

## **The 53rd Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad Convention Statement**

Representing Nikkei and Japanese descendants living abroad and in Japan, we held the following sessions to discuss the three issues under the overall theme “Let us walk the road of “Japan’s rebirth” together with Japanese people!-Tasks of overseas Japanese and Nikkei asked” in the 53<sup>rd</sup> Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad held in Tokyo for three days from October 30 to November 1, 2012.

### Agenda

1. Japanese culture and Nikkei society
2. Nikkei living in Japan
3. Nikkei youths

The following seven issues were decided upon and declared as a result of discussions in the sessions and the general assembly of the Convention.

## **Resolution**

### **1. We will try to spread further Japanese culture and promote Japanese language education.**

Living abroad, we have placed great importance on “handing down” Japanese culture and the Japanese language to the future generations for a long period of time in our respective countries. We are indeed delighted to see the fruits of our efforts: a rapidly increasing number of younger people are interested in Japanese culture and the Japanese language in recent years. We hope that the Japan International Cooperation and the Japan Foundation will continue their support to promote Japanese language education.

We request the Japanese government to strengthen information transmission to spread further Japanese culture and the Japanese language. Amid a rising tide of globalization, we request private enterprises to assign brilliant Nikkei youths to positions at the core of their management.

In order to pass on Japanese culture properly, it is important to deepen exchanges among Nikkei societies in respective countries to learn from the past and also the present of each country. Taking this into account, we believe that the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad plays a very significant role to gather people representing the Nikkei societies coming from their respective countries once a year to discuss the current situation of their countries.

## **2. We request the Japanese government to approve the dual nationality of Nikkei.**

We requested the Japanese government in many occasions to permit Nikkei and their descendants living abroad to possess dual nationality. The present Japanese law does not allow dual nationality. However, the approval of dual nationality means eventual increases in a population of Japanese who live overseas and have potential Japanese nationality, whereby Japan will be able to make effective use of Nikkei in international exchanges. We love our countries where we settled down and also Japan, i.e., “Two Spirits, One Heart.” We request the Japanese government to allow us, including our offspring, to possess dual nationality.

## **3. We appreciate the “project for the Nikkei issei to visit Japan.”**

The Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad will implement the Home Visiting Program for 20 issei people who have never returned to Japan since their emigration in the spring of the next year to enjoy cherry blossoms blooming. It is indeed significant as a welfare project as well as encouragement to elderly issei people.

The home-visit program of Nikkei-abroad in which emigrants who crossed the ocean prior to the Second World War visited their home towns had been implemented under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this program 761 issei people came back to Japan in 37 groups by the year 2005, after which it was terminated. Hence, in the 45<sup>th</sup> Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad we made an appeal the restoration and continuation of the program in our written request. This year the program will be carried out after an interval of eight years. We express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Masashi Takeuchi who has made a generous donation for this program.

## **4. We ask for continuous assistance for the Nikkei working and living in Japan.**

The number of Nikkei living in Japan has been on the increase since about 1985, and by now a quarter of a century has passed. Many of these Nikkei have settled down in Japan and made efforts to become members of Japanese society. One of their efforts is well demonstrated by the fact that they rushed to disaster-stricken areas to give their hands after the Great East Japan Earthquake last year. At the same time, Nikkei abroad extended their cooperation to the disaster affected areas with donations.

However, there still remain some difficulties that pose problems for Nikkei to live in Japan; the handicap of the language, which makes their access to information difficult, and the difficulty to find jobs due to a stagnant Japanese economy. In particular, we strongly urge the Japanese

government, local governments, and regional communities to eliminate disadvantageous conditions for Nikkei to attend public schools. We also desire that they will extend their understanding and cooperation as to the education of our mother tongues and culture.

**5. Nikkei youths share down-to-earth Japanese culture and do their best to enhance exchanges between their countries of residence and Japan.**

Many Nikkei youths have been familiar with Japanese “pop culture” such as animations, manga, and J-pop since their childhood. It is very different from the Japanese culture that the issei brought with them one century or half a century ago. However, it enhances their motivation to study the Japanese language and Japanese culture, which in turn kindles their interest in studying and training in Japan. Such a new Japanese culture has become a boom among people other than Nikkei as well, which Nikkei people are highly proud of and wish to encourage further.

Nikkei youths that grew up in such environment have reflected what the differences between Japanese and Nikkei are. In the process they have refound the common features, and also sensed the differences. They will do their best to use their knowledge and experience which they have learned in Japan to develop their countries of residence as well as Nikkei communities and enhance exchanges with Japan.

**6. We expect that the Yokohama Overseas Migration Museum be enriched in its management.**

We send our congratulations to JICA on the tenth anniversary of the JICA Yokohama Overseas Migration Museum since its opening. It is the largest museum in Japan that provides information on histories of Japanese overseas emigrants and the current state of Nikkei societies. The exhibition theme titled “We participate in a new world” not only speaks to the past emigrants but also implies greater participation by Japanese people in the world in the future.

There are similar museums abroad, but the Yokohama Museum is the pivot of these overseas museums. We expect to keep enriching the Museum further.

**7. We support the bid to hold the Olympic and Paralympic Games to Tokyo in 2020..**

With hopes for the restoration and development of a dynamic Japan, we support the bid to hold the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo.