We Shall Overcome

Rev. Dr. Tsunehisa Iwahashi

Some people consider the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami as the second great defeat of Japan. According to them, the first defeat was that of WWII. If, however, they are thinking in terms of the disruption of society being the same in both cases, I would have to say that the earthquake and tsunami disaster wouldn’t qualify as the “second great defeat.” After the war defeat, the values of Japanese society, along with its very structure, fundamentally changed, and that provided bright hope during the postwar recovery. I don’t think, however, that any such changes are taking place because of the natural disaster, and on top of that, you certainly don’t see and “bright hope” for the future. Instead, the reality is that people are living with a sense of anger and resignation. Likewise, the power structures that would have us go back to the prewar societal structure seem to be gaining strength. My feeling is that the buraku liberation movement is being pushed aside and washed away by these same power brokers. It is difficult to know whether the best strategy is to simply hold on in the face of this powerful wave or to push back and try to advance against the onslaught of this wave. At the very least, we must not lose sight of the witness of the “Levelers’ Society Proclamation.”
Kyoto Gathering to Celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the Founding of the National Levelers’ Society Carrying On the Vision of the Founders to Seek After Passion and Light

By Fumio Tanba (Kyodan staff person)

On March 3, 2012, the 90th anniversary celebration of the founding of the National Levelers’ Association (Zenkoku Suiheisha)* was held at the Kyoto Hall in Kyoto. Ninety years ago on that day, some 3000 people of buraku descent from around the country had gathered in that same auditorium (then called Okazaki Hall) to adopt the "Suiheisha Sengen" (Levelers’ Association Proclamation), thus founding the National Levelers Association. In doing that, these buraku people, who had been so severely discriminated against, took matters in their own hand to begin the Buraku Liberation Movement. This proclamation has been called the first declaration of human rights in Japan, as its guiding principle was "to emancipate ourselves by promoting respect for human dignity," and it ended with the words “fervently seeking and adoring the warmth and light of human life from deep within our hearts.” While there are many "declarations of human rights" around the world, the "Suiheisha Sengen" is one that is also recognized as being conceived by those being discriminated against.

Ninety years ago, when those people gathered in Okazaki Hall, they thought that respect for the dignity of human beings along with human passion would be the driving force behind the movement to rid Japanese society of buraku discrimination, and in this we call sense a deep trust in being human. Likewise, they chose the "crown of thorns" placed on Jesus’s head at the crucifixion as their own symbol, designing a flag to portray that. This was because they identified that with their own suffering they experienced through the extreme discrimination they faced, and they expressed that in the proclamation as “The time has come for the blessing of the martyrs’ crown of thorns.”

The people gathered there later returned to their hometowns and called on their comrades to join them in founding “Levelers Associations” in each locality. This was still in a time when the discrimination was very severe and they were persecuted, but they stood their ground as they were insulted by those using such epithets as “eta” (meaning literally “great filth,” the highly derogatory term they were labeled by that was later replaced by “burakumin”). They used a tactic referred to as “conscientization fight,” the purpose of which was to get the offender to mend his ways. The founding of the National Levelers’ Association was the beginning of the human rights movement within Japan, and so it is a very important event in history. While the Levelers’ Association had to disband during World War II, it was resurrected after the war with a new name, the Buraku Liberation League, which has since then continued the struggle to eliminate buraku discrimination.

Some 1800 people gathered from around the country to celebrate this 90th anniversary and to inherit the mantle of the founders of the Levelers’ Association. The event began with the singing of the song, “Takeda no Komoriuta” (Lullaby of Takeda), which was a song from the late Meiji and Taisho eras (early 1900’s) depicting buraku children of about 10 years old hiring themselves out as babysitters in order to help their own families.

