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LGBT

# One Thousand Trans March in Tokyo in Solidarity with Transgender People

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**On November 12, Tokyo Trans March 2022 and related events, organized by Trans Gender Japan (TGJP) [1],** were held to mark Transgender Awareness Week which runs November 13 to 19. This year's Trans March was the second in Japan. In recent years, Trans March has also been held in Japan's neighboring countries such as Taiwan. Tokyo Trans March was started at 2 pm. Around 1,000 people took part in it according to the event's own registration data. [2]

Many people spoke their thoughts at the speech event starting at 10 am, underscoring the urgency to defend the rights of transgender people. The representative of the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center said that they want to build a non-exclusive women's movement. A member of Tokyo Shinjuku Ward Assembly underlined the administration's incomprehension. The Trans March was being held to strengthen social cohesion of transgender people and raise awareness about human rights issues.

The Trans March, which was organized entirely by community volunteers, began in San Francisco in 2004 after an American transgender teenager Gwen Amber Rose Araujo was murdered by four men in 2002. The Trans March in San Francisco, which could be one of the few large annual transgender events in the world [3], became the fourth main LGBT Pride event. And the annual grassroots social change events took place around the world.

In Japan, the first Trans March was held in 2021 in honor of the International Transgender Day of Remembrance. The International Transgender Day of Remembrance has been observed annually from its inception on November 20 as a day to remember those who have been murdered as a result of transphobia. [4] In San Francisco, the annual gathering to the Trans March has swelled in numbers since its inception two years ago, tripling in size each year [3]. In Tokyo, the gathering has doubled in numbers compared with Tokyo Trans March 2021.

The history of Trans March goes alongside the history of trans struggles for basic human rights. In 2017, the Trans March in San Francisco concluded with an announcement that the area at Turk and Taylor in the Tenderloin had been designated a Transgender Cultural District by the City of San Francisco. [5] In 2019, San Francisco Mayor London Breed held a press conference with the Office of Transgender Initiatives prior to the Trans March. Breed declared June 28, 2019 - the day of that year's Trans March and the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots - to be "Trans March Day", and announced a housing program for transgender people. [6] The history shows how the liberation of transgender people is crucial for trans struggles and their political perspectives against oppression based on gender and race.

In Japan, transgender rights movements have had tensions and conflicts amid intensified attacks against transgender people on the Internet. It was started in 2018 when a national women's university [7] said it would start from April 2020 accepting transgender students. Since 2018, some reactionary campaigns have censored transgender people's anger and have restricted the rights of transgender women, which shows the revival of a strain of feminism based on biological determinism.

Also, some transphobic feminist discourses on the Internet have a transnational nature. Some arguments are characterized by arguments based on the term sex, not on the term gender. If we go back to basics, the term gender is that it is separate from the term sex, the latter refers to physiological features, the former to a socially constructed role. To quote Simone de Beauvoir: "one is not born but rather becomes a woman". This has always been the general position of Marxist feminists. Oppression is not a direct result of physiological features but the social role assigned in general to those who have those features. [8]

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What is important is to challenge transphobic behavior and attitudes continuously rather than being bound by the peripheral argument about the transgender peoples' movement. Transgender peoples' anger should not be censured. And positive images of trans struggles are useful rather than giving too much air to the reactionaries.

25 November 2022

PS:

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[1] This article was written partly referring to November 16th issue of "Kakehashi" (Bridge), a newspaper which is produced weekly in co-operation between two Fourth Internationalist organizations: the National Council of Internationalist Workers (NCIW) and the Japan Revolutionary Communist League (JRCL).

[2] Kat Joplin, Japan Times, 20 November 2022, "Tokyo marks Transgender Awareness Week with march".

[3] Rob Akers, Bay Area Reporter, 21 June 2006, "Trans March on Friday"

[4] Hunter Morrison, wuuf, 18 November 2022, "Transgender Day of Remembrance and the struggles of local transgender people".

[5] KTVU, 23 June 2017, "Despite feeling under attack, community remains resilient for Trans March".

[6] City and County of San Francisco, 28 June 2019, "San Francisco kicks off Pride with Trans March and historic announcement".

[7] Ochanomizu University in Tokyo which is Japan's first institution of higher education for women with a 142-year history.

[8] Thanks to comrade Terry Conway and Socialist Resistance for their inputs on this issue. See on IVP, 28 June 2021, "[Trans Liberation and Socialist Feminism](#)".