

Japanese Peace Pioneers: Masaharu Oka & Yayori Matsui

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Both Masaharu Oka and Yayori Matsui are peace makers and the founders of private peace museums in Japan. The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum was founded in Nagasaki in 1995 and Women's Active Museum on War and Peace was founded in Tokyo in 2005. One of their characteristics is that they sincerely dealt with victims of Japan's aggression of other Asian nations during World War II and tried to do their best to take Japan's responsibility for the aggression as conscientious citizens. This is because the Japanese government has refused to apologize to the victims of Japan's aggression individually for their suffering and damages and compensate them financially. Though both peace makers were attacked physically and psychologically by nationalists who glorified Japan's aggression, they played important roles in peace making and promoting reconciliation with Asian victims.

I. Masaharu Oka (1918 – 1994)

1. Masaharu Oka's life

Masaharu Oka was a Lutheran minister, a member of Nagasaki City Assembly and the initiator of the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum. The characteristic of the peace museum is that the emphasis is put on Japan's aggression in exhibitions. The purpose of the peace museum is to make clear the aggressive acts of Japanese military and Japan's war responsibility in terms of a sincere apology and compensation by the Japanese government. The exhibitions show Japan's aggression as follows: Korean and Chinese Atomic-bomb survivors, forced labour of Korean and Chinese people during World War II, Japanese invasion of Korea and China, women who were forced to work as sexual slaves, post war compensation and Masaharu Oka's life. Why did Masaharu Oka want to found the peace museum? What made him think of Japan's responsibility for Japanese aggression and start to deal with it?

Masaharu Oka wrote about his life in an autobiography entitled *Michi Hitosujini* (the literal translation is "a straight way" and it also means "devotion" in Japanese) in 1975. He was born on 1st November, 1918 in Fukushima-ku, Osaka City. He entered elementary school in 1925 and went to the Sunday School of the Methodist Church with his brother on his teacher's advice. He achieved the highest rank in his class for six years and was deliberately absent from school only one day: it was the day for the funeral of the Emperor Taisho. His life at the elementary school influenced his future because he became a Christian and became very critical of the Emperor later. He was influenced by his father who was the president of a small company and had liberal ideas. For example, his father talked to him about Senji Yamamoto who was opposed to strengthening of the Maintenance

of Public Order Ordinance that had been issued in 1925 (and was abolished in 1945). The aim of the Ordinance was to oppress people who challenged the emperor system: Christians, liberals, socialists and communists were oppressed and people's right of speech was violated. Senji Yamamoto was a Diet member from the Rounou (meaning workers and farmers) Party in Kyoto and the only member who was opposed to strengthening the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance. As a result, he was killed by a nationalist on 3rd March, 1929 and even his funeral was oppressed by the authorities. An inscription reading "Yamase (Yamamoto Senji) defends the only fort, but I am not lonesome because the people support me at the back" was carved by Ikuo Ouyama, the chairman of the Rounou Party, on his tomb. Masaharu Oka was very impressed by Senji Yamamoto and the inscription encouraged him all his life. This explains why he acted independently even if he was attacked by nationalists later. Masaharu Oka was also influenced by his elder brother who taught him ideas of Christianity and socialism. His brother was arrested because of his liberal and critical ideas of the war and was quite often tortured by the police and his seniors in the military. As a result, he passed away when he was only twenty-five years old, which deeply saddened Oka and also made him angry against the authorities.

Unfortunately his father's factory and house were set on fire and Oka had to quit going to commercial school when he was fifteen and started to work in the Navy. In 1937 he was ordered to go to Shanghai and work as an operator of radiotelegraphy. That year the Nanjing Massacre took place, but it was concealed by Japan's military and Oka did not know about it. "It was not reported in Japan and Japanese officers and soldiers were ordered to keep it secret and they believed that it was a holy war." The fact that about 300,000 Chinese people were killed was disclosed at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in 1946 and reported in the world. Oka criticized the role and responsibility of the emperor as follows:

It is absolutely superstitious and a distortion of the facts that the emperor's leadership was passive...it was the emperor who ordered the end of the war although the army was all against it...Therefore, the emperor should be accused for his active role and his responsibility for the Nanjing Massacre. The reason why Japan felt no responsible for the war and the Japanese became confused morally after the defeat of Japan is that the emperor's responsibility was not questioned.¹

