

Peace Statue: Tribute for Comfort women of WW II

Korean-Canadian Organization
in Metro Vancouver



What is Comfort women ?

- ▶ Comfort women were women and girls forced into sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese Army before and during World War II.



How many were they?

- ▶ Estimates vary as to how many women were involved, with numbers ranging from as low as 20,000 to as high as 360,000 to 410,000, in Chinese sources but the exact numbers are still being researched and debated.



Where they come from?

- ▶ Many of the women were from occupied countries, including Korea, China, and the Philippines, although women from Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan (then a Japanese dependency), Indonesia (then the Dutch East Indies), East Timor (then Portuguese Timor), and other Japanese-occupied territories were used for military "comfort stations". A smaller number of women of European origin from the Netherlands and Australia were also involved.



How they were involved?

- ▶ According to testimony, young women from countries in Imperial Japanese custody were abducted from their homes. In many cases, women were also lured with promises of work in factories or restaurants; once recruited, the women were incarcerated in comfort stations in foreign lands.



How they are treated?

- ▶ Approximately three quarters of comfort women died, and most survivors were left infertile due to sexual trauma or sexually transmitted diseases. Beatings and physical torture were said to be common.



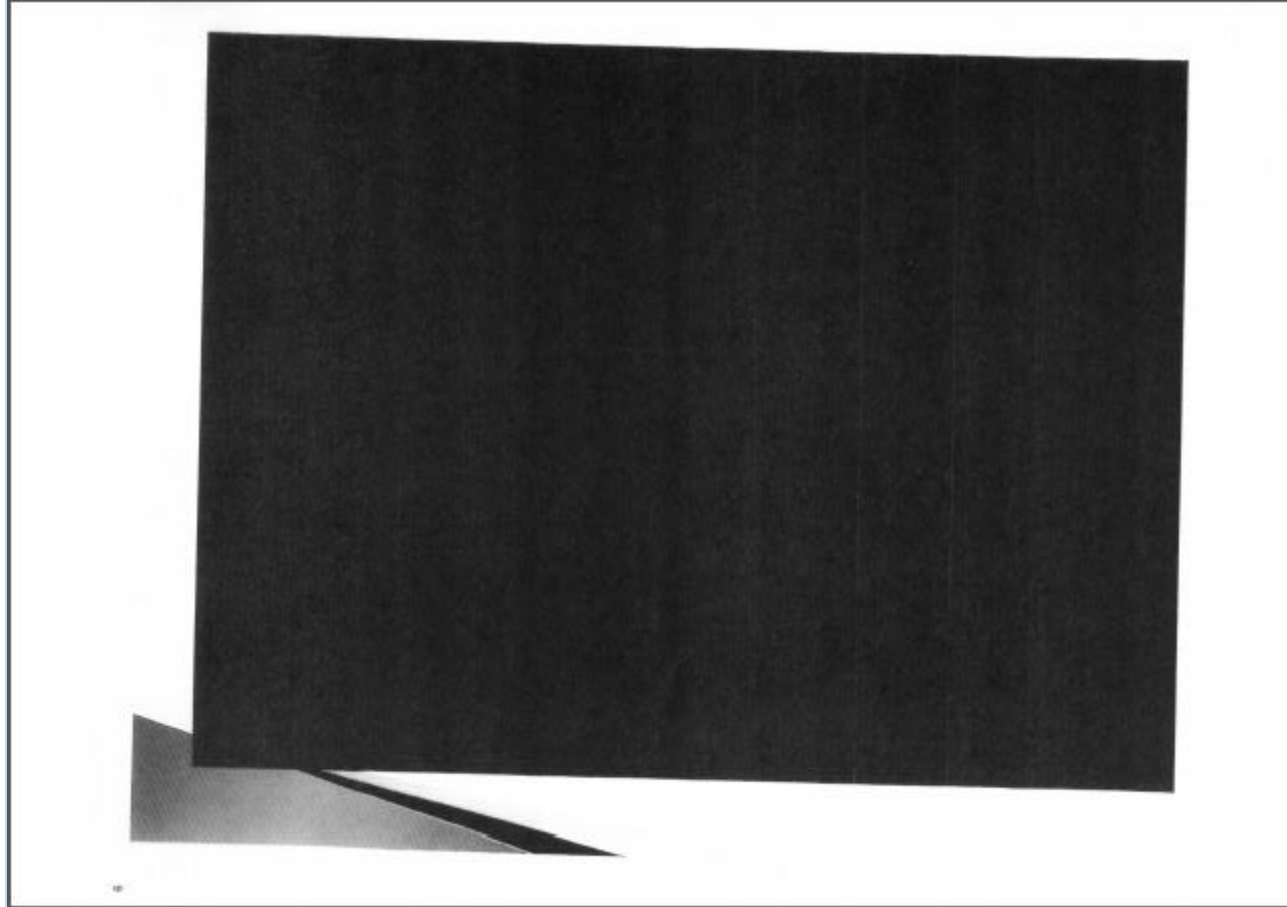
Jan Ruff-O'Herne testified to a U.S.
House of Representatives committee:

