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AREA IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FEARS CONFIRMED

Unfortunately, the fears we expressed when the new Law on Special Measures for Area Improvement Projects was first drafted appear to have been well-founded. Although the law is less than four months old, several major problems have already appeared. Five of the major flaws are:

First, the budget for Area Improvement Projects in fiscal 1982 is ¥274.5 billion. In 1981, the budget allotted for Dōwa Projects, forerunner of the current Area Improvement Projects, was ¥279.2 billion. This ¥4.2 billion reduction marks the first decrease in allocations for these projects since 1960.

Second, one of the Dōwa projects sponsored by the Ministry of Education was a college scholarship fund. In 1982 this system changed for the worse: it no longer issues grants to students, but only loans. This weakening of the scholarship fund occurs at a time when the percentage of Buraku students entering college is still less than half the national average. This change totally ignores the educational situation in the Buraku.

Third, the former Dōwa Projects law authorized local public entities to issue local government bonds to cover expenses for those projects tailored to local needs; the current measures remove the authority of local governments to utilize this type of funding. (Projects exist on both the central and local levels; this change severely affects the planning and implementation of projects on the local level.)

Fourth, the central objective of the special measures -- overcoming discrimination against the Buraku -- has been further obscured by eliminating the term Dōwa

IN THIS ISSUE.....

<i>Area Improvement Fears.....</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Public Servants=Tokushu Buraku..</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>BLL Reps Visit Canada & U.S..</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Donald Richie's Review.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Walls Have Ears.....</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Morita Memorial Service.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Retrial Movement Broadens....</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Conference Speakers.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Buraku Origins Symposium.....</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>My Mother-in-Law (poem).....</i>	<i>8</i>



(assimilation or desegregation), which the general public has come to understand as meaning government policy aimed at the Buraku. Worsening the ambiguity the new term -- or lack of it -- generates, the position of Management Advisor for Dōwa Districts has been changed to Management Advisor for Area(Community) Improvement. Indeed, even Dōwa Education has been changed to simply Education.

Fifth, the government has not attempted any concrete measures in response to the requests in the Dōwa Policy Deliberation Committee's report that were accepted by the Diet and called for actions to: solve the unstable employment situation in the Buraku; guarantee equal educational opportunity; strengthen human rights measures and activities.

We, the Buraku Liberation League, call on all other citizens of the world to work together to make known the discrimination faced by Burakumin, and to demand from the government sufficient actions to ensure the end of this and all other discrimination.



*Tlingit beadwork
(Northwest American Indian)*

BLL REPRESENTATIVES VISIT ANTI-NUKE, INDIAN GROUPS IN CANADA & U.S.

The UN General Assembly on Disarmament began on 7 June in New York. Many anti-nuclear activists from throughout the world gathered to observe the assembly and demonstrate. The BLL planned to send six representatives to the conference, but the American government denied visas to five of them (under a relic of McCarthyism, the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act.) They were forced to delay their departure because of it. Visas were finally issued to all members of the group -- but not until June 11. They therefore gave up plans to observe the UN assembly, and left for Canada to visit Canadian Indian groups.

On June 12, they took part in a Canadian anti-nuclear meeting. The following day, they met Kinuko Lasky, a woman who addressed the U.S. Congress as an A-bomb victim. From the fourteenth to the fifteenth, they took part in other anti-nuclear gatherings and meetings in various parts of the United States. The BLL representatives feel that communication and understanding with these Canadian and United States groups have been deepened through these contacts.



ETIQUETTE FOR PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS: THE WALLS HAVE EARS

Insurance Research, a Tokyo-based private investigation firm, gives its employees an investigation guidebook entitled "Etiquette for Investigators." Finding many passages in the manual which evidence a prejudicial attitude against Burakumin, the BLL Central Headquarters requested that four of the firm's top executives appear at a question and answer session in Osaka on 18 June.

Among the contents of the manual in question are such cautionary slogans as "Be careful of needless discriminatory terms" and "The walls have ears." It also contains a section on "Discriminatory terms you shouldn't use." This attitude of "discreet discrimination" demonstrates a strong discriminatory consciousness.

In "The walls have ears," employees are warned by the following example: after an investigator completed an identity check (most private identity checks before marriage or employment are to determine whether the prospect is of Buraku origin -- ed.) on a job applicant, he telephoned his agency to say that the company had better not employ the man. Unfortunately, the investigator was overheard by a local resident. When the firm decided not to employ the job applicant, leaders of the Buraku League strongly accused the investigation agency of being responsible.

Before the 18 June fact-finding meeting, the Mie Federation of Levelers uncovered even more evidence against this investigation agency. A Buraku youth working there was treated coldly by his fellow employees due to his origins, being nearly forced to quit the company. The Nagoya branch office of Insurance Research also conducted at least one known personal history investigation to determine whether the affianced was of Buraku origin prior to formal marriage agreement.

