



# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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## Year of the Wild Boar

### Editorial



Happy New Year

2007 and the year of the wild boar ! The season of Epiphany is the church season of light yet our world seems to have so much darkness. There are times we may feel lost as

the wise men did in searching for Jesus yet they followed the light of the star to continue on their way. The light of the star may become dimmer at times but it is not gone. We, as people of faith, must keep the light before us . Let us pray that in this year 2007 that the redeeming light shines in all parts of the world to bring forth peace and justice.

### CONTENTS

Candle Movement	2
CCRMW	3
Education Law Revision	4
Yasukuni Shrine Protest Letter	5
Rally for Justice	6
Tribute to to Dr. Takenaka	7
Twenty Years of HELP	8
Education Law Protest	9
Letter to President Arroyo	10
Letter to Ambassador Siazon	11
NcCCJ Calendar Highlights 2006-2007	12

**We dedicate this issue of  
JCAN to Aiko Carter  
( June 6, 1932 - October 1, 2006)  
She served in Japan 34 years**

Aiko was a UCC missionary in Japan with her husband Tony. She was the previous editor of JCAN and worked at NCCJ with the Women's Desk as well. Aiko was a strong advocate for peace and justice issues and women's rights. She educated many about the former Japanese military sex slaves and worked to bring compensation and an apology from the Japanese government. A feminist, a human rights advocate, a breaker of traditions is how she will be remembered at NCCJ where she works for over 25 years. She was an editor of JCAN.

Her memory and the impact that she had on many lives lives on. We gives thanks for the life if Aiko Carter.

We are delighted that our NCCJ General Secretary, Rev. Toshi Yamamoto, will be honored at a banquet in Berkeley, California, on January 24 as one of this year's winners of the 2007 Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards. Toshi graduated from the Pacific School of Religion in 1988. Asian theologian, Dr. C.S. Song, will present the award which is for individuals who have each made important contributions to their fields, including significant work in ecumenical and interfaith relations. This event comes during the 106th annual Earl Lectures program, the theme of which is "All the Rivers of Paradise: Christian Responsibility in an Interfaith World." [www.psr.edu](http://www.psr.edu). Toshi graduated from the Pacific School of Religion in 1988.



## Candle Movement

Dear Friends;

The issue of Yasukuni Shrine is the most important issue for the future of Japanese politics and for peace in East Asia. Let's together push the Japanese government to change their policies about Yasukuni and to keep the peace constitution.

In solidarity for peace,  
SUH Sung  
Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto

What is the Candle Movement Committee?

When the Koizumi cabinet was formed in 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi pledged his intention to visit Yasukuni Shrine, and has since done so repeatedly. The conflict between Japan and China and Korea reached its peak. Around the same time, bereaved families from four East Asian regions of Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan and Korea brought a lawsuit claiming the Prime Minister's visits to Yasukuni were unconstitutional. Furthermore, the movement by family members of the deceased from Taiwan and Korea to have their loved ones withdrawn from the list of those enshrined at Yasukuni was gaining ground.

In this context, the bereaved families from the four regions and concerned citizens joined forces to seek to prevent Prime Minister Koizumi's planned pre-resignation visit to the Shrine on August 15th, and established the Candle Movement Committee.

We, the Candle Movement Committee, define the following three points as "the darkness of Yasukuni" which urges us to take action.

- 1) The interpretation of history portrayed at Yasukuni Shrine directly connects to Japan's current rapid descent into being a country that could once again wage war.
- 2) The list of the deceased from Korea, Taiwan, Okinawa and Japan enshrined without the permission of their families.
- 3) Prime Minister Koizumi's Yasukuni visits violate the principle of separation of religion and the state set down by the constitution.

This summer, the 61st year after the end of the war, we will take action to bring about peace in Japan, Asia and the world by shedding light on Yasukuni as a symbol of the dark side of Japan, through lighting candles one by one.

Let's Light a Candle of Peace! A Candle Movement Against the Darkness of Yasukuni. Criticism regarding Prime Min-

ister Koizumi's planned visit to Yasukuni Shrine is recently heard not only from the governments of China and Korea, but also from the U.S. Government and Japan's business world. For the Prime Minister to visit a shrine that rewards Class-A war criminals who led the aggression against Asian countries as "spirits of the war dead", violates not only the Peace Principle, adopted in reflection of wartime aggression, and the constitutional principle of keeping religion and state separate but it also tramples on international and domestic agreements (San Francisco Peace Treaty, Japan-China Joint Statement, and Parliamentary Resolution of Post-War 50 year).

Yasukuni Shrine, a dark funeral site, is shrouded in deep gloom. Prior to and during the war, the Emperor acted as the chief mourner at Yasukuni. This served to hide the dire reality of war, with the Emperor heaping glory on the war dead, and making Yasukuni a site to transform the grief of the bereaved into bliss. Yasukuni was a military accommodation under the jurisdiction of military and naval forces, and became a spiritual pillar in driving the common people to the battlefield.

