

NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

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NSKK ANCK Joint Bishop's Conference - Mutual reliability deepened and collaboration reassured.

Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK) and the Anglican Church of Korea (ANCK) Joint Bishops' Conference was held from 21st to 24th October 2002 in Seoul, Korea. The Conference was attended by 10 bishops from NSKK (Bishop Endo was absent due to illness) and three bishops from ANCK.

Discussions and council were held on the first day of the 4-day Conference. In the morning of the second day, Bishop Chul Bum Chung talked about the "History of the Development of Korean Christian Church"; in the afternoon, we made a visit to House of Shares where those women who were forced to be 'comfort girls' by the Japanese Army are living together.

One of these women vividly described the abominable affairs with emotion, as follows: "While I was shopping in the market, I was abducted and taken to China. I tried to escape but failed. I was arrested to be a 'comfort girl'." We did not understand Korean (her speech was, of course, interpreted into Japanese), but her anger was definitely conveyed to us through her speech.

Her speech was over. Then, quite unexpectedly, she approached us with a request: "There are two Catholics in this House of Shares: myself and another. She is in poor health and is unable to come here. Would you kindly visit her in her room and pray for her?"

As I received her request, I strongly felt that she gave us a hand of forgiveness, saying that we can pray together. I was so encouraged by her conduct, and thought that she guided us to a path of forgiveness. With a smiling face, she showed us to a room where her Catholic friend was living. In a six-mat room, the bishops from Japan and Korea together with these two ladies were kneeling to pray together.

On the 3rd day, we visited Seodaemun Prison History Hall. This prison was built by the Japanese Empire when Japan had colonized Korea in order to maintain its colonial policy. In this Museum, the prison house and execution ground were restored to the original state, and the situation of those days was reproduced. In Korea, the Museum is an educational place as a living history, in that Korean people never forget the sanguinary affair

conducted by the Japanese Army just for the benefit of Japan herself; they should remember the patriots who were killed during the colonial days; and reflect the patriots' independent spirits. There should be no doubt that the present Japanese school textbooks have brought serious problems towards the Korean people who clearly remember that abominable period of Japanese-Korean history with a strong consciousness.

In the afternoon, we visited a House of Shares located in a place of poverty, in which the Seoul Diocese has been closely involved from the beginning.. The work by the Seoul Diocese has been highly evaluated by the Seoul citizens in that the Diocese has offered shelters, or occupational training at the request of those who need the help.

In this area, young priests and congregations have actively participated in these activities and all the bishops from Japan were very greatly impressed by their work.

The year of 2004, two years from now, will be the 20th year since the Exchange between Japan and Korea formally started. The joint conference held on the 1st day of the House of Bishops' Conference, discussion were on this topic. It was a time to reaffirm and reconfirm the reliability and collaboration which have been reflected on the successful exchange between the two countries. This sentence is a little difficult: here is a rewrite ㄹ I hope that it is what was meant.

It was a time to reaffirm and reconfirm our sincerity and willingness to work together which has been reflected in the successful exchange between our two countries so far.

The following three items were discussed and confirmed: 1) Youth Exchange Program is an important project in order to deepen the mutual understanding between Japan and Korea and to maintain Japan-Korea collaboration. 2) It is appropriate to hold a meeting on Evaluation of the 20th year of Exchange between NSKK and ANCK in 2004. 3) It is appropriate to hold Japan-Korea Joint Bishops' Conference every two to three years in order to maintain mutual understanding, should any issues occur which should be deliberated between the bishops of both countries.

The topics which were discussed during the Conference will be deliberated by relevant organizations in NSKK and ANCK, respectively. In two years time, there will be a considerable member change in the House of Bishops in both countries due to retirement. However, the Joint Bishops' Conference will be continued with a common idea that collaboration in missionary work should be continued in the future.

