

wam

アクティブ・ミュージアム
 女たちの戦争と平和資料館
 women's active museum on war and peace

ABOUT WAM

We record women's stories of suffering under military aggression, and their struggle for dignity and justice, as well as researching and exhibiting the facts behind their stories.

Our main focus is Japan's military sexual slavery, or the so-called "comfort women" system as the responsibility of the perpetrating country, Japan.

We serve as a center for action to eliminate all violence against women in war, to build a world of peace and non-violence through global solidarity.

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LOOKING BACK

WAM CELEBRATES ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY



At the entrance of WAM is a wall of portraits of the courageous women who broke their silence. WAM exhibits only portraits of survivors who have given us their permission.

about the Women's Tribunal 2000, 2) Korean Survivors' Paintings, 3) The Life and Works of Yayori Matsui, and 4) Korean "Comfort Women" Abandoned. For deeper understanding, we have also held a series of seminars during each exhibition. We have published books and catalogues, conducted research and staffed hotlines on the "comfort women" issue, launched a database of the books and materials we have at WAM, and taken action in solidarity to urge the Japanese government to accept responsibility for its wartime aggression. While learning from the past, WAM seeks to serve as a place where people can take action now to end all violence against women during war and armed conflicts from a gender perspective. Our goal is to make WAM a very "active" focal point for those working for a peaceful and non-violent Asia.

The political situation in Japan, however, has worsened in the past decade. The Japanese government has increasingly sought to deny the facts of its aggression during WWII. The words "comfort women" have now disappeared from all junior high school history textbooks. Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, which denounces war, is now in danger of repeal. In this situation, WAM has become a place that gives strength and encouragement for those working against this trend. More than 3,700 people, not only from Japan, but also from the world over have visited WAM. Men as well as women have become members. Today, more and more young people are coming to WAM – a hope for our common future. We hope to keep working in solidarity with you.

It has been a year since the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM) opened on the 1st of August 2005, marking the 60th anniversary of the end of WW2. We thank all of you who have helped us to make WAM a reality.

Our first year has passed quickly. We have held four special exhibitions: 1) All



"Comfort women" survivors from South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines visited WAM. Taiwanese survivors, Lu Man-mei (left) and Wu Hsiu-mei (right)

FOUR SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS 2005-2006

Special exhibitions give visitors an overview of an issue through panels and exhibits, while seminars deepen their understanding of each issue. While making the exhibition panels, we collect more facts, testimonies and materials regarding the topic, and broaden our networks. By publishing a catalogue for each exhibition, we seek to share the information we have gained with a larger community. Since its opening in 2005, WAM has held four special exhibitions. The panels are now traveling to communities throughout Japan. In the near future, we hope to send them to Europe for a traveling exhibition.



The Tribunal found the Emperor Hirohito and 9 high-ranking officials criminally responsible for the "comfort women" system.

ALL ABOUT WOMEN'S TRIBUNAL 2000 (AUG. 1 – NOV. 20, 2005)

The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery was held in Tokyo in December 2000. The Tribunal found that the accused high-ranking officials of wartime Japan were criminally responsible, and that Japan bears state responsibility even today. It was an epoch-making People's Tribunal organized by the global women's movement to end impunity for violence against women in wartime, and to bring justice to its survivors.



Today WAM keeps the spirit of the Tribunal alive. It was the focus of our first exhibition, in which we displayed all the proceedings, including testimony from nine countries, and the Judgment. Because the Tribunal highlighted the question of the late Emperor Hirohito's war responsibility, the Japanese media largely ignored this historical event. In 2005, revelations concerning the political pressure that led to the sabotage of media coverage gave the Japanese people a good opportunity to learn about the Tribunal. For our first four seminars, we invited experts and activists who actually took part in the Tribunal.



PAINTINGS OF KOREAN "COMFORT WOMEN" SURVIVORS: TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS 2006 WITH PHOTOGRAPHY AND SCULPTURE (NOV. 23 – DEC. 4, 2005)

As a part of their rehabilitation, Korean "comfort women" survivors now living in the House of Sharing have been painting their memories of war, scenes that have remained in their imagination. Their paintings

traveled to 11 cities in Japan and profoundly touched the hearts of many. Sadly, a number of survivors famous for their artwork are no longer with us. Photographs of the survivors by Yajima Tsukasa (Japan), and sculptures of survivors' faces created by Ho Yeon (Korea), were also exhibited.