Oka even insisted that "the emperor should have been punished as other war criminals."² The fact that Oka became a Christian in 1938 when he was twenty years old made him question the then "common sense" that "the emperor was a god for whom soldiers had to die."³ In 1937 when he was a soldier, he was ordered to go to Nanjing by a launch which was hit by a drifting mine in the Yanzi Jiang river. When the mine exploded under the launch, he was poised in the air and immediately wondered what to do with "Banzai (Long live our emperor!)" that soldiers were supposed to say before they died. He wrote in his

autobiography, “To my surprise, it was not ‘Banzai’ but ‘Mommy’ that I exclaimed and I was relieved to know that nobody was listening to me.”⁴ He became sick and was sent back to Japan and started reading the Bible eagerly again, which led him to becoming a Christian. However, his concept of Christianity was different from other Christians as he explained: “I would like to devote myself to changing Christianity qualitatively from the one that supported capitalistic structure to the one that is the motive power of the social revolution.”⁵ Here it is clear that he was influenced by his brother who was interested in socialism and Marxism. Oka refused to bow to the photo of the emperor or visit a shrine to the emperor during the war. When the atomic bomb was dropped on 6th August, 1945, he was in charge of a relief operation in Hiroshima and could not support the continuation of the war. He was a teacher of the Navy School at Etajima in Hiroshima at that time and made a speech to the teachers and his students that they should appeal to the emperor to stop the war immediately. He was “punched 49 times on his face by his seniors”⁶ and was placed in confinement in a prison for two days and was ordered to teach how to use a bayonet to 170 students. But he fished carps for the students to eat and let them enjoy taking a nap near a beautiful spring. When the emperor declared Japan’s defeat on 15th August, Oka wept all day not because Japan was defeated but because “he blamed himself that it was only six days when he resisted against the war though he served the Navy for eleven years and two months.”⁷ He thought that the emperor system should be abolished, but the emperor was kept as “the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power”⁸ according to Article 1 of the new Japanese Constitution. Oka kept demanding that this article be deleted, which has been almost a taboo to say in Japan.

He studied theology at Japan Lutheran Theological School in Tokyo and was appointed as a minister of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church⁹ in Nagasaki in 1956. He had married Mitsue Takeda in 1945 who passed away because of tuberculosis in 1952 and Oka moved to Nagasaki with his two children aged 10 and 8. He became active to promote peace and protect human rights: he became active in the peace movement against atomic bombs and formed the Nagasaki Citizens’ Congress for Protecting Human Rights of which he became the secretary-general in 1970.

Citizens started to support him to run as an independent candidate in the elections for the Nagasaki City Assembly in 1971. He was elected as a member and began to publish a newsletter in order to inform the electorate about his activities at the assembly. It was published until August, 1994, even though he had retired in 1983. He refused to accept a medal¹⁰ from the State in 1972 to honour his war services because he regretted that he supported Japan’s aggression. He also thought, “I wanted to resist against the stupidity [of the State] to give ranks and medals to living human beings.”¹¹ His idea that citizens should be equal led to his refusal to accept various privileges of being a member of the

Nagasaki City Assembly. He refused to accept ¥14,247,040 (about £71,235)¹² as a reward for having been a member of the Nagasaki City Assembly when he retired in May, 1983. He enjoyed devoting himself to working for the citizens of Nagasaki City and urged them to talk to him about environmental issues, welfare, aids for the atomic bomb victims, human rights issues, etc.

He thought that he should deal with peace and human rights issues as a Christian, criticizing the role of “Christianity that supported Japan’s aggression”¹³ during World War II. He also criticized “the church that preached the importance of justice, equity and love without tackling imperialism, militarism, aggression, the violation of human rights, discrimination, oppression, the destruction of the environment, etc.”¹⁴ He was so radical that some members of his church did not support his activities for peace and human rights. The conflict between Oka and his believers was difficult to solve because “the decrease in the number of his believers influenced the financial situation of the church.”¹⁵ He was especially concerned with two issues in his life: he tried to solve the problems that Koreans had because they were forced to work in Japan during the war and suffered from the atomic bombing, and he also dealt with the emperor system issue which was not solved to his satisfaction after the war.