The Rt. Rev. Gabriel Shoji Igarashi
Bishop of Kyushu Diocese

Rejoice all together

Recently, I had an opportunity to hear the report of Ms. Iwamoto on her work with Japan Overseas Christian Medical Co-operative Service in Bangladesh. She is working with Taize Brothers among the poor and people with disabilities, as a nurse and rehabilitation therapist. In that area, mothers who have children with disabilities feel as if it is through their own fault. Very often their husbands leave the mothers and children. Women are not rightly respected and have little way to earn, and they are left in poverty and loneliness. The team members are well respected and loved in a small Islam community. They do not

have a modern hospital, but they simply live in the same way as their neighbors, except the time of prayers. They are very faithful missionaries but do not try to convert people, perhaps to them mission means the works given by God, in their case to love and help people and pray for them. They do not hesitate to say that they deeply respect the Islam tradition and its religion and live in mutual trust and love. Many of them fast during the Ramadan, and give the saved lunch-cost to the poor. Christians and Islam are helping, and are sharing difficulties and living together with mutual respect here.

As General Secretary, I attend many meetings and one of them is the disarmament and reconciliation committee of World Conference on Religion and Peace which has been rather unfamiliar to me. Leaders of many religions come together, for example the fuku-jushoku (second highest priest) of famous Yakushiji-Temple. On his card his title in English was Bishop, I felt I had to speak him more politely. We gather to talk about peace, eat and drink together instead of fasting together. They are nice people and of course I am enjoying the meeting. Next year, they are planning to visit the New York Branch and I think they will eat and drink there also.

I visited San Francisco this year and I almost forgot that I was a foreigner as so many different people, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese and many others are living together. I wondered what the definition of 'American people' was. It should be similar in New York and I am suggesting the committee to see how the different people are living together there, with different looks, language, culture and religion. It may not always be easy, but they are trying to live together. In Japan, there have been problems and the problems are becoming more serious as many migrant workers are coming in (or being refused). To live together, to enjoy the varieties in unity, we have to understand, trust, love each other. For this, mutual understanding and respect among religions are very important. Leaders of religions have a heavy responsibility.

I do believe only the Word made flesh reveals the truth of God in its fullness, and at the same time we can see in Him the love of the Father toward all people created in his image. He has come and comes as the Lord of Peace. At this time of year, we would like to learn his humbleness again and work to restore his peace. May he be born in all people. We wish ALL a happy Christmas.

Rev. Laurence Minabe Yutaka

From Editor's Room:

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year!

I would like to share the joy of Christmas with Brothers and Sisters in God all over the world.

May the year of 2003 become closer to the eternal peace for which our God always

wishes us.

All the staff and I will exert ourselves in editing the NSKK Newsletter, always to be ready to do anything NSKK wants to dispatch for churches around the world.

Egidio Hajime Suzuki, the editor in chief.

I have been engaged with NSKK Newsletter for nearly two years now.

It is always difficult for me to put Japanese into appropriate English (or any other language). Nevertheless, I am grateful for having been given such an opportunity to do this job. In these manuscripts to be translated, there are always new discovery, wonder, pleasure, or sympathy, by which God has revealed His Great Will through a single and sometimes small human behaviour. I will try my best to translate and convey to all the friends in Christ what NSKK has done or is doing in Japan.

Grace Kazuko Takeda

Since I have been involved as one of the members of translation staff at the office of Public Relations in the NSKK, I have come to realize how limited my knowledge was, and what narrow views I had on every matter occurring not only inside of Episcopal churches in and out of Japan but in other denominations all over the world. At the same time, I became to feel the scales falling from off my eyes whenever I see the materials and articles that have taken up to News Letter. I'm so proud to be one of the translation staff of News Letter at the NSKK office. We are always looking forward to hearing from you on the News Letter.

Elizabeth Yasuko Date

As a Japanese Anglican Christian... real minority in our society, a woman... majority in number but silent in our Church, at this special season of the year 2002, I wonder what I could offer to our Lord Jesus, more practical, more useful, more heart warming than gold, frankincense, myrrh that would make this troubled world a little closer to God's Peace and Justice. Voice? What should I speak?

Mary Junko Matsuura