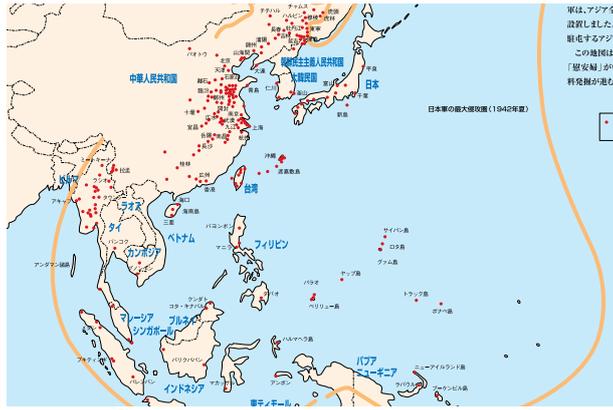
THE LIFE AND WORK OF YAYORI MATSUI (DEC.11 – APR. 23, 2006)



Yayori MATSUI was a prominent journalist and activist for women's human rights. In 1998 she proposed the idea of the Women's Tribunal 2000, and shortly before her untimely death in December 2002, she conceived of WAM as a means of continuing the Tribunal's legacy. This special exhibition showed her wartime experiences as a child, her work as a journalist for a leading Japanese newspaper, and her life as a feminist activist. The main focus was her work as journalist. It was Yayori's habit of carefully filing away all her articles, even those without a by-line, that made this possible. Until the end of her life she remained a journalist who never hesitated to confront those in authority for the sake of women and marginalized people throughout Asia. (See: Yayori Award, p. 4)

THE KOREAN "COMFORT WOMEN" ABANDONED

(APR.29-NOV.12, 2006)



Areas where Korean women were taken during WW2

This was the first in a series of exhibits specially designed to highlight the characteristics of "comfort women" survivors from each victimized country. This exhibition focused on the abandonment of women and girls from the Korean Peninsula. From 1910-1945, Korea was under Japanese rule. During the war, many Korean women and girls were forcibly taken to practically every location where Japanese troops were stationed. After Japan's defeat, many were abandoned in foreign lands. A few managed to reach home on their own effort or were repatriated by allied forces. Others were able to return to Korea only after half a century had passed. Still others have never made it back, and remain in exile.

What was the structure of colonial rule, which enabled the victimization of Korean women on such a large scale? What has kept the victimized women away from home for so long? What were their lives like in a foreign land, and how are they living now? By focusing on the abandonment question, we sought to help the audience understand the victimization of Korean women and address the issue of Japan's responsibility.



Yoon Jung-ok, who has played a leading role in researching the "comfort women" issue

SEMINARS

During each special exhibition, WAM has held seminars, symposiums and guided tours by the curators, to give visitors a deeper understanding of the issues involved. An autumn highlight is "WAM de Video," special seminars where videos from WAM's library are shown. The director of the video, or a specialist in the theme it deals with, is invited to speak. On a larger scale, international symposiums have also been held. These include a symposium on Japanese people who supported the Korean democratization movement, held to commemorate Yayori's dedication to this issue, and a symposium with Yoon Jung-ok, who first helped to bring the "comfort women" issue to light in 1980s Korea, as keynote speaker.

RESEARCH

Around August 15, the anniversary of Japan's defeat, WAM runs an information hotline on "comfort women" to collect more facts about Japan's military sexual slavery. This year we also asked for information about the RAA (Recreation and Amusement Association) that Japan set up as the last "comfort station" just after WWII to serve allied occupation forces personnel. We have followed up with research and documentation obtained from veterans or witnesses. We have also launched a collaborative investigation with Korea on "comfort stations" within Japan.



Veterans and witnesses provide information through our "comfort women" hotline

THE WORLD'S ATTENTION, JAPAN'S SILENCE

As a rule, the Japanese media does not cover the "comfort women" issue. This has become even more true since NHK, Japan's public broadcasting station, aired a program that presented an extremely distorted view of the Women's Tribunal 2000. Early in 2005, it was revealed that Mr. ABE Shinzo, who is currently Japan's prospective Prime Minister, had along with other politicians pressured NHK into altering the program. But the media's attention lasted only as long as Abe continued to make blatantly false statements about the Tribunal in public.

