



DOWA EDUCATION



EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE TOWARD A DISCRIMINATION-FREE JAPAN

BURAKU KAIHO JINKEN KENKYUSHO
(Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute)

**DOWA EDUCATION:
EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE
TOWARD A DISCRIMINATION-FREE JAPAN**

**Edited by
Yasumasa HIRASAWA and Yoshiro NABESHIMA**

Authors:

Yasumasa HIRASAWA (Osaka University)

Yoshiro NABESHIMA (Osaka City University)

Minoru MORI (Osaka University of Education)

Ichiro AKASHI (National Federation of Human Rights Educators' Associations)

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(Buraku Kaiho Jinken Kenkyusho)**

1-6- 12, Kuboyoshi, Naniwa-ku, Osaka 556-0028, Japan

Tel: +81-6-6568-0905

Fax: +81-6-6568-0714

Distributed by the Liberation Publishing House (Kaiho Shuppansha)

Printed in Japan by Nihondenshoku Co., Ltd., ISBN4- 7592-6611-9

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Preface

In January 1990, an American visited our Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute to discuss the global significance of human rights education. Ms. Shulamith Koenig was introduced to us by the late Mr. Yo KUBOTA, then an officer of the UN Center for Human Rights, to set up programs for the decade of human rights education. She passionately told us that human rights education, particularly human rights education from a global perspective, was essential for world peace and people's well-being. I vividly recall her remarks still now.

Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the UN has adopted 23 international conventions to promote the protection of human rights. They include the "International Covenants on Human Rights," "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination," "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women," "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees," "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families," and the "Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment." And the number of their signatory states has been increasing.

Considering the reality of human rights situation in the world, however, the situation is far from rosy because we see frequent occurrences of racial conflicts and the rise of neo-Nazism. Meanwhile, the Apartheid system in South Africa has been dismantled and steps toward historical reconciliation have been marked in Northern Ireland and in the Middle East. These are encouraging signs. In order to further improve the human rights situation in the world, the UN needs to exert efforts not only to adopt more conventions and to promote their ratification, but also to make sure that they are effectively implemented.

To spread and enrich human rights education efforts worldwide is vital for that purpose. The UN Decade of Human Rights Education has been formerly designated and started this year. We notice at the basis of this decision ideas such as "If people have no knowledge about their rights, their rights will not be protected" and "Human rights can be realized only by people's own struggle." Needless to say, dedicated work of a number of NGOs and individuals like Ms. Koenig is behind this UN initiative.

Looking at the situation of the Buraku in Japan, certain improvements have been made in regard to housing, living and community conditions since the government's Dowa Policy Council's Recommendation of 1965 and the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects that started in 1969.

However, many more advances are needed, particularly in the field of employment and education. Public awareness-raising should be promoted to reduce prejudice against the Buraku by disseminating correct understanding of Buraku history and the nature of Buraku discrimination. Education should be utilized more effectively by Buraku and other minorities in Japan to expand their life opportunities. In this context, Dowa education has a vital role to play.

We believe that international exchanges are beneficial because important experiences can be mutually shared. We have already learned many important lessons from human rights movements and human rights education movements around the world. They have always encouraged us, and illuminated the way forward. The Dowa education movement in Japan has contributed greatly to the solution of Buraku discrimination issues. Its experiences should be stimulating to human rights education organizations and leaders in other countries. Also, by exchanging experiences, we can work together to eliminate all forms of discrimination in the world.

There have been very few English publications on Dowa education, and that has limited productive international exchanges. In commemorating the start of the Decade of Human Rights Education we have decided to produce an English booklet on Dowa education describing its history, actual practices and further prospects.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the authors of this booklet, Mr. Yasumasa HIRASAWA, Mr. Minoru MORI, Mr. Ichiro AKASHI and Mr. Yoshiro NABESHIMA, for taking time out of their very busy schedules. My thanks also go to Mr. Brian L. COVERT, journalist of Daily Yomiuri, for proof-reading the manuscript and to Ms. Eiko YANAGIMOTO, staff of BLHRRI, for typing the entire manuscript. From our institute, Ms. Rieko NAKATA and I have participated in this project. Our institute has already produced English slides on the Buraku liberation movement and published a number of English newsletters title "Buraku Liberation News" every other month that describe and discuss many aspects of Buraku issues. This booklet on Dowa education is a new addition to our international efforts.

In conclusion, I hope this booklet will be read by many human rights researchers, activists and educators, and wish that it helps mark a big step forward toward eliminating all forms of discrimination in the world including Buraku discrimination.

Kenzo TOMONAGA
Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute
April 30, 1995

Forward

The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education started in 1995. This UN initiative has invited human rights education organizations and educators all over the world to share the experiences and to join hands to promote the culture of human rights. This booklet on Dowa education, a Japanese commitment to human rights education, is our small contribution to this UN effort.

Japan has been known as an economic giant with a homogeneous population. People abroad generally think of Japan as a nation free of social problems such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, etc. Did you know, however, that Japan also has minority populations and human rights problems? Did you know that there has been a long history of social movements in Japan demanding educational equality and non-discrimination?

This booklet is an introduction to Dowa education, which has evolved over the past 50 years in Japan as an educational challenge to eradicate Buraku discrimination or discrimination against Buraku people, a caste-like minority population.

Except for a couple of English booklets issued by the Japanese government to outline Buraku improvement measures, most English publications have been produced by our institute in Japan, the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute, describing the reality of Buraku life, its history, as well as the Buraku liberation movement. In addition, we have been sending out bimonthly English newsletters on Buraku issues (Buraku Liberation News) to nearly a thousand readers overseas since January 1981.

This booklet, however, is our first English-language publication on Dowa education. Our aim is to inform non-Japanese-speaking readers, particularly educators, of the history and practice of Dowa education so that our experiences be recognized properly and shared widely outside Japan.

The idea of publishing this booklet came out of our increasing contacts and dialogues recently with human rights organizations, researchers and educators from around the world. We notice that only a few of them are aware of Buraku issues in Japan, and almost none know anything about Dowa education.

Whenever we have such opportunities to address Buraku issues, we have to explain from the very basics: In Japan we have a caste-like minority population; they are Japanese and indistinguishable physically, linguistically, religiously, culturally; they have been discriminated-against for centuries, etc.

As a result, we often find ourselves not really successful in communicating the entire picture and significance of the challenges of Dowa education. This booklet is intended to rectify this situation, and to establish Dowa education as a new sphere of our global networking.

Past exchanges between Japan and other countries have mostly evolved around Tokyo, which is located in eastern Japan. When researchers and visitors come to Japan to obtain information about aspects of Japanese society, they usually visit government and academic institutions in Tokyo and learn almost nothing about discrimination issues or anti-discrimination education endeavors in Japan. This is partly because such issues are often treated as 'invisible' by mainstream Japanese institutions.

A group of American educators visiting our institute in Osaka symbolically said recently, "We had read nothing about Buraku issues or Dowa education before coming to Japan. We heard nothing about them when we visited the Ministry of Education and universities in Tokyo. Coming to Osaka and visiting schools here, we now know that Japan also has its share of minority issues and active efforts to cope with prejudice; things that are familiar to us."

You may feel as if there are two different worlds in Japan as far as Buraku issues are concerned. Actually, there are a number of Buraku communities in Tokyo and its surrounding prefectures. Roughly, one-third of about 6,000 Buraku communities are located in eastern Japan, and two-thirds in western Japan. Buraku discrimination is alive today in both eastern and western Japan.

Although the educational system is uniformly operated throughout Japan under the same centralized course of study enforced by the Ministry of Education, Dowa education, generally speaking, is impressively conspicuous in Kansai (the second biggest metropolitan region in Japan with cities such as Kyoto, Osaka, Nara and Kobe) and in western Japan, while it is rather invisible in Tokyo and in eastern Japan. The difference lies in how Buraku and discrimination issues have been perceived and treated in Tokyo and in Kansai.

The Buraku liberation movement began in Nara in 1922 with the founding of the *Suiheisha* (Levelers' Association), and Buraku issues have traditionally been treated as priority political, social, educational issues in the Kansai region. Most local government buildings in Kansai symbolically carry slogans saying "We Shall Allow No Discrimination." Kansai local governments have invariably set up elaborate guidelines to promote Dowa education in schools in the 1950s and 1960s. But this regional gap has been little known outside Japan.

The explanation above does not assume, however, that there have been no publications outside Japan on Buraku issues. Actually a number of English books and articles have been published on Buraku discrimination and Dowa education. They have been known to a limited circle of Japanologists and to those who were deeply interested in Japan. Among them, several books published in the 1960s, including some field studies in Japan, have significantly shaped the image of Buraku issues outside Japan. They treated Buraku discrimination as exotic rather than as something common in nature to other forms of discrimination in different cultures.

For instance, these publications illustrated the origin of Buraku discrimination as deeply related to the kind of occupations that Buraku ancestors were engaged in. "They processed dead horses and cows," "They crafted leather products," "They executed prisoners," and "That's why they were despised and ostracized against the background of prevailing Buddhist and Shintoist values abhorring impurity and acts of killing."

This illustration is clear-cut, but it implies that a segment of Japanese population was treated as outcastes because of inherited occupations since time immemorial in the unique Japanese cultural and religious context.

Historical studies have revealed that the members of outcastes come from diverse social origins and the stigmatizing functions were imposed upon them after their outcaste status was fixed. Therefore, we should focus on the political process that created the "four-class plus outcaste" system to implement the "divide and rule" policy. The fundamental issue here is not the unique cultural context itself but rather how the system of discrimination was legitimized by manipulating it effectively.

In the final analysis, discrimination has political, social and cultural functions. It evolves around certain biological, social and cultural criteria. The criteria differ from one society to another: race, ethnicity, religion, language, social origin, etc. Discrimination is the process whereby unequal power relations are legitimized by creating a division between the mainstream and the marginal, according to certain criterion. This process is common to all cultures. So, we should not fail to keep our eyes on this commonality when discussing cultural differences as seen in the process of legitimizing certain forms of discrimination.

Many of these publications were based on cultural-anthropological studies that western researchers conducted in Japan in the 1950s and 1960s. They portrayed Buraku life and attitudes in negative images by depending much on non-Buraku informants who were rather prejudiced, as well as on Buraku informants who

internalized oppression and a negative identity.

Some of these studies also focused on Buraku radicalism as a reflection of serious oppression. Discourse such as “Buraku people have been so strongly oppressed that they react quite radically against the dominant society and non-Buraku people” is clearly noticeable in these studies. Therefore, Buraku people are described as aggressive, hypersensitive, unstable, etc. Buraku movements are illustrated as violent and extremely demanding. Buraku self-directed action and movement are not treated like other social movements.

The Buraku is portrayed as different and distinct, but with negative connotations. Thus, one problem we identify in these studies that have significantly influenced the knowledge of Buraku issues outside Japan is that they described the Buraku issue as something like a skeleton in the closet of the exotic country of Japan.

Another problem we notice is that these studies did not use insights from historical studies that were rapidly growing in Japan both quantitatively and qualitatively during the 1960s and 1970s. The data and information they used were rather outdated. Also, these studies did not represent the active movement of the Buraku that has led to significant changes surrounding Buraku life, thus failing to portray its dynamic and changing aspects.

We believe, however, that one basic problem lies in the lack of efforts on our part to disseminate information, data and new research findings to outside Japan. This is because several recent English-language publications have treated Buraku issues in a more comprehensive manner and reflected findings of recent historical, sociological and educational studies in Japan by keeping close contact with grass-roots Buraku organizations, Dowa educator's organizations, Japanese scholars of Buraku issues and Dowa education, as well as with our institute.

This booklet incorporates the present knowledge of Buraku history in Japan, the most recent observations by various research studies, contemporary views and analysis of Buraku life, and pressing concerns of Dowa education and its future directions. In that sense, we hope this offers the most comprehensive picture of Dowa education.

In addition, Dowa education constitutes a fundamental pillar of human rights education initiative in today's Japan. To illustrate its outline and major characteristics will presumably stimulate interest among those who are trying to promote human rights education.

Recently we have been receiving an increasing number of inquiries from journalists, scholars, NGOs and students overseas who want to know more about Buraku issues and Dowa education, and to develop collaborative ties with us. We always welcome such inquiries and networking initiatives.

We encourage you to refer to the bibliography in this booklet and to contact us if you have questions or want to know more about Buraku issues. We hope you will find this booklet informative and stimulating enough, and we are more than willing to further exchange information and views with you.

What is Dowa education?

1 Definition of Dowa education

CONCEPT OF DOWA

Dowa literally consists of two Chinese characters; "同 (Do-)" (pronounced "doh"; meaning "same") and "和 (-Wa)" (pronounced "wa"; meaning harmony). The term "Dowa(同和)" was coined by the Japanese government during the Second World War in the early 1940s in an attempt to foster harmonious relations among soldiers. Buraku soldiers were discriminated-against by non-Buraku soldiers, and such conflicts were regarded as impediments to efficient mobilization of the military forces. The message about Dowa was given in the name of the Emperor, indicating "All soldiers are the Emperor's offspring (same), so you should keep cooperative relations (harmony) rather than being antagonistic toward each other."

The concept of Dowa originated in this way with a strong orientation toward assimilation under military rule. It has been widely employed as an official government term to refer to administrative policies and services related to Buraku issues.

The Buraku movement expressed its opposition to such usage by putting Dowa in parentheses like "「同和」" or by using "Kaiho Kyoiku" (liberation education) instead of Dowa education. Recently, however, the Buraku movement began to add a new identity to Dowa education as one pillar of a broad-based human rights education initiative in Japan. Consequently, Dowa education is more frequently referred to without parentheses these days.

In a nutshell, Dowa education today is an umbrella concept referring to all forms of educational activities, by both the government and the movement, for solving problems caused by Buraku discrimination. The problems are many: prejudice against Buraku; lower academic success of Buraku children; lack of self-esteem, etc. The difference between the government and the Buraku movement lies in the strategies they employ for the solution.

For government institutions, Dowa education means a segment of educational policy to cope with existing discrimination against the Burakumin. They include: 1) Improving educational facilities and services in Burakumin-enrolled schools; 2) Assigning additional (kahai) teachers to such schools to provide compensatory education; 3) Providing support for community activities of children, youth and adults; 4) Giving special financial aid to Buraku students; and 5) Distributing special curricular materials to teach about Buraku history and government measures.

For the Buraku movement, Dowa education means a set of educational strategies for democratizing the whole society to attain true equality of opportunity for Buraku and other oppressed populations. The objectives include: 1) Attaining parity in the level of educational achievement and in the rate of enrollment in secondary schools and in higher education institutions; 2) Developing critical literacy and sound learning capacities for Buraku children; and 3) Promoting community involvement in setting up school agenda.

The government and the Buraku movement differ in their definition of Dowa education. Is Dowa an assimilation of Burakumin into the existing social hierarchy? Or the creation of friendly interpersonal relations between Burakumin and non-Burakumin? Or does it mean a process of societal transformation to achieve

non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all? Answers may vary depending on the perspective of what is really meant by "liberation."

Put another way, Dowa education can be divided into "Dowa education as human rights" and "Dowa education about human rights." The former deals with issues of school enrollment, school achievement and educational opportunities in general, while the latter is concerned with school curriculum and teaching efforts to change prejudiced views and to enhance human rights awareness.

Let us now turn to Buraku discrimination briefly before going into substantive discussions of Dowa education.

BURAKU DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination against Buraku and Buraku people shall be referred to as Buraku discrimination in this booklet.