After that performance, everyone joined together in singing the “Liberation Song” as the flags from the various branches of the Buraku Liberation League were brought into the auditorium. This song was first sung at the May 1, 1923 gathering or the founding of the Kyushu Branch of the Levelers’ Association, and has been used ever since. The 4th verse, which says, “The sun and the moon failed to shine on us, and the flowers did not bloom for us,” reminds me of the pain and suffering of Job.
Shigeyuki Kumisaka, the chairperson of the Central Executive Committee, gave opening greetings, where he pledged “to carry on the struggle for buraku liberation, human liberation and the levelers’ (equality) movement around the world in remembrance of the many pioneers who shed their blood, sweat and tears.” That was followed by greetings from various dignitaries, including the representative of the Prime Minister Noda, Nobuyuki Fukushima, Kazue Fujita from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, Seiji Maehara from the Democratic Party of Japan, Ryotaro Tanose of the Liberal Democratic Party, Junji Higashi of the Clean Government Party, Yasumasa Shigeno of the Social Democratic Party, Governor Keiji Yamada of the Kyoto Prefecture, Mayor Daisaku Kadokawa of Kyoto and Choken Otani, chairperson of the Committee for Demanding Policies for Human Rights and Buraku Liberation. Each gave a message of congratulations for the progress that has been made in championing humans rights by the Buraku Liberation League, and encouraged them to remain in the forefront of the human rights movement. Certificates of recognition and mementos were presented to 134 individuals who had contributed to the Buraku Liberation Movement, and representatives from other minority groups such as the Ainu, the Dalit (from India), persons with disabilities, Koreans living in Japan, etc. likewise gave messages expressing their solidarity.

In response to these messages, Toru Matsuoka, general secretary of the BLL, stated, “We had 2 purposes in holding this event. One was to deepen our resolve to take on the mantle handed down to us from the pioneers who began this movement 90 years ago, and the other to look to the future and continue that resolve to further the movement. Up until now, our movement has been focused on the government, but from now on we need to shift our focus from dependence on government subsidies, etc. to become independent and carry on the struggle from that standpoint.” After adopting the conference declaration, a kind of 2012 version of the “Levelers’ Association Proclamation,” the participants went to the Kyoto Hotel of the reception.

The original “Levelers’ Association Proclamation” has three “summary points” attached to it, with the first being, “We, the Tokushu Burakumin, pledge ourselves to accomplish emancipation by our own hand.” (“Tokushu Burakumin” was a euphemism literally meaning “people of the special hamlet,” but used in a derogatory way by the general populace. Here, they take the term and turn it around to be one they use with pride.) The second summary point was, “We, the Tokushu Burakumin, pledge ourselves to demanding from society economic and occupational freedom and to accomplishing this goal.” And the third, “We awaken ourselves to the principles of humanity and charge forward towards the goal of a complete humanity.” The participants, both guests and BLL members, recited these principles and reaffirmed them as the basis for the present buraku liberation movement as well.
The conference declaration that was adopted includes references to the original “Levelers’ Association Proclamation” in an attempt to gauge the degree to which the vows it contained have been accomplished. It asks, referring to statements in the original proclamation that the “time has come for victims to throw off their stigma,” “We ask the following questions to our buraku brothers and sisters scattered around the country: Have the victims thrown off your stigma? Have the martyrs received the blessing of their crown of thorns? Have we come to the point of being proud of being ‘Eta’?”

Continuing on, it states, “At the beginning of this new century, we separate ourselves from special measures in order to be a beacon that declares a new buraku liberation movement.” This statement of the present policy is very important. After WWII, the buraku liberation movement had focused on winning concessions from government (such as infrastructure improvements), but as general secretary Matsuoka stated, “Up until now, our movement has been focused on the government, but from now on we need to shift our focus from dependence on government subsidies, etc. to become independent and carry on the struggle from that standpoint.”

This conference declaration will surely be viewed as an historic document, as it’s viewed in the future. It recognizes the present situation as “one in which the shadow of neoliberalism threatens to overwhelm people all over the world,” and then ends with the statement, “we, as the Buraku Liberation League, continue to ‘seek the warmth and light of human life’ and pledge ourselves to our historic calling to move forward the cause of buraku liberation.”

* The term “Levelers’ Association” refers to making “level” human society in the sense of human equality in terms of human rights.

Nixing Subsidies for Korean High Schools a Form of Japanese Apartheid

By Yumiko Nagasaki, representative of the Working Together Network (an organization for supporting Korean schools)

The graduation ceremony for the Osaka Korean High School on March 4 was held in an atmosphere of having been spurned yet again concerning receiving subsidies equivalent to all other high schools in Japan. Since 2009, when the government program to subsidize all private high schools in Japan at the same level that public high schools (which would represent 15-25% of total tuition costs for private schools), only the Korean schools affiliated with North Korea (hereafter referred to simply as “Korean schools”) have been left out. In response to this, students have publicly protested and stood on street corners to make their demands known. They have lost any sense of trust and are full of sadness and anger. It is now three years since the present administration began this program of subsidize private high schools, with only the Korean schools being rebuffed. Likewise, even local governments, such as in Tokyo, Osaka, Miyagi and Saitama have cut off their subsidies as well. Imagine the pain and suffering the children of the Korean schools and their parents and guardians must feel, Why is it that they have to sacrifice so much in order to maintain their cultural pride? I want to protest this as ethnic discrimination, a form of Japanese “Apartheid.”