- ▶ Many stories have been told about the horrors, brutalities, suffering and starvation of Dutch women in Japanese prison camps. But one story was never told, the most shameful story of the worst human rights abuse committed by the Japanese during World War II:



Jan Ruff-O'Herne testified to a U.S.
House of Representatives committee:

- ▶ The story of the "Comfort Women", and how these women were forcibly seized against their will, to provide sexual services for the Imperial Japanese Army. In the "comfort station" I was systematically beaten and raped day and night. Even the Imperial Japanese doctor raped me each time he visited the brothel to examine us for venereal disease.
- ▶ Movie regarding



Arrangements

Q 1: What exactly is being provided by the delegation (sculpture only? Podium? Plaque?), and what is expected from the City?

A 1: Sculpture, Podium, and Plaque will be provided by City of Hwasung, Korea.

Providing suitable space to build Peace Statue, caring, Maintenance, and security is expected from City of Burnaby

Q 2. Is there any anticipated timeline?

A 2. See the below sent by Hwasung city. But it will be discussed among Korean Canadian Organization members following both(Hwasung and Burnaby) cities' situation.

- 1.Hwaseong city plans to dispatch a few technical members on 18 February 2015 to setup the statue.
2. Mayor Chae and his entourage will follow on 22 February 2015 into Canada to perform Statue Unveiling Ceremony on 24 February 2014. And plans to return to Korea on 25 February 2015.

Q 3. What would the delegation want written on the plaque? What would the City want written on the plaque? Plaque on the ground plane, or elevated vertically? Who is arranging the final plaque text that is mutually agreed upon and presumably written in both languages?

A 3. See the next.

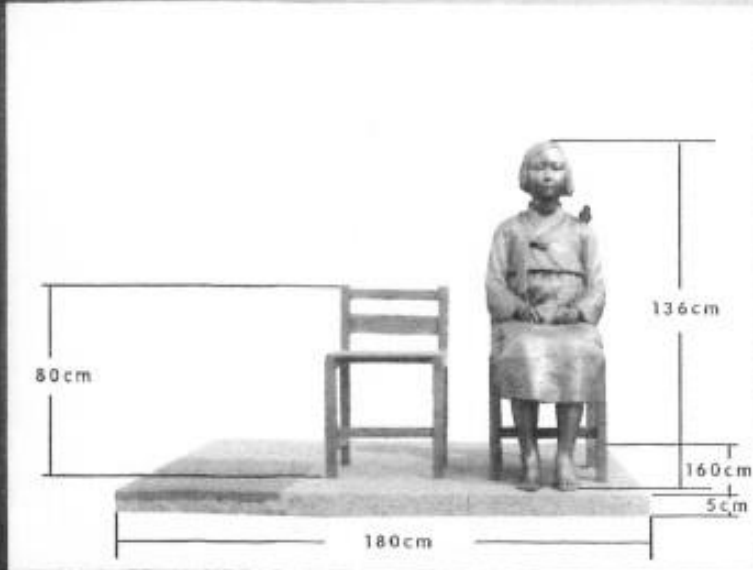


Q 5: Is there a preference of plaque design? (etched granite in place, or bronze plaque? Bronze plaques tend to get stolen unless mounted bulletproof; granite may be more in keeping with what was used in the rest of the plaza) Is there a preference for the podium design? (looks like a granite podium has been used and would be more elegant than concrete)

A 5: See the dimensions



Exact dimensions



Sculpture Material

- * Statue + Chair on the left ; Bronze
- * Bottom ; Granite stone + Obsidian (the bottom part is made of 6 blocs of 60cm X 80cm X 5cm size stones)

- * Total weight: 800 kg

- * Installation; After installing six blocks of bottom parts on concrete floor, holes were made to the granite stone of the statue and the chair, fixed with anchor bolts



Words in Podium(Hwasung)

▶ 평화의 소녀상 비문

▶ 일본 제국주의에 의해 일본군 위안부로 강제 동원되어 피해를 당한 여성들을 추모하고, 일본군 위안부 피해자들의 명예와 인권을 회복하며,
▶ 다시는 전쟁과 폭력으로부터 인간의 존엄이 말살되는 범죄행위가 되풀이 되지 않기를 바라면서, 대한민국 화성시민들과 밴쿠버 한인들의 뜻을 모아 자매도시인 버나비시에 이비를 세웁니다.

▶ 2015. 2. .