Buraku is a Japanese word referring to "village" or "hamlet." The word began to acquire a new connotation after the Meiji government (1868 - 1912) started to use "tokushu buraku" (special hamlet) in reference to former outcaste communities. The intention was to distinguish former outcaste communities clearly from ordinary villages. We may say that the government was partly responsible for the continuation of Buraku discrimination.

Almost a century has passed and the word "buraku" is generally recognized today as having to do with Buraku rather than a hamlet.

Buraku people or Burakumin ("min" refers to people) are the largest discriminated-against population in Japan. They are not a racial or an ethnic minority, but a caste-like Japanese minority. In Japan rigid social stratification has been characteristic, and the criteria of national membership have been finely tuned. In this cultural context Burakumin have suffered from social ostracism and struggled to liberate themselves.

They are generally recognized as descendants of outcaste populations in the feudal days. Outcastes were assigned such social functions as slaughtering animals and executing criminals, and the general public perceived these functions as "polluting acts" under Buddhist and Shintoist beliefs.

Although members of outcaste populations had actually been warriors, peasants and artisans, they came to be recognized as a different "race" as time passed after the status system was established in the early Edo era (around the 17th century) in the form of a "four class (warrior, peasant, artisan, merchant) plus outcaste (Eta, meaning filth-abundant people, and Hinin, meaning non-humans)" system.

Therefore, the discrimination against Burakumin is often characterized today as "racism within the same race" because they are native Japanese and indistinguishable from non-Buraku populations. Still, however, Burakumin are sometimes perceived as a different "race."

It is quite a difficult challenge, therefore, to define who is a Burakumin. A leading historian once defined Burakumin as "those people who were born, brought up and living in Buraku; those who were not from Burakumin family but came to live in Buraku in the recent past; or those who are living outside Buraku but have blood relationship with Burakumin."

However, there are many Burakumin who meet the criteria but are not perceived as Burakumin. In a way, it is non-Burakumin who determines who Burakumin is: "Burakumin are those who are believed to be Burakumin by non-Buraku people." To be more precise, we need to define how one becomes a Burakumin. This is a very tricky aspect of Buraku identity.

According to a 1987 government survey, there were about 4,600 Buraku communities and 1.2 million Burakumin. We argue, however, that the numbers should be more: about 6,000 Buraku and 3 million Burakumin. The difference is due to the method of counting used by the government. The government only counts the number of districts and populations receiving improvement measures by the government, while our estimate figures cover those who are actually or potentially subjected to discrimination regardless of whether they live in a Buraku or not.

We may say that the Buraku population accounts for about 2.5% of a Japanese, constituting the largest minority population, followed by a 1% figure of non-Japanese populations roughly 1.3 million, including about 0.7 million resident Koreans. In addition, there are about 50,000 Ainu people, an indigenous population in Japan.

NATURE OF BURAKU DISCRIMINATION

Buraku discrimination has usually been discussed in terms of marriage and employment. Marriage has symbolized the act of allowing the entry of members of one family into another. Company recruitment has often been compared to marriage; being recruited to a company is like becoming a member of that corporate family. In Japan, where the concept of family has had such cultural implications, Burakumin have faced frequent refusals, though increasingly of an indirect nature recently, when they tried to enter "other families" Just because they were recognized as a "different, polluted breed" Actually, a number of Burakumin have committed suicide when faced with discrimination in marriage. Many promising Buraku youngsters with high academic achievements have been rejected by major corporations just because they were Burakumin.

It is important to note here that discrimination refers not only to its apparent forms but also to its hidden forms, including the Buraku perception of future opportunities as being narrow and limited as well as prejudiced views of Buraku people.

We encourage you to refer to other publications on Buraku issues in general for detailed discussions.

EVOLUTION OF DOWA EDUCATION

After the Second World War, the Japanese Constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education both ushered in a new era of democracy in Japan. The education system was democratized and the language of democracy was advocated throughout school curricula.

However, a disproportionately large percentage of Buraku children were not attending schools until the late 1950s. In other words, the basic principle of equal educational opportunities was not a reality for many Buraku children.

Concerned teachers, though small in number at the beginning, repeatedly visited Buraku homes to encourage their children to come to school. They found out that severe poverty discouraged Buraku parents from sending their children to school because the children helped earn a living and were indispensable as baby-sitters, too. More importantly, however, the teachers began to recognize that Buraku parents and their community had low expectations of the benefits of schooling against the background of past oppressive treatment of Burakumin in schools and limited opportunities offered even to academically successful Buraku students.

Those harbingers of grass-roots Dowa education challenged the contradictory nature of democratic

education after the war. They argued that democracy and principles of non-discrimination should not just be spoken about but must be lived in reality. The government responded to the demand by initiating programs to offer financial aid and other support services toward the end of the 1950s.

In this way, grass-roots Dowa educators have constantly challenged such notions as "equal educational opportunity" and "democratic education." A national organization to promote Dowa education at the grass-roots level was founded in 1953 and named Zendokyo (National Federation of Dowa Educators' Associations).

In the 1960s and 1970s when full school enrollment had been attained for Buraku children, school curriculum reform became the next agenda. The Dowa education movement, promoted by a coalition of Buraku organizations, educators, parents and civic groups, began to demand that Buraku issues and history be taught effectively in schools and that opportunities be opened for more Buraku children to go to high school. As a result, school textbooks started to carry stories and references about Buraku history and issues, and the gap in the rate of advancement to high school was rapidly narrowed by 1975.

Through the 1980s and since, the major focus of Dowa education has been to improve Buraku home and community educational environments, to elucidate motivational processes for Buraku children, and to develop an anti-discrimination and human rights awareness-raising curriculum.

The important lessons learned from past efforts is that it is not enough to provide better school facilities, more teachers and more financial support for Buraku children, that it is not enough to provide more books and educational stimuli at home, and that it is not enough to tell stories of sad experiences of being discriminated against repeatedly in classes to invite sympathy and empathy with those who are discriminated against.

Dowa education now has to design (1) effective methods to improve Buraku children's sense of pride and self-esteem, (2) approaches to motivate them to challenge the limit of their potential so they can participate in a wider world of opportunities, (3) stimulating ways to encourage non-Buraku children to think of Buraku and human rights issues not just as others' business but as important matters to help enrich their mind, perspective and interpersonal sensitivities, and (4) effective curricula to educate a human rights-conscious generation of youngsters.

2 Features of the Japanese School System

In this section, we will outline the origin and development of the modern Japanese education system in describing the situation of the Burakumin's access to schooling and the changes in their educational attainment levels preceding the Second World War.

PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING THE MODERN JAPANESE SCHOOL SYSTEM

According to research by R.P. Dore, in the late Edo era (1603-1868), the estimated percentages of men and women enjoying such educational benefits as reading, writing and calculating were 43% and 10%, respectively. The education of the time was provided at HANKO (educational facility reserved for children of Bushi or warrior status people) or TERAKOYA (private educational facility open to the public). However, the SENMIN (outcaste people) were not allowed to develop literacy skills and even received legal punishment for learning alphabets, with the exception of some privileged. Replacing the feudalistic rule by Shogun, the new Meiji government, announcing a policy to ensure educational opportunity for the people, established a schooling system in 1872, using the European school system as a model. The initial plan consisted of both eight years of compulsory elementary education from age 6 to age 13, and the following five years of secondary school education as a preparatory stage for entering university. Nevertheless, the enrollment rate in effect stagnated at a level similar to the former Edo era, since the government was incapable of providing tuition-free schooling due to lack of facilities and teaching staff. As a result, the government was obliged to modify the duration of compulsory education from 8 years to 4 years starting from age six. Furthermore, it approved the establishment of the three-year KANT (simplified elementary school to ensure at least the minimum of educational opportunity). These changes were intended to adapt to the actuality of the general public's life styles.

As post-secondary education institutions, the following types of schools were founded: 1) junior high schools to prepare students to enter Teikoku University (now Tokyo University), the only existing university of the time, 2) SHIHAN GAKKO, where future teachers were trained, 3) business schools/professional schools for vocational education and 4) KOTO elementary schools that was supplementary to primary education. School admission, to assure fairness, was determined by an entrance examination that complied with the curriculum standardized by the government. Some students were preferentially enrolled in the post secondary education institutions as a respite from military service or for working as governmental officials. Such a selection system, as well as a privileged promotion to an official, accelerated the formation of employment-policy based on the educational achievement by private enterprises. At the same time, it encouraged the notion of educational achievement to be recognized in the early stage of Japan's modernization, as a mainstream channel of upward social mobility. Moreover, it helped achievement-orientation to be widely popularized among the public.

The educational policy by the government proved successful, which promoted the simplification of compulsory education and a thorough distribution of job status by means of educational achievement. It led to above 80% enrollment rate in primary schools in 1895, followed by 90% in 1902 and 97% in 1907. Since the establishment of the modern school system, it took only 30 years or so to record an even higher enrollment rate compared to that of France and Germany, which were considered models in the educational modernization project. Affected by such a favorable increase in enrollment, the duration of compulsory education was extended to 6

years in 1907. Also, forced by the people's heightened zeal for higher education, a new law was enacted in 1918 to establish SENMON GAKKO (professional school) in the university category, and to provide wider higher education opportunities that had been limited to Teikoku University. At this point, the modern Japanese school system had been almost fully established encompassing the entire range from elementary to higher education.

EDUCATIONAL SEGREGATION IMPOSED ON BURAKU PEOPLE

As is mentioned above, the establishment of the modern Japanese school system rapidly progressed with the intensive measures by the government that wished to transform Japan radically in European society's style, and to make it eventually an incomparable educational superpower. Statistics shows that the elementary educational opportunities were almost fully ensured and the school system played an important role in the society as a medium to distribute socio-economic status. In parallel, opportunities for upward social mobility were remarkably widened.

However, Buraku people faced various obstacles when trying to maximize their access to schooling and opportunities for upward social mobility.

Up until 1885, the government had left the establishment of schools and the provision of teachers to each community's responsibility by using their own resources. As for elementary schools, they were financially dependent on both tuition collected from the parents and funding from the community. Such a policy made it difficult for poor communities to have schools. Research indicates that some Buraku communities remained as non-school enrollment areas until the early 20th century because school construction was beyond their financial capacity.

From 1885 on, the government gradually shifted its policy to providing financial support to set up schools. However, total financial support for the construction of school facilities in each and every community was still impossible. Therefore, they adopted the system to recruit students from several neighboring communities to an already existing school facility. For that purpose, an area partition of school districts was carried out. In this process, non-Burakumin expressed strong opposition to letting their children be in the same school as Burakumin. Under such circumstances, sacrificing geographical accessibility, administrative authorities often took measures to specify two different categories of schools; one for Burakumin children and another for non-Burakumin children. Very often schools adopted segregation by class or by seat. Consequently, such a policy by the authorities hurt the pride of Burakumin who had come to be aware of equal rights since the status system had been abolished. This resulted in protests by the Burakumin against such segregation, which took place in various regions. The protest campaign against school segregation was recorded in Nara Prefecture already in 1890. At the same time, government records show that the major activities of the Leveler's Association (the first Buraku liberation organization in the modern age) in the early days were targeted at the segregation and discrimination in elementary schools.

Education provided in urban cities differed from that in rural areas. Along with an improvement in industrial productivity, the population gradually concentrated in urban areas, a common phenomenon internationally. Burakumin were no exception. Buraku communities in urban areas continuously expanded, showing slum-like characteristics, receiving not only Buraku people but also marginal laborers from rural areas. In those urban Buraku communities the economic levels were often worse and non-enrollment rates were higher

compared to the country sides. The government established KAN'I SHOGAKKO (simplified primary schools), YAGAKKO (evening schools) and KINROSHA GAKKO (worker's schools) in such communities in order to rectify non-enrollment situation. However, those school facilities and equipment were less than satisfactory and the content of education was quite poor, which naturally brought few possible educational effects. Despite the active construction of schools, the non-enrollment situation in Buraku communities did not notably improve.

The government, advocating better school enrollment, advanced YUWA EDUCATION (the principle of equality under the emperor), hastened by the activated SUIHEISHA's (Levelers') protest. Again, the government's effort couldn't significantly ameliorate segregation nor discrimination in schools because of deep-rooted intolerance and prejudice against the Buraku people by non-Buraku inhabitants and educators concerned. It's not hard to imagine how such a situation of segregation and discrimination discouraged the Burakumin's motivation to attend school and the will to learn. A distrust of school, deep-rooted in the Buraku people's mind in this way, hardly be removed even now.

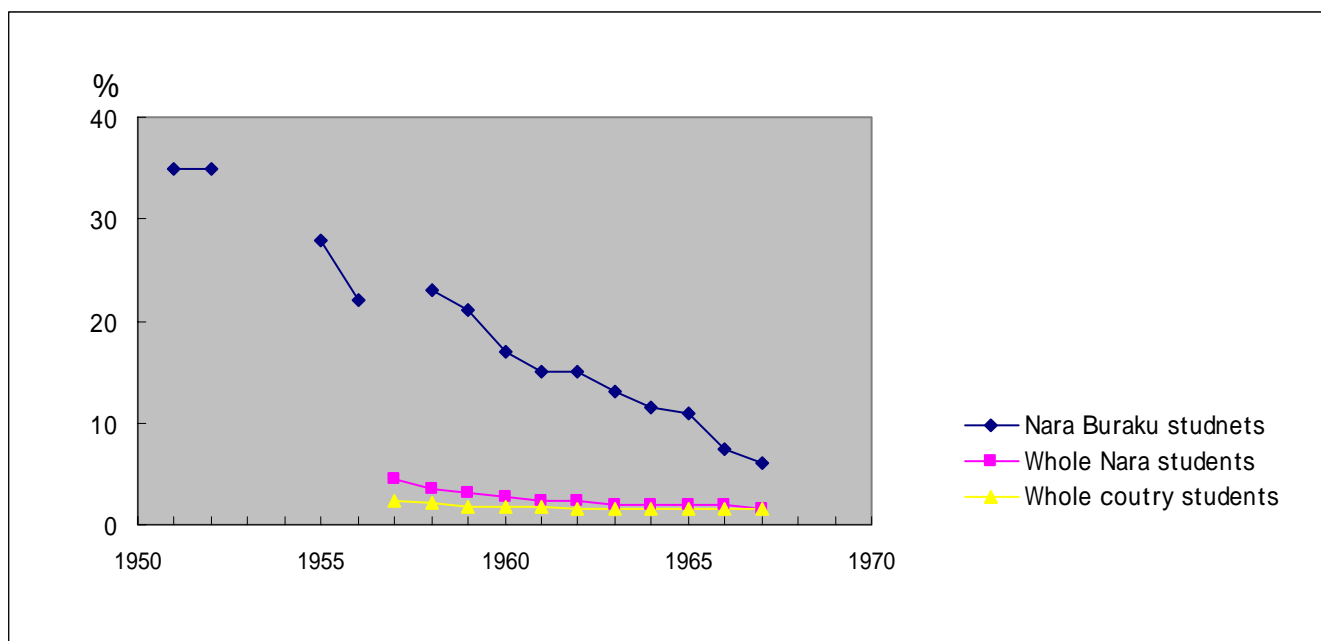
HIGH NON-ENROLLMENT RATE OF BURAKU PEOPLE

Buraku people's economy had been assured during the Edo era because industries such as leather tanning were specified as their vocation under the status system. With the dissolution of the status system, those industries were liberalized and made open to non-Buraku capital. This change plunged the Burakumin into destitution, which often compelled their children to help earning their family's living as a part of the labor force. The feeling of distrust of school as well as the economic difficulty aggravated the non-enrollment situation of Buraku children. Figure 1 shows the constitution of school careers of over 13 year-old Buraku population, according to research on Burakumin conducted by Osaka Prefecture in 1918. In those days, compared to the whole population's accumulated non-enrollment rate of 35%, the Burakumin's rate of 57% makes a significant contrast. Also, in the comparison of secondary and higher education, which stands at 12% and 2% respectively for the whole population, Burakumin are quite underrepresented

At the time when Japanese society was heading toward achievement-orientation based on educational achievement, Buraku people's education was left at a low level, which means that their social status remained "outcaste" even in modern Japanese society, with no substantive change since the Edo era.