At the inquiry, Insurance Research executives could not state how many copies of the manual were printed, nor how many had been withdrawn from use. The author of the text was not named, either. The BLL strongly requested that they find the answers to these and other related questions, and submit these clarifications and relevant materials by the end of June. The frustrating meeting adjourned on a note of anger.



RETRIAL MOVEMENT BROADENS -- NUMBER OF MISTRIALS FEARED HIGH

In addition to the retrial of the Sayama case, we are now calling for the retrial of another four cases, and investigating another twelve for the possibility of retrial motions. Unfortunately, we fear that these seventeen cases represent only the tip of the iceberg as more possible cases of miscarriage of justice become known.

According to an investigation conducted by the Federation of Japanese Lawyers last year, 680 lawyers who responded experienced 1,270 convictions of defendants who were pleading innocent. Of these convictions, the lawyers felt certain that about 400 of the defendants were in fact innocent and had been falsely convicted.

Alarmed by this lamentable reality, the Bll decided to sponsor a series of symposiums to determine possible retrial cases. The first symposium was held at the Jiichiro Matsumoto Memorial Hall in Tokyo on 13 June. The remainder are scheduled to meet once a month through December.

At the initial meeting, the case of Iwao Hakamada, who was arrested on a murder charge in June 1966 and sentenced to death in November 1980, was examined. At the July 4 symposium, the Shimada case, in which Kazuo Akabori was arrested on a charge of kidnapping and murder in 1954 and sentenced to death in 1960, was reviewed. Both of the accused are still in prison awaiting their fate.

SYMPOSIUM ON ORIGIN OF BURAKU HELD

The Fourth National Buraku Liberation Scholars Meeting was held in Nara prefecture on 3-4 July, with about 200 scholars in attendance. This symposium on the origins of the discriminated against Buraku was chaired by Mr. Nakao. The following three aspects of the history of the Buraku were addressed: when was the Buraku formed and what is the index; has the social system of the feudal period continued into the modern age; how should the difference among districts when the Buraku were formed be clarified. After this central discussion, participants separated into four groups: enlightenment activity, human rights administration, education and historical theory. The heated debate held in each group greatly furthered research on Buraku liberation. (Results will be published in future bulletins.)



EXISTENCE OF PUBLIC SERVANTS IS LIKE THAT OF TOKUSHU BURAKU,
STATES JUSTICE BUREAU DIRECTOR AT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

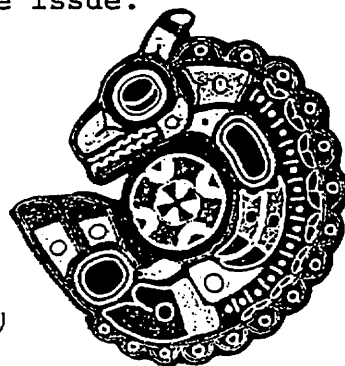
"The rather unsavory parallel has been drawn, we dare say, that public servants are as much a fact of life as the Tokushu Buraku. But public servants are, after all, just human beings." _____, Justice Bureau Director, made the above slanderous remark in his lecture at a Kansai-based research symposium on the effective execution of official duties, sponsored by the _____ Management Cooperative on 19 May. The BLL Central Headquarters examined this incident in Osaka on 17 June.

At the question and answer session, _____ owned up to his comment, admitting, "I said a disputable thing," but did not clarify what made him say it, only insisting, "I had a positive sense in mind." _____ attended a study meeting on Dōwa Policy Deliberation around 1970 in which the contents of the Dōwa Policy Deliberation Committee report were discussed. He has attended other studies held by government organizations since then, too. He is not ignorant of the Buraku situation.

The symposium sponsors must also shoulder some of the blame. Although several were listening to _____'s lecture, they took no notice of the part in question. They had not participated in any studies on the Dōwa issues, either.

In addition, there were twenty-nine government administrators present at the lecture. Representatives were present from Yamagata, Nagano, Shizuoka, Aichi, Osaka, Shiga, Nara, Hyogo, Hiroshima, Kagawa and Fukuoka prefectures. Yet only the Osaka prefectural official pointed out the discriminatory comment after the lecture.

In light of the seriousness of the situation, the BLL Central Headquarters demanded that both _____ and the _____ Management Cooperative present written statements reflecting their thoughts on the issue.



*Tlingit beadwork
(Northwest American Indian)*



THE INVISIBLE MINORITY BY DONALD RICHIE

In his 12 June Book Reviews/Features column for the Japan Times, Donald Richie reviewed Long-Suffering Brothers and Sisters, Unite! Here are some excerpts from his excellent review:

It would appear that a majority of Japanese know nothing whatever of Japan's largest minority. When asked about this group most Japanese — at least in Kanto — will answer that it no longer exists, or that, if it exists, it no longer experiences difficulties, or that if it exists and experiences difficulties the number of persons involved is negligible. None of these answers is true, but they do indicate the degree of invisibility to which the minority is subjected.