After the war, Yasukuni Shrine became a religious institution but it is obvious from the manner in which Class-A war criminals are enshrined and displayed at the Yushukan (the Shrine's Museum) that it still continues to serve as an institution to reward the spirits of the war dead, and to glorify aggression. We cannot accept the misguided interpretation of history exemplified by Yasukuni Shrine, and its potential to incite Japan's people to aggression. Even after the war, Yasukuni continued to list people as enshrined based on the register of the war dead that was illegally circulated by the Health and Welfare Ministry, without the permission of the bereaved families. There are a great number of souls listed as enshrined at Yasukuni, including 28,000 Taiwanese and 22,000 Koreans, who died after being dragged into Japan's war of aggression.

Presently, the bereaved family members of the Taiwanese and Koreans are campaigning for the names of their loved ones to be withdrawn from the list of the enshrined. However, Yasukuni Shrine refuses to respond to their claims. Should we accept this infringement of human rights neglecting the will of the deceased's families? Should this not be called a violation of the freedom of ideas, beliefs, religion, and a serious infringement of the right to self-determination?

Prime Minister Koizumi, immediately prior to his resignation, is expected to make an official visit to Yasukuni on

*(Cont'd on p. 6, col.2)*

## CCRMW, A Support for Refugees and Migrant Workers

The Christian Coalition For Refugee And Migrant Workers (CCRMW) was established as an interdenominational NGO in April 1989 to take up the varied problems of refugees and migrant workers living in Japan. It was hoped that it would encourage people, not only as church members but also as citizens, to become more interested in the issues of refugees and migrant workers. In addition, there was a desire to build a society in which they could develop their gifts and become bridges between Japan and their countries in the future, erasing the negative image of refugees as illegal immigrants or criminals. Moreover, we have appealed to the government since 1989 for foreigners' human rights and better living conditions. A handbook on the human rights of migrants has been published by CCRMW.

The number of foreign workers increased rapidly during the bubble economy period of the early 1990's. After about ten years or so, other related problems such as education of their children, social insurance and unemployment surfaced, becoming more and more serious. The migrant workers were employed for short periods of time after which they returned to the home country if the demand for workers slackened. With time however, the migrants came hoping to settle down in Japan. They did not return to their home country, but stayed to live in Japan, something the Japanese Government did not expect or want.

According to the census in fiscal 2000, there were 1,157,000 foreigners over the age of 15 in Japan. Of these, 685,000 people were employed, and 42,000 unemployed. The ratio of foreigners in the Japanese labor force rose to 1.1% of which 221,000 were illegal. Those who had overstayed their visas or who entered the country with false documents made up 28.9% of all the foreign workers in 2002.

The number of refugees requesting protection in Japan following the 9.11. 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. increased rapidly as well. The number of applicants granted approval for refugee status by Japan over the period of 1982-2004 was less than 10%. Those who are not recognized as refugees are considered to be illegal "overstays", and are detained by the Ministry of Justice in the Immigration Bureau Detention Centers. The detention of refugees and foreign workers is a serious problem, with 1,435 people now being held in three detention centers: in Omura in Nagasaki Prefecture; Ibaraki in Osaka Prefecture and Ushiku in Ibaraki Prefecture.

Soon after "9.11" on October 3, 2001, many Afghan refugees were arrested in Tokyo, Chiba, and Saitama and detained in the Ushiku Detention center by the Ministry of

Justice Immigration Bureau. Among them was a young man who had escaped from Afghanistan. He was arrested at New Tokyo International Airport, and sent to Ushiku. As his stay lengthened, he despaired, attempting suicide many times in the detention center. Very few knew about the detainees outside of the detention center. An Iranian detained at that time later spoke of his misery to an NGO group. At the end of 2001, lawyers and support NGOs established a "Support Network for Afghan refugees in Japan". CCRMW became the secretariat of the network and started a visiting support service for refugees in detention centers.

The CCRMW also asked the WCC and ACC to talk to the Afghan refugees in Japan. After their interviews, a conference was held in the hall of the House of Councilors. After that, all detained Afghan refugees were given temporary release and freed in April 2002 due to aroused public concern. The handling of the Afghan refugee cases brought to light the inhumane treatment of long-term detainees at the Ministry of Justice Immigration Bureau Detention Center as well as the inadequate medical treatment provided them. Since the interview, support activities have been initiated.

In April 2004, the CCRMW set up and formally established the "East Japan Ministry of Justice Immigration Bureau Center Christian Support Network (called the "Ushiku Menkai Net)" together with the Commission on Human Rights, Amnesty, the National Christian Council in Japan (NCC), the Catholic Tokyo International Center, the Catholic Saitama parish and other NGO groups.

