

# ZENKYO NEWSLETTER

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## Demand to expand education budget, not defense spending

On December 16th, 2022, the Kishida Cabinet adopted the three security policy documents at a Cabinet meeting. It is clearly written in the documents that Japan possesses an enemy base strike capability. Having the capacity means to launch a pre-emptive strike on a foreign land. Furthermore, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has planned to draw up 43 trillion yen in total as a defense spending over the next 5 years. He will obtain the current defense spending to twice, over 2 % of GDP after the 2027 fiscal year. Japan has openly shifted towards to be a military power.

Japan has the lowest public spending on education in proportion to GDP among OECD countries. This sifting will make, the advance of small class size, free education, and constant increase of teachers and school staff as the national request, go back to accomplish. For 77 years after the World War 2, Japan which has the Article 9 of the Constitutions has never killed or wounded foreign people in the war.

Now, it is a time to make diplomatic efforts to build



an international peace and international order, not to deepen the exclusion and conflict in the international situation.

ZENKYO demands to increase more the education budget rather than the military budget as we have collected the signatures against the military expansion and large tax increase which destroying peace, lives, and livings. ZENKYO determines to keep raising the flag of "Never send again our children to the battlefields!" and unite with all people who hope for peace. We commit to establish society and education which takes care of each person.

## Study tour of disaster-stricken areas in Fukushima for first time in 3 years



The government has changed Japan's policy to push ahead with a nuclear power plant. It aims to give a citizen an impression that the decommissioning of

a nuclear power plant has been advanced despite it has not.

ZENKYO organized a group tour to learn the disaster areas of Great East Japan Earthquake in Fukushima Prefecture, under the co-sponsorship of Kyoso-kyoto Renrakukai, on September 23th to 24th, 2022. 23 delegates from 14 teachers' unions joined the tour. They visited a farmer who requested the Fukushima Prefecture to test the safety of the local produced rice right after the nuclear power plant disaster was occurred. Masatake Shibaguchi, a former

junior high school teacher who lived in Futaba district had to flee his home. He said that the residents could never forget the hard times they went through lives at evacuated sites. The delegation members traced 10 years of transition in schools and communities after the tsunami and the nuclear power plant accident.

On 24th, participants toured Iwaki City, Naraha Town, and Namie Town. They met Tatsuya Ito and

Tokuo Hayakawa. They are representatives of the national civil action for the nuclear power plant disaster and have been filed a class action against the country and Tokyo Electric Power Company.

Participants committed to change the government irresponsible attitude after Hayakawa, the chief priest of Hokyō Temple in Naraha Town, told their process of the lawsuit.

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## Donations to Ukraine for humanitarian assistance to war victim

On September 30th, 2022, ZENKYO donated money to give humanitarian assistances to war victims in Ukraine to Japan Committee for UNICEF and UNHCR: The Japan Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has been a year since it began on February 24th, 2022. Children in Japan have been worried about the war. We do hope for a swift settlement of the war.

ZENKYO called on the union members of fundraising for humanitarian assistances to war victims in Ukraine on March 16th, 2022. The actions of raising funds for Ukraine had been collected in local branches of teachers' unions and schools across the country. We fundraised 4,158,065 yen for Ukraine in total and contributed a half price to Japan Committee for UNICEF and UNHCR: The Japan Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

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## The findings of ZENKYO's survey revealed teacher shortage dramatically expanding all over Japan



Japanese government has aimed to reduce the education budget. Full-time employment educators have been replaced with non-regular educators who must be placed with full-time employment in schools. Teachers long intensive working hours has been more severe year by year. Candidates who want to be a teacher and school staff has been decreased. The realities of canceling a small class and running a class by a vice-principal have happened at schools across Japan, because teachers and school staff who must be in school at a new school year were not arranged.

In May and October 2022, ZENKYO researched on the actual condition of teacher shortage across the country. The survey result made clear that 1,028 teachers and school staff were short in May survey. ZENKYO requested the Education Ministry to increase the number of full-time educators based on their result. We brought the answers together from 24 prefectures and 4 ordinance-designated cities among 47 prefectures and 20 ordinance-designated cities in October survey. The findings revealed 1,642 teachers and school staff were short. It indicates schools have been in an urgent situation.

The number of the shortage was 1,184 teachers and school staff as of October survey, increased by 450 people from 734 as of May survey according to the answers of 16 prefectures and 4 ordinance-designated cities which filled out in both months.

707 substitute teachers have been not placed to

replace teachers who take sick or childcare leaves. In particular, the backups shortage for them has been rapidly grown. "A vacancy has not filled since May" , "we had to stop a small class teaching" , and "each teacher had to add the number of classes which each one has to teach" , the survey reported the voices from educators in schools. Those numbers and voices showed that teachers must handle inside a school because they cannot find alternative teachers.

The spread of teacher shortage has expanded as the problem which revealed as of May 1st survey result has not solved and gotten worse. Our priority is the

elimination of teacher shortage. Teacher' s working conditions must be improved. It is strongly connected with children' s healthy learning.

On February 2nd, 2023, ZENKYO released the findings of the fact-finding survey as of October 1st. The members from the union pointed out the problems the survey result made obvious. They mentioned emergent countermeasures and medium-term ones to solve the teacher shortage. They appealed for the Education Ministry to settle a matter thoroughly.

