

Testimony

Fedencia David

Born in the Philippines, 1927



“One of them grabbed me and raped me. I tried to shout and struggle but then he put a cloth over my mouth and gagged me. After he was through, two more soldiers followed.”

After they arrived in her hometown in the Philippines in 1942, Japanese soldiers stopped Fedencia David while she was on the way to the market with her grandmother. They slapped her, threw water on her, and cut her ear with a knife. Then, they took her and her grandmother to a garrison where they made Fedencia cook, clean, and do laundry. That night, she was placed in a dark room and gang-raped by the soldiers.

“After that, I lost sense of what was happening. I was completely weak.”

For the next ten days, Fedencia spent her days cooking, cleaning and doing laundry and her nights being gang-raped until dawn. She had not yet begun menstruating. Her experience was not isolated. The Japanese military

forced hundreds of thousands of women and girls from throughout Asia into military sexual slavery. The terror lasted from the 1930s through the end of WWII in 1945 in Japanese occupied territories.

“I could see my grandmother being raped across the room and I could hear her screams.”

One day, the Japanese soldiers allowed Fedencia and her grandmother to return home, but in reality, the soldiers followed them home because they knew that several Filipino guerilla fighters had sought shelter in her home. Spotting the Japanese soldiers near their home, the guerillas opened fire on them, accidentally killing her grandmother.

Even after she was home, the soldiers continued to rape Fedencia while her family hid in the tunnel nearby. Her father hoped that by allowing the Japanese soldiers to gang-rape Fedencia, the rest of the family would be safe.

“My father said that he believed the Japanese would not kill me and that I should just accept the bitter fate we all had to suffer.”

Later, Fedencia and one of her sisters were taken to a Japanese garrison. They escaped and fled home. Upon returning, they found their home burned, with their parents and a brother and sister inside. The fire had occurred on the day Fedencia and her sister were taken. Fedencia and her sister were alone.

In 1954, she got married and had eight children. Fedencia has been sharing her story ever since she contacted the Task Force on Filipino Comfort Women (now Lila Pilipina) in 1992.

Photo credit: Lila Pilipina

Source: *War Crimes on Asian Women*, 1998, pp. 64–68.

