

TWO NOMINATIONS FOR UNESCO'S MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER:  
TONGZHOU MASSACRE; CHINESE AGGRESSION IN TIBET  
AND  
COMFORT WOMEN

On May 31, 2016 private organizations in Japan, Tibet, and the US submitted joint nominations for UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in two categories. UNESCO rules define a joint nomination as an application that transcends national boundaries, i.e., one submitted by organizations or individuals from more than one country.

The first category is "Records of Political Violence in Mainland China During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Against Tibet and Japan." It includes the massacre of Japanese residents of Tongzhou, China on July 29, 1937 (the Tongzhou Massacre), as well as victims of postwar political violence resulting from Chinese policies designed to eradicate the ethnic Tibetan population.

The second category is "Documents Concerning Comfort Women and Japanese Military Discipline." This is a Japan-US joint nomination, and its purpose is the registration of resources shedding light on the true nature of the comfort-women system.

In May 2016 we established an NGO (Fund for Archives of the Tongzhou Massacre) to raise money for the discovery, analysis, preservation, and dissemination of resources pertaining to the Tongzhou Incident.

Supporting the Tongzhou Massacre-Tibet nomination at a press conference held on June 3, 2016 and sponsored by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform were Fujioka Nobukatsu and Saraki Yoshihisa (chair and deputy chair, respectively, of the Fund for Archives of the Tongzhou Massacre), Pema Gyalpo (director, Tibet Culture Center), and Miura Kotaro. Supporting the comfort-women nomination were Yamamoto Yumiko, Fujiki Shun'ichi, and Fujii Mitsuhiko. These representatives will coordinate with the relevant UNESCO subcommittees; they are hoping to have accomplished registration by October 2017.

The Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform will support their efforts in every way possible.

An overview of the nominations follows.

I. Records of Political Violence in Mainland China During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Against Tibet and Japan

Applicants: Fund for Archives of the Tongzhou Massacre (Japan); Gyari Bhutuk (Tibet)

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century Mainland China exercised political violence against citizens of other nations and other ethnic groups. Our nomination comprises

records attesting to acts of violence against Tibet and Japan. In addition to suggesting new perspectives on modern East Asian history, these records describe negative legacies that must never be forgotten; for these reasons they should be preserved.

#### A. Japan

These are records of the Tongzhou Massacre, perpetrated on July 29, 1937. Rampaging Chinese troops cruelly and brutally murdered more than 200 innocent Japanese nationals, including pregnant women and infants. The murderers were members of the Tongzhou Peace Preservation Corps, whom the East Hebei Autonomous Council had entrusted with the protection of those same Japanese residents.

#### B. Tibet

These are records of acts of Chinese aggression against Tibet beginning in 1949, when the People's Republic of China was established. By 1979 1,207,387 Tibetans had been slaughtered. Among the victims were members of resistance groups formed to combat Chinese aggression, as well as political prisoners who died after being tortured in concentration camps and prisons. The Tibetan Buddhist culture is on the verge of extinction.

The circumstances of the Tibetan instance differ from those of the Tongzhou Massacre. Chinese aggression in Tibet has claimed far more victims, but the nature of the atrocities in both cases is surprisingly similar.

### II. Documents Concerning the Comfort Women and Japanese Military Discipline

Applicants: Alliance for Truth about Comfort Women; Japanese Women for Justice and Peace (Japan)

The Study Group for Japan's Rebirth (US)

Misconceptions about military prostitutes (comfort women) are rampant. We are submitting these documents because they show an accurate picture of the system. Comfort women worked for the Japanese military until 1945, and for Allied troops stationed in Japan during the Occupation. Private contractors recruited the women, whose profession was lawful at that time. The areas in which comfort women were permitted to live were limited, and their activities were somewhat prescribed (these restrictions applied to practitioners of other professions as well). However, comfort women enjoyed a certain amount of freedom, even in battle zones, and were paid handsomely. They were decidedly not sex slaves. Among the submitted documents are the testimonies taken from 33 soldiers and civilians upon their return to Japan (compiled by the Showa History Research Institute). These men had interacted with comfort women, and all of them described the stringent rules that governed the behavior of soldiers who patronized the brothels. Other documents indicate that the Japanese did not discriminate against the residents of occupied territory, and that they disagreed with Hitler's claim of

German superiority. Still other records describe Japanese military discipline and Japanese attitudes toward the war, and provide proof that the comfort-women system prevented sexual attacks on local women and the spread of venereal disease, and that Japanese soldiers were orderly and obedient.