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Anglicanism in a Japanese Context

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ABSTRACT

The standpoint adopted here is that of a diocesan bishop serving in the Nippon SeiKoKai (NSKK, Anglican Church). The NSKK is a small church and has a long history in Japan. Its public stance has been relatively moderate and approaches Japanese society and other Christian churches in a modest way. Government agencies have tended to regard Christianity as peculiar and even dangerous. The moderate approach of the NSKK has meant that it has tended to yield its social work to the government. Liturgy and in particular the Eucharist has been the sustaining focus of the life of the NSKK. Monotheistic religions are regarded as not as suitable for peace as Buddhism and this creates special concerns for witness in a pseudo-religious and pseudo-communal society. The NSKK faces real challenges of enculturation and needs to find resources in the networks of the Anglican Communion for different experiences to be shared.

KEYWORDS: Japan, mission, Eucharist, enculturation, Anglican, Nippon SeiKoKai

Introduction

I have been given the theme 'Anglicanism in a Japanese Context'. What I hope to do here is to sketch out the current circumstances and issues of the SeiKoKai (Anglican Church) in relation to Japanese society, showing as closely as I can the daily realities of the Nippon SeiKoKai. I will be happy if, through this, I can present to you a point of view that is hopeful in tone on the significance of the SeiKoKai's presence in Japan with regard to future Japanese society or the future of the East Asian region including Japan and Korea.

I will start from the perspective of numbers. As is often noted, the Christian population in Japan has already fallen below the 1 per cent

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level; according to the 2006 *Kirisuto-kyou Nenkan* (Christianity Annual, published by Kirisuto Shinbun-sha), as of the year 2005, the figure is 0.8 per cent of the total Japanese population, broken down into about 480,000 Roman Catholics, 610,000 Protestants, with the SeiKoKai seemingly at about 55,000, for a total Christian population of 1.1 million. The SeiKoKai is most definitely a minority denomination, but considering that the United Church of Christ in Japan [tr. the largest Protestant body in Japan, with membership in the neighbourhood of 200,000] is a union church through and through, you can say that our church maintains a degree of unity as an organization and a degree of independence and unique identity as an individual denomination that is vastly higher than the clergy and laity of the Nippon SeiKoKai tend to realize. In other words, in having one synod on the national level, ongoing relationships between the eleven dioceses and worship and church life that is basically run using one prayer book, my feeling is that this church is in fact quite unique.

My Current Standpoint: The Diocese I Serve

Until three years ago, I was a priest of the Diocese of Tokyo, but now I work as the bishop of the Diocese of Tohoku. There are considerable differences between the Diocese of Tokyo and the Diocese of Tohoku in the environments in which their churches live and in their personal and financial circumstances, but for me, I feel it has been a blessing for me to have worked in both. However, not surprisingly, there are major differences between Tokyo, the capital of Japan, and Tohoku, even in terms of atmosphere. I see Kansai and Kyushu, Okinawa and other regions as also being quite distinctive in terms of such aspects as environment, historic background, natural features and the characteristic temperament of their people. So, first let me warn you that it is exceedingly difficult for me, presently spending every hour of each day on the work of the diocese of Tohoku as I do, to objectively and appropriately present to you the current condition of that body called the Nippon SeiKoKai.

The historic development of the Tohoku diocese's region—the northern six prefectures of Honshu [tr. the central Japanese island]—is not the theme for today's lecture, so I will be succinct; but briefly one can say that this is a region that has been marginalized and discriminated against in the history of Japan's modernization. The activities that led to the Meiji Restoration occurred basically in Satsuma and Choshu, found in Kyushu [tr. at the southwest of the major Japanese islands] and the western portion of Honshu respectively. There are regions within Tohoku that opposed Satsuma and Choshu to the very end and resisted movement toward the new age of the Meiji Restoration. So in the process of

