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SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL SUIHEISHA'S FOUNDING CELEBRATED

The Buraku Liberation League celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the National Suiheisha (Levelers' Association) this year. In honor of the great achievements of those brave human rights pioneers who trod the thorny path of struggle, the BLL held a memorial celebration to strengthen their resolve to continue this battle, with this sixtieth anniversary the turning point in the struggle. This commemorative event was held on March 2 and 3 in Kyoto, where the Suiheisha was established. The event was attended by people from all walks of life: members of the BLL and labor unions, representatives from various political parties, figures from the academic and cultural fields, religious leaders, government administrators and prominent members of the business world all joined in the commemoration.

On March 3, a beautiful array of flowers was placed around a monument in the courtyard of the Kyoto Kaikan. Seiichiro Sakamoto, one of the original founding members of the National Suiheisha, presented an address as a representative of these valiant persons of merit. In the afternoon, 2,500 people gathered at the Kyoto Kaikan and held a commemorative meeting in honor of the anniversary. The first half of the two-part program was a ceremony in recognition of the efforts of certain dedicated individuals. The names of sixty-five persons of merit, including Seiichiro Sakamoto, Zennosuke Asada and Iwakichi Wajima, were announced. They were presented with small tokens of appreciation for their brave efforts in the name of human rights. The names of sixty-eight deceased members of the Suiheisha, including Takeichi Nomoto, were also announced in posthumous tribute to their struggles. The second half of the program featured a presentation of the play "The Flag of Laurel," performed by a cast of more than one hundred. This drama left a deep impression on its attentive audience.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING
OF THE NATIONAL SUIHEISHA

At the commemorative program in honor of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the National Suiheisha (Levelers' Association), Secretary General Saichiro Uesugi gave the keynote address, entitled "The Significance of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Founding of the National Suiheisha."

The following is an excerpt from his speech.

On this occasion of the the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the National Suiheisha, I wish to pay my respects to those brave pioneers who have been our supportive mentors in the on-going struggle, and extend warmest greetings to all the scholars, men of culture and persons concerned with the democratic system and its administration who have kindly given us invaluable guidance. As successor to this illustrious movement which fought for the peace of Japan, and with deep consideration of the importance of this grave responsibility, I'd like to express my beliefs in the form of a proposal.

Looking back to March 3, 1922, our fore-runners founded the National Suiheisha here at Okazaki Kokaido in Kyoto, raising high the banner of Buraku Liberation. I do not believe this was some casual event. I believe it was inevitable that the Buraku people would rise up against the discrimination they faced, given the influence of the times.

One of these contributing social influences was the evolution throughout the world of racial liberation movements, spurred on by the success of the socialist October Revolution in the USSR. During the following year, the great Rice Riots occurred throughout our country and the self-awakening of the Buraku people was accelerated by this. The government and rulers, afraid of the Burakumin's growing awareness, started an appeasement movement. But the Buraku people realized how degrading that policy was in actuality. Therefore, the Buraku people, calling on "long-suffering brothers" to "let there be light upon all mankind,"* stood strongly united for the first time.

At that time, the founders of the Suiheisha were youths. I think they had to struggle against discrimination and oppression with all their might. Pressures were heavy. Some of these pioneers died in dark prisons, and others died engaged in the battle for these rights. But their comrades and our liberation movement had to continue on over the bodies of these martyrs, and has steadily advanced to this day. During the dark days of WWII, their organized movement was abolished by the government, but the Suiheisha stood firmly against militarism and continued the fight for human liberation throughout those trying times.

After the war, our country returned to the path of a democratic country whose sovereignty rests with the people. A democratic constitution was also established.



But, in spite of all this, discrimination against us did not decrease at all. Under those circumstances, movements such as the one requesting a report from the Integration Deliberation Committee and the movement demanding the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects played a significant role in such fields as improving the living environment and promoting equal educational opportunities for the people of the Buraku.

However, today, Japan is again swinging back towards the road of militarism, and forcing the nation's workers to shoulder all the sacrifices and burdens caused by militarization and Administrative Reform. History clearly reminds us that the struggle for democracy and human rights becomes even more difficult in a militaristic age. We must be deeply appreciative of the fact that those waging the Sayama struggle, the denunciation campaign against the Buraku Lists and the strengthening and improvement of the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects campaign are obliged to confront and be confronted by the current reactionary, militarist policy. Recently, the LDP government attempted to abolish the Dowa Measures legislation, but we successfully thwarted that plan thanks to an unprecedented united front of workers, scholars, educators, clergy, businessmen, administrators and Burakumin. Furthermore, we succeeded in having a five-year program legislated, as opposed to the previous three-year plan. I believe this achievement, in light of the present dark trend, is the fruit of the Japanese people's democratic force and well worth praising.