2. The Investigation of Korean Forced Labourers and Atomic Bomb Victims

Oka became a member of the board of directors of Gensuikyo (the Japan Council against Atomic & Hydrogen Bombs) in 1960. He insisted on the urgent aid for Korean victims of the atomic bomb because they had been suffering from forced labour. He founded the Nagasaki Association for Protecting Human Rights of Koreans Living in Japan in 1965 and became the head of the association. Thinking of Korean atomic bomb victims in Nagasaki, the Memorial of Nagasaki Atomic Bombed Korean Victims was created near the epicentre of the atomic bomb on 9th August, 1979. Oka appealed to citizens to donate money to erect the memorial to make atonement for Japan’s aggression and about 800,000 yen (£4,000) was donated. The inscription says, “For the Koreans and their families who were killed by the atomic bomb when they were forced to work hard because of the conscription.”¹⁶ In the same year Oka successfully demanded that the Nagasaki city authority investigate the actual conditions of Korean atomic bomb victims. The result of the investigation was reported in 1981 and revealed that there were “12,000 to 13,000 Korean atomic bomb victims and 1,400 to 2,000 Koreans were killed.”¹⁷ Oka criticized that the number was too small and started to investigate the issue as the leader of the Nagasaki Association for Protecting Human Rights of Koreans Living in Japan. It was found that “19,391 Koreans at least were atomic bombed and 9,169 Koreans were killed”¹⁸. The result of the investigation was published in a book entitled *Genbakuto Chousenjin* (The Atomic Bomb and Koreans) of which the first volume was published in 1982. Oka

found that “the government decided [in 1939] to take Koreans to Japan so that they could work at important industries such as coal mines, civil engineering, construction, etc. Thus Koreans were taken to Japan not for the personal reason but for the national plan.”¹⁹ Oka criticized the Japan-Korea Treaty concluded in 1965 because “Korea abandoned the Korean right of the legal claim for damages by the atomic bombing, and the Japanese government made it unnecessary to investigate the reality of Korean atomic bomb victims and aid them.”²⁰ He insisted that “the Japanese who are responsible for Japan’s aggression should be active to build hospitals for Korean atomic bomb victims, send excellent doctors and give them the best treatment and take measures to aid them.”²¹

The association also investigated the lives of about 70,000 Koreans who were forced to go to Nagasaki and work there as slaves during World War II. The result of the investigation was published in *Genbakuto Chousenjin* (The Atomic Bomb and Koreans): Vol. 2 in 1983, Vol. 3 in 1984, Vol. 4 in 1986 and Vol. 5 in 1991. Koreans who were forced to work in Saga Prefecture next to Nagasaki are reported in the same book, Vol. 6, published in 1994 when Oka passed away. These books began to be known in the Republic of Korea and Oka was asked to give a lecture on “the actual circumstances of Korean Atomic Bomb victims and the reflection on the Korea-Japan relation” by Korea Fellowship of Reconciliation in 1992. The Koreans who listened to Oka were so impressed that he was respected as “a rare reliable Japanese.”²² The Korean atomic bomb victims selected Seok Im Soon and her child living in the Republic of Korea to go to Japan to treat their sickness thanks to Oka’s efforts to aid them in 1994 because Oka went to the Republic of Korea in 1993 and listened to their experiences in Nagasaki. He planned street fund-raising and took the initiative in carrying it out. It should be noted that it was not the Japanese government but citizens such as Oka who worked very hard to aid the Korean atomic bomb victims. The facts that the members of the Nagasaki Association for Protecting Human Rights of Koreans Living in Japan discovered are very important because the evidences of Japan’s war crimes were destroyed by the organizations involved after Japan’s defeat. Some of the facts began to be exhibited at the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum. For example, the life of a Korean atomic bomb victim named Seo Jung Woo was made clear by the investigation of the association in 1983 after Oka retired from the Nagasaki City Assembly. Seo Jung Woo’s life is documented in detail in “The Atomic Bomb and Koreans, Vol. 2”²³, and later was exhibited at the peace museum.

3. The Lawsuit for the Separation of Religion and Government

The second preoccupation of Masaharu Oka was his lawsuit against Nagasaki City authority that gave subsidies to some associations that maintained 14 monuments for the soul of the soldiers who died out of loyalty to the emperor. He regarded the monuments as “the religious foundation to glorify Japan’s aggressive war in Asia”²⁴ and thought that

the Nagasaki City authority should not give subsidies to any religious organizations. Oka insisted that the subsidies for the monuments were “against Article 20 that stipulates the freedom of religion and Article 89 that restricts the use of public expenditure for religious groups in the Constitution.”²⁵ He started a lawsuit against Nagasaki City authority in August, 1982 demanding that it return 560,000 yen (about £2,800) that was used for 14 monuments in 1981. The Nagasaki District Court ruled in 1990 that the subsidies to 13 memorials were legal because they are monuments, but one payment was illegal because it concerned not a monument but a religious facility of the Shinto religion²⁶. Nagasaki City Mayor Hitoshi Motojima was ordered to pay back 4,000 yen (£200). Both Oka and Motojima appealed to Fukuoka High Court which ruled in 1992 that the money used by the Nagasaki City authority was legal because all of 14 recipients of subsidies are monuments and the groups that erected them were not religious. Oka criticized the ruling because it was against the separation of religion and politics that is stipulated in the Constitution. The trial at the Supreme Court was not possible because Oka passed away.