On October 17, 2003, the Ministry of Justice Immigration Bureau in Tokyo, the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department released a "Joint declaration on strengthening measures to reduce illegal residence of foreigners in Tokyo" aimed at a 50% reduction of illegal stays within five years. Many foreign workers who made up the labor base of the Japanese economy were kept under strict surveillance. (The Ministry of Justice Immigration Bureau requested the cooperation of one embassy in issuing a passport without confirming the inmate refugee's intention. He was then deported to his homeland where it was feared he would be killed.) In addition, the deportation of sick persons cannot be overlooked. We have visited many inmates since the end of 2000 and found serious problems in the detention center, for example, poor medical treatment, separated detention of family members, including mothers who are separated from their children and extremely long-term detention (more than two years).

*(Cont'd on p. 4, col.1)*

## Education Law Revision Endangers the Future

*Christians in Japan say the government has debased the country's peace-seeking constitution after the upper chamber of parliament approved the promotion of patriotism in the classroom by changing the country's education law. "The governing parties should know that this amendment violates the Constitution of Japan, the supreme law of the country. It also violates the Convention on the Rights of the Child that Japan promised the international community it would comply with," said Kaori Oshima, general secretary of the education division of the National Christian Council in Japan.*

We protest the passing of the bill of amendment to the Fundamental Law on Education and renew our determination to promote education that cares for everyone

### Division of Education

#### National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ)

We vehemently protest the passage of the revised bill amending the Fundamental Law on Education at the Lower House session on December 15. The government and ruling parties disregarded many voices of opposition that had been raised across the country.

The changes to the law will make it possible to alter relevant laws and systems and promote discriminatory and selective education, as well as mind-control and patriotic education, which many children and adults have already endured. The government and the ruling parties should know that the bill violates the Constitution of Japan, the supreme law of the country, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Japan has pledged to respect. The amended

Fundamental Law on Education should be abolished immediately.

We renew our determination to neither contribute to "the education of persons who are convenient to the state," nor cooperate with any education that leads to war. We oppose the state's intervention in Christian education and church education. We resolve to stand on the side of children being discriminated against and trampled on. We shall strive harder to promote education that cares for the dignity of every child, because we believe that it is the way to follow Jesus Christ, who became angry with those adults who tried to push children out of the way, and instead let them come to Him to be blessed.

Oshima, Kaori (Rev.)  
General Secretary  
Programme Chairperson

Oh SooHae (Ms.)  
[www.nccj.edu.org](http://www.nccj.edu.org)

### CCRMW... (Continued from p. 3)

In April 2004, the Ushiku Menkai Net made an appeal to the head of the East Japan Immigration Bureau Detention Center for improvement of inmate treatment. Since then, the Ushiku Menkai Net has made repeated proposals to the head of the Center for improvements in how inmates are treated. There have been some small gradual improvements – but they come slowly, little by little.

Refugees on trial and migrant workers married to Japanese can apply for "Permission for Temporary Release" but even if application is permitted, they need guarantors as well as deposit money as security. This can cost anywhere from 0 to 3,000,000 yen, depending on the decision of the Immigration Bureau. Most are charged a fee of 300,000 to 600,000 yen. Even if they are released, they are not permitted to work, nor do they receive any official support. Therefore friends, acquaintances, former employers and support NGOs must provide them with living support. The CCRMW and other NGOs in the Ushiku Menkai Net must search for housing and try to provide funding for guarantee fees, etc. Providing living support is an important task of

the CCRMW. Some of the refugees decide to migrate to a third country because they become so disappointed and discouraged by Japan's attitude towards them. So we also try to investigate possibilities for emigration to third countries. When we consider the future of Japan and the falling birthrate, we Japanese are losing valuable human assets who are keen to speak Japanese and have good job skills. On the other hand, CCRMW welcomes young people who are interested in issues concerning refugees and foreign migrant workers. We support their writing reports in university, visiting inmates at the detention center, and so on.

A multiracial, multicultural symbiotic society is the dream of many intellectuals and activists in NGOs. CCRMW continues to offer visiting support so that inmates' human rights can be better defended and supports refugees during their "temporary release" to help them have a more stable life. To share the problems of refugee and migrant workers, seminars and forums have been held by CCRMW, and a newsletter has also been issued and sent to the churches in Japan. CCRMW aims to build a peaceful multiracial, multicultural symbiotic society and to walk with refugees in Japan.



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To: Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro

#### Statement of Protest Against Visits to Worship at Yasukuni Shrine

We Christians are taught that "Justice exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to all people." However, in the past we were witness to the sins of our nation as it pursued aggressive warfare and colonialist policies in other Asian nations. We did not protest, but in fact committed the sin of accepting and supporting these policies.

Repenting of these sins, we have strived through prayer, verbal protest, and action, to call our nation to admit the wrongs of aggressive warfare and colonialist policies, and to stand firmly on the principles of peaceful non-aggression, the sovereignty of the people, and respect for basic human rights as clearly stated in the Japanese Constitution.