In future struggles, we must strive for completion of essential government ordinances and strengthen the national struggle of all classes toward the permanent legislation of the Fundamental Law on Buraku Liberation, which outlines the strategy for achieving complete Buraku Liberation in the five years of the effective period of the Law on Special Measures for Area Improvement Projects.

Today's liberation movement not only benefits the Buraku people, but also confronts the reactionary administration of justice through the Sayama struggle. Through the denunciation campaign against the Chimei Sōkan, a battle against family register investigations which violate human rights is developing. Needless to say, the struggle for the strengthened and improved Law on Special Measures Continues as a part of the ongoing campaign against the destruction of democracy by the LDP and against those politics which outline the destruction of human rights, the people's welfare and life. We are sure that in the future, other struggles will also join these battles.

In order to win such significant struggles, we must fully develop the abilities of all organizations concerned. To do so, I feel it is most important for every member of the league to thoroughly master the concept of liberation. The Buraku Liberation League clarifies the



real purpose of Buraku Liberation, and states that these struggles are just and correct measures to attain our rights. The real purpose of Buraku Liberation, as set forth clearly in the declaration of the National Suiheisha, is that each Burakumin rises by himself against discrimination and oppression, overcomes them, and by attaining these rights himself values both the rights and himself more highly. Otherwise, complete Buraku Liberation cannot be achieved.

Holding this sixtieth anniversary as the turning point, we need to reflect on our movement and strengthen our self-evaluation activities in all our organizations. Now, with these veteran human rights fighters' kind cooperation, we possess a strengthened will to promote a liberation movement that will reform even more Buraku people's consciousnesses. These brave pioneers have been constructing a lifestyle of pacifism, democracy and human liberation for over sixty years. It is up to us to lead the nation forward on this luminous path.

Saichiro Uesugi

March 3, 1982

DENUNCIATION STRUGGLE AGAINST SOTO SECT CONTINUES --
 "NO ATONEMENT CAN BE SEEN."

The third denunciation meeting against the Zen Buddhist Sōtō sect and the Pan-Japanese Buddhist Association was held under the auspices of the headquarters of the Buraku Liberation League at the Osaka BLL Center. This meeting was concerned with the discriminatory utterances case and other controversies. Approximately sixty persons participated, including the Rev. _____, the former Rev. _____ of the Sōtō sect and the president of the Pan-Japanese Buddhist Association, _____.

At this meeting, the representatives of the Sōtō sect and the PJBA were severely questioned on the following three points:

1) Representatives from neither the Sōtō sect nor the PJBA attended the second Conference of Religion for Peace in Asia held in New Delhi last December, although they should have been present to apologize for Secretary General Rev. _____'s slanderous remarks made at the WCRP III(USA, August 1979).

2) The memorial tablets of Burakumin on which discriminatory Kaimyō (posthumous Buddhist names) are carved have not yet been removed and replaced by new, non-discriminatory ones.

3) Current discriminatory publications such as "Kiri-gami," which contain questionable and derogatory material, have not been replaced, recalled or collected, although they purport to convey the doctrines of the Soto sect.

To many of the questions on these issues, the Sōtō



and PJBA representatives answered evasively, angering the other participants with their insincere answers. The meeting was adjourned with the requirement, voiced by the BLL sponsors, that the Soto sect and PJBA report on these matters again -- with sincere answers.



10,000 RALLY IN SUPPORT OF ISHIKAWA'S INNOCENCE

On the afternoon of 7 February 1982, in Hibiya Amphitheatre in Tokyo, ten thousand people gathered for a central rally in protest of the rejection of the retrial motion in the Sayama case. This rally was a demand that a thorough investigation be made to arrive at the truth of the case. During the gathering, they resolved to strengthen their their fight for the opening of all evidence, the exposure of all secret evidence held by the prosecution, Ishikawa's parole until the retrial is initiated, and at the same time hardened their resolve to achieve these objectives.