Oka was criticized by a nationalists’ organization that supported the monuments. They used big vehicles with loudspeakers from 18th February to 2nd April, 1983 (forty-four days) and on 7th March burst into the assembly hall of the Nagasaki City Assembly and one of them struck Oka. When Oka was asked if he would like the nationalist to be punished severely by a prosecutor, he said, “Of course not! I hope that he will be treated generously.”²⁷

These two concerns of Oka show his attitude towards the authorities and also his strong sense of responsibility as a Japanese citizen for Japan’s aggression of other Asian countries.

It is unfortunate that Oka passed away before he could found the peace museum. But his nine supporters borrowed 40 million yen (£200,000) from a bank and founded the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum in 1995. The aims of the peace museum are not only educating citizens and children but also empowering them to act for peace and reconciliation with other Asian people.

Now I’d like to mention the Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace which has a close relation with the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum.

II. The Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace

1. Matsui Yayori’s Life

The Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace (WAM) was founded in Tokyo and was opened on 1st August, 2005 as the sister peace museum of the Oka Masaharu Memorial

Nagasaki Peace Museum. It is “the world’s first museum to focus on violence against women and Japan’s first museum to record the facts of the suffering of Japan’s military sexual slaves.”²⁸ The initiator is Yayori Matsui (1934-2002) who was a prominent journalist for 33 years and an activist for women’s human rights, especially those who were oppressed such as women who were forced to work as sexual slaves during World War II. Why did she become active against war and work for women’s rights? She was deeply influenced by her parents.

Her father, Shouji Hirayama, became Christian when he was a student of Otaru University of Commerce in Hokkaido. But he was forsaken by his father because becoming a Christian was regarded as a shame for his family before World War II. He wanted to study theology and studied at Doshisha University in Kyoto. He protested against Japan’s aggression of China when he was a student: he gave anti-war speeches in Kyoto. Akiko Imai fell in love with him and proposed him, which was rare for a Japanese woman to propose to a man. Before Akiko went to Kyoto, she was a secondary school teacher in Matsuyama and became a Christian because she was influenced by her sister. She started to study theology at Doshisha University in Kyoto when she was 29, which was a rare way of life as a Japanese woman at that time. Yayori Matsui was born in 1934 when her parents were still students without marrying, which was also rare at that time. She was deeply loved by her parents and was a happy child. Yayori’s father started working for a church in Tokyo after he graduated from Doshisha University.

His family evacuated from Tokyo to Tochigi Prefecture in 1944 because Yayori’s father was afraid of U.S. air-raids on Tokyo. They stayed at a minister’s house, but Christians were looked coldly on because they were regarded as spies who believed in enemy’s religion. They were even watched by special police. Soon the church was occupied by soldiers and Yayori Matsui started fearing the military and hating it when she was ten years old: she was shocked by violence in the military. She had to work in rice fields instead of going to elementary school, which was hard for her. She suffered from shortage of food, which led to her sympathy with the poor children in Asia later. Her father was drafted and sent to China in March, 1945. He was severely tortured in the military because he was a Christian minister. He thought that it would be much better for him to die instead of killing Chinese people and refused to eat. As a result, he was sent to a hospital because of mal-nutrition. Later he talked about Japan’s cruel acts in China to his family and told them that it is a human way of life for the Japanese to compensate Chinese people for their suffering. He founded Yamanote Church in Tokyo and became a minister in 1948. He also founded Japanese Christian Peace Association and anti-war peace declaration was displayed at the entrance of his church. He became active in anti-nuclear movement and anti-Vietnam War, and his church became an important base for peace movement. Yayori’s mother studied hard to become a minister and later became a

vice-minister at Yamanote Church. She also became active in anti-nuclear movement and also working for women's rights. She was also busy running a kindergarten and girls' dormitory.

Yayori was influenced by militaristic education at school when she was an elementary school pupil. She wrote in her essay that she would study hard so that Japan would not be defeated when she was the first grader at Hikawa elementary school in 1941. However, she was influenced by her parents who were active in peace movement. Yayori wrote in her biography that she learned anti-war ideas by her father, and a dynamic way of life, positive way of thinking, power of action and optimism from her mother. Yayori wrote that her father gave her such books as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Les Miserables*: she was educated by her father to have strong sense of justice and work for the oppressed.