## The average hours of overtime exceed a criteria for death from overwork, ZENKYO demands to amend the law immediately and win huge increase in staff numbers

	Overtime in school	Taking work in home	Total hours of both overtime
Weekday / per day	2 hours 51 minutes	24 minutes	3 hours 15 minutes
Saturday / per day	2 hours 30 minutes	41 minutes	3 hours 11 minutes
Sunday / per day	1 hours 10 minutes	1 hours 00 minutes	2 hours 10 minutes
Total hours in 4 weeks	71 hours 40 minutes	14 hours 44 minutes	86 hours 24 minutes
Total hours in a month	76 hours 47 minutes	15 hours 47 minutes	92 hours 34 minutes

【data】 The average hours of overtime in school and taking work in home ( all occupations )

※Overtime hours in school on weekdays = working or being hours in school — a designated limit ( 7 hours and 45minutes )

※Working or being hours in school = Hours between coming to school and leaving from school - break time they took

※Total hours in a month = Total hours in 4 weeks ×30 / 28

ZENKYO made the factual survey on the teachers' working conditions across the country during October 24th to 30th, 2022.

As the reference shows, most of teachers and school staff had to work from early morning to late night in schools. They exceeded a designated limit, 7 hours 45 minutes. The average hour of overworking was 76 hours 47 minutes in a month. What is more, they had to take work home because it was not finished in schools. The average hour of taking work in home was 15 hours 47 minutes in a month. It marked 92 hours 34 minutes of overworking in a month in total. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) sets 80 hours of overtime in a month as criteria of death from overwork. ZENKYO clarified teachers' intensive long working hours. The average hour of

overtime exceeded a border line of death on their survey result.

We asked the question in the survey that what task they wanted to decrease most in a daily work. The highest answer was writing reports of materials and figures which they had to submit to a board of education. The things they wanted to take a more time to do most were preparing contents for classes and guiding students expect teaching. These answers expose that teachers cannot take an enough time to prepare for classes and deal with children which is their true job.

We asked the respondents that what we need to solve this problem. The answer that they want to increase numbers of teachers and school staff, was overwhelmingly large in the poll. ZENKYO has

promoted a campaign demanding a huge increase in staff numbers based on their findings.

At the same time, ZENKYO commits to receive a compensation for overwork. We work and are paid under the provisions of the special measures law on salaries and other matters for teaching staff at compulsory education public schools since 1971. According to the law, teachers and school staff are not ordered overtime duties except 4 unavoidable reasons such as (1) students' practical activities; (2) school excursion and other events; (3) faculty meetings; and (4) emergencies. Therefore, there is no structure to pay workers for overtime work.

However, teachers have many necessary tasks to educate children which are not finished in a designated limit. This is the reason that the reality of teachers' intensive long working hours spread in a lot of schools as the findings shows.

ZENKYO focuses on striving to eliminate teachers' long intensive working hours as we demand to amend the law to make a structure paying workers' compensations for overtime work. We have had a discussion with 32 organizations and 7 expert

committees in the field of education and held the several symposiums. ZENKYO's efforts has been reaching a common ground demanding 3 main points (1) establishing a system that can pay benefits for overtime work; (2) increasing the number of teachers dramatically; and (3) expanding the education budget. The government takes a negative attitude toward paying for the overtime pay although they started to examine the revision of the law. It does not help to eliminate teachers' long intensive working hours.

On May 30th, 2023, a voluntary group of education researchers made an appeal to public sentiment for support to a national signature campaign. They and ZENKYO shared the same demands such as <1> paying benefits for overtime work; <2> placing the enough numbers of teachers fitting with the volume of their working; and <3> increasing the education budget to fulfill those requires.

ZENKYO determined to spread the campaign to end teachers' excessively long working hours and workloads and to let our ideal education that pays careful and precise attention to all children come true.

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## “Education Forum 2022” held in person for first time in 3 years



The “Education Forum 2022” was held in Kochi prefecture on August 18th to 21th, 2022.

In the opening plenary session, Yuko Tanaka, the honorary professor of HOSEI University, gave a lecture under the title of “Shifting a society into embracing a diversity” . She mentioned that we need to make a society which cares every person and increase people who are happy. The constitution of Japan is a guide to a future which human should try to be as an individual, a human right, and the universal value, according her lecture. She called for

the audience to consider the best way which Japan directs towards children's sake.

In thematic forums held both in person and online. Participants discussed various issues: their practice to support children under the pandemic; how to address the trend toward ICT; respecting diversities; and peace education.

Workshops were held based on 285 reports presented by participating organizations.

The four-day conference achieved great success, attended by a total of 4,200 people.

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## ZENKYO met Barbara Madeloni for sharing views on education in Japan and U.S

On December 23th, 2022, ZENKYO had a discussion with Barbara Madeloni, the former president of Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), amid her visiting in Japan. They shared the educational issues and the actions of teachers' unions in Japan and the United States.

Madeloni mentioned that Japan had a similar situation to the United States in education. She described that teachers always must work overtime so that they have to diminish their private time. On a nationally standardized test, she pointed out that teachers were put under intense pressure from board of education because the score will be linked the



reputation of schools and teachers.

Furthermore, she elaborated on how teachers' unions have organized struggle of rank-and-file members and a lot of new union members in the U.S.

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## Expand union membership by having dialogues in workplaces!



Teachers and school staff had restricted to gather in person, even in a workplace, under a lingering covid-19 pandemic in 2022. It has been feared consequently that interpersonal relationships between them would become weak.

ZENKYO commits to make all workers aware of the teachers' union which aim to fulfill the demands.

The union members communicate each other including unorganized workers and share their hopes and complaints in workplaces.

With the thorough measures to stop the spread of infection, there were more union events gradually which the union members gathered in person than last two years. ZENKYO held a conference called "ZENKYO NEW WAVES" on September 17 2022. The delegates in age from 20s to 40s across the country shared how they unionized new members in their workplaces. They learnt the lessons that the dialogue was important.

ZENKYO executes to increase the union membership. We continue to have a dialogue with a lot of unorganized workers including by making use of online gatherings and social medias.

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