BURAKUMIN DEFAMATION CASES IN

PROMINENTLY PLACED ANTI-BURAKUMIN GRAFFITI

Two discriminatory graffiti incidents occurred in city on 30 December 1981 and 11 January 1982. On 30 December, "Senshū Yotsu Group - etta - yotsu - etta" was spray-painted in black ink on the cement wall surrounding a home. Both "etta" and "yotsu" are derogatory terms for Burakumin, and "Senshu Group" is the name of a young motorcycle gang. This house is centrally located, and gangs of young street toughs often gather in the area as a major highway passes by there. Probably because of this, graffiti had been spray-painted on that wall several times before. However, this was the first time such defaming graffiti had appeared. The persons who live in the victimized house are not from a Buraku.

FECES SPREAD AROUND PORCH

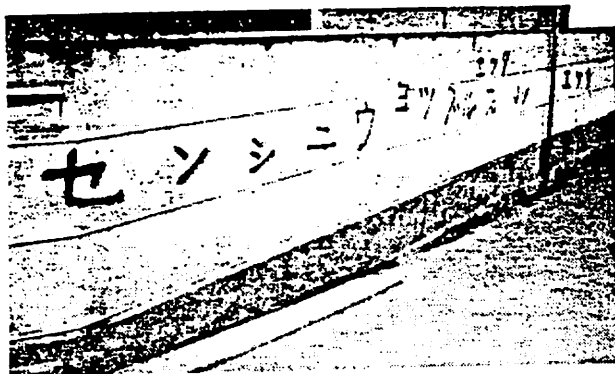
In the 11 January incident, "Kono ie etta no ie - Senshū Rengo" (This house is an etta house. Senshu League) was sprayed in red paint on the retaining fence of the house of the vice-chief of the BLL branch. This slanderous message was nearly twenty meters long. To make matters worse, a bucketful of feces was spread around the porch, gate and garden plants of the home.

DENUNCIATION STRUGGLE INITIATED

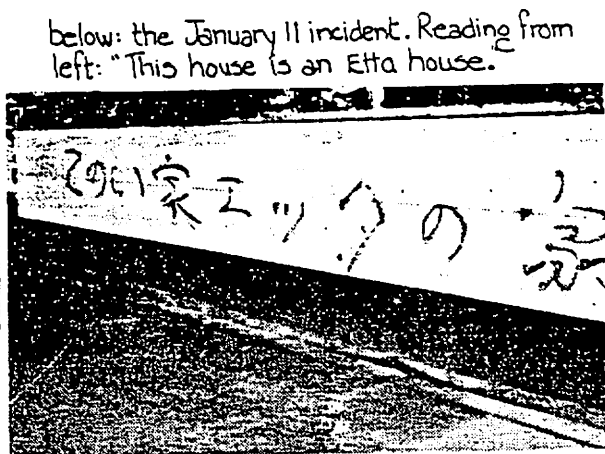
The black spray-paint used in the former case was faint. The criminal seems to have left his message impulsively, using a nearly exhausted can of paint. In the latter case, however, the bright red spray-paint was apparently new, and moreover, feces were carried in to further befoul the home. This seems to be a carefully planned attack as opposed to an impulsive gesture.

One of the more malicious aspects of the latter incident is that the criminal deliberately defaced the home of a Burakumin who is now living in a general, non-Buraku district. This method of manifesting discrimination reminds us that the Nazis in Germany first marked the homes of Jews with circles of white paint, and then proceeded by more and more serious steps to the Holocaust.

The branch of the BLL has decided to launch a denunciation struggle against these extremely wicked graffiti incidents that occurred in December and January. Only by building sound citizen awareness can such manifestations of discrimination be overcome.



above: the December 30 incident. Reading from left: "Senshū (Yotsu) Group. Etta Yotsu Etta"



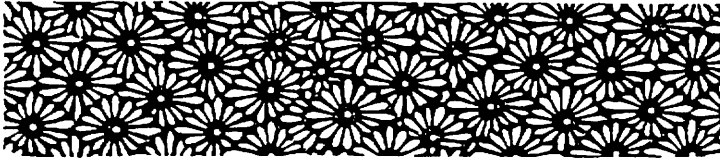
below: the January 11 incident. Reading from left: "This house is an Etta house."

