

the common indictment of crimes against humanity, particularly rape and sexual slavery. The judges also found Hirohito and Yamashita Tomoyuki guilty of rape as a crime against humanity, for the mass rapes inflicted upon the female population of Mananiqu in the Philippines on November 23-24, 1944.

On the first day of the Tribunal, a number of the victims, now elderly women, testified. Their accounts were explicit and vivid, tinged with anger. "They enslaved, raped and tortured us," Ruff-O'Herne told the judges and the audience seated in the Het Lucent Dans Theatre. "Lives were ruined and youth was stolen. There was immense suffering which didn't end with the war. The war never ended for us. The atrocities haunt us still. They stripped us of everything—possessions and self-esteem. Our dignity was taken and we were left to feel soiled and dirty."

After the war, there was no counseling available to victims, instead there was isolation. How could anyone possibly begin to understand what she and the others had gone through. Instead of sympathy, the other Dutch women called them "whores." One woman has told Ruff-O'Herne privately, that even now, when her husband is angry with her, he calls her a Japanese whore.

Eventually Ruff-O'Herne married a British soldier. She told him the story. He understood and "he loved me just the same," she said. But they never talked about it again. She told the audience that she's never been able to enjoy sexual intercourse. It only reminds her of being raped over and over again.

Twilight still makes her uneasy. It was the time of day she knew the soldiers would come to rape the women. "The fear remains," she said. "I see it get dark and this feeling comes over my body". After 60 years, she still wakes up with nightmares.

The healing for Ruff-O'Herne began 10 years ago when she broke the silence and began to tell her story. She initially did it to support the Korean comfort women, she said. But she realized the healing started when she began to meet the other

comfort women, the only other people who understood what she had suffered.

The other victims also spoke at the end of the first day's testimony. Through interpreters, Esmeralda Boe from East Timor said, "We seek justice and justice is coming soon."



Former comfort women Kum Nyo Kwak of North Korea and Eun Rye Kim of South Korea with their copies of the Tribunal Judgment.

STEPHEN WUNROW

Suhannah, of Indonesia, thanked the Dutch for allowing the tribunal to be held in The Hague. Suhannah hoped the Tribunal would provide justice for her and her friends.

The Filipina women were emotional, telling the audience that they traveled to The Hague to tell about the suffering they had undergone in their lifetime. European governments should pressure the Japanese to take responsibility for their war crimes, said Virginia Manalastas and Maxima Regala de la Cruz. "There are 38 of us still alive," said Shen Chung Lin, of Taiwan, a petite and elderly woman wearing trousers decorated with small bells. "The others are too old or too weak to travel. It is our hope that Japan can admit its crime and take responsibility while we are still alive."

The South Korean woman's voice quivered with emotion as she described how she had been kidnapped and taken to Shanghai and Nanking. At the military camps, she was forced to have sex with 10 to 20 soldiers a day. "I want an apology

and compensation from the Japanese government," she said. "I am frustrated and angry. I have waited so long. All of us must join in the efforts to bring justice to the perpetrators."

A North Korean woman, Kum Nyo Kwak, now 77 years old, was taken by the Japanese when

bound copy of the judgment. The first few women accepted their judgment shyly, bowing to the judges and walking back to their seats. But those following became bolder until finally, Maxima Regala de la Cruz, of the Philippines turned to the judges and the panel and shook each and every person's hand.

she was 16. They took her to China, and there she endured 10 to 20 soldiers a day. "Before I die, I want to receive compensation in the name of the Japanese state," Kwak said. "I was victimized by the Japanese. I hope

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the Tribunal makes the right judgment so Japan will compensate us for its crimes."

At the end of the second day, when the judges returned with their judgment the women, seated on the stage, did not show emotion. The judges presented each of the 10 women with a

When Ruff-O'Herne received her copy, she raised it over her head, and the audience cheered.

"This is a momentous moment," Sajor said in her closing statements. "We have waited patiently for one year for the judges and the legal advisors to review the indictments and the records.

"The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal lays the responsibility on Japanese government, and will give the decision to the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva and different government ministries, so they will take it up with the government of Japan. The judgment will enable other legal entities to have Japan respond to it.

"The survivors are in advanced age and they must get justice and accountability," Sajor said. "It's important to record that the judgment was made in The Hague."

After the Tribunal, co-convenor Chung-ok Yune, founder of the

Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, responded by e-mail to questions as to whether the Tribunal achieved what she had hoped for. "The Hague symbolizes human rights and peace," Yune said. "The Tokyo Tribunal had significant meaning for the plaintiffs, victimized country people and all the participants. At the Tokyo Tribunal, Emperor Hirohito was sentenced, 'guilty' and at The Hague, the rest of the responsible officers were named war criminals.

"With the final judgment at The Hague, following the guilty sentence at Tokyo, the survivors had a sense of accomplishment," Yune wrote. "It is true that the 'guilty' sentence to Hirohito had heavier weight than all the rest of the criminals put together. Yet, I think the survivors felt a kind of peace with the sense of accomplishment that justice judged the crime of Japan's military sexual slavery. It is the Japanese emperor and the war criminals who should be ashamed, and not the victims, and now the world knows it.

"Japan and the world will know that impunity is not permissible, especially to Japan," Yune wrote. "The Far East Military Tribunal in 1948 did not judge Emperor Hirohito and Japan's sexual slavery was not accused. Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery accused them and judged them.

"At The Hague, we thought the Korean case was handled rather lightly compared with Mananiqu," she said. "But now we realize why the judges have come to the judgment. The Korean indictment did not admit Japan's colonization. It wrote it was forceful invasion. In our indictment we described our state as forced occupation, not a colony as Taiwan did. It is possible that even if the judges understood the difference between the forced occupation of Mananiqu in the Philippines and Korea, it was impossible for them to understand that Japan's rule over Korea was that of colonists.

"Justice is brought to society, even it is symbolic," Yune said of the judgment. "In a sense, Tokyo and The Hague judgments have higher authority than any state because it does not belong to any political power. The Tribunal is based on human conscience." ●