

The 4th Roundtable on the Comfort Women Issue



An elderly female victim was hospitalized. She currently lives by herself. After she came out of hospital she said, "I had no visitors while I was in the hospital. The patients in the beds next to me had their grandchildren and sons visiting them. They were concerned and asked the patients how they were doing, while I had nobody. I became so ashamed to have no visitors that I went out to a store to get some fruits and asked the hospital staff to deliver them to me. I am lonely and living is more painful than dying."

When we heard this story from a member of a support group, we wondered: What are the comfort women victims of? Like this elderly woman, they could not get married and are living alone in their later years because they were forced to be comfort women. Today, almost 60 years after the war, they are still tormented by "damage," in the form of loneliness. How are the victims living now? What do they think about every day? What are their wishes? Now that the Atonement Project has been completed, we strongly feel that we must think about what the Fund can do for the victims from now on.

With this in mind, we held a roundtable in Naha City, Okinawa in October 2003. The principal participants were staff from the support groups in the countries and regions to which the Atonement Project had been delivered by the Asian Women's Fund. The roundtable aimed at providing an opportunity to educate ourselves about the victims "today." The following appeals from the victims were reported there. Our first attempt at the roundtable was completed by confirming that we would continue to exchange opinions about the problems the Fund must work on and other issues.

● Are Those Women to Blame?

Prejudice against sexual victimization is deep-rooted in our society. The victims' human

rights are still trampled on because they were comfort women.

The life of one of the victims changed completely on the day the media reported that she had been a comfort woman. Her relatives beat her, saying that she was a disgrace and people pointed fingers at her behind her back saying, "That's the woman," every time she went to a supermarket for groceries. She started to shut herself in her tiny apartment.

The comfort women victims still cannot become a member of society because society refuses to accept them. The victims are not to blame, but they feel that they cannot be accepted because they have shame.

● Now, It Is Time to Focus on the Victims

There are many support groups in the country. Some of them alienate victims that do not do what they want. Groups that are supposed to protect the victims are violating them. Victims are criticized by their fellow citizens and the people in the support groups who are supposed to be on their side. In some cases, support groups take advantage of them for the groups' purpose. Victims experience extreme misery, their health and nerves are in shreds.

The victims who accepted the Fund, in particular, have been treated like sinners by the support groups and other parties that are against the Fund. If the Fund is meant to compensate the victims it is responsible for thinking about how to solve their problems.

● Communication with Future Generations

Educational material is important for enlightening young people. What was war? What damage did war do? These women bear witness to the tragedy of war in the 20th century and yet are about to disappear from society. We want their testimonies to be recorded.

Date: October 28-30, 2003

Place: Naha City, Okinawa Prefecture

Participants: Yang Soon-Im (Honorary Chairwoman, Association for the Pacific War Victims and Bereaved Families, Korea), Kim Jeong-Im (Director, Southern Branch), Association for the Pacific War Victims and Bereaved Families, Korea), Sim Mi-Ja (Representative, Moogoonghwa Society, Korea), Lee Won-Woong (Professor, Kwandong University, Korea), Rechilda A. Extremadura (Lila-Pilipina, the Philippines), Carlota E.

Mortel (Lila-Pilipina, the Philippines), Mei Jung Lin (Representative, Grassroots Women Workers' Center, Taiwan), Su-Jun Huang Lee (Representative, Women's Society Association, Taiwan), M.J. Hamer (Chairwomen, Project Implementation Committee in the Netherlands *participation by submitting a paper), Keiko Usuki (Association to Clarify the Postwar Responsibility of Japan), Seiko Hayashi (Assistant General Secretary, Japanese Trade Union Confederation), Michiko Inaba (Equal Opportunity Office, Japanese Trade Union Confederation), Makiko Arima (Director, Asian Women's Fund), Momoyo Ise (Secretary/Executive Director, Asian Women's Fund), Tatsuo Yamaguchi (Director, Asian Women's Fund) and Hiroko Hashimoto (Member, Advisory Committee, Asian Women's Fund)

International Conference

Expert Meeting on “Women and Justice” in Puna, India



2003年1月26日～29日 インド、プーナ
参加者：アルジェリア、チリ、インド、日本、マダガスカル、ルーマニアより、国連人権委員会小委員会委員、アジアを中心に、インド各地のNGOおよび地方政府関係者、マレーシア、フィリピン、タイ、ジュネーブからは国連人権高等弁務官事務所の上級アドバイザーなど。

