

## Daegu Citizen's Forum for Halmuni

Author: Daegu Citizen's Forum for Halmuni

The Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' issue surfaced for the first time in Korea in 1990, and it was the late grandma Ok-ju Moon who first came forward with the historic first testimony in the Greater Daegu metropolitan area in 1991. Since then, 26 other survivors registered with the government from this area.

In February 1995, Dae-gu Women's Association formed 'Comfort Women Issue Taskforce' and began supporting the survivors. In December of 1997, the Daegu Citizen's Forum for Halmuni was launched with a broad support from the citizens of Daegu.

As its goal, the Daegu Citizen's Forum is seeking to achieve a society that respects peace and basic rights of women and a world where justice is realized by resolving the issue of 'Japanese Military Comfort Women.'

### The Activities of the Daegu Citizen's Forum

#### ■ Bringing Resolution to the Issue of the 'Japanese Military Comfort Women.'

##### ● Actions towards the Japanese Government

The Citizen's Forum is demanding legal responsibility, official apology, and preventative measures from the Japanese government. The Citizen's Forum initiated and successfully carried out a 500,000-signature petition campaign that calls for the Japanese government to pass an appropriate legislation to resolve the issue, and successfully delivered the petitions to the Japanese government.

##### ● Actions toward Korean Government

The Daegu Citizen's Forum has been consistently demanding responsible stance of the Korean Government who has at times been passive in resolving the Japanese Military Comfort Women issue.

The Daegu Citizen's Forum proposed a legal proceeding at the Korean Constitutional Court, resulting in a decision in August, 2011 that the government of S. Korea is responsible for bringing a resolution to the issue.

Currently, The Forum is involved in a Coalition of organizations in Daegu to nullify the backdoor deal made on December 28, 2015 by the Japanese government and the Korean government.

##### ● Coalition work to resolve the past history between Korea and Japan

The Citizen's Forum has worked in various issue campaigns including but not limited to bring justice for those who suffered damages from the nuclear bombs, forced resettlement to Sakhalin, and Ukishima Incident, and led the effort to pass the legislation in S. Korea called 'Special law to establish historical facts of the forced labor under the Japanese Military rule' and successfully brought lawsuit to publicly disclose the contents of the Treaty between Korea and Japan.

##### ● Publicize, Educate, Memorialize

The Citizen's Forum has published survivors' testimonials and biography, and provided many presentations and lectures as a way to bring about public awareness to the issue of Japanese Military Comfort Women issue, and is working in coalition with Japanese allies to continuously oppose the efforts of Japanese government to whitewash and distort the history. Publications include 5 volumes of the survivors' biographies, called the "historical testimonies series" and the collection of 'pressed flower artworks' by the Grandmas, called "Grandma, falling in Love."

#### ■ Japanese Military Comfort Women Survivors Welfare Support

Out of the 238 survivors registered with the S. Korean government, 28 survivors reside in the Daegu and the Gyeongsangbuk-do area. The Citizen's Forum has been running programs for the surviving Grandmas, lending ears to the survivors' pains and sharing Grandmas' anger, and serving as warm and loving friend for them to talk to, visiting them regularly, providing regular health exams, hosting birthday celebrations, arranging short trips for them, and providing overall support to ensure their well-being. Daegu Citizen's Forum provided various emotional therapy and in particular, natural pressed flower activities were hailed as highly artistic and of quality, raising self-confidence of the survivors and stirring high emotions for many. As of November, 2020, one survivor resides in the City of Daegu, and another remaining survivor resides in the Gyeongsangbuk-do providence.

#### ■ Affiliated Museum: Japanese Military Comfort Women History Center, Heeum

Japanese Military Comfort Women History Center, Heeum, serves to memorialize the history of suffering and serves as a space for activism to resolve the Japanese Comfort Women issue. Furthermore, it is a history center that strives to build a society where peace and women's rights are respected through resolution of the issue.

Based on its various activities working with the surviving Grandmas, the Daegu Citizen's Forum established the "Committee to build a Japanese military "comfort women" history center" in 2009. This was made possible by the seed money of 50 million Korean Won, donated by late Soon-ak Kim, who left a will to "Never forget me even after I've died," to which other grandmas chipped in.

Citizen's Forum continued various nation-wide campaign to raise enough fund to build the history center, and numerous citizens joined in the efforts, including local artists and experts who have donated their talents and time. Many people responded to the Citizen's Forum's newly launched brand "Heeum," by purchasing merchandizes.

Many youth, in particular, joined the group-purchasing of Heeum products and donated their proceeds to the effort and also joined the campaign to resolve the issue. Through the effort of the Citizens' Group and support of various citizens, on December 5, 2015, the Heeum Japanese Military Comfort Women History Center opened its doors. [www.heeummuseum.com](http://www.heeummuseum.com)

#### ■ Brand Heeum

Heeum is a brand that invites people to participate in the efforts to resolve the Japanese military "comfort women" issue in their everyday lives. Artworks of the grandmas – by late Dal-yeon Shim, late Soon-ak Kim – have been used to create everyday merchandize such as echo-bag, pouches, and wristbands and other products.

Proceeds from the Heeum products was the biggest portion of the fund to build the Heeum Japanese Military Comfort Women History Center and currently the entirety of the proceeds is used for activism and operational expenses of the Center.

‘Gathering hopes and blossoming flowers’

Your participation can advance the resolution of the “comfort women” issue and bloom Grandmas’ hopes! Your participation and attention will bring the Japanese Military Comfort Women issue that much closer to a resolution and bloom a flower of hope of the Grandmas!

[www.joinheum.com](http://www.joinheum.com)