A notably high non-enrollment rate and long term absence rate was seen even after the Second World War. Statistics of long term absence rates of Junior high school students in Nara Prefecture (Figure 1), shows that Burakumin's lack of basic education had persisted for a long time, even in the post-War period

Figure 1 Long Term Absence (absent 90 days or over for an year) Rates of Junior High School Students in Nara Prefecture



CHARACTERISTICS OF JAPANESE SCHOOL EDUCATION

In regard to equal educational opportunities, the Japanese educational system preceding the Second World War did not necessarily making light of it. Japanese school education before and after the Second World War characteristically showed a high performance of distributing job status according to school achievement, supported by: 1) a standardized curriculum by the government, 2) a distinct selection system by examination, 3) professional status tied strongly with educational achievements, and so on. We can add also that by means of drastic implementation of the policy of equal educational opportunities following an American model the government labored for equally opened social mobility opportunities after Second World War. Alas, those efforts had less effect in changing the Burakumin's outcaste status. Furthermore, it resulted in the formation of another layer of stratification added onto the traditional hierarchy, due to the disproportionate non-enrollment of Burakumin. In Japanese society, where educational achievement is tightly linked to the acquisition of social status, social stratification can often be caused by the gaps in educational achievement. The principle of achievement-orientation built mainly on the notion of equal educational opportunity does not automatically liberate such an ascribed group as Burakumin.

3 Zendokyo and Others: Teachers' Commitment to Dowa Education

LOW ENROLLMENT/ HIGH ABSENCE RATES IN SCHOOLS

Japan's defeat in the Second World War came on August 15, 1945, when it began to march toward democracy. The Fundamental Law of Education was promulgated in 1947 laying the foundation of post-war education for democracy.

Buraku discrimination survived through the war and was symbolically represented by the poor enrollment rate of Buraku children in schools. For instance, in the early 1950's in Nara, the ratio of long-time absentees in junior high schools (those who never went to school in the month of April, when school year starts in Japan) was 35% compared to 2.7% for non-Buraku students.

Buraku children were counted as vital helpers in the family and were not sent to school in many cases. This situation was sustained by the dire poverty resulting from Buraku discrimination.

Most educators, however, were likely to perceive it as the result of Buraku parents' lack of understanding or the children's lack of motivation to study. In most schools, no serious efforts of Dowa education were made and discriminatory incidents kept taking place one after another.

In 1948 in Kochi Prefecture, a small number of so-called "fukushi kyoin" (welfare teachers) began to work for the solution of the low enrollment problem by visiting Buraku homes and giving advice to Buraku parents. They were the harbingers of Dowa educators who regarded it vital to listen to the voices of Buraku parents and to read hidden messages from the dialogues. Those educators reflected seriously on the fundamental meaning of education and began to emphasize actively the need "to learn from the reality of Buraku discrimination."

BURAKU DEMAND FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

All Romance Struggle

In 1951, a lowbrow magazine carried a fiction titled "Tokushu Buraku" (special hamlet) written by a staff member of the hygiene section of Kyoto municipal government. It portrayed a Buraku community, in real name, as an area abundant in crime and violence along with its poor living conditions. The Buraku movement criticized harshly the Kyoto municipal administration that had failed to take necessary measures for the Buraku as well as the publication itself.

The denunciation revealed that Buraku communities in Kyoto suffered intensively from poor housing, lack of fire hydrant, sewage and waterworks, and low level of school enrollment. This so-called "All Romance Struggle" became a model for a number of administrative struggles that were engaged in other municipalities later.

Yoshiwa Junior-High School Incident

In June 1952, a social studies teacher, in discussing the "four class plus outcaste" system in the Edo era stated that the ancestors of the outcastes had been slaves or foreigners in the Heian era (794 - 1191) and that they were presently called "Yotsu" (four-legged) or "Eta" (filth abundant). He then wrote down these epithets and asked

students to raise their hands if they knew them. Most students immediately looked at a Buraku student in the class who felt like targeted.

Buraku parents, hearing about this incident, declared that they would no longer send the children to the school because, as they said, "Our children do not go to school to be discriminated- against. We will not entrust our children to the care of this school and its teachers."

This incident left the following lessons:

1) Most children are already aware of Buraku discrimination even before they come to school, and many are prejudiced against Buraku. Therefore, the "Netako wo okosuna" (Don't wake up a sleeping baby) approach is not effective.

2) Dowa education should be promoted in strong collaboration with the community by closely observing its reality of discrimination and in a systematic way, guided by a well-planned implementation program.

3) It is vital to educate students as a group to be caring and supportive to each other so that they develop a strong anti-discrimination consciousness and attitude among them.

Supply of Free School Textbooks

School textbooks are currently supplied free of charge for elementary and lower-secondary students in Japan, because these levels of schooling are compulsory. The free supply of textbooks was stipulated in a law enacted in 1963 according to Article 26 of the Constitution. It should be noted that the struggles of Buraku parents and children brought about this enactment.

By the latter half of the 1950's, most Buraku children had already been enrolled in schools. It was difficult financially for them, however, to purchase school textbooks and stationery. Struggles for free supply of textbooks developed in Buraku communities in Osaka, Nara, Kyoto and Kochi prefectures.

For instance, in 1962 in Gose city, Nara prefecture, Buraku children went to school without carrying textbooks deliberately demanding that textbooks be supplied free to all according to the Constitution. In response to this, the local school board promised to them that they would request for special budget to supply free textbooks starting in the second trimester.

These demands for free textbooks, first voiced from Buraku communities, expanded nationwide, and finally achieved the objective.

FOUNDING OF ZENDOKYO AND EVOLUTION OF DOWA EDUCATION

Birth of Zendokyo

The Zendokyo (zen-doh-kyoh) or the National Federation of Dowa Educators' Associations was founded on May 6, 1953, to explore and consolidate the foundation of education for democracy in Japan. Its birth was strongly supported by the Buraku liberation movement.

The history of Zendokyo in the past four decades symbolizes the history of post-war Dowa education. Practices of Dowa education had been seen already in several prefectures, but there was no national organization before Zendokyo. Representatives of Dowa educators from seven prefectures and two cities gathered at its founding assembly: Kyoto Prefecture, Kyoto City, Osaka Prefecture, Osaka City, Hyogo Prefecture, Wakayama

Prefecture, Nara Prefecture, Shiga Prefecture, Okayama Prefecture, Tokushima Prefecture and Kochi Prefecture; all in western-Japan and mostly in the Kansai region.

The Zendokyo has pursued a broad mass-based education reform movement by focusing on how schooling can be meaningful in coping with the concrete reality of discrimination as seen in the lived life of children, parents and Buraku community and by accommodating under its umbrella diverse ideological viewpoints and political positions.

Expansion of Dowa Education Nationwide

In parallel with the birth of Zendokyo, various local governments began to issue guidelines and provide curriculum materials for Dowa education as follows:

Year	local administration	title of guideline
1947	Wakayama Prefecture	Guideline on Dowa Education
	Hyogo Pref.	Guideline on Dowa Ed.
1952	Kyoto Pref.	Basic policy on Dowa Ed.
	Nagano Pref.	For Dowa Ed.
1953	Okayama Pref.	Guideline on Democratic Ed. (regarding Dowa Ed.)
	Tokushima Pref.	Materials on Dowa Ed.
	Maizuru City, Kyoto Pref	Materials on Dowa Ed.
1954	Nara Pref	Guideline on Dowa Ed.
	Kochi Pref.	For Better Understanding of Dowa Ed.
	Kyoto City.	Guideline on Dowa Ed.
	Hiroshima Pref.	Guideline on Dowa Ed.
	Osaka Pref.	Basic Policy on Dowa Ed. in Schools

With the issuance of the Dowa Policy Council's Recommendation of 1968 and the enactment of the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects of 1969 as major driving forces, Dowa education rapidly expanded its scale and scope and Dowa educators' associations have been formed in a number of prefectures. 13 such prefectural associations have been set up and joined Zendokyo since 1966, constituting about a third of current Zendokyo membership of 34 prefectures out of 47.

For the past several years, more than 20 thousand participants have gathered in the convention of Zendokyo every year. We may say that this is the largest education-related gathering in Japan. However, Dowa education practices in western Japan still play the center role in the Zendokyo activities, and there is a vital need to expand them nationally in both quantity and quality.

Characteristics of Post-War Dowa Education

The major characteristics of Dowa education can be summarized for each post-war decade as follows:

1950's: Coping with issues of school enrollment and delinquency

1960's: Struggles for better school facilities and services including the free supply of textbooks.

1970's: Development of Dowa education curriculum and supplementary materials

1980's: Broadening the scope of Dowa education to cover other anti-discrimination and human rights education issues

1990's: Networking with international and human rights education initiatives in the world

To Learn Deeply from the Reality of Discrimination

The Zendokyo has persistently held the slogan "We shall learn deeply from the reality of discrimination and build educational practices that assure better life and promising future for the children" since its Osaka convention in 1965. "To learn deeply from the reality of discrimination" has now become a central proposition and common language of Dowa educators. But what does it actually mean? What follows is an interpretation of this proposition.

We can not eradicate discrimination just by preaching repeatedly "Discrimination is wrong." It is not enough for learners to acquire knowledge of Buraku issues, but it is vital for them to understand through their own experiences that to think about issues of discrimination finally brings about positive outcomes to them: broadened perspective of humanity; less prejudiced and open attitudes; capacity to empathize with others; discovery of self-identity.

People usually think of Buraku discrimination in the context of discriminatory incidents concerning marriage and employment. However, the slogan has revealed clearly that discrimination shows itself in the concrete lived experiences in life.

The slogan has also encouraged educators to reflect on their own personal values and attitudes by comparing them to the suffering, resilience and generosity of Buraku people. When reading about or listening to the lived experiences of Buraku people, learners may think about their own experiences and recall feelings of vexation or they may come to awareness that they had also hurt the feelings of other people.

In a nutshell "to learn deeply from the reality of discrimination" means recognizing one's relation to discrimination and transforming himself/ herself.

Outcomes of Dowa Education Movement

Dowa educators have become keenly aware of discriminatory elements in education by visiting Buraku communities and exposing themselves to strong desire among Buraku people for discrimination-free life. Through close collaboration among the home, the community and the school, Dowa education has been shaped as a community-based educational reform initiative.

The Dowa education movement has addressed the need to improve educational facilities such as the school building and the community youth center, to provide scholarships for Buraku children, to assign additional teachers. Also, it has tried to develop curricular materials featuring Buraku community life and labor.

By organizing compensatory education classes and Buraku children's community activities, focused efforts have been made to improve Buraku children's academic performance and to better assure their future.

Dowa educators have reaffirmed through decades of these experiences the vital importance of effective community-school ties and the need to relate learning activities in school to real life.

The Child Rights Convention was ratified in Japan in 1994, and the five-day-a-week school system has

been started on a bimonthly basis since April 1995. A range of educational reforms and curriculum development efforts will be needed in meeting the new demands emerging in this new situation. We now have to better understand children in the context of their overall life and perceive their wishes in order to develop Dowa education that meets the best interest of children.

POSITION OF DOWA EDUCATION IN JAPANESE SCHOOLING

Goal of Dowa Education

Dowa education is not a special form of education. It refers to all kinds of educational activities aiming at the eradication of discrimination including Buraku discrimination.

Dowa education consists of the following elements:

- a) To deepen knowledge about the history and the nature of Buraku discrimination: What is Buraku discrimination? How has it evolved? Why is it still persistent today?
- b) To develop proper awareness and sensitivities among children so that they regard the issue of eradicating discrimination not just as others' business but as their own important concern.
- c) To cultivate caring and cooperative relations among children so that they are empowered to fight discrimination.

Also, Dowa education is expected to be practiced throughout schooling in all subject and non-subject areas.

Education Ministry's Policy on Dowa Education

The Ministry of Education issued an official notice on Dowa education in 1952. It characterized Buraku discrimination as "a vestige of feudal practice of distinguishing and despising a minority of fellow compatriots" and Dowa education as an effort to "see to it that the spirit of fellow compatriots as one is carried out through school and out-of-school education." This notice was a rather conservative one.

As this notice symbolizes, the Ministry of Education had not taken a transformative initiative in Dowa education until recently, but laid out in July 1994 a more comprehensive guideline prompted by the expanding power of the Dowa education movement.

The guideline is titled "Dowa Education Materials in Schools: To promote Dowa education and guidance on discriminatory incidents." It emphasizes among others the following three points:

1) Dowa education throughout school activities

Dowa education is necessary in all schools regardless of whether Buraku communities are located in their school districts or not. It is also necessary to conduct Dowa education in appropriate manners in all subjects, moral education, special activities, etc.

2) Clarifying the key concerns of Dowa education

The central issue of Dowa education is "to eradicate unreasonable, persistent Buraku discrimination and to establish the spirit of respecting human rights in education based on the idea of equality under the law." To attain this objective, each school should re-examine their school objectives, clarify their ideal images of students, and set up priority elements of guidance for respective grade levels. Special attention should be given to the following points: (a) To make sure that the lived life of Buraku children and parental desire for

eradicating discrimination are properly represented in the curriculum; (b) To make sure that Dowa education does not just provide information and knowledge but also cultivate attitudes and mind as well as the self-directed initiative to solve Buraku discrimination.

3) Providing appropriate guidance meeting different needs of respective school subjects.

Dowa education should be practiced systematically throughout schooling. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the objectives and contents of respective subjects from the perspective of Dowa education so that priority guidance concerns for Dowa education are properly spelled out clearly for each subject.

Thirty years have passed since the Dowa Policy Council's Recommendation of 1965. And now for the first time, the Ministry of Education issued the above-mentioned document on Dowa education which is rather comprehensive. We understand that this new move has been prompted by the growing Dowa education movement. At the same time, however, we appreciate this new initiative of the Ministry of Education because it can have a significant impact on the promotion of Dowa education in certain prefectures where Dowa education has hardly been practiced in the past.

We expect that this synergetic framework will help expand and enrich Dowa education further.

Practice of Dowa Education Today

4 Dowa Education as Human Rights

In this section we briefly describe the Burakumin's educational conditions and educational efforts to improve these conditions after the Second World War.

JAPANESE SCHOOL SYSTEM AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

As we have already seen in PART I, educational policies adopted by the Japanese Government before the Second World War attached considerable importance to equal opportunity and fair competition within the school system. This policy inclination was succeeded by the post-war government and several reforms were made to further promote equal opportunity. The length of compulsory education was extended to nine years; six years of primary education and three years of secondary education. The complicated system of secondary schools was streamlined into a simple high school system and higher education opportunity was enlarged.