First, let’s look at the background of this situation. In 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan (which took over the government from the long-reigning Liberal Democratic Party) indicated that the Korean schools would be included in the subsidy program the same as other schools for foreign residents. However, a motion to exclude them was proposed, and on April 1, 2010, Prime Minister Hatoyama removed them from the list that had been announced the previous February and gave a
directive to the Ministry of Education to exclude them. They sent inspectors to the schools and at their August meeting to decide on policy, they announced a “common governmental viewpoint” that included 2 basic elements: 1) The standard by which it will be decided whether or not a particular high school has instituted a curriculum equivalent to a high school level will be based on that of a vocational high school; 2) Designation of a school as a “school for foreigners” will not be based on diplomatic considerations but only on educational standards.

With respect to the first point, Korean high schools have been recognized as having at least as high educational standards as Japanese schools, if not higher, and since the government stated that the evaluation would not be based on political and diplomatic considerations, the expectations that finally the Korean schools would be included grew. However, after the North Korean shelling of the South on Nov. 24, 2010, Prime Minister Kan directed the process of applying for subsidies be frozen. Needless to say, this directive was in contradiction to the explicit statement that the process would not be based on political considerations vis-à-vis North Korea. Likewise, the devastation of the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami was the basis for Education Minister Takagi to announce that restarting the process this year would be difficult. Even though Prime Minister Kan later announced on Aug. 29 that the review process for subsidy application would resume, as of yet, it still has not. On top of that, the suspension of subsidies from local governments has been extended and strengthened.

The Osaka prefectural government decided to tie its decision to halt subsidies to the Korean school based on the national decision to halt their process. In March 2010, governor Toru Hashimoto referred to the North Korean government as “a bunch of gangsters” when he visited the Osaka Korean High School and the Ikuno Korean Elementary School, where he also made 4 demands on the schools. First, they were to remove the pictures of the North Korean leaders from their classrooms. Next, they were to cut off all financial ties with the
Alliance of North Korean Residents in Japan. Thirdly, they were to use standards, including textbooks, that were on the same level as those used in Japanese schools, and lastly, they were to make public on their website their finances. In addition to this, Hashimoto set up a committee of educational experts to evaluate the educational content of the schools. In response to this, one of the schools, Chosen Gakuen, submitted a document to the prefectural government concerning these 4 demands, along with their governance policies. The committee of experts likewise reported that with regards to educational content, it exceeded the standards for Japanese schools.

At that point, Hashimoto agreed to resume subsidies for the elementary and junior high school sections of the Korean schools, but he continued the ban on subsidies to the senior high schools. Then, in 2011, the local political group led by Hashimoto, Osaka Ishin no Kai, gained control of the prefectural council when he joined ranks with Ichiro Matsui with Hashimoto winning the race for mayor of the city of Osaka while Matsui then became governor of the prefecture. At the Dec. 21 council meeting, it was decided that a subsidy of 8 million yen would be granted to only one of the ten Korean schools in Osaka, while it was denied to all of the others with the reason given that they had not taken down the pictures of the North Korean leaders from their classrooms. However, when Chosen Gakuen did take down the pictures and reapplied, the next issue was that they hadn’t proved that there was now no organizational connection with the Alliance of North Korean Residents in Japan when they had their home country celebration on March 19, and so all subsidies were suspended. Next, the Osaka City government then used the prefectural decision as a pretext for suspending their own subsidies, which amounted to 26.5 million yen for 2011.