She started studying English at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in 1955 because she thought that English would be necessary to protest against the United States that dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. She belonged to Newspaper Club and also Study Club on Max Weber and Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* in which she was the only female student. She was disappointed in her college life because there were many female students who were only interested in male students while male students regarded her unusual and exceptional. In 1957 she had a chance to study as an exchange student in the United States for one year. She studied International Relations at the University of Minnesota. When she went to Memphis in the State of Tennessee by bus, she was disappointed in racism against Afro-Americans and Asians. When she tried to wait for a bus at a waiting room, there were two entrances: one was written as "White" and the other was written as "Coloured". When she went to a room for the coloured, the black people told her to go to the other room. When she went to a room for the white, she was watched by white people and felt uncomfortable though she was not told to go out. This made her think of her own identity as an Asian. However, she was very surprised at men's polite manners to women: her professor helped her wear her coat and opened a door of a car for her. She felt as if she was a queen in the United States because a woman was just like a servant for man in Japan. She was also impressed by American women's power: it was all right for women to speak out and act freely while it was not so in Japan. Next she started to study at la Sorbonne in France and studied there for one year. This is because she wanted to work for an international organization and she thought that it would be better to study French. She enjoyed learning French culture while working as a baby sitter. She also enjoyed meeting students from Latin America. However, she faced racism against Asians and got disappointed in French democracy. She felt that she was looked down upon by French family for whom she worked as a baby sitter. Furthermore, she had a horrible experience: she was almost raped by a French man who worked for the Customs and told her to get her luggage in his room. She used a ship on the way to Japan and had

a chance to visit India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Hong Kong. She was shocked to meet Asian people who had suffered from poverty as a result of Western colonization and Japan's invasion. She felt anger, sadness and despair on the way back to Japan. Her study experiences in the United States and France and visiting Asian countries gave her global viewpoints.

2. Yayori Matsui's works as a journalist

In 1961 she became a journalist of Asahi Newspaper probably because she was educated in the United States and France. It was before the Olympics were held in Tokyo and a journalist who had knowledge of English and French was necessary. She was the only female journalist who was employed then. When she started working as a journalist, other male journalists doubted her ability and asked her, "Can a woman work as a journalist?" She was so shocked that she quietly decided to do a big job someday in the future. It was not long before she wrote good articles on agriculture issues, the gap between cities and the country, women's overwork, lack of nursery school, milk contaminated with agricultural chemicals, children who suffered from water pollution, and so forth.

In 1980 Yayori Matsui wrote an article on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. Her article criticized the Japanese government that had refused to sign the treaty. Many Japanese women protested against the government and the Japanese government was forced to sign it in 1980 and ratified it in 1985. Yayori Matsui used to wish that she had been a man because of sex discrimination. In Japan it was reported that women who are active in their liberation movement "commit brassieres to the fire" and "they are awful because they learn karate." But she was influenced by American women's liberation movement in 1970-1971 when she visited the United States to write articles on environmental issues. She began to be proud of herself as a woman and started to think the importance of solving gender issues. This changed her personal life also: She married when she started working as a journalist, but she began to feel that her marriage was a burden. She was so busy working as a journalist that she didn't have time to cook and do house chores. Her husband's friends sympathised with him, but nobody sympathised with her. This made her wonder why only she had to feel sorry for not doing house chores while men and women should be equal.

She began to concentrate on working as a journalist in Asian countries from 1981 to 1985 and divorced in 1985 when she was 50. First, she was asked to work in New York by her boss, but she told him that she would like to work in Asia. This made him very surprised because most of the journalists preferred working in New York or London, which would

lead to their promotion. Yayori wanted to visit many countries in Asia and write articles on Asian people from the viewpoint of women and the grassroots.

Yayori wrote many articles on people in Asia in the 1980s. She reported Cambodian people's sufferings from genocide by Pol Pot, Vietnamese's suffering from the use of defoliants, women's suffering from poverty in Bangladesh, women's activities to protect trees in India, women dealing with gender issues in Pakistan, women dealing with poverty in Nepal, working women in Burma, education in Laos, Indonesian children whose fathers are Japanese, fighting against nuclear waste from Japanese companies in Malaysia, prostitution in Thailand, saving girls from prostitution in the Philippines, women workers exploited by foreign companies in Sri Lanka, Philippine women working in Hong Kong, pollution in Taiwan, massacre of Chinese people in Singapore and so forth.

She also wrote articles on the role of European NGOs in sustainable development and development education for a just and sustainable world. She insisted on the importance of watching Japan's ODA (Official Development Assistance) because it destroyed Asian people's life and helped Japanese companies profit. Yayori also dealt with environmental issues: she wrote articles on indigenous people's resistance against Japanese companies to protect rain forests.

