

Report by the Executive Director: Things We Must Hand Down with the Atonement Project



As we announced in *Fund News* No. 20, issued in October last year, the Atonement Project in the Philippines, Korea and Taiwan ended in September last year.

Since the end of the Project, we have held report meetings about it in six locations nationwide where we had a friendly talk with the contributors and the locals and thanked them for the donations.

Also, we reported the end of the Project and about our activities in the Project and accounted for receipts and disbursements of the Atonement Fund gathered from people in Japan in printed advertisement on national and local papers.

For eight years since the founding of Asian Women's Fund, the parties concerned including the prompter of the Project, directors and the members of the Operation Division have been constantly on the move to implement the Fund's Project. This is because the former comfort women who have been certified have become very old and we thought that it was imperative to deliver the Atonement Project to them as soon as possible.

In response to our appeal, people from all over Japan sent donations together with many messages. The wide range of donors included those who had experienced war in Japan, fought in the war as service personnel and young people who had not experienced the war. There was a student who learned about the problem of the comfort women for the first time through the Fund's activities, which made him think again about the meaning of war.

At the report meetings held in different places, I stated that the Project of the Asian Women's Fund in which the government and the people of Japan worked together was unique and unprecedented in the world. I also stated that the Project was meant to provide the victims with an assurance that we were determined not to let the same thing happen again by delivering to them a letter of apology from the prime minister, the Atonement Fund donated by the devoted people of Japan and the medical and welfare projects funded by the government.

This *Fund News* No. 21 features a discussion by Shinkichi Eto, director, Isamu Miyazaki, director, Yozo Yokota, advisory committee chairperson, and Yoko Hayashi, a member of the advisory committee. Each person expressed his or her viewpoints concerning the Project by the Asian Women's Fund. We plan to convey the meaning of the Fund's Atonement Project to both domestic and international audiences in the future as well.

Momoyo Ise
Executive Director and Secretary