In the past, the Asian Women's Fund has held three conferences to discuss how to protect women's dignity and human rights in the judicial system. These meetings have been mainly conducted with the members of the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

Originally, the judicial system is intended to guarantee human rights and provide protection equally for men and women. However, specific cases of the violation of human rights and disadvantage have been reported. These include countries where women are denied recourse to the law and countries where it is not possible to press charges without the consent of the victim and countries where the consent of the victim is not necessary. There is also the issue of the extradition of criminals based on extraterritorial rights, which is approved by many countries. In addition, there are countries where people are held in custody every day without trial and where women face sexual assault from the police and prison guards.

The purpose of this meeting held in India on this occasion was to propose principles and guidelines for a system that is fair to women for the benefit of parties with an interest in the judicial system in each country. The guidelines consist of 65 sections, filling eleven pages following the background and preface. The guidelines include the reasons for and influences of a lack of justice, the damage done through violence, the different

types of violence, problems in Family Law, the rights of foreign workers, protective custody, female defendants, the circumstances of people in custody, and domestic and international implementation of the guidelines and their future. We intend to prepare a booklet written in both Japanese and English and hope that, through the Sub-Commission, it will be widely used as reference by parties with an interest in the judicature in different countries.

The participants at the conference included six members of the Sub-Commission, with one delegate each representing Algeria, Chile, India, Japan, Madagascar and Romania. Other participants mainly comprised Asian NGOs and local government officials including those from various regions in India as well as the senior advisors of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner of Human Rights from Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Geneva. The venue for this Conference was Puna, an old town in Maharashtra State. It takes four hours from India's third biggest city Bombay, which is today known as Mumbai. It was interesting for us to witness the reality that even delegates from the same country could not read the signs on the streets of Puna and needed an interpreter to communicate with the locals. It was an opportunity for the delegates to experience in person the process of establishing common ground for understanding and common ground for rules in a country that is diverse in language and ethnicity.

Mr. Yokota Yozo, professor of Law at Chuo University and a member of the Sub-Commission, was the chair of the conference. In the opening speech, he talked about the elephant presented by India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the devastated postwar Japan. He said that it was named Indira after the prime minister's daughter and remained an enduring attraction for children for a long time. He said that Japanese people started to feel very close to India because of the gift. His speech was enthusiastically received. Mr. Soli Sorabjee, attorney-general of India and a member of the Sub-Commission attended a part of the Meeting of Experts and the Public Forum as he had at the conference the year before. The participants obtained hands-on training involving the movement to improve the condition in slums and the women's independence program. The conference came to a close after four days and three nights.

Date: January 26-29, 2003

Place: Puna, India

Participants: Members of the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights from Algeria, Chile, India, Japan, Madagascar and Romania; NGOs and local government officials of mostly Asian countries as well as different regions in India; and senior advisors of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner of Human Rights from Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Geneva and others.

Open Forum: Logic and the Mentality of “That’s Why There Are Wars”—From the Viewpoint of Women and the People and Asia



What happens when you delegate the logic and the justification of violence, oppression and control perpetrated by the armed forces to the State and other people?

The purpose of planning this forum was to travel down the memories, the logic and the mentality underlying repeated wars, and to consider war and history, security and cooperation, and the State and the individual.

Three people, Ms Yoko Kato, Mr. Chizuko Ueno and Kang Sang Jung enthusiastically presented their views at the forum. Ms Yoko Kato investigated the nature of the logic underlying the moment that a country decides to declare war, while Mr. Chizuko Ueno questioned the history of the nation state and the nationalization of women. Kang Sang Jung continued to speak out about nationalism, globalization and the looming dominance of the State. Three hundred and thirty people attended the forum, far exceeding the expected number based on the quota of the venue, and necessitating that a second venue be set up using a video link.

The topics of discussion extensively covered the war in Iraq, the old Japan and North Korea, the formation of the nation state and Japan’s wartime legacy, the justification of war, the military, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the people, the role of intellectuals, political realism, the nationalization of women and the problem of female soldiers. The forum provided the opportunity to consider war, the State and the individual from an historical and logical point of view.

The Asian Women's Fund fully realizes the necessity of investigating these problems from different angles and the importance of discussing these issues repeatedly. For this reason, the Fund has held forums that can be referred to as the "conversations with history" series. This forum was the fourth forum in the series.