The kind of discrimination shown to Korean schools by the national and Osaka prefectural governments amounts to punishing individuals for diplomatic issues between countries when as individuals they bear no responsibility for those issues. It’s really no different from what the US government did to Japanese Americans during WWII, when they placed them in relocation centers and forced them to sell their property for practically nothing. The Japanese government has ratified the UN Human Rights Declaration, which includes the right to ethnic cultural education, and so it is not something that can be decided at the whim of national and local governments. When the factor of history is added in, the Japanese government has an even greater moral obligation to guarantee such ethnic cultural education for Koreans in Japan, since previously they had made a colony out of Korea, forcing the Koreans to change their names to Japanese names and took away their language and culture. Thus, neglecting to face up to this history and treating Korean schools in Japan as though they bear responsibility for North Korean abductions, etc. and punishing the children by taking away the subsidies necessary for their education makes one question what democracy in Japan truly is. The United Nations Human Rights Commission has on several occasions remonstrated Japan for its discriminatory treatment of Korean schools, but these have been ignored. In fact, the problem has gotten worse, and so this is a violation of human rights that must not be countenanced. Since 2009, the students of Korean schools and their parents and teachers have stood on street corners seeking signatures on petitions to present to parliament and councils, and they have accepted the investigations and evaluations of the government, believing that once they saw how good their education was that they would be granted the same subsidies as everyone else. However, not only were the new national subsidies denied them due to political considerations beyond their control, even the local subsidies they had been receiving were denied them. Thus, we Japanese have traumatized these children and caused them to lose all faith in Japanese society, something that challenges our humanity.
Freedom of Conscience and the Flag: A Contrast Between Japan and the U.S.

By Tim Boyle

The issues of the national flag "Hinomaru" (日の丸 — literally “circle of the sun”) and the national anthem "Kimigayo" (君が代 — literally, a song of blessing on the emperor that he may reign for many generations) have been a flashpoint of social debate from many years. During the last year or so, this issue has flared up anew with the imposition by the Osaka city government of a requirement that all public employees stand at ceremonies where the flag is displayed and sing the national anthem, with the explicit threat of being fired if they do not. So, why is this an issue in Japan today, and what relationship does that have to social phenomena such as buraku discrimination?

First, some background information on how these two symbols came to be is necessary to understand the issues that surround their present-day use. Both of these symbols are quite ancient and at the same time rather recent. Prior to Japan being forced to open its doors to the world some 150 years ago after centuries of feudal isolation, they simply didn’t have the concept of a national flag or anthem. But as Japan’s leaders began to interact with the international community, they realized the need to come up with both a flag and an anthem. Why were these two chosen? First, the "Hinomaru" flag:

"Land of the Rising Sun"
The very name of the country, Japan, is "day (sun)" and "origin," and from the written with two characters 日本, meaning standpoint of the Asian continent, the new day begins with the sun rising from the location of the Japanese islands. Thus, the "rising sun" has been symbolic of Japan since ancient times. The mythology that developed around this focused on the coming of the sun — literally, "the Great God who Illuminates the goddess, Amaterasu Omikami (天照大御神 — Heavens"), from whom the emperor was supposedly descended. Thus, given the fact that the end of the feudal era of rule by military "shogun" leaders brought on a "restoration" of imperial rule (the "Meiji Restoration"), this association with Amaterasu and the emperor made the "Hinomaru" flag a natural choice.

In a similar fashion, since the restoration of "Kimigayo" (君が代) the emperor to power was the central feature of establishing Japan as a modern state among the nations, the construction of a national anthem centering on imperial rule was also a natural choice. The words were an adaptation of an ancient "waka" poem written more than a thousand years ago. Literally translated, it says, "May your (imperial) reign continue for a thousand, eight thousand generations, until the pebbles grow into boulders lush with moss." That may sound strange to western ears, but the idea of pebbles growing into large boulders is found in Japanese legends. Geologically, this refers to conglomerates, small rocks cemented together by hardened clay, etc. into one large
rock. It is something that takes a long time to happen, and thus symbolizes longevity. (Some Shinto shrines, in fact, place such conglomerate rocks on their grounds as objects of veneration.) As Japan was trying to emulate European powers, there likely was also influence from the British national anthem, "God save the Queen," which similarly invokes a long and glorious rule of their sovereign. Thus, this too served the purpose of establishing a modern state based on imperial rule.

Both of these national symbols were heavily promoted during the expansionist days of Imperial Japan, which was only ended by the tragedy of WWII. During this time, Japan's military conquered numerous Asian countries, subjecting them to horrendous suffering, as well as bringing ruin upon her own people. Thus, it is easy to see why these two symbols evoke such strong negative feelings both within and outside of Japan.

