

# NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

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## New Hymn Book was published: "The Hymnal of Nippon Sei Ko Kai"

The Rt. Revd. Toshiaki Mori  
Chairperson of the Committee of  
Revision of Hymn Book

NSKK has published a new Hymn Book, "The Hymnal of Nippon Sei Ko Kai" in November 2006. For 47 years from 1959 to the present, NSKK has used "Hymns New and Old", and now we have been given a new Hymn Book "The Hymnal of Nippon Sei Ko Kai", which includes 590 hymns and 77 liturgical chants.

The proposal of revision of the conventional Hymn Book was first resolved by the NSKK General Synod in 1994. For 12 years since then, the members of the Committee of Revision of the Hymn Book have taken a leading role in the necessary revision of "Hymns Old and New" with great effort. During this period, the members of the Committee have repeatedly met and discussed how to revise the conventional Hymn Book, and after consecutive efforts and work, "The Hymnal of Nippon Sei Ko Kai" was finally completed in November 2006.

The major characteristics of this new version are:

- (1) Colloquial language is used as much as possible.  
Literary style of verses, which was used in "Hymns Old and New", has now been changed to current colloquial language as much as possible.
- (2) Emphasis is placed on vivid rhythm.  
We sing hymns with vivid rhythm, thanking and praising God, by whom we are redeemed and given strength to live.
- (3) Sing out the love of God as well as of our neighbour.  
Throughout the Hymn Book, we sing out clearly that together we exist to love God as well as our neighbour, as Jesus taught us "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. Love your neighbour as you love yourself". (Luke:10.22)
- (4) Sing together the relationship between God and "We, Christians".  
It is emphasized that the church is a community of "God's people". Included in the Hymnal are hymns which emphasize the relationship between God and "We, Christians".
- (5) Adopting contemporary expressions.

Antiquated words are replaced by daily used words as much as possible. Also, placing importance on human rights, certain expressions which might imply discrimination against the disabled have been avoided.

(6) Praise the God's Creation.

As human beings are presently destroying the God's Creation, the earth, it is our duty to restore the earth as it originally was: "God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased" (Genesis 1.31). There are hymns in which we praise the God's Creation and acknowledge the importance of restoring the earth as God had made.

(7) Asian hymns are included.

In the past, hymns were mostly taken from the American and European verses translated into Japanese. As Nippon Sei Ko Kai is a member of the Asian community, hymns which originated from the Asian countries are included. Included also are hymns which were originally written and composed by the Japanese members of NSKK.

It is generally required that whenever hymns are edited and/or published, persons concerned should have respective theological knowledge. Each member of the Committee has seriously considered "What does Mission mean?" or "How to interpret the Mission?" They have been engaged on the task of revising the Hymn Book with painstaking efforts and wisdom for 12 long years, and eventually the new "Hymnal of NSKK" has been completed. Every member of the NSKK church has now used the new Hymnal Book with sincere thanks for the effort made by the members of the Committee and attainment of the goal.

## **Hiroshima International Conference for Peace**

---Helping Hands of Compassion from Hiroshima---

The Rt. Revd. Andrew Yutaka Nakamura  
Bishop of Kobe Diocese

We held The International Peace Conference from November 1st to 2nd, 2006 inviting three Nobel Peace Prize recipients to Hiroshima. The purpose of this conference was to devote prayers for peace.

The three Nobel Peace Prize recipients were The Rt. Revd. Desmond Tutu, The Dalai Lama, 14th head of a Buddhist sect, and Ms. Betty Williams. The aim of the conference was to gather together all Christians, Buddhists and Muslims without religious restrictions and to work to resolve the problems occurring all over the world, including war and conflicts, poverty and starvation and all diseases. All participants were devoted to finding solutions to these problems. The conference was held at the Peace Memorial Chapel in a Roman Catholic Church.

The Rt. Revd. Tutu appealed in the Prayer for Peace as follows;

"Is there any difference among the tear of a yellow-skinned mother who lost her child for some reason and is stunned, or a white-skinned mother whose beloved child was victimised in the Northern Ireland Conflict, or a black-skinned mother whose child died because of HIV AIDS which has spread in Africa or because of poverty?

"If the skin colour is different, is the depth of a mother's sorrow different? It would be the same tear of sorrow as a human created equally by God. At the same time, the tear is God's sorrow for the sins of human beings.

"However, why should we have the prejudice or discrimination against skin colour or differences of region or environment? To eradicate all these human thoughts is the first step to the World Peace." This created a deep compassion in the more than 1,000 participants.

Prayers were offered by Shomyo chanting of Tibet Buddhist head Temple priests, Gregorian Chants by high school students of Notre Dame Pure Heart school and Buddhist Praise by Jodo Shinshu choir. All prayers were wished for peace. Muslims joined in the Prayer Chain from outside of the chapel.