Furthermore, while Asian and European media such as the BBC, South Korean KBC and MBC, and German and Swedish radio service, all reported WAM's opening, the Japanese media almost completely ignored it. The mainstream media has paid as little attention to WAM as it did to the Women's Tribunal in 2000, despite the fact that due to the present Prime Minister's visits to Yasukuni Shrine, Japan's war responsibility has become a major political issue during the past five years.



Left: Global Wednesday Demonstration, holding lanterns with the names of women who have passed away. Right: "Yasukuni NO!" 1000 people's protest with candles

ACTION

Every August, people throughout Japan take part in the "Global Wednesday Rally", joining in the spirit of the weekly "Wednesday Rally" held in Seoul, Korea. WAM has been taking part as a member of the Action Network for Japan's Military "Comfort Women". This year, in spite of intense right-wing interference, a rally was held in Tokyo on August 9, 2006. After the names of more than 250 survivors who spoke out but have since died were read aloud, participants marched quietly through the busy streets of the big city. On August 14, the people of Korea, Taiwan, Okinawa and mainland Japan protested against the notorious Yasukuni Shrine, which glorifies Japan's role in WWII and other past acts of aggression. Three Korean "comfort women" survivors also joined in the rally and the subsequent candlelight protest.



**YAYORI
AWARD**
WOMEN'S HUMAN
RIGHTS AWARD
LAUNCHED

Yayori Matsui was a journalist and activist with a global perspective, who constantly spoke up for women and other marginalized peoples. In Yayori's name, and in accordance with the will she left at her death, the Yayori Award was set up to encourage women who are struggling to make women's human rights a reality in Asia. The



Himalayan Times headline coverage of Yayori Award recipients.

award is divided into two parts: the Yayori Award, presented to activists/groups working for the human rights of women at the grassroots level in Asia, and the Yayori Journalist Award, for an individual journalist active in Japan, chosen to promote the recipient of the Yayori Award through creative media during the following year.

The first Yayori Award recipient is usha titikshu (Nepal), a photo-journalist actively involved in the peace and democracy movements in Nepal. The Yayori Journalist Award was given to GOTO Yumi (Japan), who has been introducing the work of freelance journalists in South East Asia. The collaboration of these two recipients will be seen in the autumn of 2006 at WAM.

WHO WE ARE

WAM is managed by the Steering Committee. There are two secretariat staff members, and many volunteers who are helping out. The members of the committee are: NISHINO Rumiko (Director of WAM), IKEDA Eriko (Chair of the Steering Committee), WATANABE Mina (Secretary General), SUZUKI Sawako (Secretariat), ARIMURA Junko, IKEDA Yumiko, NIWA Masayo, SAITO Yumiko, SHOJI Rutsuko, TABA Sachiko, TAKAHASHI Chikako, and YAMAMOTO Kazumi.

WAM is a project of the Women's Fund for Peace and Human Rights. The Fund has two projects: one is WAM and the other is the Yayori Award. The Fund oversees WAM's activities and directly operates the Yayori Award. The board members of the Fund are: SHOJI Rutsuko (Chair of the Fund), NIWA Masayo (co-vice chair), IKEDA Eriko (co-vice chair), NISHINO Rumiko, ARIMURA Junko, HIROTA Shizue, NAKAHARA Michiko, MUKOUYAMA Yayuki, and WATANABE Mina

JOIN & SUPPORT WAM!

WAM was started by donations from more than 1,800 individuals and groups. Today, WAM is a People's Museum with no support from any state authority. Our operational costs are covered by donations, individual membership fees, and entrance fees. Please join us!

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

JPY3,000(US\$ 30.00)

You will receive:

- Information on events and exhibitions
- Newsletter
- Membership in our list serve

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

JPY 10,000(US\$100.00)

All general membership plus:

- Free admission to WAM
- Discounts for seminars and publications

BANK ACCOUNT FOR DONATION AND MEMBERSHIP FEES

The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd.(SWIFT Code: BOTKJPJT)
Shibuya-branch 135-3345859
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