Many articles that she wrote were rejected by her boss and she began to publish them in NGO's newsletters and books. She published 18 books in Japanese, 2 books in English (*Women's Asia* published by Zen Books in 1989 and *Women in the New Asia* by Zen Books in 1996), one in Indonesian and one in Hangul.

3. Matsui's works for NGOs

She felt a limit working as a journalist and founded some NGOs such as Asian Women's Association in 1977, Asia-Pacific Research Center in 1995, Network for Japanese Filipino Children in 1994 and Violence Against Women in War Network in 1998.

In 1973 when she read an article on Japanese men in Christian newspaper, she was very shocked to find that poor Korean women had been selling their bodies to Japanese men. She regarded this as Japan's sexual invasion and the repetition of Japan's colonialism. She started writing articles on such women in Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan and Okinawa. This issue began to be dealt with at the Diet in Japan, but she began to be looked coldly on by male journalists at Asahi Newspaper bureau. A male journalist in the same newspaper bureau wrote an article that "international prostitution would never cease as long as there are men in rich countries and women in poor countries." On the other hand Yayori Matsui argued that this issue was not merely a matter of discrimination against women but

a matter of man's concept of woman, and such an issue of international prostitution is a North-South problem. The more she was criticised by male journalists, the more she thought and acted courageously.

4. Women's International War Crimes Tribunal for the Trial of Japan's Military Sexual Slavery

Yayori Matsui was one of the initiators of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal for the Trial of Japan's Military Sexual Slavery held in Tokyo in 2000. It should be noted that it is "a Peoples' Tribunal, a Tribunal conceived and established by the voices of global civil society. The authority for this Tribunal comes not from a state or intergovernmental organization but from the peoples of the Asia-Pacific region."²⁹ The World War II Allied states should have prosecuted Japanese officials for crimes before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Far East held in Tokyo from April 1946 to November 1948 because there was "the fact that they possessed ample evidence of rape and sexual slavery in the 'comfort system'."³⁰ The reason why the People's Tribunal was held is that the Japanese government has been ignoring the victims' demands such as "the investigation of the matter, Japan's apology and compensation, the punishment of the responsible persons, the explanation of the sexual slavery issue in school textbooks and memorial services."³¹

One of the Chief Prosecutors was Patricia Viseur Sellers, an Afro-American who was the Legal Adviser for Gender-Related Crimes in the Office of the Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the one for Rwanda. The other Chief Prosecutor was Ustinia Dolgopol, a Lecturer in Law at Flinders University of South Australia and a staff member of the International Commission of Jurists that released its report on the former "Comfort Women" in 1994. This report urged the Government of Japan to "take immediate steps to provide full rehabilitation and restitution to the victims as it is clear that it bears a moral and legal obligation towards them. It also contains a list of recommendations as to how this should be done."³² Four judges were also well known experts of International Law and human rights in the world: Judge Gabriell Kirk McDonald (Afro-American judge and the former Chief Judge at the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia), Judge Carmen Argibay (Argentinean judge, the former judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia), Judge Christine Chinkin (Professor in International Law at the University of London) and Judge Willy Mutunga (the head of Kenya's Human Rights Commission). Sixty-four women who were forced to work as sexual slaves went to Japan to testify at the Tribunal from eight countries: China, East Timor, Indonesia, the Netherlands, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan. (The women of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea worked together.) The victims of the sexual slavery and two Japanese soldiers who raped women gave their testimony. The accused held some of the highest level

positions in the Japanese government and military during World War II: Hirohito Emperor Showa who was the Head of State of Japan and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Hideki Tojo who was Prime Minister and War Minister from October 1941 to July 1944 and eight other men and also the Government of Japan. The final judgment was presented in The Hague, the Netherlands on 4th December 2001. The ten accused were found guilty including Emperor Hirohito. The State of Japan was found responsible for the sexual crimes committed during World War II. The Tribunal found Japan's military sexual slavery system guilty as a crime against humanity. "The final judgment shows the calls for justice of the survivors."³³ This Tribunal has no real power to enforce its judgment, but "as a people's and women's initiative, it nonetheless carries the moral authority to demand their wide acceptance and enforcement of the judgment by the international community and civil society and pave the way for law reforms in national governments."³⁴