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Japanese modernization, the region has been labelled as backward, as always lagging behind. The 'advancing centre' is thus set in contraposition to a 'lagging Tohoku'. People talk of the Tohoku region's rich natural beauty or its abundance of folk arts (say, folk songs or festivals), but putting this the other way around, this means the region is not up-to-date. Having also to deal with a natural environment that makes this a cold region, with high accumulations of snow and highly mountainous territory, the region has been marginalized on all fronts with regards to modernization, including various social, cultural and economic aspects and in its information and transportation networks. In the west and south of Japan, intercourse with the countries of Asia takes place relatively naturally, but this was not so in the Tohoku area. Even further north than Tohoku we find Hokkaido; yet it turns out that Hokkaido is not more 'backward' than Tohoku. In Hokkaido another historical background is at work, and this area is in fact considered to be open and free in nature. One could say that the Tohoku region is Galilee, a border area, so in biblical terms, there should make for all kinds of hope, but in fact the reality is not so simple.

The SeiKoKai as found in this land seems to be trying as a church to maintain quite faithfully that image of the church that was brought by the missionaries about one hundred years ago. For instance, even at churches attended by just a few elderly parishioners, great emphasis is put on ringing the church bells early in the morning and at evening. This is not a bad thing in and of itself, but in attempting to work toward mission-guided transformation of the church, as we view the circumstances and changes to be found in our society and world in these new times, this presents some real difficulties. Here is how I would put it: even though our social circumstances are completely different from seventeenth-century England, the age of the national church, it seems that we are still preserving a certain illusion of parish life, trying to mimic some rural church of the Church of England, a church in the middle of the village with one simple priest where pious laypeople would come to worship on Sunday. Tohoku had one candidate for the priesthood seven years ago and not a single candidate after that one. I do believe that this situation is different from the other ten dioceses of the SeiKoKai which are currently engaged in quite active development, particularly the dioceses of Tokyo and Chubu, in the Kansai, and the dioceses of Kyushu and Okinawa. If bishops from one of these dioceses were speaking, I need to let you know now that their story would again have been quite different. So, having given you some idea of my personal context, for the remainder I will try my best to give you a generalized picture.

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The General Character of the Nippon SeiKoKai

I have a striking memory of Bishop Takeda Makoto, who is present with us today, writing on the character of the SeiKoKai in the newsletter of Rikkyo Girls' School (of Tokyo) under the heading 'Tolerance, Humour and Common Sense', back when he was the managing director of that school. If you will allow me to make use of these terms as a means of approaching this subject, I think it can be said they display the SeiKoKai stance in this world of being relatively moderate and calm and not being very fond of imposing denominational convictions or beliefs on others in a forceful or unilateral way. But it goes without saying that what else is at work here is not mere moderation, in fact, but a very strong creation-based approach. In other words, this is a church with a very strong inner sense of its 'createdness', that it is a created thing which is limited in its existence, and thus, does not go too far in assertions about its absoluteness. It is a church that admits the idea of being in process. As I remember it, Bishop Takeda also wrote about a deeper form of 'tolerance, humour and common sense' that derived from this inner sense. I want to interpret 'common sense' in the literal sense of a sense that is commonly held, a commonly held sense in which you don't arrogate to yourself any more absoluteness than necessary.

Let me offer another example for this same point. There were very few Japanese intellectuals in Japan's militaristic society during the Pacific War who were able to look at the nature of that state with a critical eye, but one such person was Watanabe Kazuo, a researcher of the French Renaissance and also of Erasmus of Rotterdam. Even in the midst of a trying age, Watanabe declared humanism and Erasmianism to be 'opposing fanaticism and illiberality and violence' (source: a collection of lectures by Oe Kenzaburou, the Nobel Prize writer who was a disciple of Watanabe). And indeed, Erasmus, the humanitarian, had a major impact on the spiritual basis of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Church, so I want to believe that 'opposing fanaticism and illiberality and violence' is part of the ethos that courses through Anglicanism.