First Forum

Date: February 23, 2002

Venue: Tokyo Women's Plaza Hall (Aoyama, Tokyo)

Theme: Memories of War and Conversation for the Future—From an International Point of View (Japan and Germany)

Panelists: Ian Burma (journalist), Yoshio Kisa (journalist), Kenichi Takagi (attorney), Shinpei Ishii (journalist), Soji Takasaki (professor, Tsuda College) and Momoyo Ise (executive director, Asian Women's Fund)

Second Forum

Date: November 16, 2002

Venue: A classroom at Sophia University (Yotsuya, Tokyo)

Theme: Japan and South Korea—Memories of the Past and Conversation for the Future

Kizo Ogura (assistant professor, Tokai University), Hisashi Michigami (director, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Soji Takasaki (professor, Tsuda College), Takanori Aebara (lecturer, Waseda University/former member of NHK), Kim Hae-Kyung (Waseda University Graduate School/foreign student), Lee Kyung-Jae (a Korean living in Takatsuki, Japan) and Momoyo Ise (executive director, Asian Women's Fund)

Third Forum (Japan-Korea Student Forum)

Date: July 1, 2003

Venue: United Nations University Conference Hall (Aoyama, Tokyo)

Theme: The Present, Past and Future of Japan-Korea Relations—Our Conversation for Living in a New Era

From Korea: Students from Kwandong University and students from Sogang University International Graduate School (a total of 18 students)

From Japan: Students from Chuo University, Tokai University, Tsuda College, Kyorin University, Meiji University and Waseda University (a total of 16 students)

Overseas students studying in Japan: Two Korean Students

Facilitators: Professor Lee Won-Woong, Professor Yozo Yokota, Lecturer Takanori

Aeba and Momoyo Ise, executive director of the Asian Women's Fund

Fourth Forum

Date: March 4, 2004

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Venue: Shufukaikan Plaza F

Support: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Participants: Chizuko Ueno (professor, University of Tokyo), Yoko Kato (assistant professor, University of Tokyo) and Kang Sang Jung (professor, University of Tokyo)

International Conference of Specialists/Public Forum: Do We Need a Ban? — International Human Trafficking—Violence against Women



We tend to think that international human trafficking has little to do with us. However, the reality is that Japan has become one of the major destinations. The Asian Women's Fund invited government officials and NGOs from Asian countries and people who work for international organizations for them to report on the current situation and discuss how to cope with or prevent the problem and protect the female victims. On the final day, we announced the result of the discussion at the public forum.

From the Conference of Specialists

Despite the degree to which it has proliferated, this problem is not fully recognized by the public. People's indifference based on the misconception that it is a problem for foreigners makes it difficult to protect the victims. Also, because awareness in terms of the restoration of victims' rights is lacking, neither protection nor care following the protection of the victims is adequately provided.

Cooperation between the Asian governments and between domestic government agencies and support groups is believed to be extremely important in coping with international human trafficking. Because the definitions of human trafficking vary slightly in each country, and because different laws are employed to regulate it, friction arises between the governments in handling the problem. The important issue from now is how a country can take the initiative and how the governments can cooperate in dealing with these problems.

From the Public Forum

The current situation with human trafficking

It is believed that tens of thousands of women are sent to Japan from foreign countries including Asian countries every year. They are told that they can visit Japan as singers or dancers. They are given training, qualifications and visas to come to Japan. Once in Japan, they end up working at clubs as hostesses rather than singers and dancers and are tormented by the system known as *dohan* (going on a date before going to work). A certain number of these dates are assigned to each woman as a quota. They start out simply having a meal together with their customers, but after a few dates the women can be made to engage in prostitution.

In some cases, women are told that they must pay four to five million yen, including the travel fare, immediately after they enter Japan. The club owners take all forms of identification, including passports, from the women, which end up in the possession of promoters and other such people. Therefore, the women are left with no means of identifying themselves when they face a situation where they are forced into prostitution in order to pay back their exorbitant debts. Convinced that neither the embassy nor the police will deal with them without the documents, some women end up overstaying their visas and going into hiding.

Damage and problems resulting from human trafficking

The women who come to Japan include many teenage girls who lie about their age. They come to Japan with a dream, but they are both physically and mentally scarred when they go home.