As better educational achievement has already been the major means of social mobility, the enlargement of educational opportunities resulted in an immense "education fever" among people. To meet the boiling demand for educational opportunity, the government spent large sums on school resources and also many private facilities were built. The high school enrollment rate rose, exceeding 50% in 1955 and 90% in 1975.

Higher education enrollment rate exceeded 20% in 1964 and reached almost 40% in 1975. This educational explosion dramatically enlarged the middle-class population and raised the standard of socio-economical status.

BURAKUMIN'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVEL AFTER SECOND WORLD WAR

In spite of the explosive enlargement of educational opportunity, the Burakumin's educational attainment level after the Second World War remained low. Table 1 compares the school backgrounds of Burakumin and the whole population in Osaka Prefecture for each generation.

It may be easily inferred that unenrollment or a drop-out from primary education heavily concentrated among Burakumin before the Second World War. For those aged 60 or over, 20% of Burakumin were not enrolled in or dropped out of primary education, whereas for the counterpart the figure was less than 1%. This pitiful situation of Burakumin can not be observed for those aged 20-29, but the relatively low educational attainment level for Burakumin can be found in other figures. The percentage of those who completed junior high school is 20.8% for Burakumin and 7.3% for the counterpart. Also, we can find considerably lower figures for Burakumin in higher education levels.

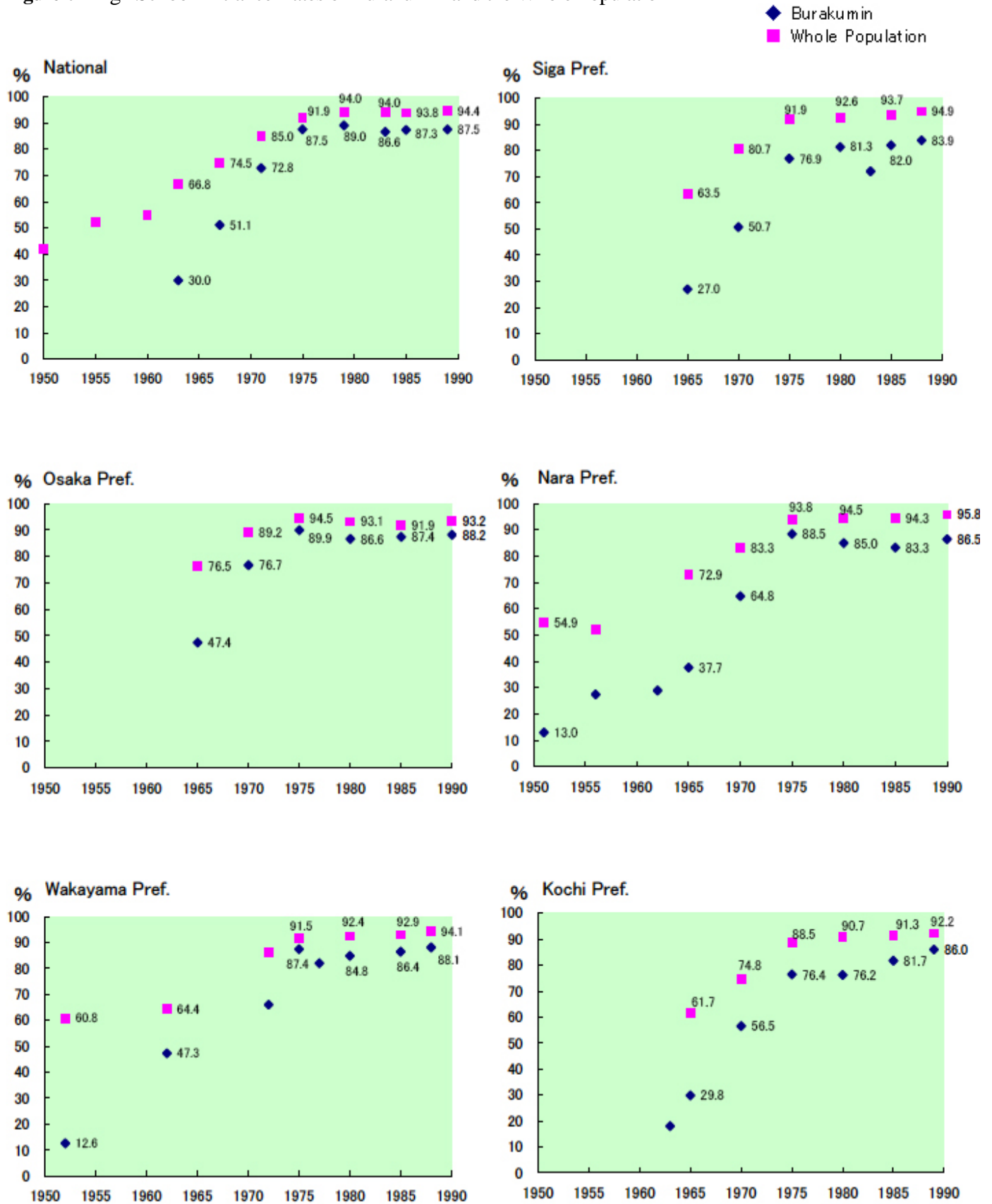
This lower educational attainment of Burakumin inevitably leads to lower socio-economic status, especially in a society like Japan that has a social mobility system heavily dependent on schooling. Indeed socio-economic status level itself is considerably low for the Burakumin, although their lives are supported by special governmental measures.

TABLE 1

School Backgrounds of Burakumin and the Whole Population in Osaka Prefecture

School Background	Age							
	60 or over		40 to 59		30 to 39		20 to 29	
	Buraku	Whole	Buraku	Whole	Buraku	Whole	Buraku	Whole
Primary School Uncompleted	18.7	0.7	6.5	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.0
Completed Junior High School	69.9	49.2	71.3	30.0	33.7	11.2	20.8	7.3
Completed Senior High School	9.6	37.8	18.4	50.7	45.8	47.5	57.4	51.4
Completed Junior College	1.0	5.1	1.6	5.5	10.6	14.9	13.7	22.7
Completed College or Over	0.8	4.8	2.1	11.6	9.5	24.1	8.0	16.8

Figure 1 High School Entrance Rates of Burakumin and the Whole Population



Let us look more closely at the Burakumin's educational attainments. Figure 1 shows national and prefectural senior high school entrance rates for both Burakumin and the whole population.

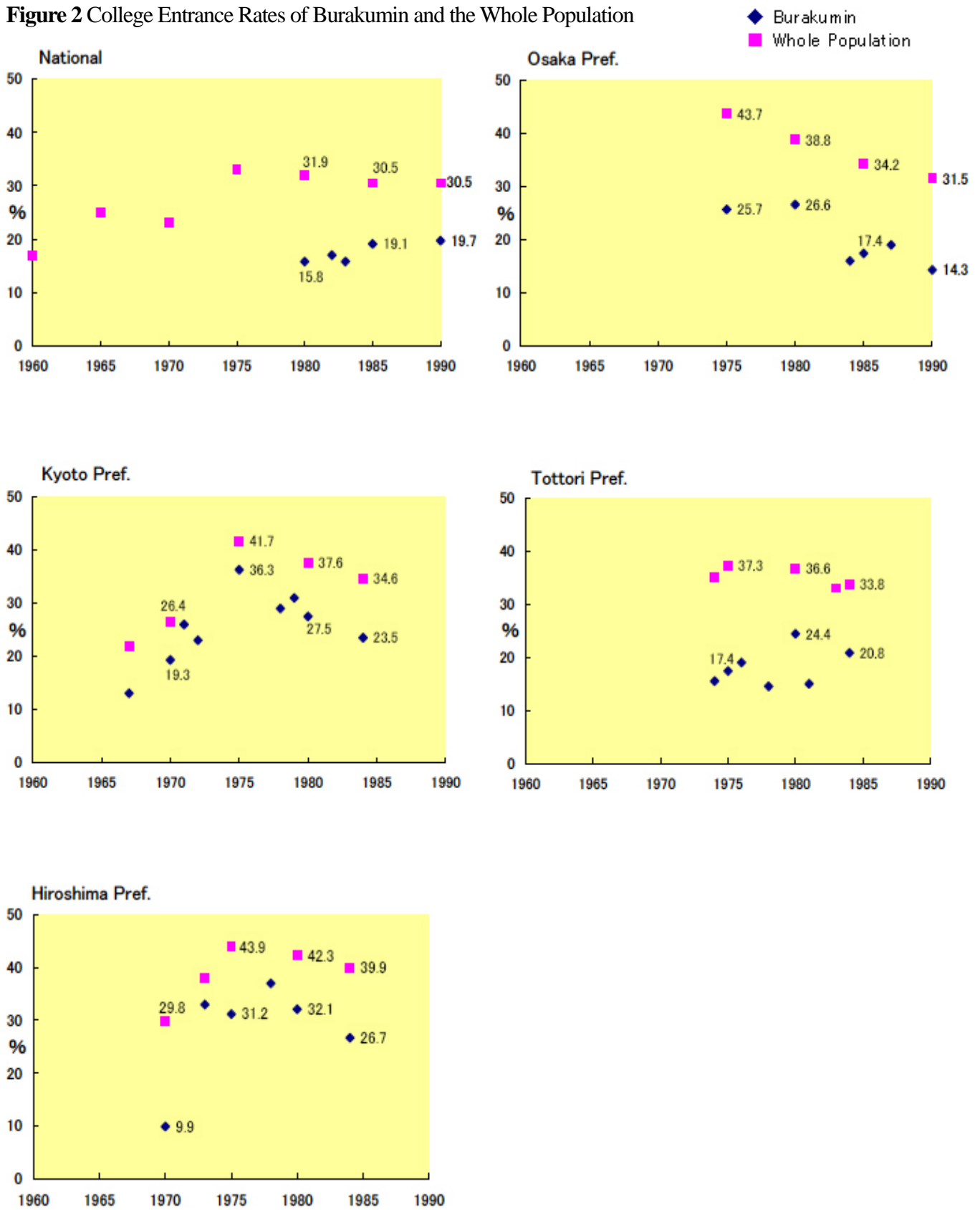
In 1960, the figures show that the rate for Burakumin was approximately 30%, whereas it was approximately 60% for the counterpart. In 1975, high school entrance rates for the whole population reached around 90% and, without exception, large gaps that had existed in 1960 narrowed to between 2- 10 points lower figures for Burakumin. Some people interpret this rapid closing as success in mainstreaming the Burakumin and consequent success in improving Buraku pupil/students' scholastic ability.

However, that was not the case. According to research on Buraku pupil/students' scholastic ability conducted in the post-war period, nearly 1 standard deviation difference in achievement scores was found between Burakumin and non-Burakumin pupil/students regardless of when and where the research was conducted. This meta-analysis on Buraku pupil/students' scholastic ability leads us to conclude that the relative difference in scholastic achievements between the Burakumin and non-Burakumin pupil/student has been maintained to a considerable degree through the post-war period

Supposing that achievement scores follow normal distribution, it can be estimated that 1 standard deviation difference between the two groups' achievement score distribution will lead the lower group's entrance rate to 15% when it is 50% for the whole population, and 85% when it is 90% for the whole. These hypothetical calculations agree with statistics (see Figure 1), which means that the relatively rapid rise in Buraku students' high school entrance rate observed in the period of 1960-1975 does not mean real improvement in Buraku pupil/students' scholastic ability nor success in mainstreaming Burakumin.

Since 1975 the government has kept the high school entrance rate at 90-95%, while the Buraku students' rate has been consistently lower by 2-10% (see Figure 1). This curious phenomenon is understandable by assuming a consistent difference in the scholastic achievement level between Burakumin and non-Burakumin.

Figure 2 College Entrance Rates of Burakumin and the Whole Population



The difference between these groups in college entrance rates is much larger (see Figure 2). As college entrance examinations require a much higher academic standard, this significant gap again suggests a consistently lower achievement level of Buraku students.

It is true that the absolute level of the Burakumin's educational attainment has risen in the post-war period but as the analysis above shows, the relative level has remained considerably low for Burakumin, reproducing Burakumin's relatively lower socio-economic status. Overall enlargement of educational opportunity does not necessarily result in the improvement of minority group status. This fact presents a serious question to the modern notion of equality that regards equal opportunity as a sufficient condition in assuring equality. What we need now is to find out precisely what conditions would stimulate the Burakumin's motivation toward learning more and what would accelerate the improvement of the Burakumin's achievement level. It is obvious that the success in attaining these goals depends heavily on the effort to transform the Buraku children's learning process.

Also, it must be recognized that Dowa education has not been quite effective in this regard. Though the practices of Dowa education have been conducted in many regions and schools for nearly half a century, Buraku children's educational attainment has not improved, as we have already seen. The fundamental issue indicated by this fact is that macro-level improvement is not observable despite hard efforts and many micro-level improvements attained by Dowa education. In the following, we will look at what Dowa education has been practicing till today in order to change the conditions of the Buraku children's learning process.

MAKING BURAKUMIN CHILDREN STAY IN SCHOOL

The first problem that Dowa education confronted was the absence of Burakumin children from school. The saying "That child is absent again today" was shared among teachers who took Buraku children's massive unenrollment or long-term absence seriously. These teachers started to visit the Burakumin community frequently and persuaded to send their children to school or encouraged children themselves to come to school.

Frequent home visits became one of the routine practices of Dowa education. Its aim was mainly to gain the Burakumin's trust of schooling and to understand each child's background in order to ensure effective instruction.

Through these home visits, a lack of money to buy textbooks or other necessary supplies was reported by many teachers, eventually resulting in free textbook distribution and other treatment by the government. Also, in some prefectures additional teachers started to be assigned to schools with Buraku children to support additional activities of teachers for Buraku children. This special assignment is called "Dowa kahai". These efforts resulted in the gradual decline of the unenrollment rate and long-term absence rate of Buraku children.

Following these special educational benefits such as scholarships for high school and national governments were established. Strong requests for such measures to the local and national governments were made by Burakumin themselves in the late 1950s, represented by the demand of the Buraku Liberation League. Political power relations between Buraku movements and local governments create a considerable variety of government policies. In some regions, Buraku children are suffering from lack of basic educational resources even today.

However, we have to be careful in assessing the efficacy of these government measures on Buraku children's educational attainment. As we have already seen, we cannot observe real improvement in the relative achievement level of Burakumin at the macro level. It is obvious that these government measures did not have an overall influence on Buraku children's educational attainment, though it had quite a strong influence at the micro level (i.e. increased school enrollment).

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Buraku children's absence from school gradually declined during the 1950s and early 1960s. Buraku children were now present in school but still not ready to learn. They couldn't concentrate on learning and misconduct was frequently seen among Buraku students. Traditionally, Japanese teachers have treated student misconduct with reprimands or punishment, but this method usually aggravated the Buraku students' distrust of teachers and the school because of their internalized sense of alienation. Some teachers began to understand this sense of alienation and underlying perception of discrimination as well as poverty, and tried to speak with Buraku students on their concerns in order to gain their confidence. Understanding the sense of alienation of minority students and students in difficulties is now widely recognized as the core philosophy in Dowa education.

Misconduct was just among the outlying cases of general difficulties of Buraku children in the classroom. To manage the generally lower achievement of Buraku children, some teachers started to give extra instruction to Buraku children out of school, usually using facilities in Buraku communities. These activities are called "chiku-shinshutsu gakushu," meaning community outreach instruction.

