



ZENKYO NEWSLETTER

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Struggle for the Defence of Article 9 and the Fundamental Law of Education

– History Textbooks and Prime Minister's Visits to Yasukuni Shrine –

In Japan, the move to change the Peace Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education for the worse has taken on a new aspect in the 61st year since the end of WWII. The move aims to adjust those two important laws for enabling Japan to engage in war.

At its Party Conference convened in November 2005, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party published a draft of Japan's new Constitution, its long-cherished wish since its formation. In response to the move, the Democratic Party, largest opposition party, also published its Proposition for a new Constitution. Both those new Constitutions aim to eliminate Article 9 of the Constitution that declares renunciation of war and any military forces and to enable Japan to engage in war with the United States. Those forces agreed to amend the Constitution at the Parliament ordinary session in 2006.

Closely related with the move mentioned above, Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine as well as the authorization and adoption of history textbooks that twist historical facts to justify Japan's Fifteen-Year War have provoked criticism inside and outside Japan and made Japan's diplomatic relations with Asian countries, in particular with China and Korea, more difficult than ever.

Yasukuni Shrine justifies past Japanese aggressive wars as unavoidable wars for "self-esteem and self-defence" and as wars for "liberation of Asian countries". At present, the Shrine acts as a spiritual hub to glorify Japan's war of aggression and colonization. History textbooks that were published under the direction of the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*Tsukuru-kai*) deny the historical facts of aggression, glorify Japan's war and support the idea of changing



Article 9 of the Constitution.

ZENKYO together with wide range of parents and citizens convened a number of meetings in every part of Japan, opposing the adoption of history textbooks published by *Tsukuru-kai*. As a result, only 3 districts among 583 adopted the textbooks. It might be said that a victory was won by public opinions and good conscience which resolved never to permit such a textbook be handed over to Japanese children.

With regard to Article 9 of the Constitution, the waves of movements for the defence of Article 9 have been rapidly spreading across Japan. In response to the appeal by nine well-known intellectuals, including Mr. Kenzaburo Oe, Nobel Prize winner, more than 4,000 associations to defend Article 9 were formed both at communities and workshops. In July 2005, a Rally was convened in Tokyo, mobilizing 10,000 citizens who wish to defend Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan. Various unique activities have been evolved in every part of Japan.

In March 2005, ZENKYO succeeded in organizing a big Rally for the defence of the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education in Tokyo to which 10,000 teachers, parents, researchers and citizens participated.

Holding high a slogan, "Never Send Again Our Children to the Battlefield!", ZENKYO have played and will play an important role to defend Article 9 of the Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education in close collaboration with a wide range of conscious and conscientious people.

Educational Forum for Opening up a New Vista of the 21st Century

The above-mentioned Forum was convened in Osaka, August 18 – 21, 2005. For more than half a century, the National Assembly for Educational Research in Japan was convened every year since 1951. In order to establish democratic education based on the Peace Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education under difficult circumstances surrounding education and children in Japan, it was required to innovate the Research Assembly with a view to have the participation of more classroom teachers and citizens. Hence the first Forum was convened during summer vacation. The Forum had expected results with more than 10,000 participants in total.

Accepting our invitation, two representatives from the Korean Teachers and Education Workers' Union(CHUNKYOJO) including its Vice President, Park Kyeonghwa, participated in the Forum. After the opening plenary session on August 18, CHUNKYOJO and ZENKYO signed for the first time the Joint Statement, "For More Closer Partnership to Defend the Future of Children and the Peace in Northeast Asia" as printed below.



Joint Statement

"For More Closer Partnership to Defend the Future of Children and the Peace in Northeast Asia"

Since the Minister of Education and Science of Japan authorized school textbooks published under the direction of the Japanese Society for Textbook Reform (*Tsukuru-kai*) in 2003, ZENKYO has declared its standpoints not to hand over such textbooks to children that twist historical facts to justify Japan's aggressive war. When the Tokyo Metropolitan Education Board decided to adopt the textbooks by *Tsukuru-kai* in 2004 next to Otawara City, Tochigi Prefecture, ZENKYO published its Secretary General's comment as the following and demanded the Tokyo Education Board to examine the possibility to withdraw the decision.

