

Campaign of Civil Claims for Compensation from Japan

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After the World War II, the Kuomintang government and the government of the Communist Party consecutively agreed to not claim for war reparations from Japan, but the people in the Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong has never ceased to demand damage compensation from the Japanese government.

As this year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations, Japanese Emperor Akihito is very likely to visit China in this October, but the people from the Mainland have increasingly called for compensation from Japan. Tong Zeng, an enthusiastic scholar from the Mainland, will visit Japan in the next month during the anniversary of the Atomic Bomb to promote the compensation campaign and convey the opinion of Chinese people to the Japanese people. Tong is now attending an exchange activity related to aging science in Hong Kong. The reporter of our newspaper had an exclusive interview with Tong to understand the progress of the compensation campaign.

In this special edition, we will also provide some cases about personal suffering, the issue of comfort women and Japanese military notes during the war, and reveal a litigation case brought by a family of three generations from Hong Kong. It is a case of claim for compensation that has lasted for 50 years and finally shows a light of hope.



**By the China Newsgroup, Overseas Chinese Daily News
Special Topic on China**

(Photo at left) An Open Letter from 10,000 Chinese People to the National Diet of Japan. During the session of the National People's Congress in this April, Tong Zeng (second from left) published An Open Letter from 10,000 Chinese People to the National Diet of Japan, on which up to 50,000 people have signed their names.

Tong Zeng, while on his visit in Hong Kong, recently paid a visit to Wu Yixing, president of the Association of Claim for Compensation of Hong Kong to understand Hong Kong people's request for compensation from Japan for forcing the exchange for military notes during the World War II. Moreover, he obtained the signatures of 9 Hong Kong people for supporting the Mainland's claim for damage compensation from Japan during the visit and gained the support of 18 Taiwanese scholars in a cross-strait exchange event, including executive committee members Chen Yingzhen, Xie Xuexian and Zhang Xiaochun from the China Reunification Alliance, and Professor Zhao Guocai from the Department of Foreign Affairs at Taiwan's National Chengchi University.

To Visit Japan to convey the Chinese people's opinion

Tong Zeng said, the news about claims for compensation has been widely reported across the country since the signatures and support of over 100 NPC members were obtained in this April. In addition, thanks to the relaxed environment provided by the speech of China's top leader Deng Xiaoping during his visit to South China, the national people's awareness of claim for compensation has been strengthened and the forces supporting the compensation campaign have rapidly grown from 10,000 people to 50,000 people. Yet, Tong's goal is to obtain the signatures and support of 100 million people nationwide.

Tong will depart for a 10-day visit to Tokyo, Niigata and Osaka in the 6th of the next month at the invitation of the Japanese Association of Remembering War Victims in the Asia-Pacific Region. His visit will coincide with the Japanese 47th Anniversary of the Atomic Bomb, when he will convey the requests of 50,000 Chinese signers and demand civil compensation of USD 180 billion from Japan.

Tong said this event, organized by a non-government association of Japan, will gather representatives from countries and regions such as South Korea, Philippines, Thailand and Taiwan to discuss the post-war damage of each country on the theme of the compensation for comfort women. Tong stated that he will expound the suffering of 4 comfort women from Shanxi Province at the event. He cited Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman's remarks, "Since Japan will consider compensating comfort women from South Korea, the compensation to Chinese comfort women shall also be considered."

Tong explained that most of the 50,000 Chinese signers are old people who suffered during the World War II and their family members, and that they are either intellectuals or workers or religious people, etc., including Huang Yuzhou, a subordinate of anti-Japanese hero Zhang Xueliang who played a major role in Xi'an Incident. Huang graduated from Meiji University of Japan and held a position as Artillery Commander of the Northern Expeditionary Army before becoming Deputy Commander of the Far East Volunteer Army. The 87-year-old Huang wrote vigorously on the signature form that, "A debt must be repaid. Justice must be served. His 76-year-old wife from Langshan also signed her name and wrote, "Japan's invasion of China has made innocent Chinese people suffer greatly. I firmly demand the Chinese government to claim damage compensation from the Japanese government for the losses of victims."

Huang made a calligraphy painting and asked Tong to give it to the incumbent Social Democratic Party leader Makoto TANABE and President of Sino-Japanese Friendship Association Tokuma UTSUNOMIYA during his visit in Japan. It's reported that Tokuma UTSUNOMIYA played an important role in the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations in 1972, and the Social Democratic Party has always sympathized with the claim for damage compensation. It's learned that Makoto TANABE made a speech at the Marco Polo Bridge in this January during his visit in Beijing. The original press release sent to the Japanese Republican Club pointed out that a young man makes a proposal about demanding compensation from Japan and thinks that although Japan cannot make up for its crime of invading China with money, Japan still should make financial compensation.

The people haven't given up the right of claim for compensation

At the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations,

Tong Zeng restated and reminded the Japanese government that the Chinese government only gave up the claim for war reparations in the agreement signed 20 years ago and hasn't given up the damage compensation, so Japan shall be legally and morally responsible for compensation for killing 20 million Chinese people and causing varying degrees of damage to 50 or 60 million Chinese people during the World War II. In addition, Communist Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin made a speech before his visit to Japan, saying that the claim for compensation is one of the people's matters, which means that the government has given acquiescence and won't interfere with the compensation campaign.

Tong pointed out that Deng Xiaoping's speech made during his visit to South China also applies to the patriotic cause, "Let's do what hasn't been done before and let's do it boldly." The ambitious Tong said he is planning to establish the Association of Victims of Japan's War of Aggression Against China in Beijing which will be registered with the Ministry of Civil Affairs or an investigation committee so that it can effectively oversee the compensation matters in all places and fight for the rights of Chinese victims from Japan.

Authorities won't interfere with the campaign

When asked if there was any interference from the Chinese government when he gained 50,000 supporters, Tong replied that the compensation campaign is a bottom-to-top matter where the people promote the government to state its position. As the campaign has been widely recognized as patriotic, the government doesn't suppress it, which also shows that the government has provided a relatively relaxed environment for civil activities. It is an encouraging phenomenon in China. Tong believes that he might have been arrested if he conducted this kind of activities during the Cultural Revolution.

The 36-year-old Tong graduated from the Department of Economics, Sichuan University in 1982 and was admitted in the Department of Law, Peking University to pursue postgraduate education in 1989. After graduation, he worked at a cadre institute as a lecturer and is now a researcher at the China Research Center on Aging. Tong's great grandfather's houses and property in Wuhan and Chongqing were seriously damaged by the bombing of the Japanese army.