

NSKK NEWSLETTER

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Rumoi Christ Church in the Hokkaido Diocese is commemorating the centennial anniversary of its foundation. Rumoi is a small port town, located in the northern part of Hokkaido. In summer 1901, a British missionary, Rev. Niven George Cecil, started missionary work in this place, after a long journey from Otaru by sea across the Sea of Japan, as no railway was available then. Since then the Anglican Faith has been unceasingly maintained. In the Church Register, 600 names have been registered.

In this Rumoi Christ Church, there is a "Treasure" of the Church, which has been successively cherished and carefully preserved by the Church members. They are 312 "hanging pictures" which are based on Bible stories. All the pictures have a size of 83cm by 60cm. The pictures include "Three Kings led by the Star", "The Birth of Jesus Christ", "Five Loaves and Two Fish", "The Sermon on the Mount", "Jesus Heals Many People", "Jesus Walks on the Water", "Jesus Entering Jerusalem", "Jesus Washes His Disciples Feet", "Jesus Eats the Passover Meal", "The Arrest of Jesus", "Pilate Questions Jesus", "The Angel Stands by the Tomb", "The Resurrection of Jesus", "The Ascension of Jesus", etc., and thus the Life of Jesus was illustrated in detail, intelligibly and beautifully. They should certainly be seen as the "Treasure" of this church.

In commemorating the Centenary of its foundation and initiation of the mission, Rumoi Church published a heliotype pictorial record, "Life of Jesus illustrated by the Hanging Pictures", selected 31 pieces from the "Treasure", and distributed it to the church

members and all concerned people in order to share the pleasure of the Centennial of the Foundation of the Church.

The Hanging Pictures of the Christ were produced more than 100 years ago, one of the series of European Hanging Pictures, which were the fruits ripened from the era of the Christian Faith in Europe. Nobody knows when and by whom these pictures were brought into Rumoi Church, but there is no doubt that a certain CMS missionary brought these pictures during the early stage of NSKK.

It is a matter of great regret that some of the pictures, including the most dramatic scene of Christ's Crucifixion, were damaged due to frequent use of the pictures during these 100 years of time. Nevertheless, we would like to express and to share our great pleasure that in the 21st Century when audiovisual machines are in the height of development, "A Set of Hanging Pictures of the Period of Christian Faith in Europe" which were produced by human hands over 100 years ago, have been brought back to life in such a small church of NSKK in the northern port town of Hokkaido.

E. Hajime Suzuki

Leprosy and the Mission of NSKK

Relief activity for leprosy patients in Japan was started by Miss Hannah Riddel, a CMS missionary who had been sent to Kumamoto. Before then, almost nothing had been done, either on a public or a private basis, for leprosy patients. In those days, leprosy being regarded as a fatal disease, the patients, fearing to give trouble to their families, used to leave their homes and wandered about Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, living by begging. Miss Riddel was so moved to see the miserable condition of the leprosy patients that she retired as a CMS missionary and established Kaishun Byoin in Kumamoto at her own expense in 1895, which became the first sanitarium for leprosy in

Japan. The principle of her sanitarium was to preserve their lives, give medical treatment, and also to restore their humanity based on Christianity. Moreover, she sent devoted Christian former patients who had recovered from the disease to other areas where there were more patients in order to help them.

Miss M.H.Cornwall-Leigh was a USPG missionary who was also moved by the encounter with some patients and started leprosy relief activity in Kusatsu, a place where hot springs were well known to be effective for skin diseases, so that many leprosy patients came to live around the area, called Yunosawa district. In 1916, Miss Leigh founded Kusatsu St. Barnabas Home with her own patients. In the meantime, the Japanese government started a severe quarantine policy for leprosy to strengthen the war regime, and consolidated the private institutions into public (national) sanitariums. Consequently, those Christian based institutions were forced to close in 1941. However, chapels for the Christian patients were provided to guarantee their religious lives. Since World War II ended, NSKK has been sending care-taker priests for worship and for ministry to the patients. Although the percentage of the Christian population in Japan is 1%, and Anglicans are only 0.05%, in leprosy sanitariums, the Christians are more than 30%, Anglicans 10%. This is the fruit of the hard work of the two missionaries.

Even though leprosy became a curable disease owing to medical progress, and the quarantine policy was no longer needed, the government did not abolish the Leprosy Prevention Law until 1996. On May 23rd 2001, the government decided not to appeal against a court ruling holding the government and Diet responsible for the needless quarantine policy, and expressed deep regrets and apologies to the former patients.

At our General Synod in 1996, NSKK resolved to approve the abolition of the Leprosy Prevention Law, and confessed that our church had not protested against the government policy and asked for forgiveness from all the former patients.

Hansen's disease in Japan has come to an end now. The average age of the former patients is over 70. In NSKK, we have determined to join a solidarity movement for restoring their human rights, and to continue our mission and ministry work till the last breath of the last patient.

