



Japanese Women for Justice and Peace (JWJP)
4F-B Shinko Bldg., 3-13-4 Ginza, Chuo-ku,
Tokyo 104-0061
JAPAN
TEL & FAX: +81 5031530391
Email: JapanNetwork1@gmail.com
Website: <http://nadesiko-action.org>

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Information for the UPR 28th Session / JAPAN

Title: Racial Discrimination against Japanese Children in Foreign Countries

We, Japanese women for Justice and Peace, are pleased to submit our opinion to the UPR Recommendation numbers 31, 60, and 63 of the Government of Japan Mid-term Report on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations issued at the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, January 2017.

1. About us

Japanese Women for Justice and Peace (JWJP) is a non-governmental organization established in 2011. Our members and supporters are Japanese women, mainly mothers, both in Japan and in foreign countries. We have heard from mothers many cases of racial discrimination against Japanese children, such as bullying and hate speech at schools. The discrimination is quite often caused by the historical issue, the so-called “comfort women issue”. “Comfort Women” is the direct translation from a Japanese word “慰安婦 ian-fu” which means women working at brothels servicing the Japanese military during WW2, occupation forces in Japan after WW2, and US forces during the Korean War. There are alleged stories that the Japanese military committed atrocities against those women, and the issue has become politically and diplomatically controversial.

JWJP has been making efforts to end the comfort women issue and to stop this racial discrimination. We published a booklet “Comfort Women Issue From misunderstandings to SOLUTION” (1). And we sponsored a parallel event “Women’s Rights under Armed Conflict – Japan’s Approach to Respect Women”(2) at the UN Church Center in NY in March 2016 during CSW60.

2. Recommendation and Japan's follow up

UPR Recommendation	Japan's follow up
31. Continue to refine its domestic legislative, institutional and administrative structures to strengthen its work in the field in human rights (Zimbabwe)	Japan is conducting an appropriate review of the framework of the human rights remedy system, taking the discussions made thus far into account.
60. Continue its policies on improving the rights of the child (Jordan)	<p>1. Permanent centers for human rights counseling have been established in the offices of Legal Affairs Bureaus, District Legal Affairs Bureaus, and their branches throughout the country, as well as ad-hoc centers for human rights counseling in other locations. Additionally, the special toll-free "Children's Rights Hotline" consultation call service has been established and "Children's Rights SOS Mini Letters" (This is a type of pre-stamped and addressed sealable postcard on which children can write any concerns they may have. These go to Legal Affairs Bureaus or District Legal Affairs Bureaus, which then contact the sender upon receipt.) have been distributed to all students of elementary and middle schools throughout the country. Furthermore, an Internet-based human rights consultation reception system, "Children's Rights SOS E-mail," has been established. These measures serve to provide a wide-ranging system to provide children counseling on human rights issues, including bullying.</p> <p>2. Additionally, the human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice set "Protect Children's Rights" as one of the annual priority targets of activities for human rights awareness-raising and conducts various activities for awareness-raising.</p>
63. Continue the efforts to combat and prevent discrimination under any grounds (Cuba)	<p>1. Article 14 paragraph 1 of the Japanese Constitution states, "All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin." Irrational discrimination is therefore forbidden.</p> <p>2. Paragraph 1 of Article 14 of the Constitution provides equality under the law without any racial discrimination. Based on this principle, Japan has been making efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination. In highly public fields such as employment, education, medical care and traffic, which are closely related with civil life, discriminatory treatment is prohibited by laws and regulations. Moreover, in such fields, the related ministries and agencies carry out guidance and awareness raising programs to eliminate all forms of discrimination.</p>

3. Opinion

Japan's war-related claims and reparations have been fully settled by laws and international agreements, yet some civil groups of Korea and China demand compensations and apologies from Japan. This triggers political campaigns to dishonor Japan and causes the human rights violations against Japanese.

For example, in the U.S., there are so-called comfort woman statues and monuments, engraved with the words that "comfort women were 200,000 women and girls abducted and forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army." These places became focal points for anti-Japan demonstrations, which lead to the bullying of Japanese children, and community harmony and peace have been affected. There are more statue plans in the U.S., Canada, Australia and Europe despite the fact that Japanese residents are strongly protesting against such plans. The comfort women issue is now used, not to promote women's human rights, but as political campaigns to condemn the Japanese nation in foreign countries.

We believe that all children all over the world, regardless of nationalities, should grow friendships, respect each other, and look forward to make a better world for the future. The children living at present have nothing to do with the hatred descended from the past.

The state party as well as NGOs should work to eliminate such racial discrimination. The problem is that state party's human rights policies do not sufficiently cover the human rights violation against Japanese residing in foreign countries. We hear more and more voices of discontent and anxiety from mothers.

4. Current Situation

(1) Reports to JWJP from Japanese mothers in foreign countries

- The statue put up at Central Park in Glendale, CA, makes me feel very uncomfortable to go there, because I am Japanese. I have a seven-year-old daughter who was born from me, a Japanese mother, and a non-Japanese father. She said, 'I cannot hate the other half part of myself. Why am I hated?' This statue is alienating her from many friends for something she had nothing to do with. The statue has no educational value at all. It is rather promoting confusion and racism to discriminate against Japanese people living in the United States.
- One mother in Glendale says the statue is a symbol of racial discrimination against Japanese, and all Japanese residents are upset. Their children used to enjoy playing in the park, but now

they do not want to take their children to the park. Because the mothers do not want their children to read the plaque. And sometimes they have to conceal their Japanese nationality because they feel unsafe and scared of being bullied.