However, Prime Minister Koizumi, you have trampled on our desires, and since August 13, 2001, have continued obstinately to push ahead with yearly visits to worship at Yasukuni Shrine culminating in the visit this year on August 15. We rigorously protest these visits to worship at the Yasukuni Shrine by the Prime Minister of Japan.

The Prime Minister, as representative of the Japanese people, is infringing on Article 20 of the Japanese Constitution when he makes an official visit to worship at Yasukuni Shrine. Such visits were deemed unconstitutional by a judgement put forth by the Osaka High Court on September 30, 2005. This is not a matter of criticism from our Asian neighbors. The Prime Minister ought to conform to the law and Constitution of Japan. Ever since 1969 when the Liberal Democratic Party passed "The Yasukuni Shrine Bill," we the people have continued to protest any connection between the Yasukuni Shrine and the nation state. We strongly urge that the head of state lend an ear to the voices of the people, and terminate any visits to Yasukuni Shrine.

The Yasukuni Shrine glorifies the aggressive war and colonial policies of the past. We are particularly disturbed by the Prime Minister's visits to the Shrine because it expresses an affirmation of that particular view of history. This can be called nothing other than a violation of the peaceful spirit of the Japanese Constitution which was established on the basis that "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes." In particular we protest this visit on August 15th, because it glorifies and affirms war, and serves to stir up once again the type of militarism and nationalism of the past, which compelled the Japanese people to sacrifice their lives for the nation state.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister's visit to worship at Yasukuni Shrine goes against the peaceful non-aggressive policies of Japan which have won the trust of foreign countries. These visits break the bonds of reconciliation and goodwill that have been forged over many long years with the people of Asia.

Given these recent developments, we strongly protest the visit of the Prime Minister to worship at Yasukuni Shrine, and insist that under no circumstances should the Prime Minister worship again at the Yasukuni Shrine.

August 15, 2006

National Christian Council of Japan  
 Committee on the Yasukuni Shrine Issue  
 Rev. Seiji Suga, Chairperson

<http://ssc.uccj.jp/>



## Rally for Justice

November 2006

To Our Friends and Supporters:

Greetings from Japan to our Supporters around the world. On October 31, representatives from almost every district of the United Church of Christ in Japan met in Tokyo for a rally in support of Kazuo Ishikawa, who was wrongly convicted over 40 years ago of a crime he clearly had no part in. The "Sayama Case", as it's become known, has become a focal point for the struggle against "buraku" discrimination.

Briefly, this miscarriage of justice stems from a botched police investigation of the kidnapping and eventual murder of a teenage girl in 1963. The local police were under severe criticism for allowing the kidnapper, who had written a ransom note, to escape. They were under extreme pressure to solve the case. Their "solution" was to look for a suspect in a nearby "buraku" area (a poor neighborhood of people descended from those who had been designated "unclean" by ancient religious traditions), and Kazuo Ishikawa proved to be a convenient scapegoat. He didn't have a provable alibi, and since he was "one of those people" that society thought of little worth anyway, it was easy for them to justify extracting a "confession" out of him. You can read more of the story by going to <<http://www.imadr.org/sayama/story.html>>.

It boggles the mind to think of a young man's future being taken away from him by clearly trumped-up charges. After being tricked into signing a confession after many days of grueling interrogation, he was actually sentenced to death. This was in spite of the clear evidence that he could not possibly be the real culprit, and was based entirely on his "confession." The sentence was later reduced to life imprisonment, and after spending 32 years behind bars, he was finally paroled. His unjust sentence, however, was not overturned, and in fact, the court has continued to refuse to even open up the case again so that he can clear his name.

The court is in effect following a choking at the facts of the case. It's hard to imagine a more obvious case of frame-up. In fact, the frame-up was so poorly done that it is clear that it was done totally ad hoc and under pressure, with little if any real planning. This is not a case of simply "reasonable doubt" concerning his guilt, but clear and compelling evidence of his innocence! Even in this situation of "guilty until proven innocent," that would be very easy to do if only given the chance. People all over the world are being urged to show their support in this effort to put pressure on Japanese authorities to come clean and admit this injustice. Previous efforts have been stonewalled, and the court has steadfastly refused to even look at the evidence.

We urge all of you to go to the website <<http://www.imadr.org/sayama/>> and sign the petition on line. Just click the "Sign the petition" button on the right under "More Information" and type in your name and email address and submit. At the rally, we spent more than an hour appealing to passersby to add their signatures to the list, and gathered more than a hundred from our one spot. Next, we went to the main rally, where well over 1000 supporters from various religious and secular groups were gathered to listen to speeches in support of the cause. Kazuo Ishikawa himself came to express his appreciation for all of the support he continues to receive.

Ishikawa is only one victim of a wide variety of subtle and not-so-subtle forms of discrimination still present in Japan against people of buraku descent and other marginalized groups. His story, however, has become a central symbol in the struggle to liberate not only the people who suffer such discrimination, but also those who still engage in it.