One obvious way to make a clean break with the past and forge a new identity for post-war Japan would have been to create a new national flag and anthem. This was not to be, however, as the conservative power structure, dominated as it was by the "Liberal Democratic Party" (a misnomer, to be sure!), preferred to maintain the old symbols. Those symbols, however, remained unofficial until the LDP was finally able to reinstate them as the official flag and anthem in 1999.

It is certainly true that as the generation that directly experienced the horrors associated with those symbols has died off, the degree of anguish they bring has gradually decreased. Likewise, given how long a time has passed since the end of the war, when the most natural time to change the flag and anthem was present, it is perhaps a bit much to expect that Japan could change them now. And so the question becomes, how should their use be handled today? Where is the "freedom of thought and conscience" guaranteed by Article 19 of the Japanese Constitution?

Challenges based on this principle are presently making their way through the courts, and recent rulings have been somewhat favorable, as the more draconian punishments against teachers who refuse to stand and sing "Kimigayo" have been struck down. Nevertheless, the issue of individual freedom of conscience versus the perceived need for social cohesion and patriotism is one that will likely fester for a long time.

How are similar issues handled in the United States and in the U.K., which has a political system similar to Japan as well as a royal family? Would a teacher in England be disciplined for not singing "God save the Queen?" My British friends assure me that would never happen. There may be peer pressure in certain situations to follow custom, but individuals are free to not participate in rituals to which they have philosophical objections.

The situation is similar in the U.S. A specific ruling by the Supreme Court in 1943 guaranteed that individuals could not be compelled to recite the "Pledge of Allegiance (to the flag)." Similar to what local governments, such as those in Tokyo and Osaka, have been attempting to do, the state of West Virginia had made a law requiring all its students to stand and recite the pledge. In the American case, Jehovah's Witnesses objected on the grounds of religious freedom (as they viewed swearing allegiance to any power other than Jehovah God to be idolatry), and their right was upheld. This is in accord with the general principle of freedom of religion and conscience in America, and is why a variety of minority groups have been allowed to pursue their own lifestyles, provided they don't infringe on the rights of others. Likewise, even in times of war, "conscientious objectors" have been allowed to serve in ways that did not violate their consciences.

The roots of this way of thinking are rather shallow in Japan, which has a culture that traditionally has emphasized the group at the expense of the individual. In fact, such thinking was almost non-existent until the postwar constitution, which was heavily influenced by the temporary American occupation, was enacted. Conformity is still very much the norm, and the traditional Japanese proverb, "The nail that sticks out
gets pounded in," still holds sway. This proverb, by the way, is in stark contrast to a roughly equivalent American proverb about how the society works: "The squeaky wheel gets the grease."

As to how this issue relates to the problem of buraku discrimination, it all comes back to the emperor system and the organization of Japanese society. The "kimi" in "Kimigayo" clearly refers to the emperor, even though supporters now claim that since he is merely a symbol of the nation. To their way of thinking, "kimi" is simply the Japanese people as a whole. While that may be true in a sense, the historical baggage this song carries is not something that can simply be done away with.

a rhetorical wave of the hand. Not only does it bring back bitter memories of the suffering forced upon millions both inside and outside of Japan under the symbol of this "kimi," but the entire hierarchical structure of Japanese society that promoted the devaluation of certain humans as being "defiled" is rooted in the emperor system. That, of course, is the basis upon which buraku discrimination began and continues. Needless to say, few if any people of buraku descent who know their history would feel comfortable singing the "Kimigayo" national anthem, no matter how patriotic they feel towards their homeland in other ways.

Steps on the Way to an Ever-broadening Understanding of Humanity?
By Mira Sonntag, Rikkyo University (Tokyo)

The first official national anthem for German-speaking territories was designated as such in 1922 during the era of the Weimar Republic as a statement against the loss of the Austrian territories. The anthem was sung to a tune dating back to 1797 composed by Joseph Haydn in order to celebrate the birthday of Francis II, Holy Roman Emperor of the House of Habsburg. Its text was the very popular "Deutschlandlied," written in 1841 by August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben, who envisioned a united and free Germany where the rule of law — not monarchical arbitrariness — would prevail. However, the context of its designation subsequently made it a favorite of reactionist groups. Its first stanza draws the borders of Germany in such a way that its territory would be three times as big as that of today. The central phrase from the third stanza "Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit" (unity and justice and freedom) also found its way onto bills and coins of the Weimar Republic.