Along with these instructions in Buraku communities by teachers, some Buraku communities began to form children's organizations to keep children out of trouble, wake up Burakumin consciousness and provide recreation opportunities for the children. School teachers and college student volunteers usually supported these activities. In some cases, outreach instructions were integrated into the organized community activities of Buraku children. As most of these children's organizations were established under the influence of the Buraku liberation movement, they are usually named "Kaiho Kodomo-kai" meaning community-based children's liberation organizations.

Facilities and staff for this kind of educational instruction is now partly financed by the government. Few local governments have their own community education systems, including special facilities and staff.

SCHOOL AND CURRICULUM REFORM

The Dowa education practices we described above are mainly intended to control the Buraku children's environment of schooling and learning. Although they are necessary conditions for educational equality, they do not constitute sufficient conditions. To assure effective learning by Buraku children, the schooling and learning process themselves must be reconstructed

In Japanese schools, instruction is usually given to a class of 30 to 40 pupils/students by a single teacher in a single sequence. Mastery learning conscience is shared among Japanese teachers but the above conditions pose difficulties in setting the pace of instruction. This always results in some students remaining behind; usually Buraku children. Those schools with a heavy enrollment of children with difficulties, mostly schools with Buraku children, also have most of the classes staying behind the standard. (Standards are prescribed in "GAKUSHU SHIDOYORYO" meaning government guidelines for teaching.) In these cases, extra curricular instruction is usually given to those children few hours a week. Extra curricular instruction is called "SOKUSHIN" in Dowa education, meaning "to hasten or to promote." The kind of outreach instruction we have seen before can be regarded as a kind of extracurricular instruction specifically given to Buraku children.

Providing extra care to children in this way has been inefficient however. For many children it was a mere

extra burden and often resulted in cooling their aspirations. Also, it made many of them passive about learning.

In the late 1970s, a few schools with Buraku children started a new instructional reform called "HAIRIKOMI SOKUSHIN." Utilizing "DOWA KAHAI" (extra teachers) who had been free from their former task of ensuring Buraku children's presence at school, they assigned extra teachers in the classroom to assist the main teachers, chiefly taking care of those children who were considerably behind the standard in understanding the current curriculum.

It may have been easier to divide the class according to the degree of progress but this method was not adopted initially. Dowa education practice had been deeply influenced by the Soviet collectivism-oriented education that attached greater importance to collective harmony than to individual success. Thus, under this ideal, any action that seemed to split class unity was carefully avoided. Physically splitting the classroom was out of the question. However, HAIRIKOMI SOKUSHIN was obviously insufficient to compensate for lower achievement. Dowa education gradually moved toward splitting the class and paying the closest care not to hurt children who were placed in lower achievement classes, and not to disintegrate classroom identity and harmony. This was called "CHUSHUTSU SOKUSHIN." CHUSHUTSU means extraction or pull-out.

Recently, new challenges toward this problem are taking place. One of them is called "KOBETSUKA" which means individualization. Utilizing overall resources in schools such as teachers, time, space, educational programs, worksheets and media, KOBETSUKA attempts to prepare the most appropriate learning settings for each child, centering around an individualized program of study. Distribution of such resources is planned to maximize the achievement of children who are behind the standard and not to discourage children who are going ahead. Collective classroom activities are also carried forward eagerly. This new set of practices is influenced by the concept of the effective school movement that was initially established by Ronald Edmonds's research on school effectiveness on minority and poor children in the United States. Considering the consistently lower achievement level of Buraku children, reforming schools and curricula is now among Dowa education's major agenda.

However, these practices to ensure better scholastic achievement among Buraku children do not take place in many schools because of a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the situation of Buraku children.

ABILITY FOR LIBERATION

Scholastic ability has been consistently discussed in Dowa education from the very beginning. Many teachers thought that competition based on scholastic achievement was a major source of discrimination, and therefore held negative feelings about scholastic ability itself. Through this argument, the notion "KAIHO NO GAKURYOKU" was established, meaning "ability for liberation," namely the ability of children to know what discrimination is, to point out the problem, and to fight social inequality. There are some variations on this notion; regarding scholastic ability and ability for liberation as contradictory to each other and regarding the former as the basis for the latter. In some cases, few teachers and/or activists strongly oppose any kind of school practices aimed at improving scholastic ability, giving this notion as a reason for opposition.

This notion, posing serious questions about uncritical acceptance of achievement-orientation, was shared by many people especially by minority groups. Indeed the side effects of achievement-orientation such as "diploma disease" are not ignorable and will continuously be one of the main issues of Dowa education.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

In many countries, affirmative action has been adopted by many schools as a means to raise minority status and also to make school environment multi-cultural.

In Japan, this notion of affirmative action is regarded negatively by school administrative authorities because, as they argue, it would seriously harm the fairness of entrance selection. The only case of affirmative action in an educational facility implemented so far is one by the Shikoku Gakuin University, which adopted this policy for Burakumin and Koreans in Japan starting in April 1995. This test case is expected to stimulate attention about affirmative action.

The Dowa education movement has also been playing an important role in abolishing discriminatory employment practices. Until recently, instrumental discrimination such as inquiring about applicants' birth and parentage in application forms and/or in interviews was customary in the private sector. To protect minority students from these forms of discrimination, the Dowa education movement had fought intensively against these employment practices and achieved considerable improvement. For instance, a standardized format of application forms has been set up without columns for birth place, parentage, or any other information that would possibly lead to discriminatory employment practices. These forms are not yet applied to college graduates, and several other means are still used in excluding Buraku applicants. These activities can also be regarded as education as human rights.

5 Dowa Education about Human Rights

CURRENT SITUATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BURAKUMIN

We will first examine the present situation of discrimination against the Buraku before discussing how education about Buraku issues is carried out. The nature of current Buraku discrimination can be revealed not only by findings from various surveys of discriminatory consciousness, but also through typical incidents of discrimination.

For instance, the secret publication and circulation of "Buraku Lists" were unveiled in 1975. The Buraku Lists carried information on the location, size and occupations of Buraku communities in Japan. One can easily find out who is from the Buraku by comparing his/her address with an indicated location of Buraku on the lists. Overall, nine such kinds of lists are known to have been marketed and more than 200 corporations, including some world-famous Japanese giant corporations, purchased them. They did so in order to avoid hiring people from the Buraku. Actually, a number of Buraku applicants had been rejected by companies in the recruitment process. The widespread use of such lists in recent years symbolizes how prevalent discriminatory consciousness still is against the Buraku. The total picture of the publication of these lists, however, is not clear yet. Japan has not acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the publishers of the Buraku lists have not received any legal punishment even for such an apparent act of discrimination.

Also, marriage-related discrimination still causes suicide and other problems among young Burakumin. The Japanese Constitution provides that marriage is to be based solely on the consent of the marrying couple. However, marriage has been regarded symbolically in Japan as a ritual of formerly relating one family to another. Young Burakumin falling in love with non-Burakumin may decide to marry, but they often cannot because the latter's parents and/or relatives express opposition to their marriage on the grounds that the would-be spouse is from Buraku. Some such non-Burakumin suddenly change their attitude in the face of strong rejection from their parents and/or relatives. And among Burakumin who have been refused in this way, some get totally depressed and even attempt to kill themselves. Given the nature of this issue, the victims would not want to openly talk about their experience and we cannot provide any statistical figures of such cases of suicide. However, educators who have been active in Dowa education know that there are quite a few such cases.

Results of various surveys of the awareness of local residents also indicate discriminatory views against the Buraku. For instance, a survey conducted by the national government in 1993 revealed the following results: To the question targeted at unmarried persons "What would you do if you decide to marry someone from the Buraku but face strong opposition from your parents and relatives?", only 17% of the respondents said "I will follow my will and marry." To the question targeted at married persons "What would you do if your child is getting married to someone from the Buraku?", only 43.4% said "I will respect the will of our child. Parents should not intervene in such a matter." Be aware that these are the results of questionnaire surveys. We assume that the actual situation is worse.

Various surveys have also shown that some non-Buraku people have such images of Burakumin as "hard working " "kind," and "honest " but negative images of them such as "vulgar," "rude, " "undeveloped," "closed" "gloomy," and "horrible" seem to be held more strongly. Also, we notice strong objections to special government measures provided for Buraku communities.

PRACTICES OF EDUCATION ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

Outline of Practices of Education about Buraku Issues

This section will describe Dowa education from the perspective of education about human rights. Education about Buraku issues today is provided not only in formal education from elementary school to college but also through non-formal educational activities in the community and the workplace. Schools have started to teach Buraku issues widely since the Dowa Policy Council's Recommendation of 1965 stated the need for Dowa education.

Dowa education should be carried out also in such early childhood educational institutions as day-care centers (supervised by the Ministry of Health and Welfare) and nursery schools (supervised by the Ministry of Education). Because the ratio of employed women is very high in Buraku communities, the opening of day-care centers for all children in the community has been a goal. However, to our regret, conscious efforts to promote Dowa education are hardly seen in day-care centers and nursery schools outside Buraku communities.

Education about Buraku issues has grown rather widely in western Japan in elementary and secondary education. As a result, most children learn about Buraku issues in school. The quality of Dowa education they receive may not be quite satisfactory, but it is significant that they receive bias-free information in the school before they are deeply affected by prejudiced views of Buraku in their home and community.

The ratio of higher education institutions offering Dowa education is still limited compared to elementary and secondary education. Of the 1,100 higher education institutions in Japan, 305 or only 27.7% provide courses on Dowa education according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education. What is even worse is that these courses are rarely taught by full-time instructors and are mostly assigned to part-time teachers. There are only a few higher education institutions engaged in research on Buraku issues. Such a lack of effort in higher education hampers the progress of education and research on Buraku issues.

It was not until the early 1970s that classes were opened to teach about Buraku issues in community adult education facilities. About the same time, TV dramas and documentary programs on Buraku issues began to be aired. In some areas, these programs are broadcast several times a year. And many of them have been produced on the local government's budget.

Education and training sessions on human rights and Buraku issues started in the workplace slightly after this. In particular, the purchase of the notorious Buraku lists by a number of corporations led to the opening of these sessions in the late 1970s. The government also gave guidance to business corporations to provide wider in-house training opportunities on human rights issues. Today some companies give human rights education to their employees on their own initiative.

The Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute also provides its own programs on human rights education. One such program is called "Kaiho Daigaku" or the Buraku Liberation College. It offers two-to-six months of training programs dealing with international standards on human rights and discrimination issues in Japan and abroad as well as with such themes as social movements, education, public administration and corporate management. It is intended to train leaders on Buraku issues in various fields. Methods of teaching include lectures, field-work and group activities. As of 1994, 40 terms of programs had been offered to a total of 1,865 participants since the beginning of the program. In addition, the BLHRRRI provides a number of shorter

courses and workshops.

As indicated in the above descriptions, education about Buraku issues is widely offered today and not just limited within schools. In the following, however, central focus will be placed on Buraku studies in elementary and junior high schools.

Concept of "Don't wake up a sleeping baby" as an Obstacle

It is impossible to distinguish Burakumin by appearance because Buraku discrimination is a caste-like discrimination that has evolved within the same ethnic group. As a result there is widespread support to the view that "Buraku discrimination will go away only if we don't make a fuss about it." We call this view "Neta Ko wo Okosuna" or "Don't-wake-up-a-sleeping-baby." This view negates the need to teach about Buraku issues. It is important, therefore, to point out the problems inherent in this view.

As indicated by a number of recent surveys, discrimination still persists. There are many Burakumin who would not want to face discrimination again. If you say to them "Just keep quiet, and discrimination will go away" you are almost telling them to be silent even in the face of apparent discrimination. We should respect the rights of victims of Buraku and other forms of discrimination to raise their voices and appeal to society rather than undermine such an initiative.

In Japan institutional support of Buraku discrimination still exists. There is the Family Register Law, which has supported a family-oriented ideology. The family register is a system by which the government controls the citizens by the family as a unit. Local governments keep family registers that show the past record of the families. The family register contains information that allows one to trace the family tree down several generations. This institutional framework has sustained discrimination against Buraku. Some people abuse this system to find out who is from the Buraku. Most other countries in the world do not have a family register system, and have no serious problems in conducting public administration for that.

Dowa education has advanced by denouncing discriminatory incidents. Up until the 1970s, a significant number of non-Buraku parents living in the neighborhood of the Buraku had customarily sent their children to schools away from their neighborhood even though the law provided that they should send their children to the neighborhood school. It was called "Ekkyo" or literally "going beyond the border." That was because the neighborhood school enrolled Buraku children while the distant schools they chose were rather prestigious and without Buraku or other minority children. This practice, therefore, was a reflection of strong prejudice among non-Buraku parents. At the same time, schools with Buraku children tended to show poorer educational conditions because the local governments did not fairly budget for these schools.

"Ekkyo" became a hot political issue in 1968 in Osaka, and local governments in the Osaka area declared that it was a discriminatory practice. As a result, children who had been to non-neighborhood schools came back. There was an urgent need to educate these and other children properly on Buraku issues, because otherwise they could become even more strongly prejudiced against Buraku. To aid such an awareness-raising process, it was decided to compile a supplementary textbook on human rights issues titled "Ningen" or "Human Being" and provide copies of it free of charge to all school children in Osaka. In this way, dealing with concrete cases of discrimination in education has led to various improvements in the education field.

Group process

Even if you teach about actual cases of Buraku discrimination, it is not enough of a stimulus for the students to reflect seriously on what they learn or relate themselves to it. In the final analysis, if the learners do not have the sensitivity to grasp the nature of the issue, the knowledge and interpretation the teacher provides cannot really empower them. Therefore, much weight is placed on the group process to lay the foundation of education about Buraku issues.

There are a number of key principles to observe in dealing with the group process in Dowa education. First is to situate the group process by taking into consideration the life of children outside the school. Children are agents of their lives, and bring their lives at home and in the community to school. They show only some aspect of what they are in the school. Those children who tend to cause problems in the school may have trouble at home. It should be easier for the teacher to work on such children if he or she knows more about their lives at home and in the community. Similarly, if children know about each other's lives, their relationship can be developed in a mutually supportive manner.

Second is to advance the group process by placing "Teihen no ko" or "Children at the bottom" in the center. In Dowa education "Teihen no ko" refers to children who belong to a discriminated-against group and children who have serious problems in their lives, relations with friends, academic performance, etc. These children, who are placed in vulnerable positions, tend to suffer from a disproportionate weight of various contradictions in society. They may show poor academic performance because they do not have adequate support conditions both mentally and physically. They may get disorganized since they see no meaning in their lives. Or they may feel intimidated in the school environment. The thesis of placing "Teihen no ko" in the center of the group process encourages each child in the class to recognize the problems of the "bottom" children as their own and motivates them to grow together with the "bottom" children.

Dowa education has developed a number of methods to advance such a group process. Many of them were originally created in educational movements in Japan, and further improved in Dowa education.

One method is the use of "Seikatsu Noto" or "diary notebook." Children are asked to write about their daily lives and their observations in the notebook and bring it to school. The teacher writes down his/her responses in these diary notebooks. As teachers return caring and thoughtful comments back to the children, children who first only wrote about rather superficial observations begin to focus on their deeper concerns and real life problems in the writing in the notebook.

Another method is the use of "Han" or small groups, and a regular meeting of group leaders. About 5 to 8 small groups are formed typically in a class of 30 to 40 students. Members of the small group participate in various activities together, compare notes, and support and encourage each other. It is vital in this process to consider how vulnerable children or "bottom" children can be supported in the small group.

Meetings of small group leaders take place every week or two after school for conducting small group-based classroom management. Homeroom teachers discuss with them what has happened during the week and develop plans for forthcoming events.