▶ 밴쿠버 한인단체

▶ 화성시 여성단체

TO COMMEMORATE THOSE WHO WERE FORCEFULLY TAKEN BY THE JAPANESE MILITARY TO BE THEIR SEXUAL SLAVERY AND TO RESTORE THEIR HUMAN DIGNITY AND HONOR, WITH HOPE THAT THE CRIMINAL ACT IN VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS BY WARFARE OR ANY FORMS OF VIOLENCE WOULD NEVER RECUR ON THIS LAND.

WITH HWASEONG CITIZENS OF REPUBLIC OF KOREA and KOREAN-CANADIANS CITIZENS IN METRO VANCOUVER IN ONE HEART, WE ERECT A MONUMENT IN THE SISTER CITY OF BURNA BY.

FEBRUARY 2015

KOREAN-CANADIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN METRO-VANCOUVER

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN HWASEONG CITY, REPUBLIC OF KOREA



- ▶ Q 6. Is it desirable to have the sculpture accessible to persons in wheelchairs, or can it be stepped up on a podium?
- ▶ A 6. See the next.





Q 7: What was the inspiration and meaning for the sculpture and who is providing it? (this may assist with the podium design but will also be necessary for any Council / Commission reporting)

A 7: See the next.

Q 8: Are there other such sculptures around the world and why?

A 8: See the next.



Production

- ▶ “I was a comfort woman for Imperial Japanese army” are the words those courageous Korean grandmothers who identified themselves as comfort women to Imperial Japanese Army in the colonial era.

On the day of 1000th (20 years) weekly demonstrations, a “Peace Statue” was made and installed in front of the Japanese Embassy in Korea in the hope of receiving an official apology and legal compensations from the Japanese government.

› <The Statue>

- › Statue of the Girl in *Hanbok* (Korean traditional dress): Since 1992, comfort women, now old ladies, identified themselves as “the comfort women who served Imperial Japanese army” and revealed the impudence of making young girls into sex slaves as well as the cruelty of the invasion war of Korea. Until this point, many people knew it was an act of injustice, but they didn’t fully realize that comfort women slavery was a great disservice to young girls of Korea.
- › The fault of comfort women slavery is not just the problem of the victims, but it is in fact to let the Japanese government know of their systematic atrocities of sexual abuse and violence to the young girls of Cho-sun, in order for the Japanese Embassy to face up squarely to history.
- › Thus, the statue has been made to symbolize the image of a young girl at the age between 13 and 15 wearing *Hanbok* before she was taken as a slave.

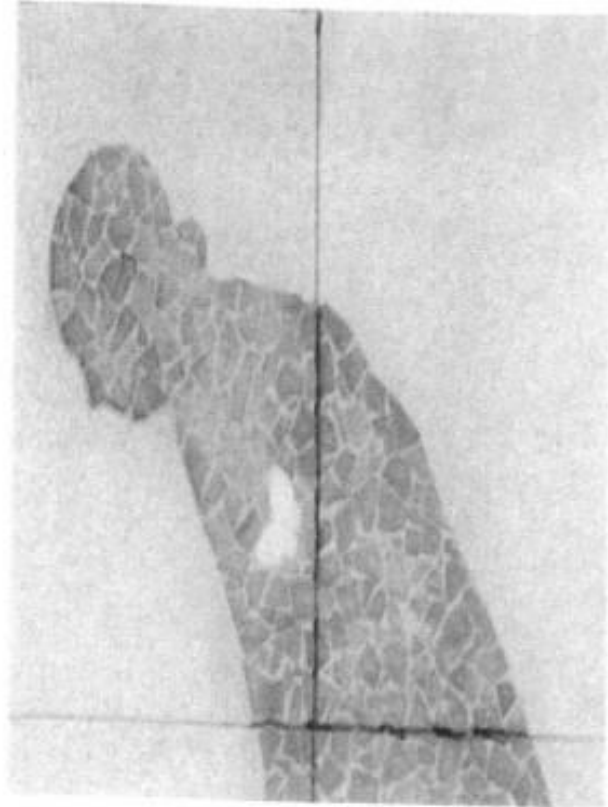
<Meanings behind the Symbols>



The shadow of an aged woman

- ▶ The statue is a figure of a young girl with the shadow of an old woman to show the current reflection of her. Is the person (the young girl) different from the shadow (the old woman) of herself?
- ▶ It has been a long time and the girl has become an aged old woman. The shadow represents the time of resentment and sorrow that the victims had been through without receiving a formal apology.

Won-Ok Gil, one of the victims, once said: "I can't forgive them for anything, not even for Japan itself. Give my life back!" Nothing can resolve the suffering the victims had buried in their hearts for the entire life.



The White Butterfly in the shadow

- There is a white butterfly at the heart of the aged woman's shadow. A lot of victims passed away one by one as they aged.
- They supported the Wednesday Protest rain or shine, waiting for the Japanese government to concede their wrongdoings and apologize. They left the world without resolving their deep sorrow. Butterflies usually symbolize reincarnation.

