

The 61st General Synod of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, Resolution 25

Declaration of Support for the Eradication of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech and the Creation of a True Multiracial and Multicultural Society

by the

NSKK (Nippon Sei Ko Kai, the Anglican/Episcopal Church in Japan)

Submitters:

Diocese of Osaka

House of Bishops: The Rt. Revd. Osamu Onishi
(Bishop in charge of human-rights issues)
House of Clergy: Revd. Akira Iwaki, Revd. Makoto Yamamoto

Diocese of Kyoto

House of Bishops: The Rt. Revd. Takashi Kochi
House of Clergy: The Revd. Yutaka Kuroda, The Revd. Izumi Ida

Diocese of Tokyo

House of Bishops: The Rt. Revd. Yoshimichi Ohata
House of Clergy: The Revd. Tazu Sasamori
House of Laity: Ms. Keiko Kurosawa

Committee for Justice and Peace: The Rt. Revd. Ichiro Shibusawa

Youth Committee: The Revd. Satoshi Kobayashi

We declare the adoption of the following statement at the 61st general synod

"The NSKK declares its unanimous support for the eradication of hate crime and hate speech and for the creation of a truly multiracial and multicultural society"

Description:

Since the latter half of the first decade of the 21st century, racist groups such as Zaitokukai (Citizens against the Special Privileges of Korean Residents; formed in 2007) have continuously held, as "active conservatives," dreadfully racist public demonstrations. In December 2009 they raided Kyoto Chosen Shokyu Gakko (Korean elementary school) while children were still in class, and severely traumatized not only children but also school officials, and the local community. This triggered a broad recognition of the term "hate speech" in the Japanese society.

The historically accurate view of Japanese invasions and their subsequent military reign in Asia based upon colonialism, imperialism and militarism after the Meiji Restoration has not been properly atoned for. Furthermore, the former colonized peoples' persecution, forced assimilation and subjugation by ethnocentric policies have not been fully acknowledged. In particular Korean people and their descendants have borne the brunt of this history. This is arguably the root of the current problems surrounding ethnic Koreans in Japan.

The NSKK has promoted a convivial society through the restoration of St. Gabriel Church in the Diocese of Osaka and support of the NSKK Ikuno Center (a community center located in an ethnic Korean area), and through mutual exchanges and cooperation with the Anglican Church of Korea. In the meantime, "Anti-Korean sentiment" has become conspicuous, particularly on Internet blogs and demonstrations held in predominantly ethnically Korean communities. A rightward trend in Japanese politics, in evidence of the aforesaid lack of remorse for Japan's military colonization, has become more and more prevalent.

As hate speech is now rampant in Japan, the targets range from ethnic Koreans to various social minorities such as other Asians, foreigners in general, "Burakumin (*see below)" outcasts, Okinawans, atomic bomb survivors, Ainu people, and sexual minorities. Negating and ignoring the very existence of victims, hate speech is a serious crime that physically and mentally scars people in a profound way.

In November 2013, the Kyoto District Court made a landmark ruling that the December 2009 school attack was considered a deliberately discriminatory action. In regard to hate speech in Japan, the United Nations formally urged the Japanese government to take measures against it on February 2014. Although Japan has been a member of International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Japan is one of only five countries that have made reservations on Article 4(a) and (b) condemning hate crime and hate speech, and the United Nations strongly requires the member states to withdraw these reservations. While western countries extensively regulate hate crime and hate speech to protect racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities based on remorse over their own historically documented racial atrocities (typified by the Holocaust), Japan still has almost no legislation for regulating hate crimes and hate speech.

The bible records the outcries of people threatened by hatred and accusations.

Save me from the contempt from those trample on me. My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts -

the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords. - Psalm 57:4-5.

See what they spew from their mouths - the words are sharp as swords. Who can bear such words from their lips? - Psalm 59:7.

The Psalms tell us that the Lord is full of compassion and mercy for those who are threatened, and goes in front of them (Psalm 59:10). The Lord once ordered the Israelites not to persecute foreigners (Deuteronomy 24:19) and to protect their life and rights (Leviticus 19:10, Deuteronomy 10:18). And the Lord has promised that the day as "they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid (Micah 4:4.)" will come, and want us to live towards that day.

In this globalizing modern world, a multiracial and multicultural society is not just an inevitable consequence but is an ideal that must be actively worked towards. The racist movements are totally against our goal and should never be tolerated as "freedom of expression". Following the merciful Lord going in front, (Psalm 59:10), we vow to eradicate hate crime and hate speech and will strive to establish a true multiracial and multicultural society.

(*Burakumin are ethnically Japanese, but are members of caste restricted to certain areas of residence, descent and occupations , in particular abattoirs, meat processing, garbage collecting, or leather working. Considered unclean, burakumin for centuries have suffered continuously from segregation and degradation as outcasts. Their official numbers vary, but most estimates put their population at around two million.)

Article 4(a) and (b) of ICERD

(a) Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;

(b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognize participation in such organizations or activities as an offence punishable by law;

<Reason for Declaration>

All churches and dioceses of the NSKK have supported and prayed for the NSKK Ikuno Center which was established in 1992 for the purpose of supporting a local community where non-Japanese residents (mostly, but not exclusively, ethnic Koreans) and Japanese residents could live harmoniously together. The NSKK had declared in 2012 its dedication to "create a communion in which we walk together with each individual person, respect the dignity of individual life and positively encounter people, without simply grouping them as "aged", "youth", "female", "male", "children", "disabled", "foreigners"". Recent activities of Zaitokukai and its sympathizers, which clearly violate human rights, are totally against this declaration of the NSKK, and we hereby steadfastly declare our position with this resolution.