- My pretty 7 year old grand-daughter is American. One day she was taught at school, “Japan is a bad country and Japanese are bad people.” Since then she will not play with me. I am very sad.

(2) Examples of racial discrimination and bullying against Japanese children in the U.S.A. collected by Professor Shiro Takahashi of Meisei University⁽³⁾:

The following are some of the examples of Japanese children being bullied and discriminated by Korean and Chinese counterparts after Comfort Women Statues, or memorials, were erected in the U.S. These incidents clearly suggest that young children are most susceptible to racial hatred promoted by adults no matter how those Korean (and Chinese) adults try to justify erection of such memorials by calling them “Peace Statues” as such. The fact is that there was no such noticeable animosity reported before the Comfort Woman Statue movement was promoted by the Anti-Japan Korean groups.

It has been brought to our attention that a similar kind of animosity has been observed in Sydney, Australia, as well. Many Japanese residents stopped shopping at Korean grocery shops due to the change of attitudes shown by Korean shop keepers.

Example 1 Primary Students

Japanese mothers are completely ignored by Chinese and Korean mothers. They flatly ignore even greetings. At a community party they served cold rice only to Japanese families. During lunch time at school Japanese students were bullied and ostracized by being told “Japanese lunch boxes are smelly and Japanese are smelly.”

Example 2 Primary School

At school a Japanese student was told by his Korean classmate that he did not want to play with Japanese because his parents told him that Japanese were a bad race. The Japanese student then asked his mother if he should hide his nationality.

Example 3 Junior High School

At school Japanese students were told by Korean students unknown to them that Japan was a nasty country.

Example 4 Primary School

A Japanese student was suddenly told by a close Korean friend “Stupid Japanese are trying to steal a Korean island.” The Japanese student and his parent were totally shocked.

Example 5 High School

A Korean student suddenly assaulted a Japanese student shouting, “I hate Japs.”

Example 6 Primary School

Korean students repeatedly spat at Japanese students even by chasing them when they ran away. Korean students constantly bullied Japanese students by saying things like, “Korea defeated Japan in a football match and Japan copied a Korean cartoon character” etc.

Example 7 High School

Korean students put posters stating the Takeshima Island (under territorial dispute) belonged to Korea all over the school. Japanese students were intensely intimidated and teachers did nothing about it.

Example 8 Junior High School

A Korean female and a Korean male student performed a play at a public school in front of all the students of the school. The play was featuring atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army as a true story. After the play Japanese students who were a minority at the school were blamed by being told “Shame on you for being Japanese. Japanese are cruel.” They were completely intimidated and humiliated.

(3) Investigation Report of Discrimination against Japanese Children in New York and New Jersey, by Himawari JAPAN⁽⁴⁾:

Himawari JAPAN is a group of Japanese mothers in NY and NJ, U.S.A. There are 6 comfort women memorials in the area. They collected recent bullying cases at schools and discrimination cases in communities, and disclosed them on their website in Oct, 2016. ⁽⁵⁾

(4) A complaint lodged with the Human Rights Commission in Australia:

A comfort women statue was put up by a Korean group in the parking lot of the Uniting Church in Sydney in spite of strong opposition by Australian and Japanese. The Australia-Japan Community Network ⁽⁶⁾ lodged a complaint against the Uniting Church Australia with the Human Rights Commission in Australia in 2016.⁽⁷⁾

5. Proposed Recommendations

- (1) The State party should recognize that there are many cases of racial discrimination against Japanese and Japanese children in foreign countries due to the historical issue of “comfort women”.
- (2) The State party should take measures to eliminate racial discrimination and human rights violations against Japanese in foreign countries, and refine its legislative, institutional and administrative structures when necessary.
- (3) The State party should protest and rebut against baseless defamation against Japan, and provide accurate and truthful information to solve misunderstandings in the international community.
- (4) The state party of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should take measures to protect Japanese children in foreign countries from racial discrimination, and should give support to their parents.

END

¹ Comfort Women Issue From misunderstandings to SOLUTION
<http://nadesiko-action.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Comfort-Women-Issue-From-misunderstandings-to-SOLUTION-.pdf>

² CSW60 “Women’s Rights under Armed Conflict – Japan’s Approach to Respect Women –”
http://nadesiko-action.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CSW60_3.24event_JWJP.pdf

³ “Will” Nov.2016 edition p 232

米国の慰安婦問題 総領事、なぜ子女を助けてくれないのですか

Comfort Women Issue- Consul general, Why won't you save our children?

“Seiron 正論” March, 2016 edition

『慰安婦』でここまで来たアメリカの日本人差別”"Comfort Women" Racism Against Japanese

⁴ Himawari Japan <http://himawarijapan.org/>

⁵ Investigation Report of Discrimination against Japanese Children in New York and New Jersey, by Himawari JAPAN <http://himawarijapan.org/category/reports/>

⁶ Australia-Japan Community Network (AJCN) <http://jensydney-en.blogspot.jp>

⁷ ABOUT THE COMFORT WOMAN STATUE

<http://jensydney-en.blogspot.jp/2016/12/about-comfort-woman-statue.html>

COMFORT WOMAN STATUE CAUSING RACIAL BULLYING TO JAPANESE CHILDREN

<http://jensydney-en.blogspot.jp/2016/12/comfort-woman-statue-causing-racial.html>