"Tsuzurikata" or Writing about Life

"Tsuzurikata" or writing about life has been considered as a vital component of Dowa education. "Tsuzurikata" has been traditionally a major approach to teaching writing in Japan. Children, who are agents of their lives, are invited to write about their life as it is.

The key to successful "Tszurikata" or writing about life is elaborated in the following steps. The teacher should instruct the student to choose some unusual event or experience, to determine the period (from when to when) to cover in the writing, to describe what happened or what was experienced by recalling the details. If you just write "I was very happy," It doesn't really communicate your feelings to the reader. The reader can reexperience and share your feelings if you skillfully represent in writing the event or your experience just as you experienced it.

Why is "Tszurikata" or writing about life so important in Dowa education? Prejudice causes bias in one's perception of even those who actually do their best to survive. Some Buraku children feel "why was I born to these parents?" without being able to accept them and their love. "Tszurikata" trains the writer to look at his or her life objectively and critically, and enables him or her to surmount prejudiced views.

"Tszurikata" may also enable the writer to reflect on his or her behavior critically and understand why he or she was carried away by emotions. As this process is repeated, the writer becomes able to control his or her behavior more rationally. The following episode exemplifies the changing process: One boy was frequently involved in fighting with his classmates and was driven by his emotions. He felt sorry about the fighting usually one week after it occurred. As he started "Tszurikata" and writing about his life, he began to feel sorry for the fighting three days afterward, and then on the following day. Finally, he was able to control his behavior before he got into fighting.

Content of Buraku Studies

It was in the early 1970s that Buraku studies began rather widely in schools. No mention of Buraku issues had been made in school textbooks before 1972. Today, most social studies textbooks refer to Buraku issues. However, even these textbooks are not problem-free. They may just describe historical events one after another without really providing critical interpretations into their background and context. Or they may only illustrate the poverty and misery that Buraku ancestors have come through. Or they may not situate Buraku history in the overall context of Japanese history. Partly as a result of this situation, most students who study about Buraku issues in the school get a dark and negative image of the Buraku. The tendency of Buraku studies to heavily use extreme cases of discrimination in marriage and employment as teaching materials have also shaped such perceptions.

However, Buraku people have not just been overwhelmed by discrimination. They have advanced the liberation movement by supporting each other and have surmounted a series of difficulties that stood before them. We may even say that strength and generosity prevail in the life of Buraku. A major way for non-Buraku people to study Buraku issues has been to learn from the real life experiences of Burakumin. Buraku people may say "I just hated my parents when I was small, but I began to love them as I joined the liberation movement myself and came to understand how my parents lived through daunting difficulties to bring me up." Or "It was just hard to keep my background secret, being always suspicious of other people's perception of me. It is not easy to be active in the movement, but it is much better than hiding my identity." Or "Now that I can openly identify myself, I enjoy meeting with really nice people. This is great." All these comments are possible because they were able to solve their personal anxieties through social action. The liberation movement provided them with a key to think in terms of social structure and inter-group relations rather than in terms of personal failures. Non-Burakumin who meet such prideful Burakumin realize how deplorable it is for them to be under the yoke of prejudice and how that limits their human capacities.

In addition, the following points are considered as major criteria to judge whether or not the materials and teaching are good.

- 1) Not just the origin and history of Buraku, but also current issues are presented.
- 2) Not just the general and abstract discussions of Buraku issues, but also concrete cases of discrimination and Buraku life are illustrated in the materials.
- 3) Not just discriminatory incidents, but movements to cope with them are also presented.
- 4) Teachers visit Buraku homes and work collaboratively to promote Buraku studies in the school.
- 5) Focus is clear as to how the concerns of students are related to learning materials.
- 6) Teachers speak about their own views of Buraku issues. They should not position themselves away from the context of Buraku discrimination as though they are totally free from prejudice. They should rather demonstrate that they are also studying with the students.

Supplementary Dowa Textbooks

Supplementary Dowa textbooks substantially help teachers to organize classes to study about Buraku and other human rights issues. The Ministry of Education has not produced any textbook on Dowa education, but many local governments have compiled and published textbooks on human rights and Dowa education. There are more than thirty kinds of such textbooks available in Japan, each provided in separate copies for different grades: from grade one to junior high level. Usually, students receive the supplementary textbook on Buraku issues free of charge along with other textbooks in the beginning of each new school year in April.

We shall describe the case of "Ningen" meaning literally "human being," one such supplementary textbook in Osaka. "Ningen" has been provided to all elementary and junior high students in Osaka since 1970 when "Ekkyo" or not going to the neighborhood school, became a hot issue. The free supply of "Ningen" was intended to promote human rights education, particularly Buraku studies, in all schools to eliminate Buraku discrimination. The Liberation Education Research Institute has edited the book and was helped by many school teachers and Buraku leaders. Dowa educators' associations in Osaka also play an important supportive role. In other words, "Ningen" is produced by NGOs and members of civic organizations, and copies of it are supplied to all students free of charge by receiving financial support from the local governments in Osaka.

Contents of the supplementary textbooks differ from one to another. But they are not generally limited to Buraku issues and typically cover an array of human rights-related issues. "Ningen" in Osaka, for instance, includes materials on discrimination against Buraku, resident Koreans, women, disabled people and indigenous populations, as well as on such themes as life, work, friendship, peace and international understanding.

They are designed also to meet the needs of students at different grade levels. Those for lower elementary grades look like colored picture-books and contain easy-to-read stories. Those for upper elementary grades have a number of concise stories dealing with issues close to their daily lives and presented in such a style as to stimulate classroom discussion. And those for junior high students have a comprehensive coverage of the history of Buraku issues. We may say that the official supply of these series of supplementary textbooks for different grade levels constitutes one unique feature of Japanese Dowa education.

Methods of Teaching Human Rights and Buraku Issues

In some areas where Dowa education is actively promoted, a comprehensive curriculum for teaching about

human rights and Buraku issues is designed for grade 1 through the third grade of junior high (corresponding to grade 9). A typical structure looks as follows:

- Grade 1-2 People who work for the school; people who collect garbage
- Grade 3-4 Buraku in the school neighborhood
- Grade 5-6 History of Buraku discrimination; human rights; politics
- Grade 7 Fieldwork in Buraku in the school neighborhood
- Grade 8 Work and occupations of parents
- Grade 9 Future life and career choice

In conventional approaches to Buraku studies, a major approach has been to listen to and learn from Buraku people. This approach, combined with the group process in the classroom, has stimulated non-Buraku students to deal with their personal problems in relation to Buraku issues.

Some argue, however, whether this approach is enough. Some schools have tried to translate what the students learned from Buraku people into a drama script and motivated them to express their thinking and feelings through their drama performance. In regard to the methods of human rights education in the world, participatory and vicarious approaches have been widely utilized on the belief that passive learning alone does not bring about a meaningful change on the part of learners. As a result, role-playing, debate forum, simulation and other methods attract much attention these days because these methods encourage "learning to change" by doing.

Pursuit of Global Dowa Education

Buraku discrimination is not the only discrimination in Japan. There are other forms of discrimination such as against women, resident Koreans, disabled people, etc. We cannot assume that Buraku discrimination will go away while other discrimination persists.

As we look back upon the history of Dowa education, we notice that educational initiatives for Korean children and disabled children developed by learning significant lessons from Dowa education. At the same time, Dowa education has learned much from these other human rights education initiatives. Today Dowa education is expected to learn also from the experiences of anti-discrimination education and human rights education around the world

Globalization is the major trend of today both politically and economically. Global perspectives are strongly needed when we deal with Buraku issues and Dowa education. Japan invaded Asian countries during the Second World War. Recently Japanese economic expansion has adversely affected Asia by destroying the natural environment and people's life styles. In a global context, Japan appears more as a victimizer. We (including Buraku children) cannot but recognize our position as victimizers in our relationship to Asia. Future Dowa education has to be constructed on this assumption.

To learn about issues facing Asian countries does not just imply that we have to recognize our victimizing position. Buraku children can also take pride in what their ancestors did to advance the cause of Buraku liberation, because major strategies developed decades ago in the Buraku liberation movement such as the literacy movement and the demand for housing. Denunciation of discrimination is now growing or expected to grow in Asian countries. By situating Buraku issues in the contexts of Asia and the world, we can rediscover the

significance of the Buraku liberation movement and the Dowa education movement.

Let us propose that the following issues be explored further in discussing Buraku Issues in a global context.

One is to locate Buraku discrimination against the background of the entire history of Asia. Buraku discrimination is often compared to caste discrimination in India. It has been pointed out that some Buddhist sutra brought to Japan had teachings that harbored discriminatory ideas of caste discrimination. There have been people in Korea called Paekjong. Buraku levelers and the Paekjong liberation movement developed a strong solidarity. Many Paekjong people were engaged in leather processing business and were also victims of status discrimination. What is the nature of discrimination against Paekjong? What has caused the declining discrimination against them, if at all? We have to relate the history of Paekjong to that of Burakumin.

Secondly, we have to advance Japan's globalization from within. Nowadays many migrant workers and their families from abroad live in various places around Japan, some in neighboring Buraku communities. We can discover a different dimension of Japanese society as we look at it through their eyes.

Thirdly, we have to develop a network of friendship and collaboration with schools and regions in Asia and other parts of the world in pursuit of the common theme of human rights. As long as we think of Asia and the world in abstract terms, we cannot feel close to them. Just as Buraku studies have emphasized the importance of learning from concrete experiences and particular individuals in the community, we have to develop personal ties with Asia and other regions.

6 Educational Activities in the Community

DOWA EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The Buraku liberation movement has been firmly based in Buraku communities. Since the founding of "Suiheisha," or the Levelers' Association of 1922, the movement has consistently emphasized the vital role of education. Often it is said "The Buraku liberation movement begins with education and ends in education." Buraku community-based movements have had significant roles to promote education against discrimination and about Buraku issues, and to bring academic achievement of Buraku children on par with non-Buraku children. An educational function is inherent in the community movement. Adult literacy movement, community children's activities, and educational engagement of Buraku parents are highlighted in the following.

ADULT LITERACY MOVEMENT

A letter written by a literacy student

Dear Masuko MORITA,

I didn't go to school because my family was poor. So I was completely illiterate.

I can write most kanas (Japanese phonetic letters) now because I have studied in a literacy class.

I used to ask someone to write my name for me at the receptionist desk when I went to see a doctor.

But the other day I finally wrote down my name by myself. I was overjoyed when I heard a nurse calling my name, "Ms.Kitadai."

In the past I wasn't really impressed by the sunset's glory, but now that I know how to read and write I can really appreciate the beauty of the sunset's glory.

As I walk around town these days I feel very glad when I find letters that I know in street signs and advertisements.

I enjoy going to the supermarket and a 'Thursday market' since now I can calculate.

I no longer get ashamed for not being able to recognize the number of my room at an inn because I can read numbers now.

I want to study more and more.

I want to live another ten years.

February 28, 1973

Iro KI TADAI

This letter written by an elderly Buraku woman was carried in a publication which was produced as a result of Book Voyage, a global project commemorating the International Literacy Year of 1990. The author was born in Buraku, attended a Buraku literacy class when she was almost 70 years old, and acquired the basic literacy skills to write this first letter she had ever written in her life. The letter communicates messages illuminating the significance of literacy for Buraku people.

Illiteracy among Burakumin has been disproportionately high. Many elderly Burakumin could not

complete basic education due to the multiplying effects of discrimination in the school and poverty at home and in the community. Those illiterate adults have been trying to regain literacy in their community literacy classes. The Buraku liberation movement has actively promoted literacy activities saying "The literacy movement is the foundation of the liberation movement."

Buraku literacy movements spread widely in the 1960s. Some literacy classes were organized by teachers who found through repeated visits to Buraku homes that many Buraku parents were illiterate. Other classes were opened by the liberation movement to enable Buraku people to read the organs or newsletters of the Buraku Liberation League. Those classes began in small rooms without sufficient facilities. A small number of teachers began to visit these classes as instructors on the belief that illiteracy in the Buraku was caused by their inaction or failure in educating Buraku people. The number of literacy classes expanded nationwide rapidly as activities in these initial classes were introduced in various meetings of Dowa education and the Buraku movement. Today, there are about 600 such literacy classes in Buraku communities, mostly centering in western Japan.

The Buraku community literacy movement has emphasized, just like Paulo Freire's theory of critical literacy, the need to enable the learners to read the world by reading the word. As exemplified in the letter introduced earlier, many learners in literacy classes reflect together with other learners on their past life experiences to find out why they couldn't go to school and how they were discriminated against and suffered because they were illiterate. These reflections and memories are expressed in writing based on the literacy skills they began to acquire. A number of books containing these written works from Buraku literacy classes have been published

Secondly, adult literacy is pursued by simultaneously questioning the responsibility of the schooling and working to transform the schools and teachers. We have often called the participants in literacy classes "living witnesses to discrimination." If schools had not been discriminatory and had done enough to improve Buraku children's academic performances, they would not have had to face intimidating moments and attend literacy classes as adults. In this sense, the responsibility of schooling for failing to educate Buraku children should be more openly questioned. Also, the process by which illiterate adults acquire literacy and write and talk about their experiences to liberate themselves compels us to investigate the nature of schooling constructed on the banking model ("teachers teach and students receive knowledge") and encourages teachers to actualize similar and liberatory learning processes also in the schools. Actually, many teachers who taught literacy classes translated their learning in those classes into their instruction and teaching materials.

Thirdly, the literacy movement has stimulated the growth of diverse cultural activities. It is not only literacy skills that the learners acquire but they also develop the will and power to express their wishes and expectations, often hidden inside themselves, in various ways. One cultural activity is called "Ogari" meaning literally "to speak out." It is a collective stage performance of Buraku experience played usually by Buraku women. "Ogari" is presented in the form of a play based on the stories written and/or told by literacy learners. Parodies and jointly-produced dramas have been created in many Buraku literacy classes. Warm and caring human relations are indispensable as a foundation of these activities.

Many Buraku people have experienced the process of consciousness-raising by participating in literacy classes. And a number of literacy works have been produced. However, there are many Buraku people who cannot read or write sufficiently. The comprehensive survey of Buraku areas in Osaka conducted in 1991 showed that at least 11,000 individuals in Buraku communities in Osaka alone, or 16.4% of Buraku people at or above 15

years of age, have difficulty in reading and writing.

The International Literacy Year of 1990 stimulated a number of significant developments in Japan. The Buraku literacy movement collaborated with other literacy initiatives in Japan to organize various events during and after the ILY. A number of TV programs on literacy issues were produced. Our representatives have also attended international meetings on literacy, where we were greatly encouraged by knowing that people with the same spirit all over the world are promoting literacy movements. We maintain strong ties with literacy programs and movements in South Africa, Nepal, Thailand and South Korea.

BURAKU CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

The Boys and Girls Levelers' Association was already active in the early years of the Buraku liberation movement and held an important position in the movement as a whole. Konojiro YAMADA, then a 15 year-old boy, proposed the idea of organizing the Boys and Girls Levelers' Association at the second national convention of Suiheisha, or Levelers, in 1923. He criticized the school, saying, "Buraku children are educated by the devil-like-minded teachers," and argued for the vital need of such an independent organization of children to fight discrimination in the school. Buraku discrimination in the pre-war days was truly harsh and Buraku children frequently boycotted school attendance.