The goal is not retribution or revenge against those who directly perpetrated this injustice. It is to set all of us free from the fear and misinformation that is at the root of the problem in the first place. And as Christians, our goal is to introduce people to the life-changing power of Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate answer to this age-old problem.

Grace and Peace,

Tim and Yuko (Juji) Boyle

*(Tim and Juji are UMC/PCUSA Missionaries who will work at the Buraku Kyodan Liberation Center in Osaka from April)*

Candle... *(Continued from p. 2)*

August 15th. Such a visit will without doubt send a message to the world affirming Japan's wartime aggression, and will definitively inhibit reconciliation and friendship between Japan and East Asian countries. Moreover, to incite people's desire to have potential future war dead enshrined at Yasukuni is nothing other than denying peace and preparing for war.

We believe that now is the time for Japan to work towards a peaceful future, in order to build a peaceful Asia. We hereby object to Prime Minister Koizumi's Yasukuni Shrine visit. On August 11-15, East Asian citizens (Japan, Okinawa, Taiwan, Korea) will gather in Tokyo to hold events for "Let's Light a Candle of Peace! A Candle Movement Against the Darkness of Yasukuni."



## World Council of Churches

### General Secretariat

Geneva, 22 August 2006

Tribute to Prof. Dr Masao Takenaka

It is with deep sorrow that we received the sad news of the passing away of our dear friend and ecumenical colleague, Prof. Dr Masao Takenaka. He was an outstanding theologian, thinker and ecumenist of our times and will be deeply missed in the ecumenical world.

A professor of Christian Ethics and Sociology of Religion, Dr. Takenaka's contribution to ecumenical social thought extended far beyond the borders of his country and region. For over five decades he played a leading role as a thinker and a spiritual guide of the ecumenical movement in Asia. An ardent supporter of grass root movements, he was the Chairman of the Urban Industrial Mission of the World Council of Churches from 1968 to 1975. He inspired and encouraged URM colleagues through his theological insights and biblical exegesis on the history of people's struggle. As Oh Jae Shik, a former director of the Commission of the Churches' Participation in Development and a devoted disciple of Dr Takenaka so aptly puts it: "Masao was not an onlooker of history. He always found himself on the front line of movements of people."

Dr Takenaka believed that the struggle for justice and human dignity must begin from one's own backyard. He was in the forefront of the struggle in Japan against Emperor worship and vehemently opposed visits of official dignitaries to the Yasukuni Shrine, a symbol of Japanese nationalism and militarism. Dr Takenaka worked tirelessly amongst his country's people to help them understand and interpret Japan's role during the war in order to forge a better understanding with Asian people, who suffered under the Japanese imperial rule. His voice was also heard in the global ecumenical platforms, especially through the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia.

He taught Christian Ethics and Sociology of Religion in his own country, at Doshisha University, Kyoto, for 41 years and was also a visiting professor at Yale Divinity School, Harvard Divinity School and at Union Seminary, New York, where he shared his intellectual brilliance from an Asian cultural, social and ethical perspective.

Dr Takenaka, in his ability to mould and nurture his ecumenical commitment through his long years of deep involvement in the Student Christian Movement in Japan and in the leadership of the World Student Christian Federation, was an ardent promoter of the idea that laity must play a vital role as "the ambassadors of the Church to perform the service of the Church through their ordinary secular life to the world". While he was Vice-Chairperson of the WSCF, he echoed his assessment at the Third WCC Assembly at New Delhi in 1961 - what he termed the Four D's of Christianity - "divided, dependent, derived, and dated". He felt that such a Christianity "cannot be sold to his friends" and "the presence of Christians in the secular world is very important."

In his search to understand the implications of the spiritual meaning of culture for our earthly life in the light of Christian faith, Dr Masao Takenaka believed that "culture is not only a gift of God but also the people's identity" and that it is highly significant to consider the relationship between the Christian faith and the role of cultural expressions. He also passionately articulated his conviction that images and symbols rooted in the local culture can nurture the power of spiritual imagination and shape the human sense of responsibility.

Toward the later part of his life, Dr Takenaka became a passionate promoter and supporter of Christian art in Asia. He served as President of the Asian Christian Art Association for many years. He was acutely sensitive to how Christian faith and worship are expressed through local culture throughout the world, and might also stimulate ideas of the relationship between gospel and culture. This sensitivity infused his writing, teaching, preaching and his enormous contribution to ecumenical dialogue.

Dr Takenaka will be greatly missed in ecumenical circles for his spirited presence and great mind. We thank God for the life and witness of Dr Masao Takenaka and we offer our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends around the world.

May God rest his soul in eternal peace and provide patience and courage to the bereaved family as they grieve his loss.

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia  
General Secretary

## HELP Marks Twenty Years of Service to Women

In April 1986, as a 100th anniversary project for the Japan Christian Women's Organization Kyofukai, HELP Asian Women's Shelter was established to reach out and help women who are faced with violence and human rights abuses. For these 20 years, HELP, which stands for House in Emergency of Love and Peace, has provided telephone counseling and a temporary emergency shelter for women and children in need, regardless of their nationality or immigration status.