This type of creation-based sensibility is also nurtured through the repetition of Holy Communion, even if the majority of clergy and laity actually have little awareness of this effect. In other words, you can say that the sacramental experience in which earthly things like bread and wine are changed into heavenly things, are consecrated, is in fact a very powerful iterative practice that, over long years, forms an attitude consisting of a certain degree of affirmation toward this world that God has created. One could say this practice is an instructive device for the

church. If things of this world were thoroughly in opposition to God, there could not be any such thing as the sacraments. The two aspects of understanding one's self as being in process (not absolutizing one's self), and taking a basically affirming posture toward the world can also be considered, I believe, characteristics of the Anglican Communion as a whole. Though we in the Nippon SeiKoKai do not even happen to be English, you can say that we have been (quite emphatically) ingrained with these characteristics.

There might be dissenting opinions on this next point, but the experience some one hundred years ago of accepting Christianity as a new cultural form from the West along with the major impact of the British and American missionaries who worked in the area and the effect of roughly a hundred years of observing Anglican worship since that point, particularly of the practice of Holy Communion, have had a quite powerful impact. In the diocese of Tohoku, the first missionary was the woman missionary Georgiana Suthon who came to Tohoku from Louisiana, and ever since, one can sense that, all in all, the effect of these missionaries and evangelists, many of whom were women, still casts an influence to this day. However, now that the believers who were strongly impacted by that generation of missionaries are becoming aged, what is important and of great interest for our day, it seems to me, is what sort of spirit is to be passed on to the upcoming generation.

I would like to make a few comments, then, on how the general nature of the Nippon SeiKoKai as just described above works itself out in the real world.

One concrete example: my wife's father, that is, my father-in-law, was suffering from cancer, and in the end passed away in a Seventh Day Adventist hospice. There, all the doctors, nurses and staff were members of that church, and at various points in their day you could hear the nurses singing hymns. No, patients were not compelled to be part of some specific religion, but it was not hard to imagine that this denomination had within its membership a strong sense of 'holiness', of making sharp distinctions between the holy and the profane. Meanwhile, I feel that Nippon SeiKoKai-related schools and institutions have strong trends toward secularization (there happen to be some people at this event from Nippon SeiKoKai-related schools). 'Secularization' here does not have a negative sense, but at least, what is strongly operating in our institutions, it seems, is a real sense of concern over not being too coercive in presenting denominational faith or tradition, together with an understanding that one can be part of God's works of grace even if one is not part of the SeiKoKai, or not a Christian. Expressing this in present-day terms, this is in line with Missio Dei thought. Of course one reason for

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this is that practically speaking you cannot get quality workers simply from among SeiKoKai believers. But the reality is that among all our affiliated schools, hospitals and kindergartens, SeiKoKai denominational traditions are treated in a liberal and flexible way, and people of no particular faith are also involved in the work of various SeiKoKai institutions. In this sense, you can say that the various SeiKoKai institutions are inclined to secularization.

The pioneering role in practically all educational enterprises or social welfare enterprises in Japan was assumed in fact by Christianity and in many cases by the SeiKoKai. However, at present many elements of such work have been turned over to national or local administrative organs and their Christian or Anglican impact is on the wane. These and related developments would entail hard work and real struggle for those involved with church affiliated enterprises. We might say that the collaborative approach to society evinced by the SeiKoKai in fact has two aspects, an aspect deserving of positive assessment and a more chancy aspect.

Negative Views toward Religion and Christianity

In trying to provide good facilities and a good environment, whether at schools or in institutions like hospitals, you need the powers of government, and this gives rise to conflict. Japanese society and in particular administrative organs have the tendency to treat religion as something rather peculiar and even dangerous. One nursery within the Tohoku diocese continues its activities as a nursery operated in the spirit of Christianity, but in its relationship with administrative organs it is facing a considerable dilemma. If it ceases its relationship with the church and becomes entirely a social welfare corporation under the guidance of administrative organs, it will receive many times more money in subsidies from government than it does now. One protestant nursery in this same city at long last gave up its church affiliation and became a social welfare corporation; this entailed exchanging the cross on the roof for a weathervane. The welcome that government gives to those church-related institutions that will remove language about operating 'according to a Christian spirit' from their certificates of incorporation shares something with the circumstances of Japan's militaristic days. Yet presently, this change is occurring in a way that at first glance appears gentlemanly, using the justification that a 'public enterprise' should be public in nature. There is also a general attitude, very different from Korean society, of seeing religion and Christianity as peculiar, a sense that religion is something dangerous or dubious. One might also say this has been produced by soul searching with regard to the state-supported