The Rev. Naoki Kimura
Secretary, Mission and Ministry

Revised Hymnal coming soon

In 1994, after some years of preliminary study and experimental work, the Commission for the hymnbook of NSKK was authorized to start its work by the General Synod. The present hymnbook, titled Hymns Ancient and Modern, published in 1959, is a result of several revisions in the past since the missionary time. Thanks be to God, missionaries who arrived in Japan first in 1859 worked very hard to put English hymnbooks and prayer books into Japanese for the use of our Japanese church. The 1959 Hymnbook is one of the outcomes of their toil and hardship. The year 1959 was marked also by the authorization of the post-war revision of our Book of Common Prayer. Both of these books were written in traditional language and forms. But as a result of a growing desire among people in the church for more understandable and contemporary use of words, the General Synod, after almost two decades of work, ratified the 1990 Book of Common Prayer in contemporary language, and then created a commission to revise hymnbook that might go along with the new prayer book.

At the outset of undertaking the revision, the commission looked into the present hymnbook and decided which hymns might be included in the new one and which had to be eliminated. Some principles, after a lengthy discussion, were adopted as a ground rule of the selection process, which later applied in selecting hymns from other hymnbooks in use worldwide, such as Hymns of the Chinese Church, Hymnal 82, the New English Hymnal, Hymnbook of the Korean Church, Taize Hymns, Iona Hymns, and numerous other hymnbooks.

The first principle that we had in our minds is that our new proposed hymnbook shall be a liturgical one, not just a collection of songs we love. By 'Liturgical', we mean that the

hymns we choose must be intended to be used in a celebration of services of public worship, and they are to be a communal expression of our faith, joy, gladness and thanksgiving. We wish that our new hymnbook be an expression of the faith of our historical church, even going back to Christian hymns of the early church.

We have tried to include more original hymns made just for this proposed hymnal, soliciting words and music from people in the pews as a way of enabling our Japanese expression to be realized in the new hymnbook. And the words are intended to be more understandable to our young ones. As is the same everywhere, traditional and poetic expressions are very difficult to understand for many. We wish those words to be sung with a clear understanding of their meaning, although we are having a very hard time to make the words more contemporary, because in the Japanese language a contemporary use of words needs many more syllables than writing in a poetic traditional way. Translation of new hymns also has this difficulty. However, we have been able to publish a book for trial use with some 180 hymns. This little hymnbook will, we hope, encourage us and our fellow church people to see a final result in the next five years.

The Rev. Bartholomew Kentaro Takeuchi
Hymnal Revision Committee

SUPPORT FOR HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

NSKK member **Monica Hisano** is a woman long committed to working on the issues of gender and consumerism in the women's movement and has attended several international gatherings. During one of them she faced strong criticism from a participant against Japanese men who had joined package tours mainly aimed at prostitution and as a Japanese woman she felt anger and guilt.

Some years after her encounter she became familiar with the serious pandemic of HIV/AIDS in Thailand through a TV program in Japan. Through it she learned that prostitution was legal and in the country poor families would sell their daughters for

their survival. Prostitution is one of the main means of transmitting the virus and many young parents are unconsciously virus carriers and so their babies are born with the virus. Another serious consequence is the increase in orphans because anti-virus medicine is impossible to acquire for people in developing countries, even in Thailand where the GNP per capita is \$5,456. It is a tragedy to see that young girls among the orphans are sold to be sex workers.

After long consideration about what she could do to apologize for the Japanese males' crime to fellow women overseas, Hisano decided to commit herself to support the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Thailand. She planned to donate a meaningful amount of money as a scholarship for girls in Thailand to be given without any specification of the subject to be studied, but she thought it would be superb if it related to health/medical work.

This good will idea was presented to her diocesan bishop, who is also the Primate of NSKK, and came to the Provincial Office General Secretary who has a friend from his youth, Dr. Michael Ishida, who is working in Thailand for the prevention of HIV/AIDS sent by the Japan International Cooperative Agency.

In July, the General Secretary and Hisano's Rector, **The Rev. John S. Sato**, visited Thailand in the northern area around Phayao District where the HIV prevalence is highest in the country and also the working ground of Dr. Ishida. There are many different minority groups in the area and they have been following their traditional way of life and many children have no chance to attend school. Also there are several NGOs operating in this area who have competence to provide the administration of a scholarship. After visiting several of these agencies with Dr. Ishida, it was decided that the Bangkok YMCA Foundation project would be the facilitator for the Monica Hisano Scholarship Fund. Consequently, the Fund has been set up as follows:

1. The Monica Hisano Scholarship is founded as a token of the strong concern of Ms. Monica Hisano for young women in Thailand.
2. This scholarship is principally provided to young girls who are from the area of the Phayao Center at Dok Kham Tai.

3. The Provincial Office of Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Anglican Communion in Japan) will assume the managerial role for the scholarship.
4. The scholarship provides 350 US\$ per year per high school student for three years and 60,000 TBT per year per nursing college student for four years.
5. The amount of money required to cover tuition and spending money for 10 high school students and 3 nursing college students is kept in the account of NSKK Provincial Office.
6. The provisions of the scholarship start at the beginning of the school term in October.
7. NSKK Provincial Office will send money at the request of Bangkok YMCA Foundation. The request should include the name of the recipient of the scholarship.
8. Bangkok YMCA Foundation will give a report of the status quo of the scholarship to NSKK Provincial Office in the end of each school year.

NSKK approved the special fund for the Monica Hisano Scholarship in its accounts and is publicizing it widely to invite donations.

(Samuel I. Koshiishi)

NSKK would convey the heartfelt condolence to the victims of the horrible events on September 11, their families and friends. May God's guidance and help be with sisters and brothers of the Episcopal Church USA, especially those who have been involved in works of the relief and the reconstruction at the Ground Zero.