> Jung (2020).

<sup>153</sup> “Minor Sex Offender Exposed to Public View En Route to Prosecution” (2020).

<sup>154</sup> Jung (2020).

<sup>155</sup> Oh (2020).

year-old man is an accomplice of God God.<sup>156</sup> Also, on June 22, it was announced that the prosecution was also charging Mr. Cho and his co-conspirators for organized crime. (6) On July 13, 2020, 29-year-old Nam Kyung-ep's identity was revealed to the public. Mr. Nam was originally a paid member of the Nth Room chats, but later joined Mr. Cho in finding women to sexually exploit.<sup>157</sup> Korean citizens are waiting for the key suspects of the Nth Room trial dates to be set.

Due to public outrage and the need for harsher punishments for digital sex crimes, significant changes to South Korean law have occurred. In April 2020, two lawyers requested the Korean Supreme Court to make sentencing guidelines for digital sex crimes, as none existed at the time, and sent in their suggested guidelines. The proposal received over 20,000 citizen endorsements. Due to public fury surrounding the Nth Room scandal and the public's approval of sentencing guidelines, on April 21, 2020, the Supreme Court revealed its plans to make sentencing guidelines for digital sex crimes.<sup>158</sup> On May 19, 2020, the National Assembly's revisions to the Criminal Act went into effect. Now anybody caught viewing or possessing an illegally filmed video could face up to three years in prison or a fine up to 30 million won (US\$24,490). This crime was previously not punishable and only those caught viewing or possessing child pornography could be arrested and fined. In addition, the crime of producing and distribution illegally filmed videos has risen from up to five years or a fine of 30 million won to up to seven years or a fine of 50 million won. Persons who threaten or blackmail individuals for videos of sexual nature can now face up to one and three years in prison, respectively. The age of sexual consent has also risen from age 13 to age 16 and anyone age 19 or older caught

---

<sup>156</sup> All information from Jung (2020).

<sup>157</sup> All information from "Key Suspects in Telegram Sex Abuse Indicted on Additional Charges (2020).

<sup>158</sup> All information from Kim (2020), "Top Court to Make Sentencing Guidelines for Digital Sex Offenses."

having sex with a minor below the age of 16, regardless of consent, will be charged with rape. Indecent assaults on children aged 13 or younger will be met with a sentence of five or more years in prison and on November 20, 2020 the statute of limitations on statutory rape and indecent assaults will be removed.<sup>159</sup> The National Assembly also approved legislation that will require online platforms, like Telegram, to delete digital content that involves sex crimes.<sup>160</sup>

### **Public Sentiments**

When the Nth Room scandal broke, about 2.2 million people signed an online petition on a website run by the Korean presidential office, the Blue House, demanding that the police disclose the Nth Room operator's identity and face. In Korea, a person's identity and face is supposed to be hidden from the public until he or she is found guilty. Their face is legally blurred in photos and their name and other personal information is unknown to the public. An exception to this rule is if the defendant is considered a threat to the public's safety. As a result of this law, citizens petitioned the Blue House to have Mr. Cho's face and identity revealed. A comment under the petition reads ""If (he) is not a devil, who else can you say is a devil? (He) should stand on a photo line, with his bare face ... Human rights are a luxury for someone who thinks lightly of other people's humiliation."<sup>161</sup> Since the petition received an overwhelming response from the public, Mr. Cho's identity was revealed on March 24, 2020. In addition to that petition, another one emerged at the same time asking for the 260,000 users in the Telegram chat rooms' identities to be revealed. The petition received 1.5 million signatures, however, the identities of the 260,000 users have not been revealed.<sup>162</sup> Many celebrities, including Korean pop singers

---

<sup>159</sup> All information from "Revised Laws Take Effect to Punish Even Possessors of Illegal Sexual Videos" (2020).

<sup>160</sup> "New Legislation Aims to End Digital Sexual Crimes, Boost Digital Signature Front" (2020).

<sup>161</sup> Lee (2020), "Sex Crime Chat Room Ignites Public Fury."

<sup>162</sup> All information from Lee (2020), "Sex Crime Chat Room Ignites Public Fury."

