

YAYORI MATSUI: RETIRING INTO ACTIVISM

Source: Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center, Shibuya-Coop Rm. 311, 14-10, Sakuragaoka, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150 Japan

A NEW WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN SET UP IN JAPAN BY INTERNATIONALLY-RENOVED FEMINIST JOURNALIST YAYORI MATSUI, IT IS THE ASIA-JAPAN WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER. ITS PURPOSE OF EMPOWERING JAPANESE WOMEN BY SHARING MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ASIAN WOMEN'S SITUATION AND THEIR STRUGGLE AND BY TRAINING YOUNG JAPANESE WOMEN THROUGH VARIOUS ACTIVITIES.

THE RESOURCE CENTER PUBLISHES A BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE "WOMEN'S ASIA 21", WHICH FUNCTIONS AS A TYPE OF CLEARING HOUSE DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION ON THE BEIJING CONFERENCE FROM INDEPENDENT POINTS OF VIEW FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

YAYORI RETIRED FROM THE ASAHI SHIMBUN LAST YEAR, AFTER THIRTY-THREE YEARS! SHE SAYS, "IT IS HARD TO RECALL THOSE DAYS WORKING AS ONE OF A FEW FEMALE REPORTERS IN THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE, WHICH WAS A TYPICAL MAN'S WORLD. NOW I'M LIBERATED FROM SUCH AN OPPRESSIVE WORLD AND WORKING AS A FREELANCE JOURNALIST, WRITING MAINLY ON WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER ISSUES FROM GENDER PERSPECTIVE."

YAYORI, WHO IS A MEMBER OF ISIS' INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL, HAS PUBLISHED MORE THAN TEN BOOKS AND ALSO EDITED OR TRANSLATED VARIOUS OTHER BOOKS, AND PLANS TO WRITE MORE BOOKS AFTER THE BEIJING CONFERENCE.

SINCE HER RETIREMENT, SHE HAS BEEN EVEN BUSIER THROUGH INVOLVEMENT IN PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES TOWARD BEIJING AS EAST ASIA SUBREGIONAL CONTACT POINT, AND AS A

COORDINATOR OF AN INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S NGO NETWORK IN JAPAN.

SHE HAS ORGANIZED OR COORDINATED THREE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES IN JAPAN: THE ASIAN WOMEN'S TRIBUNAL ON WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS IN TOKYO IN MARCH LAST YEAR HELD JOINTLY WITH AWHRC: THE FIRST EAST ASIAN WOMEN'S FORUM WITH MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED FOREIGN PARTICIPANTS FROM SIX COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES (CHINA, TAIWAN, SOUTH KOREA, HONG KONG, MACAU AND MONGOLIA) LAST OCTOBER AND THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON JAPANESE ODA AND ASIAN WOMEN WITH ELEVEN WOMEN FROM TEN COUNTRIES.



BESIDES PREPARATION FOR BEIJING, YAYORI IS OCCUPIED WITH MANY OTHER ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE CITIZEN'S NETWORK TO SUPPORT JAPANESE-FILIPINO CHILDREN. AT THE NGO FORUM, THERE WILL BE A WORKSHOP ON ASIAN MIGRANT WOMEN IN JAPAN.

"I'M ALSO BUSY AS A MEMBER OF A JAPANESE GROUP 'FRIENDS OF THAI WOMEN', WHICH IS ACTIVE IN HELPING THAI WOMEN VICTIMIZED BY TRAFFICKING INTO THE JAPANESE SEX INDUSTRY. THE PEOPLE'S FORUM ON CAMBODIA ALSO MAKES ME BUSY BECAUSE I'M IN CHARGE OF ITS GROUP 'WOMEN AND CHILDREN'. (I DO ALL THIS BECAUSE) JAPANESE SOCIETY HAS TOO MANY PROBLEMS WHICH I FEEL TOO IMPORTANT TO JUST CLOSE MY EYES." (WE SHOULD ALL 'RETIRES' THIS WAY. ED.)▲