A white butterfly has been engraved in the heart of the shadow in the hope of the deceased victims reincarnated as butterflies receiving an apology from the Japanese government.



- ▶ It was common for young girls in *Chosun* period to have their hair tied with *daeng-gi* (a hair ribbon).
- ▶ Especially, hair was considered as a part of the body, and people were, traditionally, not to cut their hair. However, one may observe that the hair was cut off ruthlessly in the statue.
- ▶ This is to express the image of how the imperialism of Japan forced the disconnection from one's own hometown and parents.

<Hair cut off>

Hair is a part of your body given by your parents)



Clenching of the hands

There were a number of ideas and ites prior to producing the statue, and aft er a long pondering, it has been settl ed to build a statue of a girl.

In the beginning, the girl had her hands gently folded on her laps. While the p roduction was in process, Japanese g overnment, rather than apologizing, opposed the installation of the statue , and kept oppressing the Korean gov ernment to interrupt the process.

We were trembling with rage by their ac t of rude and despicable conduct. Th erefore, the gently folded hands were strengthened to clench to express pr omise and resolution to finish the pr oject.

Therefore, the gently folded h ands were strengthened to cle nch to express promise and r esolution to finish the project.



Heels of the bare feet unable to touch the ground

The girl is sitting barefoot. Her innocent feet remind of those who couldn't make it back and those who came back to their land and who could never ease their mind. It was not their fault, but the victims had lived their life feeling guilty for some reason. Finally, in 1992, they made a courageous confession. But even so, Korean government for the sake of diplomatic reasons, could not free the hearts of the victims.

The government of this country is neglecting its own people's resentment, and these people could not protect the young girls whose hair turned grey. The discomfort of the country is represented by the sculpture through the heels of bare feet unable to step firmly on the ground.



A small bird on the shoulder

Birds usually symbolize freedom and peace. It is a symbolic animal predominantly used in the works of art, literature, and movies.

There is another imbedded meaning other than freedom and peace in this case. Birds fly the sky and sit on the ground, acting as a medium to connect the living and the dead.

In other words, the sky is a place for the deceased, and the ground is for people alive, and the bird is the one that connects both places.

Even though some victims may have passed away, they are connected in spirit with us as well as the victims who are still alive.



Empty Chair

There are two meanings behind the empty chair.

First is to illustrate the loneliness of the empty seat after the victims had passed away in resentment before mending the wrongdoings of the Japanese government.

Second is to show the people, who may visit the Japanese Embassy, the cry of the victims and the feelings of those young girls at the moment by sitting in the empty chair beside the statue of the young girl.

Other sculptures around the world

- ▶ A statue of a girl symbolizing Korean comfort women during World War II has been unveiled in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendale in the U.S. The statue looks the same as the one in front of Japanese embassy in Seoul.



New Jersey Comfort women Memorial



Chinese comfort women memorial



| Date | Name | Place | Builder |
|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| 2010.10.23. | Comfort Women Memorial | Palisades Park, New Jersey. USA | |
| 2011.12.14. | Peace girl Award | Chong-Ro, Seoul. S. Korea | |
| 2012.06.20 | Comfort Women Memorial | Long Ireland, Nassau County. USA | |
| 2012.12.01 | Comfort Women Memorial | Garden Grove, Orange County. USA | |
| 2013.03.08 | Comfort Women Memorial | Bergen County. USA | County Gov |
| 2013.04.06. | Justice Memorial | Nammang Park, Tongyung. S. Korea | |

| Date | Name | Place | Builder |
|-------------|--|---|---------|
| 2014.01.17. | Peace girl Award | Jansengpo park, Guje. S. Korea | |
| 2014.01.19. | Resolution Memorial of Comfort women | Eisenhower Park, Nassau County. USA | |
| 2014.08.14. | Peace girl Award | Hwasung. S. Korea | |
| 2014.09.15 | Comfort Women | CGV Olympic Gym, Beijing. China | |

Estimated Budget for building of Peace Statue

▶ Revenue.

1. Fundraising from Korean communities in Metro Vancouver: \$80,000
2. Donation from Hwasung city and Burnaby city: \$10,000(Hopefully)
3. Donation form Korean government: \$10,000

▶ Expense

1. Set the protecting wall behind the Statue: \$60,000
2. Set the pass way for wheelchair access to the Statue: \$20,000
3. Cost of an unveiling ceremony: \$10,000
4. Cost of Fundraising: \$6,000
5. Administration Expense: \$4,000

- ▶ Our intention to build a Peace Statue is neither to blame Japan nor to punish Imperial Japanese Army in current.

We want people from all over the world know about the comfort women, and hope never this tragedy happens again.

We want people remind of women's dignities, protect women's purities, honors, chastity from any act of violence.



Thank you for your patience to
hear this presentation.