In many cases women end up overstaying their visa without the means of going home, which creates a new problem, and that is the problem of their children or the second generation created by human trafficking. In fact, there are currently no accurate estimates on the number of children who live in Japan without nationality. An investigation has finally begun into Thai women.

What Japan Must Do

Japan has no laws that directly prohibit human trafficking or protect the victims. Laws such as the Manpower Dispatching Business Law, the Anti-Prostitution Law, the Immigration Control Law, the Criminal Law, the Law Regulating Business Affecting Public Morals and the Employment Security Law address the problem indirectly. In the

case where these laws are applicable, the victims can press charges. However, they cannot be a substitute for the law against human trafficking because they completely fail to consider protection and support for the victims.

Today, the countries from which the victims originate are establishing new mechanisms and laws to deal with this problem. It is necessary for Japan, as a recipient country, to recognize the necessity of a ban on human trafficking and make an effort to make it happen.

Conference of Specialists

Date: November 25 and 26

Venue: Hotel Grand Hill Ichigaya

Public Forum

Date: November 27

Venue: Tokyo Women's Plaza

Participants: A total of 40 participants including specialists in the areas of labor migration, social welfare, judicature and human rights from Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, the United States and Japan. Government officials, staff from NGOs and international organizations.

Cooperation: International Organization for Migration

Support: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

A Symposium for College Students

Gender and Violence



In our everyday life, men and women are influenced in many ways by the social and cultural expectations by gender from the day we are born up to the present. Sometimes gender creates a power imbalance between people and is responsible for prejudice and discrimination. Problems involving violence, particularly sexual violence and violence in a close human relationship, such as molestation, sexual harassment and domestic violence, are not correctly understood as problems that emanate from this prejudice and discrimination. Therefore, the victims of these forms of violence are not only tormented by direct damage by violence but also by the lack of understanding in society and by the people around them.

The objective of this symposium was for the participants to become aware of the sort of gender values they have and to be aware of what is referred to as prejudice and discrimination created by gender. Approximately 80 college students of both sexes participated in and exchanged opinions about gender in an effort to improve awareness by drawing from their personal experience.

At the end of the symposium the speakers made the following comments:

Kayuri Kim: One of my wishes is to build a society where all the people on earth can actively live true to themselves with no one resorting to violence or being subjected to it. I hope from the bottom of my heart that each of you will start from where you are.

Yuko Nosaka: If you become aware and acknowledge that you were actually very hurt by certain things or that you really hated some things, you should talk to somebody you

can trust or read a book instead of blaming yourself or just living in misery. I think that there are things around you that can provide help. I hope that you will find the power to look for these things within you.

Chika Hyodo: Please remember that what we call society and culture, or the culture nurtured in Japan, can always change. In other words, society and culture can change if each person acts differently and becomes more aware. Society can change and so can culture. They are never fixed and immutable.

Date: Monday, December 8, 2003

Time: 6:00 – 8:45 p.m.

Venue: Tokyo/TEPIA

Speakers: Kayuri Kin (head of HEAL (Holistic Education and Learning)), Yuko Nosaka (clinical psychologist, Musashino University, Center for Clinical Psychology and Chika Hyodo (Staff member, Place Tokyo, and visiting researcher, Waseda University).

The Role Played by the Asian Women's Fund



Although the Asian Women's Fund's Atonement Project for the former comfort women called a lot of issues into question, both domestically and internationally, it has been delivered to many victims thanks to the understanding and cooperation of many contributors. We have asked the directors of the Fund about the establishment of the Fund, its meaning and the role it has played. We hope to have interested people outside the Fund speak in this paper from now on. We invited Mr. Teijiro Furukawa, Ms. Midori Miyazaki, Ms. Makiko Arima and Ms. Momoyo Ise to this roundtable talk.

Looking back on the Atonement Project

The Founding of the Asian Women's Fund

Miyazaki: When I was gathering information in different parts of Asia, I had many opportunities to face the history of the past. Sometimes I winced. Prepared as I was, I was shocked to see the slogan, "Let's Forgive but Never Forget" that had been adopted in Indonesia.

Our generation has had the experience in which we were made to feel strongly how we must accept our heavy deeds of our past as our own problem. Today, I would like to ask many questions, especially about the role the Asian Women's Fund has played and the many difficulties it encountered under adverse circumstances.

Will you, Mr. Furukawa, please begin by talking about the background to the establishment of the Fund?