Baekhyun and Chanyeol, showed their support of the petitions by sharing them to Instagram and Twitter, asking fans to sign them. On Instagram, actress Son Soo Hyun writes

“If such unethical behavior ends with just a few years in prison, I really won’t hold myself back. Reveal their personal information and [reveal their faces in front of the press]. We should catch all of the participants and shame them so they won’t be able to go into society. I can’t help but say terrible things.”<sup>163</sup>

Ms. Son’s words likely match those of the other two million signatories who wanted Mr. Cho’s identity to be revealed.

## **Analysis**

### **Comparison of Punishments**

We can see a change from no one being punished, to some people being punished, to significant changes to South Korean law to punish those found responsible for sexually exploiting women. In Japan’s military comfort system, Japan has avoided its legal responsibility to Korean “comfort women” and has faced no punishment by the law or international community. The Japanese government was sued by Korean “comfort women” in 1991, but that lawsuit was thrown out in 2001 and no other attempts to try Japan for its war crimes have been carried out by the South Korean population since then.

Although Japan has faced no legal punishment, Korean “comfort women” have received apologies and monetary compensation from the Japanese government. The government established a fund in 1995 and 2016 to pay former Korean “comfort women.” Some have questioned the sincerity of the Japanese government’s apologies because initially Japan denied its involvement in the “comfort women” issue and only admitted to being a part of it when

---

<sup>163</sup> @sohnsuhyun (2020).

irrefutable evidence emerged. In addition, since 1993, Japan has apologized to Korean “comfort women” and then denied their apology and the validity of the experiences of Korean “comfort women.” The constant back and forth suggests that perhaps the Japanese government does not regret their past actions during the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II. Despite the Japanese government apologizing and compensating former “comfort women,” the government has not been punished for its war crimes under the law or by the international community.

In the Burning Sun scandal, some perpetrators have been sentenced, some have had their sentences reduced, and some have not had their trial dates set yet. Police officer Mr. Kang was originally sentenced to one year in prison for accepting a bribe on August 14, 2019, but was acquitted in 2020. On August 22, 2019, the former co-CEO of Burning Sun was sentenced to one year and six months in prison and three years of probation for taking drugs. His prison sentence was reduced to one year. On September 24, 2020, Mr. Jung was sentenced to five years in prison and Mr. Cho to two years and six months for sharing illegally filmed videos. Their sentences were both reduced from their first trial, which sentenced Mr. Jung to six years and Mr. Cho to five years. Some alleged perpetrators are waiting for trial dates and Seungri’s trial is ongoing. His two arrest warrants from May 2019 and January 2020 were dismissed. At his first trial on September 16, 2020, Seungri denied all charges against him except the charge for violating the Foreign Exchange Transaction Act. In addition, Mr. Yoo admitted to hiring prostitutes on April 25, 2019, but has not had a trial date yet and police officer Mr. Yoon was indicted by the police on October 29, 2019, but does not have a trial date set.

Interestingly, the people who were booked for prostitution or distributing drugs are the people who were booked relatively quickly and sentenced faster and for a longer period than the ones who had different charges. The 17 women who were hired as prostitutes were charged on

April 25, 2019. The women who are prostitutes were charged, but the men who bought them are still free. An employee of Burning Sun was sentenced to four years and six months in prison for taking and distributing drugs at the club on December 6, 2019. These individuals were charged in 2019, while others' trials are ongoing or have no trial date set yet. One reason that could explain the difference in quick trials and sentences is the fact that prostitution and drugs are illegal in South Korea. The laws for these crimes are harsher, having a longer sentence maximum, in comparison to the laws for sexual violence crimes. Some of the alleged Burning Sun perpetrators have been found guilty and sentenced, some have had their sentences reduced, and some are waiting on trial dates.

Notably, the Nth Room scandal has brought about changes to South Korean law. Public anger has pushed the government to create new and stronger laws for sex abuse crimes. On April 21, 2020, the Korean Supreme Court agreed to make sentencing guidelines for digital sex crimes (none existed beforehand) and on May 19, 2020 changes to the Criminal Act went into effect. The changes included punishing those caught in the possession of an illegally filmed video (previously not punishable), increasing the sentence maximum for producing and distributing illegally filmed videos, punishing those who threaten or blackmail others for sex abuse content (previously not punishable), increasing the age of consent (from age 13 to age 16), increasing the sentence minimum for indecent assault on children aged 13 or younger, and removing the statute of limitations on statutory rape and indecent assaults (in effect on November 20, 2020). In addition, legislation was passed to make online platforms required to delete sex abuse content shared on their platforms. We will have to wait and see if these new laws and changes are able to punish those responsible for sex abuse crimes and deter others from committing a crime.