Let me explain to you a little bit about the Japan Christian Women's Organization Kyofukai, the mother organization of HELP. At the end of the 19th century, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in the US turned its eyes out to the world, and in 1886, the movement found a new home in Japan. KYOFUKAI was founded by 54 Japanese Christian women who decided to promote, in addition to temperance, women's rights, which developed into a larger belief that "with the women's power the social disease should be corrected." In the first years, KYOFUKAI submitted yearly petitions calling for monogamy and an end to Japanese women being trafficked and prostituted overseas. In 1894, it acquired land and established a refuge for the women upon their return to Japan.

They have worked hard for women's basic rights, such as to end legalized prostitution, gain the right to vote etc., for social welfare projects. Their strong commitment has made it possible for Japanese women today to have the equal rights to those of men. It is no surprise as part of its history that KYOFUKAI chose, as its 100th year anniversary project, to establish an emergency shelter, having grasped the rise in the number of women from Asian nations and signs that most of these women who were brought to Japan would only experience human rights abuse, oppression and discrimination.

At first, the majority of the trafficking survivors who came to HELP were of Asian origins, but nationalities have gradually diversified. In spite of HELP's petition against human trafficking to Japanese government, our voice was too small to be heard for almost 20 years. Even the Japanese media, which is also male dominated, did not take up this issue in a serious way. A few year ago, the U.S. State Department listed Japan as one of the major destinations of sexually victimized women and criticized Japan's inadequate response. Under pressure from global community to take measures against human trafficking, in August, 2004, criminal law was revised so that the traffickers are prosecuted and women are no longer viewed as criminals violating prostitution and immigration laws. They are given a legal means to leave Japan instead of being deported.

Around the time that I began my work here in 2001, the number of women, with their children, who had escaped from their abusive Japanese husbands was increasing. Many Japanese women here were also DV survivors. At that time, society's awareness of domestic violence was very low, and there were no legal systems set up to protect these women.

Some ex-HELP residents (DV survivors) spoke up and Pandane (Yeast) Survivors' Support Group was formed to present a public statement requesting the creation of anti-domestic violence legislation. In October, 2001, the Anti-Domestic Violence Law was implemented and some of the changes proposed by concerned organizations passed in 2004.

HELP will continue to monitor government actions in connection with the relevant laws against DV and human trafficking to protect the rights of these survivors and support them to prepare for new, independent lives. Recently, more women, mostly Japanese are being referred to HELP for issues other than DV and trafficking. Since the implementation of these laws, national women's institutions have actively started accepting these non-Japanese women, and thus there has been a big change in both the climate and users of HELP.

HELP is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. At the end of March, our director for 6 years retired and until next March, we have an acting part-time director. Now there are 2 full-time caseworkers and five part-time case workers, as well as two full-time dorm mothers and one part-time accountant to help out the facility. Having lost our old director, we are facing new challenges, but are blessed with a warm and caring atmosphere.

### JCAN Subscription Information

JCAN is \$20 a year for North America. This does not even cover our printing and mailing costs from Japan so your donations are appreciated. For other NCCs and ecumenical organizations, JCAN will be sent as a courtesy or as a newsletter exchange. Subscriptions in Asia are free. To subscribe, please send a check to "PCUSA" and make a note on the check it is for "ECO offering JCAN #051621"

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## NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL IN JAPAN

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副会長 鈴木 杏子  
 総幹事 山本 俊正

Ms. SUZUKI Rieko  
 Moderator  
 REV. YAMAMOTO Toshimasa  
 General Secretary

To: Prime Minister Shuzo Abe  
 Minister for Education and Science Bunmei Ibuki

### Statement of Protest against the Revision of the Fundamental Law on Education

It is written in the Bible the "God created the human person (Genesis, Chapter 1 verse 27) in God's own image." The human person created in the Divine Image exists as a mirror reflecting God. We Christians believe that each and every human person has been created by God and as such is precious and to be treated with care. We support the focus of the present '1947 Fundamental Law on Education in its emphasis on "Respect for the individual person " and its goal of "complete character formation".