"The history textbook by *Tsukuru-kai*, refers to the Asia Pacific War as the 'Greater East-Asian War' and justifies the aggressive war and the colonial domination by glorifying and affirming the war as one fought for "Asian liberation" and for "self-defence". On the other hand, it scarcely contains description on the damages of atomic bombing and immeasurable sufferings of the peoples in Asian countries caused by the war. The textbook was compiled with the intention to implant in children that "it was righteous war". Historical viewpoints to glorify and affirm the aggressive war are shared by those politicians who dare to pay homage at Yasukuni Shrine.

Historical facts and truth should be described in textbooks with due consideration to the development stage of children. Such textbooks as to twist historical facts and to glorify the war of aggression do not fulfil the requirements to be in conformity with the principles of pacifism and international cooperation enshrined in the Constitution of Japan and the Fundamental Law of Education.

In order to guarantee children who live in the 21st century growth and development to play a role as sovereigns for peaceful Japan and world with full of goodwill and solidarity, it is needed to make them face with historical facts of the aggressive war and colonial domination with a view to never repeat again the past mistakes. In order to make children live in the international society with self-confidence, we should not sit and watch the enforcement of such textbooks to children and schools.

The decision of the Tokyo Metropolitan Education Board to adopt hurriedly those textbooks without substantial argument was politically motivated by such circumstances that almost all education

board except that in Otawara City had decided not to adopt textbooks by *Tsukuru-kai*.

ZENKYO strongly protests against the decision of the Tokyo Metropolitan Education Board who tramples down educational principles by disregarding the opinions of schools and teachers. ZENKYO demands the Board to examine the possibility to rescind the decision."



With the standpoint to establish peace in Northeast Asia, CHUNKYOJO has noted with deep concerns what has taken places concerning the school textbooks. CHUNKYOJO expresses its approval for the above-mentioned Secretary General's comment as well as various activities on those textbooks by ZENKYO. CHUNKYOJO hopes to collaborate with ZENKYO in defending peace in Northeast Asia.

ZENKYO and CHUNKYOJO confirm mutually the common standpoints as mentioned-above and agreed to promote followings:

In the first place, both Unions demand that Prime Minister Koizumi will stop visits to Yasukuni Shrine.

In the second place, two Unions will hold high the flag to demonstrate the opposition against any war, develop joint activities for peace education and promote movements against any moves that distort historical facts in collaboration with democratic citizens groups in each country.

August 18, 2005

Iwao Ishimoto, President of ZENKYO
Park Kyeonghwa, Vice President of
CHUNKYOJO (On behalf of President Lee
Soo-il)

Koizumi Administration Advocating for a "Smaller Government"

By calling for postal privatization as the only election issue, the Liberal Democratic Party led by Prime Minister Koizumi succeeded last September in having 73% of seats with 48% of votes cast under undemocratic single-seat electoral constituency system.

The newly formed third Koizumi Cabinet has started openly to "revise" the Constitution of Japan and to further promote neo-liberal "reform" campaign. By spreading false images of public service workers, the Cabinet targeted public service workers as victims for promoting the reduction of annual expenditures. The ultimate goals of the Cabinet are to reduce budgets for welfares and education and to increase taxes.

The Cabinet decided to reduce by half in direct to the GNP the total personnel costs of national public service workers in 10 years. In parallel with the reduction, the Cabinet intends to reduce the number of local public service workers by cutting down national subsidies for wages of local public service workers including public school teachers.

What' more, the Cabinet decided to reduce 50% national subsidies for compulsory education, the system of which was established to guarantee 'equal opportunity for education' in conformity with the Constitution, to one third

from next fiscal year on and finally aims to abolish the system itself. In case such measures be implemented, it would be difficult to realize a maximum class size of 30, which has been a long-cherished goal of classroom teachers as well as parents. Every teachers union in Japan expresses its opposition against the decision.