A typical case of Buraku children's community activity evolved in the Tanaka Buraku in Kyoto. Children there issued the following statement: "The community children's organization creates the environment for learning. We talk about our problems in life and organize our demands. We learn about discrimination. We acquire firm solidarity and discipline." Among concrete activities of children in the Tanaka community were play, sports, labor, study, and cultural and social activities.

Strong demand for government support to Buraku community children's activities resulted in the construction of community children's centers in large-scale urban Buraku communities in Osaka and elsewhere starting around 1970. Activities of these "Kodomo Kai" or Buraku children's community-based organization are carried out in those centers. In some communities, full-time paid leaders for these children's activities have been recruited from the community residents and they are employed as public servants. These children's activities are also supported by school teachers and parents.

Recently, the scope of activities has greatly expanded in terms of age and content. Organized activities are taking place in separate groupings such as lower elementary, upper elementary, junior high, senior high, college and working youth so that different needs can be met. They deal not only with Buraku issues but also with other issues of discrimination, such as that facing disabled persons and resident foreigners. Some Kodomokai are active in international exchanges, too.

As children's needs diversify, a wider array of activities should develop. Some Kodomokai now face a declining rate of participation as they cannot respond quickly to the changing needs of children. There remain a number of issues to deal with: leader training, better function of the children's center as a facility, and networking with children's activities not just domestically but also globally.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The Japanese Constitution, enacted after the war, stipulates that compulsory education is to be provided free of charge. However, in reality, expenses for textbooks and school lunches had to be paid by parents, though tuition was free. In the period immediately following the end of the Second World War, many Buraku and other children from poor families could not afford to go to school. Beginning in the latter half of the 1950s, organized voices of Buraku children and parents demanded the full implementation of the constitutional principle of free basic education. The issue of free supply of school textbooks in particular was highlighted. In the mid-1960s textbooks began to be provided free of charge and in 1969 all textbooks for elementary and junior high students were made free.

Through these actions in the 1960s and the 1970s, parental organizations in Buraku communities began to be formed in various places. These organizations are usually called "Mamorukai" or parental associations to improve children's education. Initially, they mainly requested local governments to provide better educational conditions in the school. But they have gradually shifted their focus on their own child-rearing practices and on advancing collaborative efforts for better child-rearing.

Parental involvement is becoming active. Recently, for instance, "Mamorukai" parental associations encourage the exchanging of notes on how to relate to children better, organize sessions to acquire skills of reading picture-books to children, and sponsor events for children jointly with the school and the community children's center.

Pressing concerns at the moment include how parents can play a more effective role in improving Buraku children's lower academic achievements and how a more positive parental involvement can be developed.

SUMMARY

There are a number of Buraku community educational activities in addition to the ones outlined above: cooking classes to improve dietary habits, and classes on traditional tea ceremony and flower arrangement skills, etc. In some Buraku communities, parents collect signatures and organize meetings to place demands on local governments for better conditions in the school. And in some communities, Buraku parents and youths visit schools to talk about their experiences of discrimination to students and teachers.

All these efforts have yielded some positive results, but at the same time many problems remain. With the UN Decade of Human Rights as a springboard, we would like to expand our exchanges with educators and people all over the world so we can mutually enrich our activities.

7 Challenges for Dowa Education

Dowa education has played a vital role to improve both the quantity and quality of educational opportunities for Buraku children, to nurture anti-discriminatory attitudes and human rights awareness among educators and students in general through schooling and out-of-school education, and to stimulate other forms of human rights education movement to grow and network with each other. In other words, Dowa education has been a driving force to advance the human rights education initiative in Japan.

This picture has evolved against the historical background in modern Japan where the country's quality of human rights culture was first seriously challenged by the largest and most crudely discriminated-against minority population, namely the Burakumin.

The Levelers' Declaration of 1922 has been called the "first human rights declaration in Japan." The Levelers Association or "Suiheisha," was founded to initiate a self-directed liberation movement by the Burakumin themselves. The declaration said in reference to what had happened following the government Emancipation Edict of 1871 that formerly declared the end of the feudal class system, "In the past half century, various reform efforts undertaken on our behalf by many people have not yielded any appreciable results. Previous movements, though seemingly motivated by compassion for humanity, have actually ruined many of our brothers and sisters. Thus, it is now imperative for us to initiate within ourselves a collective movement by which we shall liberate ourselves through our respect for humanity."

Its clear message of calling for a self-directed liberation movement and perspective to relate the specific Buraku initiative to the universal theme of respecting humanity have made this declaration a milestone in the quest for human rights in Japan.

However, the innovative initiative did not grow in a form of an abstract idea but was lived in reality. The weight of Buraku discrimination was so overwhelming in the Japanese political and cultural context that struggles to challenge it had to be powerful and total.

The declaration also said "Our ancestors were pursuers of freedom and equality, and executors of these principles. They were the victims of contemptible caste policies, and courageous martyrs of their occupations. In recompense for skinning animals, they were skinned of the respect due humans. For tearing out the hearts of animals, their human hearts were torn apart, and despicable ridicule was spat upon them. Yet all through these cursed nights of nightmares, human dignity ran deep in their blood. Indeed we, who were born of this blood, are now living in an era when humans are willing to take over the gods. The time has come for the oppressed to throw off their stigma. The time has come for the martyrs to receive the blessing for their crown of thorns. The time has come when we can take pride in being Eta. We must never shame our ancestors nor profane humanity by demeaning words or cowardly deeds. We know very well how cold the coldness of human society can be, and how warm it is when one cares for another. We therefore from the bottom of our heart revere and pursue the warmth and light of human life."

The deeper the valley, the higher the mountain. The harsher and more total the discrimination is, the more resilient and thorough the resistance can grow.

The Buraku liberation movement has been a major driving force of human rights in Japan. Similarly, Dowa education has significantly encouraged the human rights education initiative in Japan.

The major strengths of Dowa education can be summarized in the following ways:

First, Dowa education has been defined as a process to educate self-directed and transformable individuals: those who can take pride in and be confident about themselves even if they belong to vulnerable groups facing discrimination and oppression, and those who can empathize with the suffering of the oppressed and engage in social actions to create a discrimination-free society.

Second Buraku community intervention has presented a model demonstrating how community experiences and resources can be powerful agents of educational transformation. Usually, schools are regarded as a sphere separate from the reality outside. However, in Dowa education, the function of schooling, the nature of teacher expectations and teacher-student relationships, the content of textbooks, the standards of evaluation of student performance and other matters have been critically analyzed against the reality of discrimination characterized by an unequal distribution of power, wealth and opportunity. Buraku community intervention in school affairs has contributed greatly to the fundamental transformation of school practices.

Third, an inclusive philosophy has been always honored and deeply embedded in Dowa school practices: meritocratic tracking has been avoided; disabled students have been integrated; multiple intelligence and diverse potentials of students have been respected etc.

However, because Buraku discrimination was so overwhelming, Dowa education has had a number of weaknesses, too. For instance, the principle of learning from the reality of Buraku discrimination was emphasized so much that it was often translated as synonymous to communicating sad experiences of discrimination repeatedly to non-Buraku children without effective pedagogical frameworks; Buraku history teaching was emphasized but the need to develop a comprehensive Dowa education curriculum covering all subjects and non-subject matters was not taken seriously; The commitment of teachers was always discussed but the responsibilities of parents and communities in the children's education were often overlooked; Models of effective Dowa education in schools where no Buraku communities are located nearby have been slow to develop. In addition, the concept of "educating through role models" has not been well-incorporated into school practices partly because a group orientation has been strongly emphasized and partly because the nature of Buraku discrimination makes it harder to reveal one's Buraku identity, which often leads to various forms of disadvantages.

In Kansai and most prefectures in western Japan, Dowa education has been implemented with strong support from local governments. However, this has not been the case in eastern Japan. There are wide local variations in the scope and scale of Dowa education in practice.

Dowa education has been more elaborately and extensively programmed in elementary and junior high-schools, but not so much in high schools, colleges, universities and in preschool education.

On the other hand Dowa education has often fought a lonely battle without effectively collaborating with other anti-discrimination and human rights-oriented groups and individuals. There has even been a tendency among some educators to regard Dowa education as the only authentic education for human rights in Japan while criticizing other initiatives as intrinsically assimilatory.

Dowa educators did not often communicate effectively their valuable experiences and perspectives to other educators, scholars and the general public, even if they were also democratic-minded pursuers of human rights. As a result, unnecessary barriers were erected between them, hampering productive collaboration.

We now observe growing circles of human rights-oriented education in Japan. They are in action in the

form of ethnic education for Koreans and other foreigners, education for the disabled, development education, intercultural education, environmental education, sex education, etc. Their objectives are different, but they share the same concerns of respecting human rights and of appreciating differences. Innovative curricula and teaching strategies have been developed by these various organizations.

Amnesty International and other NGOs are actively expanding programs of human rights education in Japan. These stimuli and inputs from non-governmental sectors are gradually transforming a scene of human rights education in Japan that was mostly school-based in the past.

The United Nation's Decade for Human Rights Education started in 1995. The UN Secretary General defined the concept of human rights education as "education, training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the molding of attitudes and which are directed to: (a) strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; (b) full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity; (c) promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups; (d) enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society; and (e) furtherance of the activities of the United Nations system for the maintenance of peace."

The UN Decade for Human Rights provides a good opportunity for Dowa education to consolidate synergetic networks of anti-discrimination and human rights education, both domestically and internationally.

Dowa education in Japan is now actively joining this UN initiative by sharing experiences of such a broad array of human rights education efforts in the belief that Dowa education, so far little known overseas, can contribute to other initiatives in promoting anti-discrimination/human rights education in the world

We sincerely call for an active sharing of information and experiences with institutions, organizations, groups and individuals that hate all forms of discrimination and respect humanity. For further information, please contact the following:

**Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute,
1-6-12, Kuboyoshi, Naniwa-ku, Osaka 556-0028, Japan
Tel: +81-6-6568-7337
Fax: +81 -6-6568 -0714**

Glossary

Buraku

a historically discriminated-against community of people recognized as descendants of "outcastes" in feudal periods

Burakumin

people (-min) of Buraku origin

Chiku shinshutsu gakushu

community outreach instructions; Buraku community-based program organized by teachers after school to assist Buraku children to develop awareness about Buraku discrimination issues and to improve academic achievement

Dowa

literally "people in harmony" or assimilation; administrative term referring to Buraku improvement and non-discrimination measures continuously used since 1941

Dowa education

systematic educational efforts to eradicate prejudice against the Buraku and to improve Buraku academic achievement and literacy levels

Ekkyo

not going to the neighborhood public school

Eta

a category of outcaste in the Edo era (1603 - 1867); literally meaning "abundant filth"

Chushutsu

to pull out minority or low-achieving students from regular classes to provide lessons in smaller groups

Gakushu Shido Yoryo

course of study; government guidelines for teaching

Hairikomi

assignment of additional teachers to classes to help minority and low-achieving students to learn effectively

Hinin

a category of outcaste during the Edo era; literally meaning "non-humans"

Jishu hensei

teacher's self-directed curriculum organization and development of original curricular materials

Kahai

assignment of additional teachers to schools with Buraku children or such additional teachers; once referred to as "fukushi kyoin" (welfare teacher) in Kochi prefecture

Kaiho

liberation

Kaiho no gakuryoku

ability for liberation; liberation or social transformation-oriented knowledge, skills and attitudes

Kobetsuka

to provide individualized instruction and program of study

Kodomokai or Kaiho-kodomokai

community-based children's liberation organization

Ningen

a supplementary school textbook used in elementary and junior high-schools in Osaka Prefecture, introducing Buraku and other human rights issues

Seikatsu Noto

diary notebook

Senmin

outcaste people

Seikatsu tsuzurikata

critical writing about the reality one has lived in

Shakaiteki tachiba no jikaku

awareness of one's position in the economic, political and cultural power relations in the society

Sokushin

literally "to hasten or to promote"; a form of compensatory education to improve the academic achievement of Buraku children

Suiheisha

Levelers' Association; Burakumin's self-directed liberation movement organization founded in 1922

Teihen no ko

literally "children at the bottom"; those children who are placed in the most vulnerable position

Tokushu Buraku

special hamlet; derogatory term coined by the Meiji government(1868-1912) in reference to former outcaste people

Yuwa

reconciliation; principle of equality under the Emperor

Zendokyo

National Federation of Dowa Educators' Associations; founded in 1953

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(A supplementary article to *Dowa Education*)

Evolution of Dowa Education and HRE in Japan:

1990s Onward

Yasumasa HIRASAWA (Professor, Osaka University)

September 2006

Since the 1990s, Dowa education has evolved significantly in a number of ways. The United Nations (UN) initiative to promote human rights education (HRE) worldwide through the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) was a major impetus that stimulated this evolution. In this article, I discuss several features of this evolution.

‘No Discrimination’ to ‘Culture of Human Rights’

First, the main emphasis of Dowa education gradually shifted during the 1990s from ‘No Discrimination’ to ‘Building a Culture of Human Rights.’ This did not mean, however, that the traditional anti-discrimination orientation of Dowa education has to be set aside. Rather, it was assumed that the efforts and projects to build a universal culture of human rights would also become a proactive strategy to combat Buraku discrimination and other forms of discrimination.

In addition, Dowa education by tradition focused mainly on those who belong to discriminated-against social groups in Japan such as Burakumin, old-comer Koreans, disabled people and women. While this focus was legitimate given the socio-political character of discrimination, the Japanese society over the years developed a widely-accepted view that human rights are issues only for the discriminated-against. Those who were considered as ‘non-minority’ did not generally perceive human rights as their own issue. Therefore, the majority tended to regard human rights issues as ‘their (minority people’s) problem, not ours.’ Also, Dowa education had the tendency to classify learners into two groups: the discriminated-against who were supposed to fight discrimination; the ‘discriminators’ who were supposed to get rid of their prejudice and try to sympathize with the discriminated-against.

Having symbolically described the issue in this manner, however, I have no intention of arguing that Dowa education was essentially misdirected. Rather, truly effective Dowa education practices succeeded in shaping sound self-concepts and high academic achievements among both Buraku and non-Buraku students.

I am simply saying that many Dowa education practices, particularly those carried out in areas where community Buraku liberation movement initiatives were not strong enough, unfortunately maintained a kind of double-standard and failed to promote a comprehensive and effective HRE.

However, as many HRE practitioners in the world have repeatedly pointed out, only when people consider human rights as their own issue that they begin to commit more seriously to the solution of human rights violations in general. The United Nations’ call for the building of a culture of human rights was meant to place human rights as an important life

concern for everyone, not just for those belonging to marginalized populations.

As a result, Dowa educators developed a more universal framework of HRE in the 1990s. The framework asserts that HRE should create sound self esteem and bring meaningful self-actualization for everyone; allow everyone to learn from and be enriched by engaging themselves in different cultures and different life experiences of other groups and individuals; empower everyone to become agents of social change and to participate as critical citizens in local, national and global affairs.

‘Imposition of Knowledge’ to ‘Learner Oriented Approach’

Second, a learner-oriented human rights learning was encouraged through the introduction of various types of participatory methods and curricular materials into HRE. These methods and materials, mainly from Western countries, were introduced not only to Dowa education but also to environmental education, development education, international education, global education and other human rights-oriented educational initiatives in Japan.

Traditionally, Japanese schools mainly use methods of top-down teaching or ‘banking education’ (Freire). Dowa education and HRE were no exception. In many Dowa and HRE classes, teachers tended to preach the importance of anti-discrimination attitudes and behavior without really caring how the learners perceived and consumed their messages. In some cases, the students were simply alienated by teachers imposing certain values on them.