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Shinto that brought Japan into the Pacific War, or the postwar sense of 'freedom of religion' – that there should be no imposing of any particular religion – or again, you could see this as deriving from the negative impact of more recent new religions and cults. Again, taking a wider approach, one could reason that within the small confines of this island nation Japan, what is at work is an attitude of avoiding clashes that might arise due to religion. Overly intense religious enthusiasm is given a wide berth. This means on the other hand that a rather oppressive atmosphere faces even the more sober and steady religions, and a general sense has now been fostered that religion is a private matter. It is often noted that most SeiKoKai members have not declared that they are Christians at the office, and that when only the wife is Christian, she will be very careful over whether to go out to church on Sunday. Japanese Christianity is very much in the minority; this is the environment in which it exists.

Under these conditions, the SeiKoKai, which has a more collaborative attitude toward society than the Roman Catholic Church or certain parts of the Protestant Church, has a tendency to gradually yield its work to the secular world. Should we see this as a retreat, or take a positive view, that not only Christians, but also society as a whole is becoming a vessel of the Gospel? One can say that, apart from the churches of the Nippon SeiKoKai, the locations where social service and work take place are currently, in greater or lesser degree, embroiled in or struggling with this vexing question.

Of course, new theological, missiological and practical currents have made their way into the Nippon SeiKoKai, in particular since the 1970s. These have been moves made to understand and practise the gospel of Christ in terms of the poor, from the viewpoint of those marginalized by society. Starting from seminary education, these new ideas have had a great impact on, and brought changes in formal postures on diocesan mission as well as the understanding of church and faith held by many clergy. You find a wide range of approaches at the parish (local church) level, but even so, in terms of an understanding of faith and of the gospel, churches are beginning to share at the very least the sense that such understandings do come to an end with peace for the individual soul. Still, in this regard as well, one sees a lot of efforts to build up service to society – to build up social welfare – along more moderate lines. If you look at the list of Nippon SeiKoKai donations coming from Lenten offerings for the strengthening of the church's mission, you notice that there are new efforts to develop what you could refer to as welfare for the aged, as well as institutions that take care of people who find themselves in difficult circumstances due to sickness and other causes.

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On the whole you can say in brief that the SeiKoKai's Erasmian character, its humanist nature, though one has to be careful here with the exact meanings of words, is on display here. We see this church's tendency to set a high value on humanity, its humane side. In the 1950s, the Dominican friar and ecclesiology professor Yves Congar who was known for his 'liberal' remarks within the Roman Catholic Church on 'laity as the active subjects in the church' and 'the need for even the church to repent' (though in our day these remarks are not considered liberal, but common sense) was forced out of the Roman Catholic Church and went overseas to study at Cambridge and other institutions in Britain. Based on that experience, he later was to comment, 'I love the humaneness of the Anglican Church (the SeiKoKai).' Some time later, among the works of yet another Catholic theologian, Schillebeeckx, came a book on the doctrine of ministry called *The Church with a Human Face*[1]—and indeed, the character with which the SeiKoKai is strongly imbued involves being in touch with those aspects of human life such as the realities and experiences of living, breathing people together with reason, while also maintaining a life of faith. This is the main reason for my personal love for the SeiKoKai; you could also say at the same time that this aspect of this church makes it hard for the SeiKoKai as a denomination to have an intense 'religious impact' in Japanese society.

What Has Been Moulded through our Worship over Time, Particularly through the Observance of Holy Communion?

I believe that what has acted as the great anchor so that this church has not simply been swallowed up in humanism is (not so surprisingly) the effect of the SeiKoKai's worship life, and particularly how we have continued in observing Holy Communion. Some speak of the Benedictine character of the SeiKoKai, but the ambience of the SeiKoKai in which common worship and Holy Communion are accorded the highest possible importance has in fact an even greater impact than we tend to realize.