As we know, Hitler would not build his Nazi rule on "unity and justice and freedom." That is why he only retained the first stanza and "complemented" it with the so-called "Horst-Wessel-Lied," which had been the battle song of the "brown shirts." This song has been banned since the end of World War II, together with the swastika flags, of course. The new constitution of West Germany, however, did not establish a national anthem when it was enacted in 1949. It just restricted the symbols of the state to the tricolor black-red-gold flag of the democratic alliance of 1848. This flag had been used during the Weimar Republic as well, but not during the Nazi regime.

As for the anthem, after a number of humiliating diplomatic experiences in which the German chancellor Konrad Adenauer was welcomed by beer tent music, he made an attempt to restore the third stanza of the "Deutschlandlied" as the national anthem. The attempt was echoed with outraged accusations of "continuing nationalist sentiment." But the fact that the third stanza had been banned under Hitler, as well as the strong sympathy for it among the population, finally led to its designation as the national anthem in 1952. It took, nevertheless, a couple of years until the spectators at soccer stadiums etc. discarded the first stanza and actually sung only the third one.

With many different flags having been used in German history, the urge to "let fly the old flags" (i.e. a slogan of the Nazi Party in 1932) sprung up whenever Germans were to redefine their national identity. But, although the division of Germany became decisive in 1949, the two states actually used the same tricolor flag until 1959. Only then did East Germany add its national coat of arms to the
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Having been born in the Saxonian town of Zwickau, I was raised with the flag of the German Democratic Republic. The colors did not say much to me, but the hammer, compass and garland of corn spoke clear words about the ruling party of my country. Determined to raise a very new order, i.e. the socialist order, it was obvious to me that this determination should be expressed in the design of the national flag. However, the Eastern flag was conceived of as a divider-flag, and its display in West Germany was banned for about a decade. Of course, East Germany also had to decide on an anthem. It was a new text from Johannes R. Becher, which was used with a tune by Hanns Eisler. Designated in 1949 as the national anthem, it was, however, sung only until 1970. By that time, the Socialist Party had discretion of "Germany, unified Fatherland" contained in it. For me, this meant that I never was placed in a situation where I would have to sing either the Eastern or the Western anthem, although there were many other ideological songs we had to sing.

The latest chance to reconsider flags and anthems came with the fall of the Berlin wall. In order to express their hopes for reunification, many East Germans cut out the coat of arms from their flags. In doing so, they emulated Hungarian behavior during the revolution of 1956 as well as acts by Rumanians after the fall of the Ceauşescu regime. This calculated act signaled strong support for the plain tricolor as flag of the reunified Germany, and it was adopted without opposition. A number of organizations tried to push changes to the national anthem, suggesting, for example, a fusion of the third stanza of the "Deutschlandlied" with Becher's text. This would have been possible, since both hymns are harmonious with each other, and Becher kept the same measure. But finally it was the third stanza only which was (re)designated in 1991 as the national anthem.

Due to never-ending heated debates about the acceptability of anthems and flags, they have not been very popular in everyday life. This changed a little since the Soccer World Championship of 2006. However, since national teams have become multicultural units these days, only half of the German soccer team sings along. Some fans actually complain (and combine their complaint with racist views), but it is the current official policy not to force anybody to sing the hymn. The law which protects the symbols of the state from denigration does not protect them from denial. (Why should it do so, if one takes the freedom of thought of the people seriously? There could be plenty of reasons not to sing along even if you DO love and support your country.)

Similarly, a number of politicians refuse to sing the anthem during diet procedures. Even some of those who are now considered as potential candidates for chancellorship confess that they would "stand up, but not sing." Without question, this is hard to understand for unsophisticated people with fears of "Islamic invasion" and "leftist betrayal." But most of the deniers do so in favor of the future of transnational European unity.

However, unless there are increased opportunities to acknowledge the anthem of Europe as common ground for transnational sentiments of freedom, peace, and solidarity, nationalist sentiments will perhaps become stronger. Interestingly, the European Union and the Council of Europe chose an instrumental version of Ludwig van Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" in order to avoid the preference for a certain language. Thereby they agreed that verbal languages divide us, while the language of music is universal. I suppose that many Japanese as well can easily identify with the traditional tune of the Japanese anthem while it is the lyrics that make them disagree.

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