In this context, simulation, debate, games and other participatory methods of education were gradually brought into Dowa and HRE schools in the 1990s, and learners were placed more at the center of learning activities.

This is not to say that only Dowa and HRE classes began to infuse the learner-oriented pedagogy. The constructivist theory of learning started to attract more attention among educators in general in the 1990s in Japan.

Goals and Objectives of Dowa Education and HRE

Third, the goals and objectives of Dowa education and HRE began to be discussed more clearly in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills. Traditionally, Dowa educators often said ‘we will educate our students so that they will fight discrimination.’ Videos were shown and stories were told mainly to stimulate emotions among students. The videos portrayed typical cases of discrimination (usually related to marriage and employment) where good guys (those who were discriminated-against) and bad guys (those who were prejudiced) were apparent. The students felt anger and sadness, but the storyline was often too simplistic to stimulate critical and comprehensive understanding of the background and mechanism of discrimination. Such approaches were not really effective in nurturing attitudes of rejecting and fighting discrimination.

Today, nurturing critical thinking and rational reasoning based on facts and figures is encouraged on the knowledge front. Nurturing ability to communicate feelings and ideas effectively to others is encouraged on the skills front (communication skills). Nurturing one’s disposition to relate to others on an equal footing irrespective of their background (social status, wealth, race, gender, culture, etc.) is encouraged on the attitude front. In this way, it has become easier to translate the goals and objectives of HRE in school events, activities and subjects in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Systematic Practice of HRE

Fourth, systematic approaches and strategies to practice Dowa education and HRE have grown compared to the past where the importance of individual teacher’s commitment was more emphasized. Today, school-based planning and practices of Dowa education and HRE are becoming more popular. Many HRE schools develop HRE plans for a year, a semester, a month, and a week. These plans include things to do in school events as well as in subject teaching, assigning

responsibilities to respective teachers and their teams. Regular evaluation is conducted to check whether or not plans were actually and meaningfully implemented. In this way, a PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Action) cycle is clearly working in effective Dowa education and HRE programs.

Academic Achievement and Human Rights Skills

Fifth, effective academic achievement and nurturing of key competencies are more consciously placed as goals of HRE schools. Closing the academic achievement gap between minority students and other students has been a major concern for Dowa and HRE educators. Even today, the achievement gap between Buraku students and non-Buraku students certainly exists and the ratio of Buraku students advancing to universities and colleges is significantly lower than that of non-Buraku students. Prevalent unemployment among Buraku and other minority youth is believed to be caused by their lower academic achievement and sense of self-esteem. HRE schools are now trying to achieve both successful academic achievement and key competencies among students as vital life skills.

The concept of key competencies originally comes from OECD. Key competencies are categorized in terms of such abilities as 1) interacting in socially heterogeneous groups, 2) acting autonomously, and 3) using tools interactively.

First, individuals need to learn how to function in groups and social orders whose members are from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, the ability to interact in socially heterogeneous groups allows one to relate well to others, to cooperate, and to manage and resolve conflicts. This ability is particularly relevant in pluralistic and multicultural societies.

Second, the ability to act autonomously empowers individuals to manage their lives in meaningful and responsible ways. Being able to act within the big picture, and to assert one's rights, interests, limits, and needs is crucial for effective participation in different spheres of life (in the workplace, in personal and family life, and in civil and political life).

Third, the ability to use tools interactively is necessary in the global economy and the information society. The present times require us to master socio-cultural tools such as language, information and knowledge as well as computers. Using tools interactively does not only mean technical skills, but also a familiarity with the tool itself and an understanding of how the tool allows one to interact with the world differently to accomplish goals.

These abilities and competencies require the mobilization of knowledge, practical skills as well as attitudes, emotions and motivations. We may call these abilities and competencies as vital human rights skills.

Dowa education and HRE schools need to nurture not only basic academic achievement but also these human rights skills that one needs in order to live in a global, multicultural world as a critical, autonomous citizen.

Networking with Other Movements

Sixth, Dowa educators have realized the strategic importance of networking with other HRE initiatives and with other marginalized populations, both domestically and globally. The Buraku movements are now engaged in a dialogue with educators and NGOs committed to multicultural education, gender equality, global education and development education, which aims to increase awareness by children and adults of the structural inequality between economically developed and developing countries. Dowa educators are now developing strategies based on a conception of HRE in its four dimensions: education as a human right (providing equal educational opportunities and quality education); education about human rights (improving awareness of the significance and implications of human rights); education through human rights (creating democratic learning environments); and education for human rights (developing knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for active citizenship).

Collaborating with Government Initiative

Finally, Dowa education and HRE movement have successfully negotiated with the Japanese government to formulate the first law to promote human rights education and human rights awareness-raising in Japan. The law took effect in 2000 and is named "Law on the Promotion of Human Rights Education and Human Rights Awareness-Raising."

The law stipulates as follows:

(Objective)

Article 1: Considering the rising awareness about the importance of respecting human rights, current state of human rights violations including the occurrences of unjust cases of discrimination based on social status, descent, race, creed or sex, as well as the current developments surrounding human rights protection in and outside Japan, this law defines the responsibilities of the national and local governments and individual citizens, and stipulates necessary measures, thereby contributing to human rights protection.

(Definition)

Article 2: In this law, human rights education is defined as educational activities aimed at the nurturing of spirit of respecting human rights and human rights awareness-raising is defined as public relations and other awareness-raising activities (excluding human rights education) aimed at popularizing the idea of respecting human rights among citizens and deepening their understanding of it.

(Basic Idea)

Article 3: Human rights education and human rights awareness-raising should be carried out by the national and local governments in such a way as to allow citizens to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the idea of respecting human rights depending on their developmental stages by providing diverse opportunities, adopting effective methods, respecting the voluntary will, and securing the neutrality of the implementing institutions.

(Responsibility of National Government)

Article 4: The national government is responsible for formulating and implementing the measures of human rights education and human rights awareness-raising according to the basic idea of human rights education and human rights awareness-raising (basic idea) as stipulated in Article 3.

(Responsibility of Local Governments)

Article 5: Local governments are responsible for formulating and implementing measures of human rights education and human rights awareness-raising following the basic idea by coordinating efforts with the national government and considering the local circumstances.

(Responsibility of Citizens)

Article 6: Citizens must endeavor to nurture the spirit of respecting human rights and contribute to the realization of the society respecting human rights.

(Formulation of Basic Plan)

Article 7: The national government shall formulate the basic plan on human rights education and human rights awareness-raising in order to promote measures of human rights education and human rights awareness-raising comprehensively and systematically.

(Annual Report)

Article 8: The national government shall present its report to the Diet every year on measures that it has implemented to promote human rights education and human rights awareness-raising.

(Financial Measures)

Article 9: The national government can provide financial measures to local governments, which implement measures on human rights education and human rights awareness-raising, by entrusting related projects and other means.

In this way, Dowa education and HRE movement in Japan now have a strong backing from the government in promoting HRE as far as the legal framework is concerned. However, this does not mean that the Japanese government is enthusiastically promoting HRE and HR awareness. Only when grassroots HR initiatives and HRE movements had powerfully negotiated and demonstrated effective cases of HRE, would the government, by necessity, begin to take a more progressive position.

MOE Report on HRE

In this context, the Second Report from the Ministry of Education Panel on the Promotion of Human Rights Education in Schools is an important milestone. The Report was issued in January 2006. The preparation of the Report was called for by the Basic Plan for the Promotion of HRE and Human Rights Awareness-Raising (2002).

I welcome, first of all, the preparation of the Report and its distribution to schools nationwide because it stipulates the basic strategies to promote HRE in Japanese schools and has, at least, the following ten commendable characteristics.

First, the Report is written clearly and in concrete terms, so educators should find it rather easy to read.

Second, the conceptual structure of the Report is clear. It discusses the importance of nurturing the 'sense of human rights' as well as intellectual understanding of human rights. According to the Report, 'sense of human rights' means 'sensitivity to what is wrong when encountering an incident in daily life that appears to violate or dishonor human rights, and the readiness to show care for human rights through proper attitude and concrete behavior.' In short, it means a 'sense of recognizing the dignity of others as well as one's own dignity.' Also, the Report discusses the major pillars of HRE curriculum in terms of knowledge, skills and values/attitudes.

Third, the Report describes two concrete approaches to nurture the 'sense of human rights': one, in terms of creating human rights-supportive environment of 'hidden curriculum' in schools; the other, in terms of respecting the voluntary initiative and lived experiences of students.

Fourth, it concretely describes how schools can plan and carry out HRE plans, projects and curriculum systematically. It illustrates model curricula for primary and junior-high schools as well as model programs for teacher training in HRE.

Fifth, it provides concrete examples of HRE in school events, moral education, student guidance, integrated studies, and subject teaching. Schools should find these examples very helpful in planning and implementing their own HRE curriculum.

Sixth, it argues that it is important to promote legal literacy as well as knowledge and skills to practice human rights as stipulated in law.

Seventh, it emphasizes the importance of formulating HRE curriculum by taking due consideration of the level of development of students.

Eighth, it includes statements such as 'a school where the ethos of justice prevails' and 'human rights education is the most fundamental of all,' which are extremely encouraging for grassroots Dowa and HRE educators.

Ninth, it refers to examples of 'effective schools' and 'building education-oriented communities.' These examples are based on innovative approaches to HRE in Osaka which have played key roles in demonstrating the evolution of Dowa education into HRE. This reference indicates that the MOE panel evaluated highly the practice of Dowa education in Osaka.

Tenth, the World Program for HRE and the UN Decade for HRE are referred to as constituting a context in preparing the Report.

These are some of the major points that I find quite useful for Dowa and HRE educators to promote HRE in schools further.

However, I also have some negative comments on the MOE Panel Report.

First, the word 'others' in terms of 'respect for others' as indicated in the Report seems to be very narrowly defined. The Report uses "others" only in the classroom or school contexts. Various kinds of victims of discrimination and oppression in the world as well as in Japan seem to be out of the picture. Therefore, HRE as envisaged in this Report may fall short of educating students as global-minded critical citizens.

Second, model HRE curricula are presented for some school subjects such as social studies and integrated studies, but not for others. My view is that every school subject including language, mathematics, science, music, PE (physical exercise), etc. should be so strategically taught to be able to develop human rights knowledge, skills and attitudes because subject teaching occupies much of the school hours. Also, the approach to integrate human rights across subjects supports the idea that time and school resources should be more effectively used to promote HRE.

Third, the need to maintain neutrality in education is too much emphasized in the Report. Education is political in nature, and HRE is particularly so. In promoting HRE in Japanese schools, educators need to collaborate more with non-profit organizations (NPOs)/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups that are engaged in human rights-related matters. In this sense, the emphasis on neutrality should not hamper such collaboration, which is vital in promoting effective and attractive HRE in schools.

Strategies of Dowa Education and HRE Movements to Utilize the MOE Report

Though the MOE Panel Report on HRE contains these shortcomings, I would like to state again that it is an historical document in the sense that the MOE has, for the first time, designed such a comprehensive and practical document for promoting HRE and distributed its copies to schools nationwide.

School administrators and leadership teams are expected to read the Report thoroughly in order to design effective HRE strategies and programs that can meet the specific needs of their schools. Dowa education and HRE movements should demonstrate models of using the Report as a useful guide for promoting HRE as well as for overcoming its shortcomings. Otherwise, there is a possibility that the Report will be used only as a tool to impose more administrative control over school practices, which eventually could hinder the development of effective HRE.

We have now entered a new stage in the history of Dowa education and HRE in Japanese schools. Because Buraku discrimination still exists and because there are a number of serious problems in schools with Buraku and other marginalized students who have lower academic achievement, lower level of self-esteem, and limited perception of a better future, we recognize the specific needs of Dowa education clearly. However, as I have pointed out earlier, Dowa education should not isolate itself from the general framework of HRE and other HRE initiatives. Rather, Dowa education needs to incorporate universal frameworks and concepts of HRE so that its specific and universal objectives are effectively integrated.

The MOE Report lays out a general framework and structure of HRE. Dowa education should therefore translate and enrich its own strategies and needs following the framework and structure of the Report. At the same time, Dowa education needs to promote its critical and social transformation-oriented perspective more sharply in the network of HRE educators to overcome the shortcomings of the Report.

World Program for HRE

In the wake of the UN Decade for HRE, the UN adopted the World Program for HRE starting in 2005. The program is intended to further promote a universal culture of human rights in the global context.

The objectives of the World Program are: to promote the development of a culture of human rights; to promote a common understanding of basic principles and methodologies for human rights education; to ensure a focus on human rights education at the national, regional and international levels; to provide a common collective framework for action by all relevant actors; to enhance partnership and cooperation at all levels; and to take stock of and support existing human rights education programs, as well as to develop new ones.

The first phase of the World Program, running from 2005 to 2007, focuses on the primary and secondary school systems. The plan aims to achieve specific objectives such as: inclusion and practice of human rights in the primary and secondary school systems; provide guidelines on key components of human rights education in the school system; and facilitate the provision of support to Member States by international, regional, national and local organizations. The plan provides: a definition of human rights education in the school system based on internationally agreed principles; a user-friendly guide to developing or improving human rights education in the school system; and a flexible guide which can be adapted to different contexts and situations.

In this way, the World Program can be a powerful tool to further promote HRE in the world, particularly in primary and secondary schools.

Despite the fact that the Japanese representative to the UN made a speech enthusiastically supporting the World Program, the Japanese government and the Ministry of Education have not done much so far to implement the program effectively. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has translated the original English text of the Program into Japanese, but no concrete guidance has been given by the Ministry of Education to local governments, boards of education and schools as to how the Program can be implemented in Japanese schools. It appears that the Second MOE Panel Report on HRE supplements the implementation of the World Program.

The Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute in Osaka and the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Documentation Center (HURIGHTS OSAKA) took the initiative of translating the World Program into Japanese language much earlier than the government and began to call for its implementation by the central and local governments as well as by educational institutions including primary and secondary schools.

The World Program has much to offer regarding concepts and effective practices of HRE, and it is strongly suggested that the Ministry of Education and local boards of education (both prefectural and municipal) come up with their strategies

and plans to implement it in addition to the Second MOE Panel Report on HRE. The World Program is valuable because it highlights the importance of promoting awareness and practice of the global international human rights standards as well as concrete ideas on how HRE can be effectively implemented in schools and communities.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, we now live in a global, multicultural world. Human rights standards have developed and been strengthened further since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948. On the other hand, however, we continue to observe serious conflicts between nations, cultures and social groups, and the need to promote awareness of the importance of human rights and to empower all groups and individuals, particularly those who are marginalized, is ever growing.

Dowa education in Japan has been a significant initiative in bringing human rights principles into educational reality, and in empowering Buraku and other minority students as well as non-minority students.

There are a number of obstacles to overcome, however. Dowa education has evolved now into a key HRE initiative in Japan and strengthened its network with other HRE initiatives. Dowa education is now seeking a new horizon where a more universal framework of HRE can be shared and a more effective HRE can be practiced in collaboration with other educators and grassroots human rights forces.

The UN initiatives on HRE and the HRE experiences in other parts of the world have definitely guided this powerful evolution. This article is an attempt to portray the recent evolution of Dowa education in the context of growing networking among diverse agents of HRE. It is my sincere hope that HRE in Japan and in other parts of the world will communicate their concerns and strategies more closely, so that both the quality and quantity of HRE will develop further in the future.