It is remarkable that the Tribunal was not much reported in Japan while it was widely reported in the media in other countries. Even more so is that the content of the TV program on the sexual violence during World War II broadcast by NHK on 30th January, 2001 was changed because of the pressure of politicians Shinzou Abe, the former Prime Minister, and Shouichi Nakagawa, the former Minister of Finance and Industry. The women who cooperated with the NHK in making the program filed a lawsuit in July, 2001 because the content was changed very much: the judgement that Emperor Hirohito and the State of Japan are responsible for the sexual crimes during the war was deleted. As a result, "it was not possible to understand who organized the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery and who were accused in the TV program."³⁵ However, it is encouraging that Ms Rumiko Nishino, the director of the Women's Active Museum, won the lawsuit at Tokyo High Court on 29th January, 2007. But NHK appealed to the Supreme Court and there will be a trial on 24th April, 2008.

In 2000 when the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal was held in Tokyo, Yayori Matsui's life was in danger because nationalists who denied the existence of the sexual slavery would attack her. She could not go home and had to stay at a different hotel to escape from the nationalists. But she said that it was much harder that Japanese media ignored the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal than being attacked by nationalists. She gave a speech on her activities for the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal at the conference of the International Peace Research Association held at Kyung Hee University in Suwon, the Republic of Korea in July, 2002.³⁶ When she found that she had liver cancer which would not be curable a few months later in October, 2002, she was shocked and thought what she could do for the better future. She started to think of founding a women's museum on war and peace and wrote in her will that all her property should be used for the foundation of the museum, which made it possible for her to sleep well at night. She had only two months and a half before she passed away, but

she did her best to found the peace museum and wrote her autobiography. Many friends were shocked to know about her illness, but her decision of creating a museum for women was supported by many people not only in Japan but also in other countries. Her life was exhibited at the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace in December, 2005.

It was very encouraging for the members of the Women's Active Museum to be awarded International Peace Prize by Pax Christi International in 2007. This is because their hard works for peace at grass-roots level have been ignored in media. The museum has been under threat by nationalists: over twenty nationalists visited the museum using loud speakers and denied the historical facts on sexual slavery on 27th January, 2008. The members of the museum and visitors were scared, but the nationalists left there when the police were called and went there. Ms Nishino, the director of the WAM, said that the nationalists were not arrested though citizens who handed out fliers near a bus stop had been arrested in her email dated 27th January 2008. Such a different attitude toward citizens and nationalists is related to the situation that the Japanese government still rejects the historical fact on sexual slavery during World War II. It is a shame that Prime Minister Fukuda ignores the resolution urging Japan to apologize for its military's sexual enslavement of young women in Asia during the war that was passed at the U.S. House of Representatives on 30th July, 2007, at the House of Commons in Canada on 28th November, 2007, at the Netherlands' lower chamber of parliament on 11th November, 2007, at the European Parliament on 13th December, 2007, and at the House of Representatives in the Philippines on 11th March, 2008. However, it is encouraging that citizens have been making efforts for peace and reconciliation with Asian people.

III. Conclusion

The Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum was founded by citizens who worked with Masaharu Oka who was the initiator of the peace museum. His support of Korean atomic bomb victims in the 1960s, the investigation of Korean Forced Labourers in the 1970s and the publication of the results in the 1980s were epoch-making because Japan's aggressive aspect was not dealt with in general for a long time. The important characteristic of the peace museum is that the emphasis is put on Japan's aggression in the exhibitions which was not dealt with at many public peace museums.

Besides using the exhibitions, citizens have been active to promote peace and reconciliation between Japan and other Asian countries: supporting the Chinese lawsuit, inviting victims of the Nanjing Massacre, visiting China and educating citizens and young people on the trip. The peace museum is run by the 176 members³⁷ and supporters, and the financial situation is difficult. However, the active citizens' hard and steady work for peace and reconciliation is encouraging and significant under the circumstances that the Japanese government has not apologized and compensated the victims of Japan's

aggression for suffering and the damages, and the nationalists deny Japan's aggression and glorify World War II.

Emeritus Professor Yasunori Takazane of Nagasaki University, the director of the peace museum, has been playing an important role as a researcher. Teachers such as Mr. Tomohiro Shinkai and retired teachers have also been playing important roles in education for peace. Ordinary citizens such as homemakers have been playing the role of receptionist and have supported the peace museum in many different ways. Now a German conscientious objector has been working since 2007.

The Women's Active Museum on Peace and War in Tokyo was founded in 2005 while the exhibitions on the sexual slavery issues were removed from public peace museums under the pressure of nationalists except at the Osaka International Peace Centre. Yayori Matsui played an important role as its initiator.

