

August 31st, 2016

Discourse on Comfort Women Issue by Rev. Koichi Kobashi, NCCJ Moderator
The Wounds on the Girls' Lives will never Heal in this Way

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Wednesday demonstrations to solve the WWII Japanese Army's comfort women issue began in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul on January 8th, 1992. The Monument of Peace (Statue of a Girl) was built there commemorating the 1000th demonstration on December 14th, 2011.

Young women and citizens still gather there every week surrounding the victim women and keep raising their voices from the bottoms of their hearts in hope to heal their wounds and truly solve the problem.

With NCCJ's arrangement, Rev. Shinichi Yahagi, NCCJ Vice Moderator, and I participated in a demonstration and had the opportunity to give a message on October 14th, 2015. We were deeply moved by the participants' truthful cry.

The Japanese Embassy in front of the demonstration, however, kept its gate firmly closed and did not respond. This precisely represents the attitude of the Japanese government.

The Japanese government is now applying pressure for the removal of the statue in exchange for one billion yen given to "the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation" founded on the agreement between the Korean and Japanese governments.

The one billion yen is to be distributed to the victims according to the scrutiny of each individual's demand, and the issue will be over for good.

Will the wounds of the victims who have been suffering for life truly be healed by that? Will the true reconciliation of the two nations be realized?

The wills of the victims in Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, East Timor, North Korea, the Netherlands, proclaiming against the agreement, are completely ignored.

This is the current Japanese government's political style; "beat the cheek of the other's with a wad of money". The wounds on the victims' lives will never be healed this way. On the contrary, they will be worsened.

If Japan truly wishes to realize "reconciliation and healing" and move forward to the future, they need to recognize the sin they have committed, apologize to the victims, repent before God and the world, and start anew.