



at the UN anti-discrimination committee and the 4th WCRP conference

BLL Chairperson, Mr. Uesugi, Appealed for the Abolition of Discrimination

To further strengthen international solidarity for the establishment of peace and human rights, the BLL sent a delegation to the UN Committee on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in Geneva and to the 4th WCRP conference in Nairobi.

The participation in the Geneva conference followed last year's participation of our delegate headed by Mr. Komori, secretary-general of the BLL Headquarters. The participation in the Nairobi conference was decided because Japanese religious leaders were to make statements there to express their self-criticism regarding discriminatory remarks made by a Japanese delegate in the WCRP's third annual conference, and also because the BLL wanted to appeal themselves to the participants.

In both conferences, Chairperson Uesugi described the present situation of the Burakumin and called for further cooperation and solidarity to abolish discrimination. (the full text of his appeal will appear in the following) The appeals attracted much attention from the participants.

Besides this, regarding human rights issues in Japan, Professor Kim was a speaker on the present situation of discrimination against Koreans in Japan, and also an appeal was made to call attention to the discrimination against the mentally handicapped.

Moreover, the delegation deepened solidarity with ILO, UN Human Rights Research Center, Unesco, European Human Rights Council and MRAP.



Chairman Saichiro Uesugi made his speech here at the U. N. Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

Contents

Mr. Uesugi makes an appeal at Genève (1) • Discriminative book again in secret maneuver (3) • Fact-finding investigation, Part VI (4) • Discriminatory gravestones (6) • Relating my experiences of discrimination (7)



It was confirmed that representatives of ILO and the UN Committee on the Abolition of

Racial Discrimination would visit Japan in October and December, respectively.

Mr. Gomez del Prado (Secretary of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) and Mr. Yo Kubota (Human Rights Centre) talk with Chairman Saichiro Uesugi.



Towards the 4th World Conference on Religion and Peace

Members of the Japanese Committee for the World Conference on Religion and Peace — Sinken Yahagi, Secretary-General of Japan Buddhist Federation, and Muneo Machida, former Chairman of Japan Buddhist Federation (former Religious Affairs General of the Soto Sect) — Announce Basic Views Against Discriminative Statements

General Conference titled “WCRP I · WCRP III and Buraku Problem” was held in Tokyo on June 26. The sponsors of this conference was the Japanese Committee for the World Conference on Religion and Peace; from the Buraku Liberation League, Chairman Uesugi and Director Onishi attended.

In his salutation, Chairman Nikkei Niwano commented that during the 4th WCRP to be held from Aug. 23 “we must set right the discriminative statement made by the religious representative of Japan in the 1st WCRP and the 3rd WCRP”. He continued in his speech that, we must clarify known problems and all consideration and reflections of such issues, so that each participant can attend the 4th WCRP with full knowledge and commitment.

Chairman of the Committee of Human Rights, Hiroshi Ishikawa, referred to the purpose and basic perspective, and progress made of this conference. Then, the representative from the Japan Buddhist Federation, former Religious Affairs General Officer of Soto Sect, spoke. Each speaker reflected on the previous discriminative statement made by the religious representative and concluded with future courses of determination. Chairman Uesugi then provided a summary and posed a motion.

Chairman Uesugi, considering the spirit of the general body, appealed for immediate restoration of religion to its true form and also declared an end to the censure of former Religious Affairs General Officer



Inquiry Office Uses the Book as Investigating Data

Discriminative Book Again in Secret Maneuver

It became clear on July 27 that an inquiry office in Osaka was using the "Buraku Lists" in investigating a person's background. This inquiry office was found using this discriminative material regarding employment and marriage. The Legal Affairs Bureau in Osaka decided that this act was seriously in violation of human rights. The Buraku Liberation League also assessed the gravity of the matter and started to investigate.

This inquiry office deals with 250 major companies and manufacturers. Including private clients, the number of cases investigated annually totals 12,000 with an annual turnover of 200,000,000 yen.

From what the Legal Affairs Bureau investigated, this inquiry office was using "The Lists of the Names from Dowa district: National edition," one of the nine kinds of discriminative

books which became a national issue between 1975 to 1978. The 216-page magazine-size book lists the whereabouts and the numbers of houses in Dowa districts.