## Comparison of Public Sentiments

The support of sexual assault victims has grown from women's groups to women's groups, police officers, government officials, and celebrities. In the first case study, we see that women's groups support Korean "comfort women." In 1990, women activists created the Korean Council and protested against the Japanese government. They wanted Japan to acknowledge its involvement, issue an apology, and compensate its victims. The support encouraged former Korean "comfort women" Kim Hak-sun to come forward and share her story. However, Kim Hak-sun decided to share her story in 1991. She waited over 40 years to come forward because of how sex abuse victims were viewed in Korea. First, the public was not aware of the "comfort women" issue because "comfort women" kept their past a secret from their family. Second, there was a stigma attached to sexual assault victims because of the traditional view that women who lost their chastity were sullied. Third, Korean "comfort women" feared their family members would hate them for coming forward. Kim Hak-sun was able to do so because in 1991, she had no living relatives and therefore, no one from her family would be affected negatively by her story.

Unlike women's groups, the Korean government's support was mixed. The 1965 treaty excluded "comfort women" from the conversation, suggesting that the South Korean government thought the issue was not important. In 1993, the Korean government announced it would compensate former "comfort women" survivors. However, the announcement came after Japan admitted its involvement in the issue. Perhaps, the Korean government waited to compensate Korean "comfort women" because they did not want to upset Japan and did not fully believe Korean "comfort women" until irrefutable evidence emerged proving Japan's involvement. Despite compensating victims, in 2015, the South Korean government signed an agreement with

Japan, denying “comfort women” the right to seek further reparations with Japan. The agreement was supposed to settle the “comfort women” issue once and for all because Japan agreed to create a fund for the victims and South Korea agreed to remove a memorial of “comfort women” in front of the Japanese embassy. Korean women’s groups protested against the fund and survivors sued the Korean government in 2016. Due to the public’s disapproval of the fund, the government decided to dismantle the fund in 2018 and it was fully dissolved in 2019. The President’s signing of the agreement shows the government’s backtracking on the issue. However, the government did eventually decide to dissolve the fund. But was that decision a result of support for Korean “comfort women” or because of public anger? The Korean government’s support of former “comfort women” has been mixed while women’s groups have supported “comfort women” since 1990.

In the second case study, we see that the public somewhat cares for sexual assault victims and are dissatisfied with the ongoing police investigation. When the Burning Sun scandal surfaced, Korean citizens were concerned about police corruption and Seungri’s involvement in the scandal more than sexual assault claims. This fact suggests that the public does not really care about the women who were drugged, raped, and illegally filmed. One Korean netizen even criticized the media for reporting about a woman who claims Mr. Kim sexually assaulted her. Although the Korean netizen made the post because he believed the sexual assault claim was a lie and a mere distraction from the issue at hand, police bribery, the post and the sentiments guiding it contribute to the idea that sexual assault victims are lying. This view is harmful and makes it harder for actual sexual assault victims to come forward in the future because they think they will not be believed.

Despite attitudes suggesting that the police corruption in the scandal was more important than the sexual assault claims, there were people who were most concerned about the sexual violence done to the women in the Burning Sun scandal. When the scandal broke, women's groups protested in Gangnam calling for the end of the sexual exploitation of women. However, a passerby claimed the protest was "radical." The protest consisted of women walking through Gangnam to Burning Sun and holding signs. Protests arose again in May 2019 because women's groups viewed the investigation as a failure because the police found there were no ties between the police and the sex industry and Mr. Yoon's charges were dropped. Through the Burning Sun scandal, we see that some people care about the sexual assault victims in the case and believe that those found responsible should be punished, but initially most were upset about possible police corruption.

In the third case study, we see police officers, celebrities, women's groups, and government officials coming together to support sexual violence victims. In March 2020, over 2.2 million people signed a petition for the police to release the identity of the main suspect of the Nth Room scandal. Due to the petition's overwhelming response, Mr. Cho's identity was revealed. In addition, 1.5 million people signed a petition to have the police reveal the identities of the 260,000 people who had accessed the chat. The petitions' response suggests that the public is very angry at the alleged suspects and what happened to the victims. Celebrities supported the petitions and posted them to social media. This act is notable because Korean celebrities, especially K-pop idols, stay out of important issues because they fear damaging their image and everything they do is scrutinized by the public, so their willingness to come forward and share their opinions is important.