Certainly, I do not believe that all is well if the church simply worships and observes the ritual of Holy Communion. However, the SeiKoKai has continued to follow, in a way that is almost simple-minded, the words 'do this' that the Lord Jesus himself spoke at the end in the Last Supper. In particular, after Japan's defeat in the Pacific War, you had the effect of the Church Union issue [tr. note: how to deal with those SeiKoKai churches which entered into the government-enforced union of protestant

1. E. Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face* (London: SCM Press, 1985).

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churches] and other matters, so that the previous bimodal nature of the SeiKoKai found in its 'high church/low church' divide faded away. What is more, due to the effect of recovering the centrality of Holy Communion, a development which one could say was produced by the influence of the postwar liturgical movement, the overall impression of the SeiKoKai came to be 'the church that does nothing other than Sunday Eucharist'. In terms of the vitality in mission of our church as a whole, this indicates some major problems, but it does mean that we have continued, time after time, to experience our sharing in Holy Communion in a way not found in other denominations.

In considering Holy Communion in our days, particular stress is given to the aspect of fellowship within the community, and that 'sending out' for mission that derives from this. Fellowship is a word that gets much general use among Christians. But when it comes to a powerful and long-lasting experience of fellowship linked with Holy Communion the SeiKoKai stands out within Japan.

Let us consider this in terms of the history of Eucharistic practices. The Roman Catholic Church, of course, possesses a very strong piety with regards to 'the Mass'. However, over a long period of history, the spirituality of the Mass has been centred on the priest and particularly on the Blessed Sacrament. Meanwhile, looking to the Reformed churches of the Continent—of Luther, Calvin, and even of Zwingli—the themes of community and fellowship were by no means left out of their theology and other thought. However, in later history, and particularly in those fervent Protestant denominations that were introduced to Japan (bearing the theological tendencies of New England in the United States of America), the faith of these churches had strong individualistic tendencies; they were very strong on individual morality and strongly ascetic in character, as well as emphasizing the intellect—tendencies that have continued to this day. Today, rising interest among these Protestant groups in common worship and Holy Communion deserves attention, but at the very least, to the present day Protestant churches in Japan would seem to be lacking a real abundance of experience, in particular practical experience, of the Eucharist.

Of course, it is not as if all experience within the SeiKoKai was rich and fruitful; our traditional Eucharistic understanding was lacking in global and mission perspective, leaning toward an understanding that in communicating you gained an individual sense of tranquillity and your participation in salvation. You can say the liturgics established this. Present-day theological education and the 1990 Prayer Book display a mission-related vision, even if an imperfect one. The SeiKoKai world-wide calls itself the Anglican Communion and we traditionally have

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referred to Eucharist as Holy Communion. Even in a society unfriendly to Christianity like Japan's, our acts of worship have been repeated an astronomic number of times over numerous years. Of course, at any one time a Communion service may end up being quite habitual, engaged in with no real awareness or for inappropriate reasons. Yet even so, there is something amazing to what the Lord intended in saying 'Do this'. Without particular recourse to reasoning, or some elevated awareness among certain people, or fanaticism, the church has indeed gone on to 'Do this' in any and all conditions. I have to believe that the repeated and continued educational effect of this practice is quite massive. Relatively recently, there is more emphasis or consciousness in terms of building awareness in our church that Communion, or sharing, is the real, vital meaning to this act we have been repeating for so long. What I am trying to say here is that the SeiKoKai (alone) is closest to an experiential knowledge that the issue of Communion is an essential topic in Christian faith. Communion is the starting point and the goal of Christian faith.