We strongly protest the passing of the amendment of the Fundamental Law on Education in the Upper House on December 15th, without adequate deliberation or surveys in spite of many voices of protest. The Fundamental Law on Education, with the Constitution of Japan, came into being as the result of anguished reflection on the tragic experience of war. It is the legal root of post-war democracy and pacifism. Before and during the war, education based on the "Imperial Rescript on Education" (Imperial Law of the Meiji period) which was a hotbed of militarism was imposed on children. As a result of education in "loyalty and patriotism ", many children and young people were sent to the battlefield to lose their lives. Education was exploited as a tool to promote militarism, to serve the national goals and the children were made into instruments of the state. Reflecting on this, the Fundamental Law on Education, which in the Forward '1Preamble and Article 1 states that each person is to be cared for as a human person, was established in order to prevent undesirable intervention and overruling by the state (Article 10). However, the recently passed bill of amendment has deleted the phrase " all the citizens bear direct responsibility" and replaced it with "this and other laws must be carried out (Article 16.1). In the amendment, the "goal of education" is specified in 20 categories including "patriotism" and "values of tradition and culture". Education which was based on upholding the "dignity of each person" has been altered to become "education for the purposes of the state", "persons who will follow national strategies". The vital standard that the state and government should not intervene has been ignored. It has become very easy for the state and government to intervene by enforcing its moral standards. It violates the values protected by Article 19 of the Constitution: freedom of thought, conscience and heart/will (naishin??) belief? of each person. The enforcement of such symbols as the Hinomaru flag and Kimigayo anthem is a warning of the recurrence of infringement of inner freedom.

After the war, many of the Christian organizations and churches which participated in the National Christian Council (NCC) acknowledged before God their burden of sin. They repented and asked forgiveness of God and their fellow human beings. Our memory of the past as victimizers and the lessons taught us by history are etched into our hearts. We resolved to never repeat this sin and to walk a new path. The Constitution of Japan and the Fundamental Law on Education are Japan's promise to our Asian neighbors that we will never again act as an aggressor in war. The passage and implementation of the amendment to the Fundamental Law on Education does violence to this post-war direction, breaks our vow to our Asian neighbors and compromises future steps in post-war democracy and peace building.

Moreover, the revised Fundamental Law of Education not only contributes to the problems we face in education, such as bullying and increasing suicides, disorderly classes, the widening gap in education standards among schools, but it also promotes the introduction of an administrative system based on market principles and internal control. For these reasons, we strongly oppose the passage of the amendment to the Fundamental Law on Education and publicly declare our intention to protest.

National Christian Council (NCC)  
 Chairperson ( full name)  
 General Secretary: Toshimasa Yamamoto


**NCC 日本キリスト教協議会**

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Ms. SUZUKI Rieko  
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 General Secretary

To: Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President: Republic of the Philippines

Dear President Macapagal-Arroyo:

We are writing to express our concern over the unchecked killings of human rights advocates including clergymen and church workers, whose number has risen to 23 to date under your administration.

We have attentively been watching over the human rights situation in the Philippines ever since the killing of Rev. Edison Lapuz in Eastern Visayas in May 2005, since he had been planning to attend the 9th biannual church consultation between Japan and the Philippines here in Japan

Our representatives participated in the Pastoral Visit of the World Council of Churches in July 2005, and we organized another Pastoral Visit in July 2006. In these visits, delegates obtained firsthand testimonies from the families of victims and government officials. We were deeply touched by the grief and anger of the family members of the victims, who were unjustly deprived of their loved ones. We were appalled that these killings had been committed and that there has not been and legal action or justice.

Then, on October 3, 2006, Bishop Alberto Ramento, the former Primate of the Philippine Independent Church, was brutally killed. As he had been known to us personally through the above mentioned visits, we were greatly shocked. We cannot but feel deep sorrow and anger at the deterioration of the situation.

We strongly urge your government to take the following steps:

- 1) To establish a credible judicial system by which both truth and justice can be pursued thoroughly. We note that, under the circumstances, witnesses cannot even testify for fear for their safety.
- 2) To repeal the Counter Insurgency Policy, which is promoting extrajudicial killings.
- 3) To reconsider the aggressive development policies, including the Mining Act of 1995, in light of the fact that most of political killings are associated with disputes over development projects, land reforms or labor issues.

Executive Committee Resolution adopted unanimously on October 19, 2006

National Christian Council in Japan

Rev. Isamu Koshiishi (Moderator)

Rev. Toshimasa Yamamoto (General Secretary)

An interfaith discussion with German Catholic and Protestant communities was held at the Jewish Community Center on Sunday, November 5 at 7:00pm. It was the 3rd Inter-Faith Discussion with lay and clerical members of the German Catholic and Protestant communities in Tokyo. These discussions were launched through the initiative of Mr. Martin Eberts, a Catholic theologian and diplomat of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany. At the last gathering, the group look at a document adopted by the Vatican II Council in 1965 — an event that radically and positively altered age-old Christian attitudes to the Jews (see link that follows). This document is a real classic on Catholic theology, with implications for ecumenical work. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html)

Email the Jewish Community Center. [office@jccjapan.or.jp](mailto:office@jccjapan.or.jp)  
 or the German Church [kreuzkirche\\_tokyo@gol.com](mailto:kreuzkirche_tokyo@gol.com) for more information.