The support for the Nth Room victims did not end at the signing and sharing of petitions. In addition to Mr. Cho, five more suspects' identities were revealed to the public. These identity reveals are significant because criminal suspects' identities are kept hidden from the public in South Korea, so as a result of public anger the suspects identities were revealed. Another significance is that the identity reveals marked the first time that the police revealed the identity of a minor and the first time that the military revealed the identity of a person currently serving. Through public anger and the desire to reveal the suspects involved in the Nth Room scandal, we see that the sexual assault survivors are supported by the public, women's groups, celebrities, the government, and the police.

## **Conclusion**

The sexual exploitation of South Korean women is a problem that in recent years has occurred more frequently, and has started to gain more attention. In my paper, I looked at who is supporting victims of sexual violence and at the existing laws; how effective they are at sentencing perpetrators of sex crimes in my three case studies: Japan's military comfort system, the Burning Sun scandal, and the Nth Room scandal, to conclude that the treatment of South Korean women has changed since the comfort system because of stronger laws in place to deter sex abuse crimes, and diverse groups supporting sexual abuse victims. My findings show that Korean "comfort women" received support from women's groups and mixed support from the South Korean government, the Burning Sun victims received support from women's groups and mixed support from the public, and the Nth Room victims received support from police officers, government officials, celebrities, and women's groups. In addition, the Japanese government was not legally punished for its war crimes against Korean "comfort women," some perpetrators in

the Burning Sun scandal were found guilty and sentenced to prison, and laws have been passed to punish those who commit sex abuse crimes, as a result of the Nth Room scandal. The Nth Room scandal saw a different response: stronger laws and more support because Koreans were very angry about the crimes revealed in the Nth Room scandal and wanted to make sure something like the Nth Room scandal does not happen again. The findings help us understand how sexual exploitation is defined, experienced, and dealt with in South Korean society and why Korean women are treated the way they are, and further aids us to find out why sex abuse occurs. For further research, I suggest looking into whether or not harsher punishment is an effective way to stop crime, how shame culture contributes to the sexual exploitation of women in South Korean society, and whether or not capitalism is the primary cause of sexual exploitation. The answers to these questions can help us prevent the sexual exploitation of women and end the suffering of countless women.

#### Works Cited

- Baek, Sung. “대법, '집단 성폭행' 가수 정준영 5년·최종훈 2년6월 형 확정” [“Supreme Court Confirms Sentence of ‘Group Sexual Assault’ Singer Jung-Jun Young 5 years, Choi Jong-hoon 2 years and 6 months”]. *KBS News*, 24 Sept. 2020, <http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ncd=5011925>.
- “Big Bang Seungri Releases Apology Letter on ‘Burning Sun’ Scandal.” *Top Star News via Nate*, translated by Netizen Buzz, 2 Feb. 2019, <https://netizenbuzz.blogspot.com/2019/02/seungri-releases-public-apology-female.html>.
- “Burning Sun CEO, Seungri Did Not Involve Himself in the Business... We Will Comply with Investigations.” *YTN via Naver*, translated by Netizen Buzz, 4 Feb. 2019, <https://netizenbuzz.blogspot.com/2019/02/burning-sun-ceo-lee-mun-ho-releases.html>.
- “Burning Sun, Female Victim of Sexual Assault Claims Complete Opposite Opinion, ‘Kim-ssi is Fooling the Country.’” *Star News via Naver*, translated by Netizen Buzz, 2 Feb. 2019, <https://netizenbuzz.blogspot.com/2019/02/seungri-releases-public-apology-female.html>.