Ms. Betty Williams had encountered the unexpected deaths of three children during the Northern Ireland Conflict. That made her stand up and take action to save children left in extremely miserable conditions. A mother who lost her child as a result of the Conflict in Belfast, Ireland told Ms. Williams that “I was much better than being a mother of a wrongdoer, because I don’t know how much a mother of wrongdoer has to suffer from a violent action of her son.”

The Rt. Revd. Tutu had struggled for the abolition of racial prejudice. After the abolition was enacted, he was installed as the Chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to achieve reconciliation between Black and White. Rt. Revd. Tutu talked about Hibakushas in Hiroshima. “When the atomic bomb was dropped 61 years ago, thousands of people were killed and many others are still suffering. But in the midst of these sufferings Hibakusha and their families have looked with forgiveness toward their enemy, the perpetrator. Their attitude of ‘forgiveness rather than retaliation’ would be the most valuable in actualization of Peace.

“People in Hiroshima experienced suffering that makes them worthy as good neighbors as Christ has done for us. They could carry a heavy load together and endure with people all over the world, even though their sufferings are various.

“I wish the people in Hiroshima could extend their helping hands with compassion to those in trouble with difficulties.” Rt. Revd. Tutu appealed to the audience.

Wherever we were born, in any place in the world, whoever our parents are and whatever our circumstance, all these are the will of God our Creator. The diversity of religion would be the same, as well as these differences.

However, the awareness of human dignity and mutual respect is the great key needed to practice true Peace in the world. That was what we learned from Hiroshima International Conference for Peace 2006.

## **An Encounter with former patients from the National Leprosy Sanatorium**

--- Enlightening Activities on the Subjects of Leprosy, Hansen’s Disease ---

The Revd. John Makoto Matsuura  
Kita-Kanto Diocese

From August 25 to 27, 2006, we held a Workshop named “The New Way For Communication With the Leprosy Sanatorium” at Sei Nagusamenushi Kyokai (The Church of Holy Lord of Consolation) of Nippon Sei Ko Kai which has been established within National Leprosy Sanatorium; Kuryu Rakusen-en. The workshop was held to increase understanding regarding the problems of leprosy in Nippon Sei Ko Kai.

We invited two speakers. The first speaker was Revd. Kunio Ohta, a patient at the National Sanatorium Kikuchi Keihuen and an officer of the autonomous group organized by former patients. He also serves as a Deacon of Nippon Sei Ko Kai. The other speaker was Mr. Sanshiro Fujita, a patient at Kuryu Rakusen-en Sanatorium serving as a president of an autonomous group and a member of the Church of the Holy Comforter. 15 people who are responsible for human rights in the dioceses of Kita- Kanto, Tokyo, Yokohama, Chubu and Kyushu also attended at the workshop.

Through many years of hard experiences at the sanatorium, Revd. Ohta related the conflicts and torture he experienced. He told us the truth he gained through those experiences. He said that discrimination or prejudice was based on one's own consciousness welled within the bottom of one's heart and was one's own theme for life. He told us that was the subject given by God to man kind on "how to live one's life". Certainly, discrimination was not the subject of others but one's own and enlightening others meant not only to give knowledge but also to communicate with others.

Mr. Fujita spoke as an officer of a former patients' autonomous group. He related the facts in the history of the sanatorium stating that former patients wanted to live and be treated as human beings. He referred to the fact that churches did not respond to their circumstances and did not give enough understanding to the history of their daily lives. He asked us to apologize for our negligence of the facts in their history and to reflect that we were equally human. Also he suggested to develop future programmes for former patients in the sanatoriums.

Through two presentations we learned many facts which we had not heard before. At the same time, as Christians we were asked to recognize how to grasp the wisdom of former leprosy patients as a subject of our own and also as a theme for our own lives.

On the second day, we experienced a field trip within Rakusen-en. We walked around Kusatsu Yunosawa district where the former patients suffered by severe discrimination in the midst of a modern society. We were introduced to the medical and social activities of Miss Cornwall Lee who devoted half her life to the former patients from the Taisho-era (1912-1925) to the first part of the Showa-era (1926-1988) and also learned of the activities of the Mission of St. Barnabas. On the third day, we summarized the whole programme of the workshop and attended a joint worship service sponsored by the Gumma Mission district.

Through this workshop we became aware of the truth behind the leprosy sanatorium and at the same time we could truly listen to the cries of the former patients wrung out from the bottom of their hearts.

We, Nippon Sei Ko Kai are deeply repentant for the fact we were not the best co-workers because of our misunderstanding of their unique churches as exclusive organizations surrounded by high walls.

The continuance of the leprosy sanatorium is said to be nearing its end as the former patients age and pass away. At this stage we have to reflect on what is the best and the most appropriate way to connect with the sanatorium. In addition, we have to construct the future framework for mission activities with the sanatorium and of the church based on the reflections to the past.

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Members of the English Version of NSKK Newsletter, Autumn 2007 are: as follows:  
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