Furukawa: I took office as deputy chief cabinet secretary following Mr. Nobuo Ishihara on February 24, 1995. One of the things that I took over from Mr. Ishihara at that time was the Asian Women's Fund.

Concerning the comfort women issue, the coalition government project team had made a proposition on December 7, 1994 after encountering many vicissitudes. It stated: A

fund will be set up that will involve people's participation to take measures for the former comfort women and to support activities for solving problems concerning women's honor and dignity. The government will cooperate with this fund as much as possible, and contribute to the Fund. The question was how promptly it was to become a reality. Originally, we thought about asking Japanese Red Cross Society to represent the Asian Women's Fund, but it was finally established as a private organization under the joint jurisdiction of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on July 19, 1995. It became a foundation half a year later.

Miyazaki: That was very quick, wasn't it?

Furukawa: I think you can say that.

The Background of Violence against Women

Miyazaki: Exactly around that time, the '55 system (Japan's two largest political parties were formed in 1955) collapsed and the year 1995 marked the 50th anniversary of the end of the Pacific War under Prime Minister Murayama's administration. There was a tendency in international society to reassess the 50 years, and I think that contributed to the tumultuous year of 1995, both domestically and internationally.

The Fund was founded under these circumstances, wasn't it?

Arima: As you said, it really was a year of drastic change. In 1995, the World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. The year the government started the investigation, 1991, was the year in which Korea's Kim Hak Sun revealed that she was a former comfort woman. She was the first.

Under these circumstances, the World Conference on Human Rights was held in Vienna in 1993. The document reporting the results, the *Vienna Declaration and Program of Action*, for the first time clearly stated that violence against women was a violation of women's human rights.

Also, there was a shocking report about the racial conflict between Bosnia and Herzegovina. Violence against women was used as a means of war. Acts such as the organized rape of women of other ethnicities as a means of ethnic cleansing and forceful impregnation to stain their blood attracted international attention.

In the former Yugoslavia, which is close to Vienna, women's human rights were violated in this way. Why are these things happening now? Because the problems of the past

have not been adequately resolved. It was the issue of comfort women during World War II that was taken up as the symbol of these unsolved problems.

Moreover, the world started to tell us that these things happened then because the government had not officially apologized, provided compensation for or solved the problems.

The Full Realization of Moral Responsibility

Miyazaki: From the viewpoint of international law, damage to an individual is damage to the State to which the individual belongs. The problem should be solved between the states. So, our government understood that it had already been solved. However, at the individual level, their history had not yet ended. This is a difficult point.

Furukawa: The position the Japanese government is taking is that it has sincerely handled the problems such as compensation for individuals, property and the right of claim with the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the bilateral treaty and other agreements. However, there was discussion on the point of whether the Japanese government should compensate or in other words, take the moral responsibility for humiliating the women that were forced to become comfort women, for hurting their dignity and causing them the pain and sorrow that they had to endure.

Miyazaki: The bottom line is that they want their lives back, if you look at it from the women's point of view.

Furukawa: We cannot reverse what happened with atonement, but we had extremely strong feelings about at least showing them that we were sincere. However, there were still were a lot of people who disagreed with that.

Different Reactions from the People

Arima: Germany coped with its problems with special legislation, partly due to the discontinuity of the administration. In Japan there was movement towards special legislation as well. Also, there was a movement to establish a fund among the people who were working for women's issues. However, only the Asian Women's Fund materialized.

Ise: The reaction from the financial world was severe but considerable donations were received from different generations. For example, men who fought in the war witnessed

it and now regret it and Japanese woman who thought they must do something because of who they were.

I was delighted with the younger people. They saw our website and mounted a fund-raising drive saying that they did not know that the events occurred but that they wanted to contribute.

Miyazaki: There also was a medical and welfare project funded by the government, wasn't there?

Furukawa: The then Chief Cabinet Secretary Kozo Igarashi was especially concerned about why the government was unable to contribute despite its exhortations for the public to contribute. He then came up with the idea that it could contribute to medical care, welfare or keeping the victims healthy instead of state compensation. Another thing was that he had decided to spend the government's money for the operation, administration and other expenses of the Fund.

Sincere Letters from the Prime Minister

Arima: The project had three pillars: The prime minister's letters of apology, the atonement money from the people and medical care/welfare funded by the government. These three were well-designed when I look back on them even now.