27TH NATIONAL WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY HELD IN ISE

Ise City, Mie Prefecture, was the site for the twenty-seventh National BLL Women's Assembly, held from March 27 to March 29, 1982. Over 2,500 participants from all over Japan gathered under the rallying cry, "Carry the three main struggles on to victory!" The three main struggles are: the enactment of a fair and satisfactory new



Law on Special Measures for Dōwa Projects; the retrial of Ishikawa in the Sayama case; exposure and elimination of the discriminatory "Buraku Lists" (Buraku Chimei Sōkan) used by some large employers to determine if job applicants are from Buraku. The Women's Assembly also held thirteen discussion groups on such vital issues as adult basic literacy education, prenatal health, childcare, education, peace and denunciation struggles (kyūdan).



LAW ON SPECIAL MEASURES FOR AREA IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS PROMULGATED

Public support for the strengthening and revision of the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects had been steadily increasing up to its scheduled expiration date of March 31, 1982. Because of that pressure, a new law entitled "Law on Special Measures for Area Improvement Projects" was enacted on the day the former measures expired.

Welfare and human rights are forced into recession under today's Administrative Reform. The LDP government attempted to abolish this needed legislation. Only the powerful voice of the citizens' movement, spearheaded by the BLL, forced the government to draft and enact this new legislation, a five-year program, under severe pressure. This is a significant achievement.

Although this new legislation is a victory, we find four major problems within the new measures. First, the new legislation bears a different name than the previous legislation -- "Dōwa" has been changed to "Area Improvement" -- and the objectives have become more ambiguous. Second, there is a very real possibility that the quality of policies pursued under the Dōwa legislation will be lowered in the name of "unity of the project areas and the surrounding areas." There is also the possibility that certain advanced local policies will be significantly weakened by recategorizing them under the new government ordinances. Finally, the Fundamental Law on Buraku Liberation, which sets forth the basic concepts of resolving Buraku problems, is not taken into consideration at all.

Our goals now, paying close attention to these problems in the new legislation, must include the enactment of the Fundamental Law on Buraku Liberation. To achieve this, we must increase public awareness of the realities of the discriminated against Buraku and strengthen the organization of the Buraku Liberation League.



THE LAW ON SPECIAL MEASURES FOR AREA IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The following is an excerpt of the recently enacted legislation that replaces the former Dōwa projects laws. This is not an official government translation, and therefore may contain flaws, for which we apologize.

(Purpose)

Article 1. The present law, based upon the ideals expressed in the Constitution of Japan which guarantees to all the people of Japan the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, aims at contributing to the cultivation of economic potential, the stabilization of people's livelihood and the improvement of their welfare in areas (hereinafter referred to as "project areas") where stabilization and improvement of the living environment are hindered by historical and social factors. This is to be done by taking special measures for the smooth implementation of projects (hereinafter referred to as "Area Improvement Projects") provided for by Cabinet Order relating to such matters as the improvement of the living environment, promotion of industries, stabilization of employment, improvement of education, strengthening of human rights activities and the enhancement of social welfare in these areas.

(Promotion of Area Improvement Projects)

Article 2. In order to attain the objectives of the preceding Article, the State and the local public entities shall cooperate with each other in promoting, both promptly and systematically, the Area Improvement Projects.

2. In implementing the Area Improvement Projects, the State and the local public entities shall endeavor towards a fair management by achieving the unity of the project areas with the surrounding areas.

3. The people shall, with due regard to the purpose of the Area Improvement Projects, mutually respect their fundamental human rights and cooperate in the smooth implementation of the Area Improvement Projects.

(Special Subsidies)

Article 3. As regards those Area Improvement Projects whose cost is to be borne by or subsidized by the State, the amount of such cost or subsidy shall be computed, unless otherwise provided for by a Cabinet Order, at a ratio of two-thirds within the scope of the budget.

2. In the case of the preceding paragraph, certain projects, to be designated by Cabinet Order, for which the ratio of the State's payment or subsidization is fixed by law at less than two-thirds, shall have the ratio raised to two-thirds by Cabinet Order.



(Local Government Bonds)

Article 4. With respect to the expenses required by the local public entities for the Area Improvement Projects, local government bonds may be used to cover even those expenses not falling under paragraph 1, Article 5 of the Local Finance Law (Law No. 109, 1948).

2. Local government bonds issued to cover the expenses required by the local public entities for the Area Improvement Projects shall, as far as the financial situation permits, be totally underwritten by the State by means of the funds of the Trust Fund Bureau or the reserves in the Special Account for Post Office Life Insurance and Annuity.