- “CCTV Burning Sun.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Khasanah, 21 Mar 2019, <https://youtu.be/2mRz0BC4qKQ>.
- Chinkin, Christine M. “Women's International Tribunal on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery.” *The American Journal of International Law*, vol. 95, no. 2, 2001, pp. 335–341. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2661399](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2661399).
- “Court Issues Maximum 10-Year Jail Term for Alleged Leader of Online Sex Abuse Ring.” *Yonhap News Agency*, 5 June 2020, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200605007700315?section=search>.
- Cumings, Bruce. *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*. W.W. Norton, 2005.
- Gelb, Joyce, and Marian Lief Palley, editors. *Women of Japan & Korea: Continuity and Change*. Temple University Press, 1994.
- Hicks, George L. *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1995.
- “Japan Completes Transfer of ¥1 Billion to South Korean 'Comfort Women' Fund.” *The Japan Times*, 1 Sept. 2016, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/09/01/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-completes-transfer-%C2%A51-billion-south-korean-comfort-women-fund/>.
- “Japan's Shinzo Abe Says No Review of Sex Slaves Apology.” *BBC News*, 14 Mar. 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26575129>.
- Jo, Ji-won. “‘마약 투약’ 버닝썬 이문호 대표 2심서 실형 선고 받고 법정구속” [“‘Drug administration’ Lee Moon-ho, CEO of Burning Sun, was sentenced to imprisonment and arrested in court”]. *Chosun*, Chosunilbo, 28 Nov. 2019, [https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2019/11/28/2019112801290.html](https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2019/11/28/2019112801290.html).
- Jo, Ji-won. “‘마약 투약 혐의’ 버닝썬 직원 1심서 징역 4년 6개월” [“4 years and 6 months in prison for 1 trial by Burning Sun employee for ‘drug medication charges’”]. *Chosun*, Chosunilbo, 6 Dec. 2019, [https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2019/12/06/2019120601475.html](https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2019/12/06/2019120601475.html).
- Jung, Min-ho. “Police Reveal Identity of Another Key Suspect in 'Nth Room' Case.” *The Korea Times*, 15 July 2020, [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/08/251\\_292858.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/08/251_292858.html).
- Kang, Aa-young. “Seungri Remains Silent on Burning Sun Controversy.” *TheKoreaTimes*, 30 Jan. 2019, [www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/02/251\\_262964.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/02/251_262964.html).
- Kang, Seung-woo. “Troubled K-Pop Stars Questioned over Sex-Related Allegations.”

*TheKoreaTimes*, 14 Mar. 2019,  
[https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/03/251\\_265393.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/03/251_265393.html).

Kang, Young-hoon. “전투복 입고 법정선 빅뱅 승리 성매매·상습도박 혐의 부인.” *Yonhap*,  
 Yonhap  
 News, 16 Sept. 2020, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20200916092000061>.

“Key Suspects in Telegram Sex Abuse Indicted on Additional Charges.” *Yonhap News Agency*,  
 22 June 2020,  
<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200622006400315?section=search>.

Kim, Da-young. “버닝썬 앞에서 시위 벌인 불꽃페미액션” [“Fireworks Femi Action Protest  
 ‘Eradication of Club Sexual Violence’ ahead of Burning Sun”]. *JoongAngilbo*, 8 Mar.  
 2019,  
<https://news.joins.com/article/23405842>.

Kim, Eun-bin. “‘버닝썬 유착’ 전직 경찰관, 2심서 무죄로 뒤집혀” [“Former police officer  
 of Burning Sun adhesion' turned over to innocence in second trial”]. *JoongAngilbo*, 7  
 Feb. 2020,  
<https://news.joins.com/article/23700467>.

Kim, Eun-kyung. “‘마약 투약’ 버닝썬 이문호 대표 1심서 징역형 집행유예” [Lee Moon-ho,  
 CEO of  
 Burning Sun’s ‘drug medication’”]. *Yonhap*, Yonhap News , 22 Aug. 2019,  
<https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20190822053500004>.

Kim, Eun-kyung. “‘버닝썬-경찰 유착고리’ 전직 경찰관 1심서 징역 1년” [“Former Police  
 Officer  
 ‘Burning Sun Police Collision’ 1 Year Imprisonment”]. *Yonhap*, Yonhap News , 14 Aug.  
 2019,  
<https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20190814106300004>.

Kim, Jae-heun. “Burning Sun Probe Expands to All Gangnam Clubs.” *The Korea Times*, 17 Feb.  
 2019,  
[https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/02/251\\_263889.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/02/251_263889.html).

Kim, Ki-hoon. “‘김상교 폭행 의혹’ 경찰 등 3명 파면...버닝썬 연루 12명 징계” [“Kim Sang-  
 gyo's  
 assault suspicion' 3 policemen were dismissed...Disciplined 12 people involved in  
 Burning Sun”]. *Yonhap*, Yonhap News , 28 Sept. 2019,  
<https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20190928049700004>.

Kim, Se-jeong. “Top Court to Make Sentencing Guidelines for Digital Sex Offenses.” *The Korea  
 Times*, 21 Apr. 2020,  
[https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/04/356\\_288251.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/04/356_288251.html).

