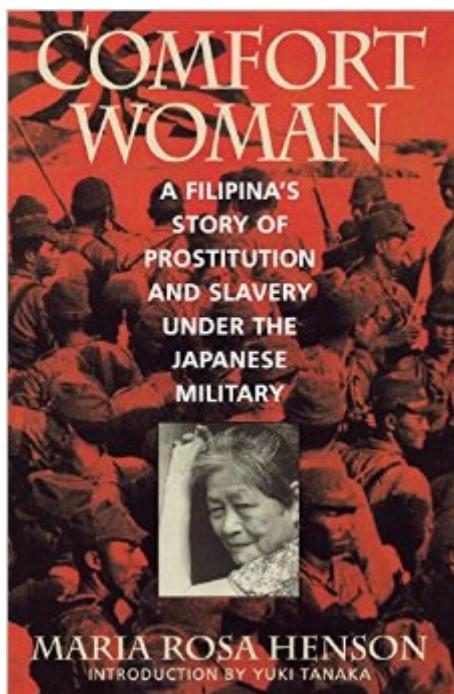


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Comfort Woman: A Filipina's Story Of Prostitution And Slavery Under The Japanese Military (Asian Voices)



Synopsis

In April 1943, fifteen year old Maria Rosa Henson was taken by Japanese soldiers occupying the Philippines and forced into prostitution as a comfort woman. In this simply told yet powerfully moving autobiography, Rosa recalls her childhood as the illegitimate daughter of a wealthy landowner, her work for Huk guerillas, her wartime ordeal, and her marriage to a rebel leader who left her to raise their children alone. Her triumph against all odds is embodied by her decision to go public with the secret she had held for fifty years.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hiromi's review of "Comfort Woman" is important to respond to because the book's importance comes from the fact that it is a true story. Not knowing anything about comfort women other than what was presented in the book itself, I believe I can still refute Hiromi's points: The position of the comfort station, and the "odd" use of the words banzai and baka are no evidence against the authenticity of the author's story. To put it bluntly, most of us were not living in Japan during the 1940s and even less of us were on the front lines. We cannot say with any conviction how odd Japanese behavior would have been in that time period and under those circumstances. The point that Maria could have easily escaped cannot simply be proved by the fact that one guard stood outside her room. No matter how "nice" he was to her, it's unlikely he'd simply let her leave, and even if he did (or if he could be tricked as Hiromi suggests) it's not as if there was a route, free of Japanese soldiers, leading straight from the garrison to safety. Maria constantly refers to Japanese

sentries and checkpoints throughout the region, not to mention guards *outside* the building. The doubt concerning how many Japanese troops would be available to rape Maria doesn't seem to be well founded. The entire purpose of comfort stations was to increase morale, and a losing battle would require more "comfort". Certainly there were always large numbers of troops present at and around the garrison. If sexual services were considered routine for young men to receive, most of them could free up their schedules. The "more serious doubts" do not hold any more water. The idea that Maria could not learn complex Japanese military terms from her captors is probably true.

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