(Incorporation of the Repayment
of the Principal and Interest into
the Basic Financial Requirements)

Article 5. Of the local government bonds issued to cover the expenses required by the local public entities for the Area Improvement Projects, the expenses for repaying the principal and interest relating to those bonds designated by the Minister for Home Affairs shall be incorporated, as provided for in the Local Allocation Tax Law (Law No. 211, 1950), into the basic financial requirements used in the computation of the local allocation taxes granted to that local public entity.

OSAKA CITIZEN'S COUNCIL NOW A HEALTHY FIVE YEARS OLD AND GOING STRONG

The fifth anniversary of the founding of the Osaka Citizens' Council for the International Covenants on Human Rights was paid tribute with a commemorative meeting held at the Osaka BLL Center on 23 March 1982. The Citizens' Council has been working hard to promote people's awareness and respect of human rights in Osaka since its founding in 1977. It campaigned hard and successfully for the ratification and promulgation of the the International Covenants on Human Rights in 1979, and held the International Symposium on Human Rights in 1980.

At the 23 March meeting, a slide presentation entitled "Human Rights" was viewed. At the same gathering, Mr. Ohashi, representing Osaka prefecture, Mr. Tamaoki, representing Osaka city, Mr. Fujiwara, President of the Osaka City Council for Promoting Human Rights Education, and Ms Yamamoto, representing the Osaka Citizen's Council for the Ratification of the UN Convention to Abolish Discrimination Against Women, spoke on various human rights issues in their fields of specialty. The chairman was Mr. Miyata, Vice-Secretary General of the Osaka BLL.



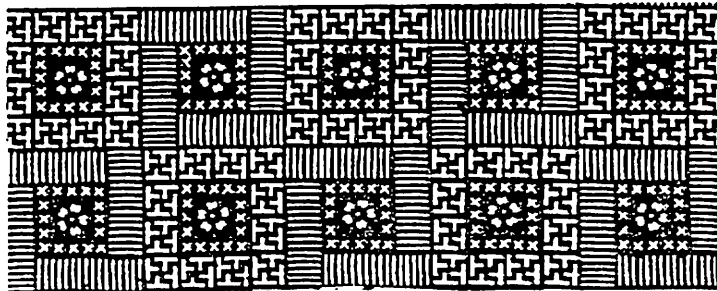
Mr. Sueo Murakoshi, Secretary General of the Citizens' Council, made the following keynote proposal:

- 1) We should utilize the slide presentation "Human Rights" by showing it to many groups as part of citizen awareness activities.
- 2) We should publish a translation in Japanese of "The United Nations and Human Rights."
- 3) We should cooperatively strive for the success of the ongoing study-meetings on human rights.
- 4) We should work for the ratification of the UN-sponsored international convention on the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities.
- 5) We should work for the ratification of the UN-sponsored international convention on the abolition of discrimination against women.
- 6) We should cooperate together to ensure the success of the International Conference against Discrimination.

Mr. Yasuhiko Saito, professor at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, gave a commemorative address on "Human Rights in Japan from the International Viewpoint." In his lecture, he introduced the UN Human Rights Committee's discussion of their Bonn, West Germany, ICCPR signatories' review meeting (19-30 October 1981). He stressed the following points:

- 1) This was the first time that Japanese human rights problems were ever discussed by this international body. Just this fact in and of itself is very significant.
- 2) It is very important for non-government organizations such as the Osaka Citizen's Council to review and evaluate the results of the Bonn session, because these human rights problems are part of the world of the average citizen and he can therefore judge if the presentation was accurate.
- 3) We must work for the ratification of the UN-sponsored international convention on the prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities, which will clearly define legislation to be enacted in the battle against discrimination and special measures to be taken to aid victims of discrimination. This is one of our most urgent future tasks.

A stirring appeal to strengthen and develop the movement met with enthusiastic applause, and the meeting was adjourned with this strong feeling of support and solidarity.





THE PICTORIAL SIXTY-YEAR HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL SUIHEISHA
EDITED BY THE BLL CENTRAL OFFICE



(poster, 1931)

LARGE FORMAT, 256 PAGES
8 PLATE COLOR FRONTISPICE
(U.S.) \$19.95, INCL. POSTAGE

Loudly declaring, "May the fervor of justice be in society. May the light be in all mankind," the National Suiheisha was founded.

With more than 700 photographs, this pictorial vividly recalls the 60-year long struggle which rejected any pity or sympathy on the road to the liberation of the Burakumin by their own hard work.

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