Whenever there is a client seeking information regarding employment or marriage, the detective firm provides a copy of this book to the investigator. If the subject is living near the border of Dowa district, the investigator goes to the very spot and checks the surroundings or visits the temple to look at the death register or tomb stones. In such ways, the investigator determines whether the subject is from the Buraku.

The Osaka Legal Affairs Bureau has a copy and is now interrogating the president of the inquiry office. The president, however, denies any such acts.

Osaka Prohibits Acts Encouraging Discrimination Against Buraku

Towards Establishing Regulations for Inquiry Offices

In order to prohibit inquiry offices and detective agencies from investigating into a person's ancestors which leads to discrimination against Buraku, the Osaka Prefectural Government made clear in July that they intend to establish Regulations on Inquiry Offices (tentative name).

With severe penal regulations up to suspending businesses, this law will be the first in the nation to prohibit acts which encourage discrimination against Buraku.

After discussion with the Dowa Project Liberation Committee in Osaka, the government will get on with the regulation and submit it to the assembly at the earliest in September. If this succeeds, it will greatly influence other self-governing bodies.

In Osaka, discrimination against those from Dowa districts is endless, starting with the circulation of the Buraku lists in 1975.

With our rapidly growing "information society," it is possible and also easy to violate privacy. Because of this, since 1981, discussions on how to protect privacy have been held. Last year the committee of this project formulated a basic policy: such as "it is necessary to limit by law detective agencies' inquiries into persons' ancestors."

However, due to strong-rooted opposition from some of the inquiry offices and conservatives in the prefectural assembly, the Liberation League is strengthening the struggle towards realization of such laws.

Results of fact-finding investigation of anti-Buraku discrimination in Osaka, Part VI

The Reality of Discrimination Against Buraku in Osaka (6)

To the question "Have you ever experienced discrimination against Buraku, or actually seen or heard discriminative acts or statements to Buraku?", the results are as follows in chart (1).

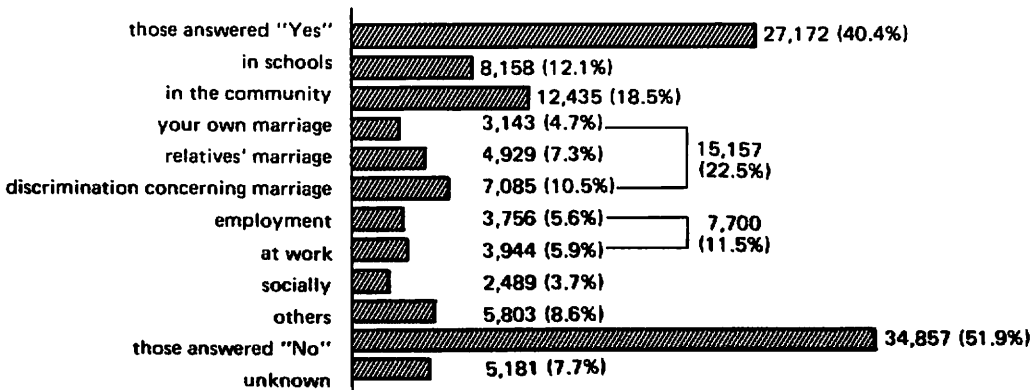
Of the 67,210 respondents (all above the age of 13), 27,172 (40.4%) answered "yes". This means that about one in every two people have experienced discrimination or heard or seen it directly.

Detailed analysis shows: (1) Discrimination

concerning marriage (22.5%), (2) Discrimination in community areas (18.5%), (3) Discrimination in school (12.1%), (4) Discrimination in occupation and employment (11.5%), (5) Social discrimination (3.7%), and (6) other forms (8.6%).

Besides these answers, we believe that there are cases which we fail to realize or overlook, as discriminatory or cases which we accept unconsciously, out of habit.

Chart (1): Experiences or Direct Observations of Discrimination Against Buraku
(67,210 people of age 13 or above – 100%)



Researchers Discuss "Fundamental Law on Buraku Liberation"

Approximately 200 researchers met on July 7 and 8 for the 6th National Researchers' Assembly on Buraku Liberation and for the 20th General Meeting of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute.