Furukawa: It had a great meaning for the prime minister to give a letter directly to each victim. To mark the start of the project, the former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto signed his name with a calligraphy brush with such sincerity. I was watching nearby and was deeply moved.

Ise: The prime minister's letter was given to each victim as part of the Atonement Project, and we received strong responses from many of the recipients to the effect that they were consoled. Of the three pillars, the letters were important in that they had emotional appeal.

Arima: The three women who received the Atonement Project first in the Philippines told us that they had announced their past because of the letters from the prime minister.

Our Initiatives toward the 21st Century

Miyazaki: Now that you have finished work on the Atonement Project, what are your opinions concerning the future?

Ise: For the Asian Women's Fund, the task remains to record the historical background for this Project and facts about it and handing them down to the next generation.

Furukawa: I vividly remember the time when I resolutely read aloud the informal talk by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama in a Cabinet meeting held on the anniversary of the end of the Pacific War on August 15, 1995.

The informal talk consisted of three sections. The first is to express the serious regret and apologize most sincerely. Second is to communicate the tragedy of war to the younger generation so that the mistakes of the past will never be repeated. Third is for Japan to spread the ideology of pacifism and democracy as a responsible member of the international society based on deep self-reflection.

This informal talk will be handed down by word of mouth. It is the duty for the government or the Japanese people to remember these three principles every day and make them the starting point of all policies and measures. We must not allow this informal talk to become a thing of the past.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the staff of the Asian Women's Fund. I think that the government is responsible for building the future based on the significance of this project.

Arima: Although the international society criticizes Japan for not carrying out its legal responsibilities concerning this problem, to some extent, Japan has, in fact, taken action. With this in mind, I think that we need to continue to tackle today's problem of the violations of human rights against women based on self-reflection of our past.

Also, to express a personal feeling, although we have completed the first stage of the Atonement Project, the victims from the past are now very old but still alive. More than 40 victims have already passed away since the Fund was established but many are still alive. If this is the fact, I think that we must continue to watch over them and care for them, although even the way I say it sounds presumptuous.

Miyazaki: The important question is how this country or our society is going to take its place in international society. Thank you very much for coming today.

A Symposium with College Students as Panelists Discussing the Problem of Comfort Women

The Asian Women's Fund finished the Atonement Project in the countries concerned last fiscal year. Since that time, the Fund has planned and held student forums for young people, primarily college students who will carry us in the 21st century, think about the issue of comfort women. We invited two of the students to this symposium who applied in response to the public advertisement to raise questions prompting a discussion.

Mr. Junichiro Kosaka studies the European Community overseas. He said that he started to think about things for himself when he learned about Japan's colonization policy on the Korean Peninsula and in China at junior and senior high school. It was the starting point for him. He said, "I have been thinking about what I can do. I think the answer to postwar Europe is to form a network through a multi-polar channel and that is how the European Union was born." He argued that networking is needed for reconciliation and for living with neighboring Asian countries.

Ms Naoko Maeda first expressed her appreciation for the Asian Women's Fund for the role it has played so far in conducting the Atonement Project for the women certified as former comfort women who have been put to one side as an unsolved problem for a long time after the war. She said that the Atonement Project for those women still was not sufficient and that a law should be made on which the projects by Asian Women's Fund would be based so that the government would honestly deal with the problem of restoring honor and dignity to the victims.

In response to these suggestions, Professor Soji Takasaki who participated in the symposium as a commentator talked about the apologies by the Japanese government in the past, the policy on the postwar compensation, and the reaction of the former comfort women and the NGOs to the start of the Atonement Project in Korea. He stressed in particular the fact that many said they were basically willing to accept the fund but the amount was not sufficient, while victims themselves were of the opinion that the Japanese government should directly offer an apology and compensation.

Another commentator, Professor Daizaburo Hashizume, spoke very highly of the activities of the Asian Women's Fund and said that it was necessary to position the comfort women problem as one of the focal points in thinking about the violation of human rights during war. He feared that so far the discussion had focused exclusively on the problem of comfort women.

A male student in the audience, who had studied in Germany, said that the right thing to do was to apologize so that Japan would be a country where people could build a future that they could be proud of. These comments led to active discussion.

Secretary Momoyo Ise who participated on behalf of the Fund said, "I understand that there are many different opinions about the Atonement Project delivered to the victims. However, the letter of apology by the prime minister, the compensation and the medical and welfare support project have reached the hearts of the victims. Many recipients sent us messages saying that they had been consoled." She also said to the students who participated that she hoped to record the Fund's projects, the historical background and the facts.