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副会議員 鈴木 裕子  
 総幹事 山本 俊正

Ms. SUZUKI Rieko  
 Moderator  
 REV. YAMAMOTO Toshinasa  
 General Secretary

October 4, 2006  
 Ambassador Domingo L. Siazon  
 Philippine Embassy

Dear Ambassador Siazon,

We are grieving and in a state of shock upon learning that Bishop Alberto Ramento, the Chairperson of the Supreme Council of Bishop of the Philippine Independent Church, was stabbed to death yesterday morning with initial report that it is a case of robbery with homicide. It is known that Bishop Ramento had been receiving death threats due to his advocacy that is critical of the Arroyo government's policies.

In his June 12, 2006 Interfaith Rally against Charter Change, Bishop Ramento again took to the stage in Liwasang Bonifacio to denounce the administration's moves to revise the constitution. During his speech, he proudly announced that during its deliberations, the leadership of the Philippine Independent Church was unanimous in its opposition to charter change. This announcement drew applause from the audience and leaders of other churches and faiths present at the rally.

The Aglipayan Bishop was active in human rights and civil liberties issues, being a founding convenor of the Movement of Concerned Citizens for Civil Liberties (MCCCL). He spoke out against the spate of extrajudicial killings under the Arroyo administration. Like him, progressive church leaders and workers have been among the targets of political assassination in the provinces.

While the Philippine National Police quickly suggest robbery as the motive of the killing, we cannot be content knowing that he is an outspoken critic of extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations under the Arroyo government.

Bishop Ramento has dedicated his entire life solely to the poor and the oppressed just like when he stood by striking workers of Hacienda Luisita. He has been a staunch peace advocate and human rights defender dating back to the martial law years of former President Marcos.

As we join all peace-loving people of the Philippines in praying for Bp. Ramento and other victims of human rights violations in the Philippines, let it be known that we are calling on the government of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to make a quick and thorough investigation of the murder so that justice may be served.

Therefore, we are asking your office to convey our demand in the strongest term to the Philippine government to give an impartial investigation to the death of Bishop Ramento.

Respectfully yours,  
 Rev. John Yuji Kanzaki  
 Chair, Philippines Committee  
 National Christian Council in Japan

Rev. Toshi Yamamoto  
 General Secretary  
 National Christian Council in Japan

# NCCJ Calendar Highlights 2006

## July

- 26 Interfaith prayer meeting to oppose SDF (Self Defense Force) dispatch to Iraq organized by Interfaith Peace Network (Submitted petitions to Prime Minister's office)

## August

- 10-12 Seminar: Human Rights Education for Christian Schools
- 12-15 Candlelight Demonstrations to oppose Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine
- 15 Prayer Meeting for Peace ( at Chidorigafuchi)
- 24 Interfaith prayer meeting to oppose SDF (Self Defense Force) dispatch to Iraq organized by Interfaith Peace Network (Submitted petitions to Prime Minister's office)
- 26-29 8th World Assembly of World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) in Kyoto.

## September

- 1 Commemorative Early Morning Prayer Meeting in memory of the Massacre of Koreans in Japan during the Kanto Earthquake in 1923 (Korean YMCA in Japan)
- Inter-religious prayer meeting to abolish the Death Penalty in Okayama
- 9 Fellowship Meeting for NCCJ Individual Supporters
- 22 60 years Anniversary Celebration of Christian Newspaper
- 27 Interfaith prayer meeting to oppose SDF (Self Defense Force) dispatch to Iraq organized by Interfaith Peace Network (Submit petitions to Prime Minister's office)

## October

- 5 Dialogue Meeting between NCCJ and Catholic Bishop's Conference in Japan
- 24 Meeting with Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, General Secretary of CCA
- 26 Interfaith prayer meeting to oppose SDF (Self Defense Force) dispatch to Iraq organized by Interfaith Peace Network (Submit petitions to Prime Minister's office)

## November

- 3 Rally for Japanese Peace Constitution
- 8 Human Chain demonstration at Diet Building to oppose changing the Fundamental Law of Education
- 12-18 NCCJ Week of Disabled Persons
- 24 Interfaith prayer meeting to oppose SDF (Self Defense Force) dispatch to Iraq organized by Interfaith Peace Network (Submit petitions to Prime Minister's office)

## December

- 8 Caroling for Peace (at Tokyo Union Church)
- 13 Interfaith prayer meeting to oppose SDF (Self Defense Force) dispatch to Iraq organized by Interfaith Peace Network (Submit petitions to Prime Minister's office)
- 14 Human Chain demonstration at Diet Building to oppose changing the Fundamental Law of Education

## January

- 11-13 National Consultation and gathering of "Gaikikyo" (National Coalition on the Problems with the Alien Registration Law)
- 20 Forum on Migrant Workers in Japan (Organized by the Christian Coalition on Refugees and Migrant Workers)
- 21 Day of Prayer for Christian Unity, co-sponsored by NCCJ and Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan]

### JCAN EDITORIAL COMMITTEE AND VOLUNTEERS

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### NCCJ welcomes two new part time staff persons to head committees!

Ms. Fumiko Oshima for the NCCJ Women's Desk and Ms. Tomita, Peace and Nuclear Issues Committee.