



The YWCA of Japan, at the 30th National Council in 2009, publicized “The Apology for the Asia-Pacific War, and the Resolution for Commitment to World Peace”.

It was our great repentance that we could not only stop Japanese aggression but were also obliged to collaborate in the war. This regret made us resolve to uphold the Peace Constitution so that our nation would never wage war again.

It was natural, therefore, that our consistent movement emphasis was on peace-making activities. However, we could not release any formal apology up to now. In 1995, fifty years after the defeat of the war, as well as our 90th anniversary, we wished to release a statement of apology, but realized we did not have enough data of historical background to make the apology sincere and substantial. It was urgent to make more precise research of actual circumstances of the YWCA during the war. Therefore, in 1995, we could not do anything but publish a president’ personal address.

Immediately, a fact-finding project started hearing and resource investigation, in cooperation with the YWCAs in the neighboring countries, especially Korea and China, as well as the World YWCA. The survey disclosed how YWCA of Japan walked under the Japanese colonial policy and aggression. The result of the research was compiled into the book “Hundred Years of the YWCA of Japan” published in 2005, the year of our centennial anniversary. All local YWCAs were requested to read the book and to respond what to incorporate in the statement of apology.

After the executive committee finalized the statement, it was proposed at the national convention on November 22 .2009, and was approved without any objection.

The Apology for the Asia-Pacific War and the Resolution for Commitment to World Peace

After the defeat in the Asia-Pacific War in 1945, the YWCA of Japan pledged, on Christian basis, to stand firmly against any kinds of war, to endeavor to promote world peace, and to work for defense of human dignity, sincerely regretting having been involved in the Asia-Pacific War, a war of aggression. In 2005, taking the occasion of centennial anniversary of the YWCA of Japan, we thoroughly reexamined our history, especially the time of militaristic expansion, and sincerely admitted our guilt which resulted in the decision to release the official statement of the apology and our commitment to future peace. With the heartfelt repentance, we, the YWCA of Japan, hereby apologize to people who were victims of in the Asia-Pacific war, and pledge to make our utmost efforts to strive for peaceful future.

Since modernization of the nation in early 20th century, Japan, through military aggression and colonization, oppressed people in neighboring countries in Asia and Pacific, depriving

them of freedom, properties, lives, and their culture. Japan also mobilized many Korean and Chinese people to Japan, forcing them to work under harsh condition, and violated their human rights. A great number of women were forced into sexual slavery by Japanese military which violated their women's dignity. We sincerely acknowledge the fact that Japan's criminal activities overshadow the lives of survivors even today. Realizing these cruel facts, we admit our responsibility as assailants and are resolved to engrave these historical facts deep in our mind.

The YWCA of Japan committed fatal guilt of the war of aggression under the Japanese military regime. We stopped communicating with the World YWCA, abandoning the nature of world movement. We also compromised with State Shintoism, which enshrined the Emperor as a god, and consequently deviated from Christian principles. We admitted the YWCA of Korea under colonial rule to transfer into the YWCA of Japan, and founded a new YWCA in Shanghai for Japanese women. We, the YWCA of Japan, sincerely apologize for the said deeds which were resulted from our involvement with the Japanese militarism and its unjust national policies.

Since 1945, the YWCA of Japan has devoted herself to the principle of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which renounces every military force and war. The YWCA of Japan believes that Article 9 is a guide to ultimate world peace, and strives for peace building by means of non-violence. Being citizens who experienced the atomic bomb explosions over human beings, we are advocating for nuclear-free-world, being convinced that human beings cannot co-exist with nuclear power. It is our great joy that, in recent years, through exchange programs, in particular those for younger generations who do not have direct experience of wars, peace building dialogue among the YWCAs of Asian region has been developed beyond the border.

Following the teaching of Jesus Christ, we are persistently advocating peace towards the Japanese government, which has been, and is still at risk of, taking a path toward expanding military power. We believe that keeping silence leads us to the same errors as we made in the past. We will promote peace education to create non-violent and nuclear-free world, and will make efforts to create a future without violence. The YWCA of Japan hereby declares the resolution to act for fulfilling peace and reconciliation. In order to achieve this goal, we are determined to commit ourselves to establish communication and network with YWCAs in the world, particularly with YWCAs in Asian and Pacific regions.

YWCA of Japan