Date: December 6, 2003

Venue: Tokyo Institute of Technology, Okayama Campus

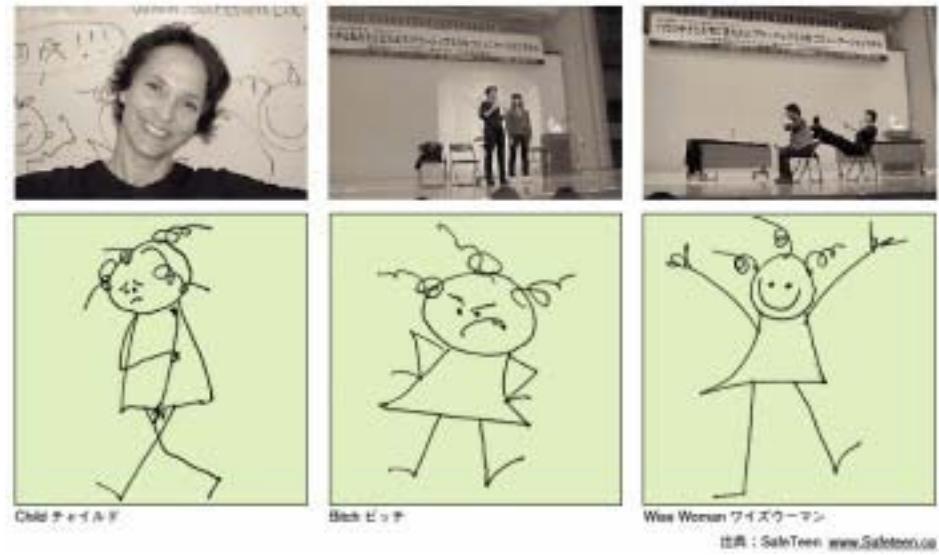
Student Panelists: Junichiro Kosaka (University of London), Naoko Maeda (Dokkyo University Graduate School), and Yuka Kubota (Chuo University, Graduate School of Law/Facilitator)

Commentators: Daizaburo Hashizume (Professor, Tokyo Institute of Technology), and Soji Takasaki (Professor, Tsuda College/Member of the Advisory Committee of Asian Women's Fund)

A Public Seminar and a Workshop for Supporters

Let's Teach Our Teenagers Assertive Communication Skills

We Do



Through its training project over the past six years, the Asian Women's Fund has felt the need to provide children with violence prevention education so that violence against women can be avoided before it happens.

The theme this year was "Let's Teach Our Teenagers Assertive Communication Skills." We held two public seminars in Shizuoka and Fukuoka and four two-day workshops for supporters in Tokyo and Fukuoka targeting students and parties concerned in areas such as education, public health and welfare, and medical care.

The Safe Teen programs were specifically designed for boys, girls and trainers (interested people in education and welfare). Each of the programs provide instruction in how not to let other people take away your power, how to perceive the anger within you and how to communicate it assertively to the other party without resorting to violence.

We hypothesized various scenarios in which violence occurs, such as violence by a strange man, date rape and bullying at school. We engaged in role playing, in which the participants acted out the roles of a child, a nasty girl and a wise woman--three characters that are said to be inherent in all of us. (Please refer to the drawings below.)

The participants also learned how to observe the boundaries between themselves and others and control the situation for themselves so that others cannot cross the line.

If young teenagers can learn how not to transform anger into violence they can avoid becoming assailants. If they can assertively say “no” to violence instead of running away when they feel the danger of becoming a victim they do not have to become a victim.

If they can recognize their own anger and express it appropriately without being bound by their imprinted sense of gender, they can, in the end, restore the power of self-determination and improve their self-esteem.

In some communities in Canada, this program is incorporated in the required courses at junior and senior high school so that the students can establish their own future. It is hoped that this kind of violence preventive education will be incorporated in schooling in Japan.

*Assertive: This word is translated as *jikoshucho suru* in Japanese. Being assertive does not simply mean forcing your opinion onto others. It means sincerely and frankly expressing your requests and opinions as an equal without violating the other person's rights.

Public seminars and workshops were held from November 16 to 27, 2003, in Tokyo, Shizuoka and Fukuoka.

Lecturer: Anita Roberts (Representative, Safe Teen, Canada)