Countering Criticism against Monotheism

These days, what catches one's eye regarding the tenor of argument coming from those intellectuals who are said to represent Japan (men or women of letters, philosophers, scholars of religion) is the following: 'since Islam, Judaism and Christianity are monotheistic faiths of the desert, they are exclusive and combative. On the other hand it is Buddhism that possesses the characteristics of mildness and tenderness. So Buddhism is more suitable to the cause of world peace' (so says Umehara Takashi and others). In particular, as eyes are drawn to the Palestinian conflict or terrorism by Islamic extremists as well as the bellicose stance of Bush's America, this tenor of argument has become quite prominent. Certainly, there are many historical issues over which Christianity should be self-critical. But every time I see this type of argument, I think of how little grounding in religion Japan's intellectuals have. Also, and this is not trying to offer a justification, I think of the mystery in which Christianity has preserved the doctrine of the Trinity as the orthodox faith. Christian monotheism is not exclusive; it is faith in a Trinitarian community of life. Just as the most traditional doxology in the liturgy is 'in Christ, through Christ and with Christ, in the communion of the Holy Spirit, all glory be to God the Father', the being of God and the very worship of God in and of itself is a Communion in life. Yet of course we need to gain a clearer awareness of this very perspective. The fact that the God in whom we believe is Himself a God of communion, I believe, provides the theological grounds for our faith life and for

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social ministry and activities. We can assume a positive understanding of the already mentioned tendency for SeiKoKai activities in wider society to be inclined to secularization, precisely from the standpoint that all issues of life as found in this world are related to the essence of God. Important Anglican documents in recent years like the Eames Report or the Virginia Report have dealt with this very point, and yet again in the Windsor Report, the issue of communion in today's world-wide Anglican church is made the most important issue.

Living in a 'Pseudo-religious', 'Pseudo-communal' Society

Finally, as I have related above, we may grant an extremely high level of importance to this matter of communion, but in Japanese society, we have to take additional care in regard to this, because I think Japanese society is strongly 'pseudo-religious' and 'pseudo-communal' in nature.

Here again, the words of the writer Oe Kenzaburo whom I mentioned before, prove very thought-provoking. He gave a lecture in 1990 at the University of California, San Diego entitled 'Before "Post-modern" Were We Ever Modern?' He begins this lecture by talking about the ceremony for accession to the throne, known as the 'Daijousai', that took place in Japan when the current emperor acceded to the throne following the death of the Showa Emperor. Japan has undergone its baptism into Western civilization, achieved high economic growth, and ought to be an advanced nation whose development is based on science and technology, Oe said. But he then pointed out that this state event that took place at the very centre of national life was a hidden act that was extremely cultus-based and religious, in which 'the person acceding to the throne is hidden within a covering known as the "*madoko-ofusuma*," found within a bedchamber built for the Daijousai rite, and becomes emperor through eating and sleeping there together with the spirit of the emperors.' Previously I said that Japanese society is sceptical toward religion, but here it is all too religious—and what is more, this is kept ambiguous, using the sophistry that these rites may be customary practice, but they are not religion.

When we think about the historical background to the Liturgical Movement, which has had a profound impact on churches today throughout the world, we cannot leave out the French Revolution of 1789. The criticism of the church and the struggle of the people against conventional, traditional forms of repression (from monarchy and church) that were represented in the French revolution resulted in the independence and freedom of each individual which over time led to an individualism that went too far. These are part of the context of the Liturgical Movement.

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Conversely, it is dangerous to be talking about 'community', which gathers so much comment these days, in places which have not had the experience of a thorough-going questioning directed toward individual freedom and independence. To do so bears the risk of simply falling into the form of 'community' found before the French revolution—into the family systems of the village or of patriarchy, into the pre-existing conventions.

In this way, the question raised by Oe ('Before becoming "post-modern" were we ever modern?') sounds a strong alarm regarding the repeated, scattershot use of the term 'community' in the circumstances of Japan. And so, with regard to that treasure that is the communion of the Anglican Church, a treasure we have valued highly up to this day, we need to ask what form of communion, in fact, will have meaning for Japanese society and for the region of East Asia.

