



Japan–Korea YWCAs Conference Joint Statement

We, the YWCA of Japan and the YWCA of Korea, have jointly held the 8th Japan–Korea YWCAs Conference in Okinawa, from January 22 to 25, 2014 under the theme, “Peace in Northeast Asia and Collaboration between the YWCA of Japan and the YWCA of Korea”. The Conference is a fruit of the continuous grassroots peace exchange between two YWCAs, learning from the past and aiming at a peaceful future. We believe this Conference in Okinawa is a big step towards the realization of global peace.

In the past, Japan forcibly annexed the Korean Peninsula and invaded other Asian countries, infringing upon the human rights and destroyed many precious lives. Today, violence against the citizens of Okinawa is continuously repeated by the presence of the United States Military Forces on the islands, and as shown in a number of cases such as the dispute over the twisted accounts of the historical facts in the school textbooks and the visits to Yasukuni Shrine by Prime Minister Abe, there exist strong political moves towards building a war regime when actually Japan should reflect on the lessons to be learnt from the past history.

The Korean Peninsula is also fraught with sad conditions which prevent the realization of peace: the division of the country after the Korean War, human rights violation against women and children in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), and the violence against women and children caused from stationing of U.S. forces in South Korea.

Furthermore, the conditions that can be disruptive and worrisome are present in both countries such as construction and operation of nuclear power plants and their export to Asian/African countries, and extreme disparity between the rich and the poor. This social structure which victimizes the vulnerable groups is causing chronic violence.

The forceful annexation of the Korean Peninsula by Japan in the past, as well as the current problems like imposing the burden of military bases on Okinawa by Japan and U.S and construction of nuclear power plants, is the manifestation of the “Systemized Sacrifice”, which victimizes without any qualms vulnerable people and regions. Such a system is commonly seen across countries and regions. Under the “Systemized Sacrifice” it is almost impossible for the victimized women to raise a voice. Still, we should not forget that there are women who are courageously raising their voices in the belief that “Our silence would produce new victims”. Former “Comfort Women at Wartime” or survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery, as well as women of Okinawa, are good examples.

During the conference, we have reaffirmed our mission and our social responsibility to stand against the “Systemized Sacrifice”, or the structural violence within society, to work for the realization of true justice and a peaceful world, and to value life.

In order to promote nonviolent grassroots peacebuilding and to show women’s resolve for peace, we need to launch an action plan that can implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and stop all forms of violence against women and children whether by the people in uniform on military bases or by individuals. The YWCA of Korea has proclaimed from the standpoint of Christianity that “faith cannot coexist with nuclear”. The YWCA of Japan has declared that “neither nuclear weapons nor nuclear power plants can coexist with our lives.” “We choose life over ‘nuclear’.” In order to protect the lives of all people, at present and in future, the YWCAs of Korea and Japan are determined to work together intimately with a recognition that history is shared, and we are committed to continuing the following activities to build a nuclear free society.

1. For the implementation of the joint resolution, adopted at the 27th World YWCA Council 2011:

- ① Share information on the current situation of the DPRK (e.g. Violation against women's human rights, malnutrition of children, etc.).
 - ② The YWCA of Korea will work to raise both awareness and funds to support the nourishment of the North Korean children and the settlement of the DPRK refugees within South Korea. The YWCA of Japan will also work to raise awareness and funds to help the DPRK refugees settle in South Korea with as little pain as possible.
 - ③ Carry out in Japan an international exchange program regarding "peace in the Korean Peninsula".
 - ④ Stand against the issue of Ethnic Korean schools in Japan being excluded from the national subsidy program. Koreans born in Japan also deserve an opportunity to be educated free of charge.
 - ⑤ Pass messages of peace to the world, for reconciling the conflicts between two Koreas.
2. For the removal of military bases:
- ① Promote concrete implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. It is an imperative to build peace without depending on military power.
 - ② Put an end to human rights violations against women and children resulting from long-term stationing of foreign military forces, and retain the dignity of life.
 - ③ Oppose to the environmental disruption and pollution augmented by the presence of military bases, and which also serve for war threatening.
 - ④ Advocate for the revision of the unequal Japan-US/ Korea-US Status of Forces Agreement, in order to minimize the damages described in the above②and③.
 - ⑤ At the 28th World YWCA Council in 2015, raise the issue of violence against women brought by the presence of military bases.
 - ⑥ The YWCA of Japan will act for the solution to the discriminatory structure in Japan, including the imposition of a large number of U.S. Military bases in Okinawa.
3. For the promotion of anti-nuclear movement:
- ① The YWCA of Japan will stand in solidarity with "the anti-nuclear Tuesday Campaign" promoted by the YWCA of Korea.
 - ② Share the work of the "the anti-nuclear Tuesday Campaign" first with the World YWCA and then spread it to the global community.
 - ③ Promote anti-nuclear campaigns and movements including the "the anti-nuclear Tuesday Campaign" in collaboration with the young generation.
 - ④ Reexamine lifestyles and the nature of civil society with a synchronized view on history, and work for a peaceful and sustainable society where people's lives have precedence over economy or before anything else.
 - ⑤ The YWCA of Japan and Korea will submit to the 28th World YWCA Council in 2015 a joint-resolution calling for a world without nuclear.

We, the participants of Japan-Korea YWCAs Conference, have learned about the various conditions brought by military bases in Okinawa. We all confirmed to become peace building "cornerstones" and to cooperate to stop new construction of military bases. When it comes to building peace in East Asia or in the entire world for that matter, we will never shy away.

January 25th, 2014, Participants of Japan-Korea YWCAs Conference