This minority is a sizable group of Japanese in no way different racially or culturally from other Japanese, who have been discriminated against for much of Japan's history. They were forced to live in ghetto-like conditions and are shunned especially in the Kansai.

Feudal discrimination against this group was abolished, and the pejorative terms used to describe its members were outlawed, by the Emancipation Edict of 1871. The fact that, despite these measures, discrimination actively continues against these people particularly in terms of marriage and employment is perhaps in part due to the invisible status enforced upon the minority and the consequent general feeling that the problem no longer exists. Yet, for the victims, it certainly does.

Fortunately, at the same time as the minority invisibility deepens, steps are also taken to bring the plight of these people to public attention. These steps are being taken, properly, by people of the minority itself and it is one of their publications which is under review today. (*)

Another measure taken is that the group and its leaders have adopted a very vigilant attitude toward all signs of active discrimination, particularly in the written word. There was, for example, the case of the Japanese edition of *Shogun*. In his general ignorance the author showed a particular ignorance in his use of a literally unspeakable pejorative term. There was a very strong protest and the publisher had to print an apology in the Japanese dailies and request that those who had purchased the book exchange it for a revised copy.

One can quite understand and approve a minority measure which has such results. At the same time, however, one must also note that such measures cannot but result in further invisibility. For example, when my *Inland Sea* appeared in Japanese last year the editors cut from the translation those sections devoted to the plight of this minority. To be sure, this publishing house was the same which had issued *Shogun*. They had been frightened and consequently now refused to publish anything at all about the minority. Clavell's reference was insulting. My reference could only have given solace to these unfortunate people, but the publisher treated both as though they were the same.

To this extent such minority measures might be said to work against a very just cause in that invisibility is increased. Also, the Japanese majority is, I would think, only too pleased to respond with silence: it is "safe" for them to do so and, at the same time, makes a very real problem literally invisible.

Yet, information — the display official Japan seems so to fear — is the only way through which the lamentable conditions under which this minority exists can be bettered. To that end there has been a fruitful amount of minority activity including the issuing of various publications, among them the book today under review.

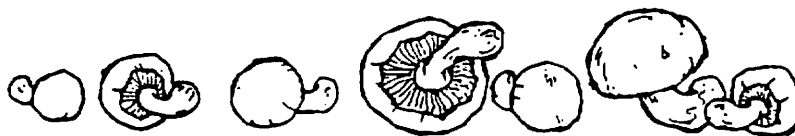
Subtitled "*The Buraku Problem. Universal Human Rights and Minority Problems in Various Countries*," it was compiled by experts in this field. It quite ably exposes the present condition of the problem in Japan and at the same time goes into this long history of discrimination. The Sayama Case is discussed and there is a full coverage of the infamous "lists," as well as general descriptions of the appalling living conditions in such areas as Osaka's Asaka and Izumi's Saiwai-Oji. The second part of the book is given over to reports by foreigners on the minority problem in Japan and essays on similar problems in India, in Austria, and in England. There are a number of very interesting appendices as well as a full glossary.

With this single book (the English edition of the Japanese original publication) the invisible minority suddenly becomes visible. This accounting of centuries of oppression is very moving and indignation seems the only appropriate reaction. Another important aspect is that, all wrongs now in the open, one can begin to think constructively about this continuing problem, something may be done to alleviate this continuing plight.

The book should be read by anyone with a real interest in Japan.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR LIBERATION ACTIVIST YOSHINORI MORITA

One year has passed since the great forerunner in studies on Dowa education and Buraku liberation passed away. Mr. Morita devoted himself to the liberation movement as the vice-director of the BLRI. Mourning our loss and strengthening our resolve to carry out his dream, we held a memorial service at the Buraku Liberation Center in Osaka on 3 July. Over 400 persons, including the bereaved family, liberation movement activists, scholars, educators and administrative officials, attended. All pledged to carry out his will and promote liberation.



PLANS FOR FIRST INT'L CONFERENCE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

Preparations for the first International Conference Against Discrimination, to be held from the second to eighth of December, are proceeding smoothly due to active cooperation from many quarters.

Four internationally renowned anti-discrimination activists have kindly accepted our invitations to appear as guest speakers at the conference. Mr. Ravi Jain, secretary-general of the National Association of Asian Youth will speak on the problems of immigrants in Great Britain; Mr. Kanshi Ram, chairman of the All-India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF), will represent the Scheduled caste of India; Mr. Romani Rosé, vice-chairman of Verband Deutscher Sinti, will present the problems faced by the Roma; Mr. José Inglès, chairman of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, will also speak. It is hoped that the understanding of discrimination faced by people worldwide will be strengthened.

Further details of the conference, such as the times for the various symposiums, have also been worked out, and are available to any interested persons by writing to the BLRI.