- Kim, Seung-jae. "Seung-Ri's Business Partner Admits Pimping." *Chosun*, Chosunilbo, 25 Apr. 2019,  
[http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2019/04/25/2019042501417.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2019/04/25/2019042501417.html).
- Kimura, Maki. *Unfolding the "Comfort Women" Debates: Modernity, Violence, Women's Voices*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Ko, Han-sol. "Court Dismisses Comfort Women's Suit against Government for Signing 2015 Agreement with Japan." *The Hankyoreh*, 17 June 2018,  
[http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english\\_edition/e\\_international/849403.html](http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/849403.html).
- Kwen, Yu-jin, and Sung-eun Lee. "Gov't Has Seungri's Sordid Texts." *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 5 Mar. 2019,  
<https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3060172>.
- Lee, Hong Yung, et al., editors. *Colonial Rule and Social Change in Korea 1910-1945*. University of Washington Press, 2013.
- Lee, Jae-hyun. "'갓갓' 모방 '제2n번방' 운영자 또 있다...닉네임 '로리대장태범'" ["There is Another Operator of the 2nd Room"]. *Yonhap*, Yonhap News, 24 Mar. 2020,  
<https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20200324176800062>.
- Lee, M. "Seungri Indicted on Overseas Gambling, Prostitution Mediation Charges." *Yonhap News Agency*, 31 Jan. 2020,  
<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200131001700315?section=search>.
- Lee, M. "Sex Crime Chat Room Ignites Public Fury." *Yonhap News Agency*, 23 Mar. 2020,  
<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200323002900315>.
- Lee, Suh-yoon. "'Not Again,' Women's Groups Say after Burning Sun Probe Fails to Bring Justice." *The Korea Times*, 17 May 2019,  
[http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/05/251\\_269045.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/05/251_269045.html).
- Lies, Elaine. "Japan to Review Testimony of Women Who Served in Wartime Brothels." *Reuters*, 21 Feb. 2014,  
<https://in.mobile.reuters.com/article/amp/idUKBREA1K0SV20140221>.
- "Minor Sex Offender Exposed to Public View En Route to Prosecution." *Yonhap News Agency*, 17 Apr. 2020,  
<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200417002800315?section=search>.
- Min, Pyong Gap. "Korean 'Comfort Women': The Intersection of Colonial Power, Gender, and Class." *Gender and Society*, vol. 17, no. 6, 2003, pp. 938–957. *JSTOR*,  
[www.jstor.org/stable/3594678](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594678).



- Nam, Jeong-Lim. "Gender Politics in the Korean Transition to Democracy." *Korean Studies*, vol. 24, 2000, pp. 94–112. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/23719707](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23719707).
- "New Legislation Aims to End Digital Sexual Crimes, Boost Digital Signature Front." *Yonhap News Agency*, 21 May 2020, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200521004600315?section=search>.
- Ock, Hyun-ju. "[Newsmaker] Arrest Warrant Sought for Seungri over Procuring Prostitutes, Illegal Gambling." *The Korea Herald*, 10 Jan. 2020, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200110000439>.
- Oh, Grace. "(3rd LD) Army Discloses Identity of Enlistee over Online Sex Crime Case." *Yonhap News Agency*, 28 Apr. 2020, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200428006254325?section=search>.
- Onishi, Norimitsu. "Abe Rejects Japan's Files on War Sex." *The New York Times*, 2 Mar. 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/02/world/asia/02japan.html>.
- Onishi, Norimitsu. "Japan Leader Who Denied State Role in Wartime Sex Slavery Still Apologizes." *The New York Times*, 27 Mar. 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/27/world/asia/27japan.html>.
- Palley, Marian Lief. "Women's Status in South Korea: Tradition and Change." *Asian Survey*, vol. 30, no. 12, 1990, pp. 1136–1153. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2644990](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2644990).
- "(4th LD) Park Calls for Fresh Ties with Japan over Landmark Deal on Comfort Women." *Yonhap News Agency*, 28 Dec. 2015, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20151228006754315>.
- "Revised Laws Take Effect to Punish Even Possessors of Illegal Sexual Videos." *Yonhap News Agency*, 19 May 2020, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200519007200315?section=search>.
- "Senior Police Officer Indicted over Nightclub Scandal." *Yonhap News Agency*, 29 Oct. 2019, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20191029012100315?section=search>.
- Seo, Yoonjung. "Dozens of Young Women in South Korea Were Allegedly Forced into Sexual Slavery on an Encrypted Messaging App." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 28 Mar. 2020, [www.cnn.com/2020/03/27/asia/south-korea-telegram-sex-rooms-intl-hnk/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2020/03/27/asia/south-korea-telegram-sex-rooms-intl-hnk/index.html).
- Ser, Myo-ja, and Kook-hee Sohn. "Top Police Pulled into Seungri Scandal." *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 13 Mar. 2019, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3060529>.

- @seungriseyo. *Instagram*, 11 Mar 2019,  
<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bu3JOIUBbVK/?igshid=1ncv8l8suyxym>.
- Shim. “BIGBANG's Seungri Denies Drug, Sex-for-Favors Allegations in Police Questioning.” *Yonhap News Agency*, 28 Feb. 2019,  
<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20190228003400315>.
- Smith, Josh, and Haejin Choi. “South Korea's Surviving 'Comfort Women' Spend Final Years Seeking Atonement from Japan.” *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 23 Nov. 2018,  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southkorea-japan-comfortwomen-idUSKCN1NS024>.
- Soh, Chunghee Sarah. “Japan's National/Asian Women's Fund for ‘Comfort Women.’” *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 2, 2003, pp. 209–233. *JSTOR*,  
[www.jstor.org/stable/40024391](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40024391).
- Soh, Chunghee Sarah. *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*. University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Soh, Chunghee Sarah. “The Korean ‘Comfort Women’: Movement for Redress.” *Asian Survey*, vol. 36, no. 12, 1996, pp. 1226–1240.,  
[www.jstor.org/stable/2645577](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2645577).
- @sohnsuhyun. “강력한 처벌을 촉구합니다...”. *Instagram*, 20 Mar. 2020,  
[https://www.instagram.com/p/B98X5LwgiIr/?utm\\_source=ig\\_embed&utm\\_campaign=loading](https://www.instagram.com/p/B98X5LwgiIr/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading).
- “South Korea Formally Closes Japan-Funded 'Comfort Women' Foundation.” *The Japan Times*, 5 July 2019,  
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/07/05/national/politics-diplomacy/south-korea-formally-closes-japan-funded-comfort-women-foundation/>.
- “South Korea Says It Will Dissolve Japan-Funded 'Comfort Women' Foundation.” *The Japan Times*, 28 Nov. 2018,  
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/11/21/national/politics-diplomacy/south-korea-says-will-dissolve-japan-funded-comfort-women-foundation/>.
- Tai, Crystal. “Sex Abuse of Minors Alleged at Nightclub Linked to K-Pop Scandal.” *South China Morning Post*, 26 Apr. 2019,  
<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/society/article/3007700/k-pop-sex-scandal-continues-widen-exposes-womens-low-status>.
- Tanaka, Yuki. *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II*. Westview, 1996.

- Tanaka, Yuki. *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation*. Routledge, 2001.
- “Telegram Sex Offender's Case Sent to Prosecution.” *The Korea Herald*, 25 Mar. 2020, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200325000174>.
- Yoon, Min-sik. “[Newsmaker] Police Target Seungri in Sex-Trade Investigation.” *The Korea Herald*, 26 Feb. 2019, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190226000768>.
- Yoon, Min-sik. “Seungri's Reputation in Peril over Alleged Assault at His Club.” *The Korea Herald*, 31 Jan. 2019, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190131000557>.
- Yoon, Soo-jung. “Police Seek Arrest of Jung Joon-Young in K-Pop Scandal.” *Chosun*, Chosunilbo, 19 Mar. 2019, [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2019/03/19/2019031901300.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2019/03/19/2019031901300.html).
- Yoon, So-yeon, and Alannah Hill. “[DEBRIEFING] 'Nth Room': A Digital Prison of Sexual Slavery.” *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 29 Mar. 2020, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2020/03/29/features/DEBRIEFING-Nth-room-A-digital-prison-of-sexual-slavery/3075441.html>.
- Yoon, So-yeon. “Women Tied to Seungri Get Charged.” *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 25 Apr. 2019, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3062331>.
- Yoshimi, Yoshiaki. *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military during World War II*. Translated by Suzanne G. O'Brien, Columbia University Press, 1995.