The researchers' assembly opened with a greeting by Saichiro Uesugi, Chairman of the Central Headquarters of the Buraku Liberation League, followed by the symposium proper, titled "Towards Establishing the Fundamental

Law on Buraku Liberation."

First, Director Kenzo Tomonaga reported on the activities of the Fundamental Law Examining Committee. He appealed for concrete proposals for the October Assembly and for a drafting of the law by January of next year.

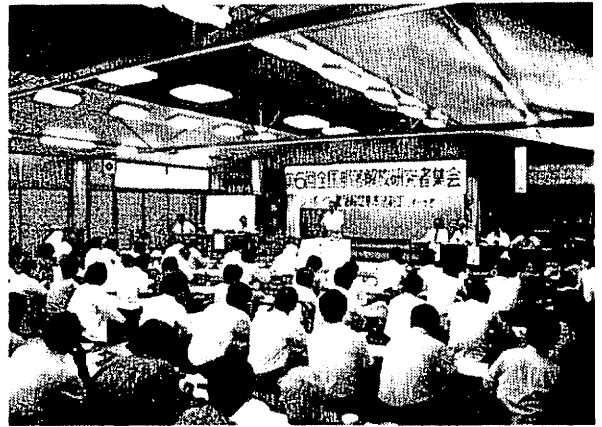
Masumi Takano (student of Kagawa University) then brought forward and discussed "The Conception of the Fundamental Law" and (student of Kansai University) "Various Problems



of Legal Control.”

After the symposium, separate discussion groups were held as follows: (1) Enlightenment and the Movement, (2) Human Rights and Administration, (3) Education and Community and (4) History and Theory.

At the 6th National Researchers' Assembly on Buraku Liberation.



New Chairman Sueo Murakoshi and New Superintendent Shozo Suzuki

At the General Meeting of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Sueo Murakoshi, present acting Chairman, was elected Chairman and Vice Chairman Shozo Suzuki as Superintendent of the BLR Institute.

Accounts and budget were approved and it was decided to start a Commemorative Fund for Tomohiko Harada.

Sueo Murakoshi takes office as the Chief Director of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute.



Defence Counsel Submits A Written Opinion to Seek Early Verdict on Sayama Case

The Defence Counsel for the Retrial of the Sayama Case submitted a written opinion to the Supreme Court on July 14 stating “We strongly demand a reversal of the original verdict and investigation, and referral of the case back to the Tokyo High Court. We demand an early verdict.” This movement is essentially to seek an early start of the retrial.

The written opinion was submitted taking into account the following points: (1) three and a half years have passed since the Supreme Court started the trial for the Sayama Case in 1981, (2) unlike other retrial cases, the Sayama Case has not been investigated for facts, and (3) seven new pieces of evidence have been found which indicate the innocence of Ishikawa.



Saito, Condemned in the Matsuyama Case Proven Innocent in Retrial

Yukiyo Saito (53), sentenced to death in the Matsuyama Case (in which a family of four was murdered and whose house was set fire to in Miyagi Prefecture in October, 1955), has been pleading his innocence and was recently found not guilty by the Sendai District Court. Also, along with the verdict, the court decided to put an end to Saito's custody. This is the first time a court has approved a "release" at a retrial. Saito,

the third condemned criminal proven innocent in retrial, won his freedom after twenty-nine years since his unwarranted arrest.

It was also made clear at the trial that (1) the initial verdict was based on an illegal arrest on a charge of convenience, (2) the police moved on suspicion only and forced the confession from the suspect, and (3) the authorities concealed evidence.

At the cemetery in Kumamoto Prefecture

Discriminatory gravestones in

Discriminatory gravestones were found in the public cemetery behind the charnel house by Buraku Liberation League's Branch, Kumamoto Prefecture. It has been thought that the Honganji branch of the Jodo Shinshu Sect (head temple Nishi Honganji) did not discriminate; however, these discriminatory gravestones were found in their branch temple. Engraved on one of the stones were the ideographs "shaku-ni-myō-sei-shin-nu." The discriminatory character is "nu." The correct character should have been "me," meaning "woman" but the rewritten form here is "nu," meaning "slave." Besides this example, one third of the 200 tombstones located here were found to be discriminatory, using homonym forms of ideographs.