Education Topics

Football Pool (Lottery for win and loss of Soccer), in Crisis of Bankruptcy



The Ministry of Education and Science initiated a project of football pools in 1998, breaking down opposition from a variety of organizations including ZENKYO and Japan Council of PTAs. It was named **toto** after totocalcio in Italy. In order to introduce **toto**, the Ministry developed a big campaign. The Ministry advocated that it would promote sports in Japan by subsidizing the project profit to various sports organizations. ZENKYO published its statement against the introduction of **toto** and developed various activities to prevent the introduction. The reasons why ZENKYO oppose **toto** are as follows: 1) **toto** which targets win and loss of soccer, the most popular sports among youth, might lead them to think that the goals of sports is to win, 2) Youth might easily embark upon other gambles, which will inevitably increase educational difficulties, 3) The poor national expenditure for the promotion of sports in

Japan should not be supplemented by the profits of gambles but by the national revenues. In collaboration with various organizations, ZENKYO has demanded the abolition of **toto** since its introduction.

The turnover of **toto**, however, has fallen below the expected goals since its introduction. In these two years, subsidies to sports organizations were not granted at all. To make it worse, outstanding debts for the project still remain no less than 23 billion yen. The bank that had been entrusted the business cancelled the contract. The government intends to fling additional public money amounting to 30 billion yen to the project for putting the project under its direct management, which could not escape severe criticism from a wide range of people.

International Activities

1. The 4th World Social Forum was convened in Porte Alegre, Brazil, in January 2005, to which ZENKYO sent a representative. The total participants amounted to 150,000, largest number in its history. They affirmed their resolves to realize peaceful world without war as well as the world with justice and without poverty.



2. In the 60th year of the atomic bombing on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Seventh Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was convened in the UN Headquarters in May 2005. The Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (GENSUIKYO) sent 830 representatives including 25 from ZENKYO to take part in various actions organized in the global network of NGOs. Total participants from Japan amounted more than 1,000 people. The GENSUIKYO delegation made petitions to the delegation of each government, paraded the streets in New York City together with 40,000 from various countries and collected signatures for the abolition of nuclear weapons. The delegation presented signatures amounting to more than 5 millions to Mr. Sergio Duarte, President of the 7th NPT Review Conference.



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3. In June, the National Confederation of Trade Unions in Japan (ZENROREN) sent a mission to the Confederation of Indonesian Prosperous Trade Union (KSBSI) to hand over solidarity fund for the rehabilitation of the disaster-affected areas in Ache province of Indonesia caused by the Sumatra earthquake and tsunami.

Mr. Higashimori, ZENKYO Secretary General and Mr. Okada, NIKKOKYO President took part in the mission.



4. World Actions of 2005 was held from March 8 (International Women's Day) to October 17 (International Day for the Elimination of Poverty), 2005 in some 50 countries. The Quebec Women's Federation of Canada initiated the World Actions in 2000 and succeeded in having positive actions in 146 countries. In 2005, the World March of Women relayed quilts to highlight the importance of peace and the Women's Global Charter for Humanity that calls on women and all oppressed peoples to act for the transformation of the world on the basis of equality, peace, freedom, solidarity and justice. In Japan, women voiced their opposition to the re-militarization of Japan and denounced a revision of Article 9 of the Constitution. Peace quilts and the Charter were handed over to the participants in Korean March in July by a Japanese delegation to which a ZENKYO representative took part.



5. In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the end of the Asia-Pacific War, the Chinese and Japanese Societies for Friendship jointly organized a Peace Forum in Beijing. The Meeting was held under the co-sponsorship of All China Federation of Trade Unions, the National Committee of Educational and Scientific Workers' Union of China and ZENKYO. Mr. Hasegawa, ZENKYO Vice-President made a report on what happened on school textbooks compiled by *Tsukuru-kai*, reactionary trends in education and struggles against the trends.



6. In December 2005, ZENROREN sent a delegation including a representative from ZENKYO to the ILO to submit an 'additional information' concerning the "Reform" on the system of public service workers in Japan. In submitting the 'additional information', the delegation had talk and consultation with some ILO officials.



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