Working on the Inside, with the Eyes of an Outsider: Using the SeiKoKai as our Small yet Large Testing Ground

I feel Japan's current social tendencies are dangerous. Statements from our Prime Minister, who represents our nation, tend to be extremely brief, and the comments of many young people are also very short. I sense the spreading of a mentality that 'simple and clear is best', that 'we hate things that create a bother'. There is a great rise in the popularity of the Shinsengumi that existed at the end of the shogunate period [tr. this was a police force that was stationed in Kyoto] and in particular its second-in-command Hijikata Toshizou. This group opposed the new wave that was the Meiji Restoration as well as the opening of Japan and tried to show its loyalty to the Tokugawa shogunate right to the very end; what appears to be drawing people is not the complex historical meaning of this group, though, but the simplified male aesthetic that they express: once you've decided, stand your ground. The sense here is that it is manly to make clear-cut decisions, even if they happen to be one-sided. But this means simplified, short-circuited thinking, thinking which is dangerous and can lead to ultra-nationalism. What is more, it is the complete opposite of what we already said that the SeiKoKai prizes, opposition to fanaticism and illiberalism and violence. Precisely because our church's position is the exact opposite, it would seem that the mission pursued by the SeiKoKai will not easily bring about growth in membership.

Here I am not trying to justify our lack of growth as a church as indicated in numeric terms, but to state that the struggle before the Anglican Church in Japan lies in the situation I have just described. While abundantly bringing to life that experience of communion we

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have preserved so carefully over a long history, our church needs to give continuing attention to finding the key that will keep this experience from becoming buried or melting away within Japanese society. In brief, perhaps the key here is being able to bring the viewpoint of outsiders within our communion. We cannot have a church of Japanese, by Japanese and for Japanese. This is where the hard issues lie with regard to enculturation, or incarnation within a culture, particularly for the Japanese church. Also, it would seem that one other historic Anglican distinctive—that churches should be set up by nation or nationality group—needs to be re-examined.

The Nippon SeiKoKai theologian Inagaki Youichirou had certain connections with Tohoku. He went abroad to study in the United States, gained some grounding in Anglo-Catholicism, and later became principal of the SeiKoKai Shingakuin (Central Theological College). It is said that he was critical of the Nippon SeiKoKai's mode of being vis-à-vis the 'Chosen SeiKoKai/Choson SungKongHoe' [tr. the pre-war Anglican Church in Korea] during the militaristic period. This is presumably because he did not think about things from within the framework of Japan, but was able to see them from the perspective of a wider world. We need to continue our efforts to keep the substance of communion from becoming homogenized, all of one substance, even if it causes us some pain to do so. The war and the period slightly thereafter created a major moment for the Nippon SeiKoKai, when they sent the lion's share of foreign missionaries back to their home countries. Then it was thought that the age of the missionaries had ended, and what was truly important was the independence of the Nippon SeiKoKai. Yet now, once again, we feel the need for many labourers from overseas (and this not from a numbers perspective). This is not because we are in need of assistance, but because more than anything else we need to draw together differing experiences. A communion or network that goes beyond the frameworks of nation or ethnic group—here is the greatest weapon the Anglican Communion has. When people from Japan want to visit Korea, if they join in a tour through a regular travel agency, they stay in posh hotels, and probably then will be escorted to the nightlife areas. However, if you go through the church, you encounter an entirely different group of people, and discuss very different topics. The same applies for Okinawa or the Philippines. You would encounter a different group of people and see different things than you would at the resort areas or tourist attractions where a travel agency would take you. These church-based encounters are actually taking place right now, and I believe that this is a mission of great importance for which the Nippon SeiKoKai (small though it is) can take on the responsibility within Japanese society.

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This is the frame of reference that we need to hold on to so we can acknowledge the treasure we possess, yet not have it dissolve away into Japanese society. In this sense, the SeiKoKai must carry out its function as an 'open window', an organization that is not self-sufficient—and in fact, don't we have the potential to carry out this task?

Let me bring my remarks to an end by announcing with thanksgiving that after about a year of mutual exchanges, on 22 January the diocese of Tohoku where I serve established a relationship of friendly cooperation with Taejeon Diocese of the Taehan SongKongHoe (Anglican Church in Korea) for an initial period of 3 years, taking a step forward toward the possibilities of cooperation in mission.

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