Discriminatory gravestones have been found among the Soto, the Shingon, the Jodo, and the Shinshu's Otani sect; this discovery proves that although the Honganji sect's temples are located in almost half of the Buraku and although the sect has great influence among the Burakumin, there are no exceptions in Buddhism where discrimination is concerned. A fundamental reconsideration, along with a re-examination of the doctrine, must not be avoided.



The recently-found discriminatory gravestone.





“At that time, I was”

Relating my experiences of discrimination, Part I

Discrimination is increasing. According to the investigation of the Osaka Liaison Conference, last year every two and a half days one act of discrimination occurred. A plan of action to seriously consider acts of discrimination was set

forth at the 30th Assembly of the Osaka Liaison Conference last year. Hence, to help find progress in this, we have provided a space for activists to recall their own such experiences.

When I was A Student At My Friend’s House

I have had many experiences of being discriminated against. Although I am now 46 years old, I still have vivid impressions. Among various experiences, I cannot forget the one I had when I was a student at Osaka City University. It shocked me nearly enough to have changed my life.

It occurred when I went to a friend’s house in August 1957. My friend was unfortunately out

and his mother said he’d be back soon, so I waited and talked with his mother until his return. When we started talking about friendship between the sexes, she said, “There is a young girl studying in my kimono class and she’s going out with a boy from the Buraku.” When I heard the word “Buraku,” I was startled but stayed quiet and continued to listen.

I oppose marriage with a Burakumin

“The girl told her mother she wanted to marry him even though he is from Buraku. But her parents would not listen to her and insisted that she must not marry him. She is deeply troubled by this.”

In another instance, another pupil in the class had a meeting with a prospective bridegroom, exchanged betrothal presents and was prepared to marry him. However, her parents suddenly told her to regard the proposal as if it had never happened. When she inquired why, they answered that after investigating the fiancé’s background, they discovered that he was from Buraku. The young woman cried, “I don’t understand why I cannot marry a man from Buraku.”

My friend’s mother continued talking to me.

“ . . . , there is discrimination. It is your own choice to fall in love. But you had better make sure that she is not from Buraku. I always tell my son so.” Further, she started to talk about the theory on racial origin of the Burakumin, such as how their blood is tinged blue or that their bone structure is different in several places. I was furious but tried to keep calm. “If I show my anger here, she will find out that I’m from Buraku.” But it being so difficult for me to stay and listen, I said, “I just remembered I have a couple of things to do. I’ll come again,” and ran out of the house. The tears kept on flowing. With anger, I regretted my own weakness for not being able to argue back to her.

The entire town of discriminated against

In September of the same year, we faced discrimination concerning the alteration of house members in Town. My heart was filled with anger from my experience in August at my friend’s house and then from the incident concerning our town.

Up until then, I was told to keep quiet about my background, better to keep it a secret. But discrimination exists. Keeping silent will not solve the problem. These experiences made me plunge into the Buraku Liberation Movement. I was twenty years old. The energy within me all



through these years comes from the miserable experiences I had.

Head of the Research Dept.
Buraku Liberation Research Inst.



Towards the Human Rights Week in December.

Preparations for the publishing of the “White Book on Human Rights: From the Discriminated People’s Viewpoint“ makes smooth progress

The outline for the publishing of the “White Book on Human Rights: From the Discriminated People’s Viewpoint”, an important project scheduled this year by the Central Executive Committee for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, has been made clear.

Basically, the book will consist of nine themes: a) Problems on Buraku, b) Koreans living in Japan, c) Ainus, d) handicapped people, e) Okinawans, f) women, g) victims of an atomic air raid, h) Hansen’s disease and i) Niseis (Japanese

Americans), and will be composed of three objective views – (1) Present Conditions (2) The Problems Concerning These Conditions Viewed Through International Covenant on Human Rights and International Standards and (3) Future Tasks.

The publication of this book is scheduled not later than Human Rights Week (December 4 – 10) and this operation is making progress energetically at his moment.

INFORMATION

BURAKU LIBERATION NEWS is published every two months by the Buraku Liberation Research Institute. The editorial staff will be very happy to receive any information concerning human rights, discrimination problems, liberation movement etc. If you have any, could you kindly send it to the following address?

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