8·14 Global “Comfort Women” International Memorial Day Commemorative Activities in China

To commemorate South Korean “comfort women” system victim Hak-soon Kim courageously broke the silence in 1991, support organizations from affected countries designated August 14 as the “International Memorial Day for the Victims of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery”. In order to mark the fifth of the world’s “comfort women” Memorial Day, PRC side will rely on the Chinese “Comfort Women” History Museum to conduct theme sharing activities promoting a just resolution to the issue of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery.

A. Showing Newly discovered Japanese historical Archives of “Comfort Women”

On August 14, Chinese “Comfort Women” History Museum will show the new found Japanese historical archives of “comfort women” in RPC: The Rules and List of Gyerim Organizations in Jinhua which Collected in Jinhua city, Zhejiang province, the old photos of comfort station in Lanxi county, Zhejiang province and in Songjiang district, Shanghai.

“Gyerim” is the title of a reigning dynasty of Silla, referring to Korean Peninsula, so the Koreans’ townsmen association named for “Gyerim”. In the WW II, as for Japanese colony, there are so many people in Korean Peninsula came to Jinhua for survive. This list recorded a number of comfort stations in Jinhua, and the number of “comfort women” accounted for more than 60% of the total number.
Partial content of The Rules and List of Gyerim Organizations in Jinhua

In addition to archives, museum will show the old photos of comfort station in Lanxi county, Zhejiang province and in Songjiang district, Shanghai. The picture of Songjiang comfort station bought from a deceased former Japanese soldier’s families, which shot by this soldier in Shanghai.
B. Chinese “Comfort Women” History Museum Second Engineering Project

On January 1938, Japanese armies built Yangjiazhai comfort station in Shanghai (Now in east Dong ShenJiazhai, Xiangyin Road, Yangpu District, Shanghai.) This is a larger comfort station operated by the Japanese army officially and early after the total aggression. When the Japanese defeated, they retreated and set fire to this 10 cabins. But according to former Japanese military surgeon Asō Tetsuo’s book From Shanghai to Shanghai, the museum restored a room based on the original appearance of the Yangjiazhai comfort station, opening to the public.
C. Chinese "Comfort Women" Theme Documentary Twenty Two National Release

During the Japanese War of aggression against China, at least 200 thousand women were forced to be "comfort women" by the Japanese invaders in China. In 2012, young director GuoKe shot documentary *ThirtyTwo* because at that time the national public identity of the "comfort women" survivors only 32 people. While in 2014, this figure becomes 22. From January to July 2014, in support of the China "Comfort Women" Research Center, GuoKe’s crew recorded survivors of the Japanese "comfort women" system throughout the country successively.

The film *Twenty Two* will release on August 14, 2017 in the country. From July to the present, the film has held many request shows for audience. On the day of release, museum will screen *ThirtyTwo*, posters and other materials of *Twenty Two* to support the documentary.
Posters of Twenty Two
This is a peaceful film which only records the survivors’ daily without war and condemnation, but it’s enough to make people cry. The fragmented, daily scenes shocked my heart. For these women who suffered sexual violence, this experience is hard to say, so they said “I can’t say anymore”, “I can not help crying when I think about these things”. Times goes by, the pain is still there. While the film also reveal warmth, whether the survivors’ adopted daughter, daughter-in-law, Chinese volunteers, or Korean photographers. Japanese female abroad students, people in the film are kindness.

These women have borne wounds from the war but still chose to live strongly and bravely. The average age of them is more than 90 years old, so they are more enjoy the present life peacefully. When I saw they talked about their life and smiled happily, I smiled unconsciously too. And I think this is probably “face the pain, not all day resentment, but never forget”.

What we can do now is to give them more comfort and attention when they are alive, so that more people will understand their experience and history. Will there be a just resolution and explanation given to them in the future? I believe that will be and I hope this day come as soon as possible.

Film critics from audience participated in the request screening

D. Caring Survivors

Under the various types of groups both at home and abroad and individuals actively contribute to the “comfort women” survivors since 2000, the “Comfort Women” Research Center provided living assistance with 100RMB a month to these verified “comfort women” survivors who live in mainland China, the monthly assistant had been added to 200RMB a month since 2006. Now the assistance is 5000 a year. From next year, the research center will raise the living aid fee again.

Every New Year’s Day, the volunteers of research center will deliver the assistance to every survivor personally through “New Year volunteer activities”. In winter and summer vacation, student volunteers from Shanghai Normal University also came to visit these elderly people. Now, with the popularization and dissemination of “Comfort Women” issue by national media, artist and the public, more and more compassion public figures from all over the country visit survivors continuously and spontaneously. On August 14, museum will introduce survivors’ situation like Wei Shaolan living in Guangxi province. We will also share the story between volunteers and survivors.
In March 2017, student volunteers from Shanghai Normal University with compassion public figures from America and the United Kingdom went to Guangxi province to visit survivors Wei Shaolan and her mixed-blood child Luo Shanxue.

On July 30, 2017, compassion public figures Ms. Liang and her friends went to Guangxi province to visit Wei Shaolan.