What is common between Masaharu Oka and Yayori Matsui is that both of them had a strong sense of justice and worked hard for peace and reconciliation with other Asian Victims of Japan's aggression. Both of them have been ignored in media and are not well known for their works for peace, but they should be recognized as peace pioneers not only in Japan but also in the world.

¹ Oka, Masaharu. *Michi Hitosujini* (Devotion). Nagasaki, Shouwadoh, 1975, p. 90.

² *ibid.*, p. 139.

³ *ibid.*, p. 140.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 96.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 109.

⁶ Oka Masaharu Memorial Book Publishing Committee. *Koruio Mamoru Tatakai* (Struggles for Protecting the Only Fort). Nagasaki, Koubunsha, 1995, p. 28.

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

⁸ Nishimori, Shigeo., ed. *The Flame of Hiroshima and Article 9*. Kochi, Grassroots House, 1995, p. 38.

⁹ Protestantism was introduced to Japan in 1859 and the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church started its mission in 1893. Oka, *op. cit.*, 1975, p. 207.

¹⁰ A medal began to be given to persons who contributed to the state or the public since 1964. The relation between Japan and China was normalized in 1972 and it is ironic that the government tried to give Oka a medal for his war services. It is possible to think that Oka could not accept the system that the emperor awards a medal to selected persons who committed cruelties during the war. The information on the Order in Japan is available at the website of <http://www8.cao.go.jp/intro/kunsho/enkaku.html>.

¹¹ Oka, op. cit., 1975, p. 182.

¹² Oka Masaharu Memorial Book Publishing Committee. op. cit., 1995, p. 446.

¹³ Oka, op. cit., 1975, p. 208.

¹⁴ Oka Masaharu Memorial Book Publishing Committee. op. cit., 1995, p. 108.

¹⁵ Yasunori Takazane pointed out the difficult relations between Oka and his believers in his email to the author on 2nd December, 2005.

¹⁶ The memorial was well taken care of when the author visited Nagasaki and saw the memorial on 1st October, 2005.

¹⁷ Oka Masaharu Memorial Book Publishing Committee, op. cit., 1995, p. 9.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁹ Oka, Masaharu. *Genbakuto Chousenjin* (The Atomic Bomb and Koreans) Vol. 1. Nagasaki, Koubunsha, 1982, p. 4. Oka quoted this part from *Zainihon Chousenjin Gaikyou* (The general conditions of Koreans living in Japan), but the details of this book are not given in Oka's book.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 9.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 10.

²² Oka Masaharu Memorial Book Publishing Committee, op. cit., 1995, p. 10.

²³ Oka, Masaharu. *Genbakuto Chousenjin* (The Atomic Bomb and Koreans) Vol. 2. Nagasaki, Koubunsha, 1983, pp. 69-77.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 69.

²⁵ Oka Masaharu Memorial Book Publishing Committee, op. cit., 1995, p. 10.

²⁶ Shinto is a native religion of Japan and was once its state religion: the emperor was regarded as a god and the Japanese were expected to obey him. Soldiers were taught that they should die for the emperor after which they would be enshrined at the Yasukuni Shrine. After World War II, Shinto lost its status of state religion, but many monuments were erected all over Japan to console the soul of the soldiers who died for the emperor. The monuments tend to glorify the death of the soldiers and there is no reflection on Japan's aggression and the sufferings of the victims.

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- ²⁷ Oka Masaharu Memorial Book Publishing Committee, op. cit., 1995, p. 164.
- ²⁸ Quoted from the leaflet of the Women's Museum on War and Peace.
- ²⁹ Violence Against Woman in War Network Japan, op. cit., 2001, p. 2.
- ³⁰ Violence Against Woman in War Network Japan. *The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal*. Tokyo, VAWW-NET Japan, 2001, p. 1.
- ³¹ *ibid.*, p. 8.
- ³² http://www.icj.org/news.php3?id_article=3372&lang=en
[accessed on 19th December, 2005].
- ³³ <http://www.jca.apc.org/video-juku/haag-eng.html>
[accessed on 19th December, 2005].
- ³⁴
http://koreaweb.ws/pipermail/koreanstudies_koreaweb.ws/2000-October/002116.html
[accessed on 19th December, 2005].
- ³⁵ VAWW-NET Japan. *NHK Bangumi Kaihento Seiji Kainyuh* (The Change of NHK Program and Political Intervention). Tokyo, Seori Shobou, 2005, p. 87.
- ³⁶ Her speech was so powerful that it was strongly applauded by the audience including the author.
- ³⁷ The number of the members is 176 as of November, 2005 according to the report of the third general meeting.