

The 55th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad Declaration

We, representatives and like-minded members of Japanese descendants living overseas and in Japan, gathered in Tokyo for the 55th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad that was held for three days from October 22nd to 24th, 2014. With the overall theme this year being “Nikkei-society developing new Japanese culture in the world -- “Washoku” shows bases of its power --,” we deepened our discussion in the following three working group meetings.

- Japanese Cultural Heritage and Development
- Nikkei-society and Business Partnerships
- Nikkei Youth Playing New Roles

We hereby declare in the name of the Convention that we have adopted the following seven resolutions as a result of our discussion at the above working group meetings and the plenary session:

Resolutions

1. We agree in our efforts for the heritage of Japanese culture to further develop creativity in our proud Washoku culture that has been accepted and continues evolution overseas

The taste of Japanese food (Washoku) with which we have been brought up is unforgettable. It is one of the greatest preoccupations for those who migrated to foreign countries and our fathers and mothers had a hard time to obtain ingredients of Japanese cooking. But they managed to recreate Japanese cuisine with ingenious efforts, attracting the interest of local citizens gradually. Japanese food came to serve as a superb tool of gaining their understanding of Japanese culture. Today, “Japanese cuisine” is highly accepted and appreciated all over the world without any feeling of strangeness.

We Nikkeis and Japanese living abroad are not necessarily intent on bringing “Japanese cuisine” thus cultivated in the process of emigration life to the level of Washoku. On the contrary, we would like to call attention to the fact that “Japanese cuisine” recreated at daily meals with ingenious creativity has become ingrained in local communities and contributed to the understanding and promulgation of Japanese culture through Japanese festivals and various ceremonies at individual home. Last year, the UNESCO added traditional Japanese cuisine to its Intangible Cultural Heritage. The news swelled the heart of us living out of Japan with pride. We are committed to continue to respect and take advantage of “Washoku” culture and demonstrate our creativity that has been reflected in the development of Japanese food in our respective countries.

2. We Nikkeis agree to cooperate with Japanese companies expanding from Japan to overseas as their business partners

People in Japan that has a propensity for a mono-racial tone seem to find it hard to cooperate and create something new with people from different religions and ideas. Meanwhile, we Nikkeis have produced a large number of competent talents with both the culture of their new countries and Japan-rooted culture. Along with accelerated multi-nationalization of Japanese companies, many Nikkeis including business leaders, attorneys-at-law and certified public accountants have been cooperating with Japanese and their affiliated companies in a broad spectrum.

For Japanese companies to succeed against tough competitors in overseas markets, Nikkeis’ active roles

are needed more than ever in our assessment. While Japan's big businesses are active in expanding abroad, small and medium-sized counterparts are not necessarily so. We assure them that Nikkeis and people from Nikkei societies will be their good business partners in their overseas expansion strategy. We sincerely wish that they would focus attention on Nikkei-societies in Latin America. We will do our best to cooperate with Japanese companies in their seminars like doing business in Latin America, Nikkei internship programs and so on.

3. We Nikkei youths agree to endeavor to promulgate Japanese culture, the soul of which we have been in touch with while growing in a society woven in the fabric of various cultures, and contribute to the development of international business

Younger generations of Nikkeis are multi-cultured, that is, familiar with cultures of their respective countries and that of Japan. Therefore, they can play substantial roles in reducing distances between cultures. When Japanese companies expand overseas, Nikkeis can act as an important bridge between their respective countries and Japan by relaying Japanese culture and custom to local communities and thus lead their business to success. One good example is the spread of Washoku that was taken up at the Convention this year. When food-related Japanese companies advance into foreign countries, Nikkei youths are capable of offering those companies versatile ideas and new twists.

The stage of contribution by Nikkei youths is wide open. It ranges from spreading Japanese culture in their respective countries to working for Japanese companies advancing there and promoting their global business exchanges. We feel that many Japanese companies still regard Nikkeis as merely "a handy man who can speak Japanese." We strongly urge them to assess their ability in fair terms and their proficiency in Japanese language.

4. We agree to continue to request Japanese Government's approval of dual nationality

For Isseis who were born in Japan and acquired new nationality after emigrating overseas, Japan is the community in which they want to retain membership as Japanese. For them, the provision of loss of Japanese nationality stipulating (in Article 11 of the Nationality Act) that "If a Japanese citizen acquires the nationality of a foreign country at his/her choice, he/she loses Japanese nationality" is an actual reject of their cherished wishes.

We continue to ask the Japanese Government to understand their wishes and approve that those with dual nationality are Japanese nationals along with its standing policy of treating them as nationals of their respective countries.

Meanwhile, we have found some cases that application for Government-sponsored study scholarship is not open for those who had legally acquired dual nationality before the Nationality Act was revised and for minors under 20 years of age. They are also banned from purchasing the Rail Pass. We request the improvement of this kind of situation together with approval of dual nationality.

5. We agree to expect the Japanese Government to keep sending information directly to Nikkeis abroad

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been actively visiting foreign countries since he assumed the premiership. Japanese language newspapers in respective countries reported his visits and carried in detail the content of Mr. Abe's meetings with heads of states, prime ministers and key cabinet ministers, together with his

encouraging messages to Nikkeis and Japan-related organizations. Also increased were his intercourse with Nikkeis and Japan-related organizations in his countries of visit. These news reports are so heartening to us that we do expect this kind of occasions will continue in the future. We also expect that the Japanese Government will strengthen its overseas public relations strategy.

6. We agree to disseminate “Cool Japan” at cultural events including Japanese festivals

We hold Japanese culture related events in various countries, dubbing them as Japan festivals, Japan Culture Week and so on. At their start, quite a few centered on bon-odori dance and night fair yatai events for the sake of and by Nikkeis and Japanese residents mainly. Yet in recent years, as is seen in the Festival of Japan in Sao Paulo and the Nisei Week Japanese Festival of Los Angeles, these events are increasingly ranked as key festivals at their respective host cities. They also serve as a stage to experience “Cool Japan” with many general citizens taking part in. As the understanding of Japanese culture deepens, eyes to cherish the authentic Japan have been cultivated among local communities. We have come to occasionally find that our self-help efforts are nearing the limitations.

We expect the Japanese Government as well as all the 47 prefectural governments across Japan will proactively support, participate in and make use of Japanese cultural events planned and managed by Nikkeis overseas.

7. We agree to request further and accelerated easing of the tourist visa policy by the Japanese Government that aims at realizing a tourism-oriented country

We ask the Japanese Government that set a target of calling in 20 million foreign visitors by 2020 to promote the easing of requirements for tourist visas. Since Brazil has the largest Nikkei society, we request the early review of the Japanese Government’s tourist visa policy before the 2016 Rio Olympic and Paralympic Games and the 2020 Tokyo Games.