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Joshua D. Pilzer. *Hearts of Pine: Songs in the Lives of Three Korean Survivors of the Japanese "Comfort Women".* New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. xv + 191 pp. $99.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-975956-9; $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-19-975957-6.

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Commissioned by Margaret Sankey

Music and Memories of a Hard Life

Having spent four years living and working in Korea, I was looking forward to reading this work about "comfort women," a topic that I became aware of during my first year living there. Prior to and during WWII, the Japanese military used many Korean and other women as prostitutes serving military camps all over their sphere of influence. In Korea, several of these former comfort women have been demanding an apology from the Japanese government since the war. Joshua D. Pilzer takes an unusual approach in his examination of this topic; he looks at the effect that the experience has had on three former comfort women, Pak Duri, Bae Chunhui, and Mun Pilgi, as conveyed through their music. A multimedia text, this study includes recordings of the women stored on the World Wide Web. Readers should have a computer available when reading this book as notations throughout the work point to audio files on the web. These files are easily accessible through common browsers and plug-ins do not appear to be necessary.

Some readers might be confused by some references that seem at times strange.This confusion stems from cultural differences. A good deal is "lost in translation." Music is very important in Korean culture; during various gatherings, on tour buses, and at business parties, someone typically starts to sing Karaoke style. And most Koreans have a "favorite song" that they sing on demand.

Pilzer's fluency in Hangeul enables him to enter into the lives and personalities of the three women described in the text. Not surprisingly, he does not rely extensively on the wartime experiences of the women. Former comfort women who suffered at the hands of the Japanese do not often talk about their wartime experiences, which included unwillingly servicing up to fifty Japanese servicemen per day. Pilzer details the rest of their lives and their musical expressions, from Pak Duri who sometimes takes over a group with her song to less outgoing Bae Chunhui who is fluent in multiple languages and ran song houses.

The book is divided into three general sections: an introduction to the three women and comfort women in general, biographies and the musical stories of the three individuals, and an appendix with Pak Duri's personal testimony. I suggest that readers, after familiarizing themselves with the history of comfort women, view the personal testimony as the second chapter, in which one of the women speaks directly to readers for herself, and then follow into the stories of the three women as related by the author. The text flows more easily when read in this order and gives a more thorough understanding of why the women are who they are today.

The inclusion of the web-based sound files is incredible. I truly enjoyed listening to the music, which was translated in the book; it gave a greater depth and meaning to the songs and greatly enhanced the text. At times I could easily imagine myself in the bus or room with the women as they sang. In addition to music, Pilzer also includes artwork, showing another outlet for these women to portray their feelings and experiences.

Overall, this is an incredibly good text, expanding the work on the history of comfort women, using an unusual and interesting methodology. While reading the book I was at times reminded of my own visit to the House of Sharing where the women stay, and of my own experience listening to a translation of the story of one of the women. This is a definite must read for anyone who is researching Korea, comfort women, or the Japanese army in WWII.

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