

November 1986

A Critique of the Ideas of Racial Superiority Expressed by Leading Japanese Government Officials

Four months have passed since the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won the general election in July. During this time, not merely once, but twice, leading LDP representatives of the government have created serious international controversies because of their irresponsible statements.

First came the following assertions by the former Minister of Education, Masayuki Fujio, in September: "Korea was also responsible for colonization in her history"; and "Although they criticize the Japanese government for the massacre in the Chinese city of Nanking during World War II, I think killing is natural in war." His statements represented an attempt to deny Japan's responsibility for her part in the war.

Another incident was caused by remarks made by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone during a lecture. "The Japanese," he said, "who are racially homogeneous, enjoy a high intellectual standard. The level of education and intellect in the United States, on the other hand, is low because of its large black and Hispanic populations."

We can see the strand of thought linking the above assertions: a conception of racial superiority which boasts of a "homogeneous" Japanese society. They ignore the reality in Japan of the existing problems of Burakumin, Korean residents and the Ainu people. They also exposed a contempt toward other races in the world.

This way of thinking is precisely the kind which led to World War II, and we need to take these two cases seriously because the statements came from the mouths of leading government representatives, who should act responsibly on the public stage.

After the uproar their words caused both inside and outside the country, Fujio was dismissed as minister and Prime Minister Nakasone issued an apology. Yet Fujio still stands by what he said, repeating his opinions to the mass media, while Nakasone's apology is seen as being merely for the sake of appearances.

They should pay for their irresponsible assertions by taking certain concrete measures.

I think one of the lines of action they should pursue is securing ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by the Japanese government.

Japan has not ratified the Convention in an international context in which 124 countries have already done so. It seems that the principal reason why the Japanese government is not eager to ratify it is that they don't want to legislate against propagandizing ideas of racial superiority or racial discrimination.

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We renew our determination on this occasion to strengthen international unity on the complete and earliest possible ratification of the Convention and also on the enactment of both the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation and the Law for the Ainu people as domestic laws related to the Convention. I sincerely ask for your continued support for this purpose.

We will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the enactment of our constitution on November 3 next year. We have sworn to renounce war and to protect human rights in this constitution. We should reconsider the original ideas to which we pledged ourselves when we started down the path of a new nation after World War II, in order to win the true respect of the people of the world.

RECURRING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AINU PEOPLE

Prime Minister Nakasone spoke in the diet that we don't have any minorities facing discrimination in Japan. Is it true after we knew the reality of Ainu people in Hokkaido? The following cases were reported recently and they are just a few visible peaks on a huge iceberg.

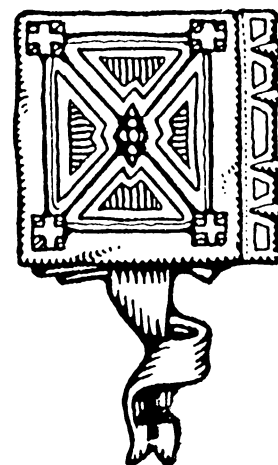
Example 1: Three years ago, a young Ainu man who worked for a public hospital in a town was ordered by his boss to shave his body hair by reason of unhygienic appearance. Ainu people have some physical difference from other Japanese as their racial characteristics. Those physical characteristics, of course, can never be the reasons for them to get blamed. The boss's words hurt him deeply but he put up with this contempt. He did not complain to the association for Ainu protection called "Hokkaido Utari Association", considering his human relationship at the work place after all. Recently it became known to the association. That young man still keeps using a depilatory agent when he goes to work today.

Example 2: The second case was reported to the association last year although it actually occurred ten years ago. Once a child in a hospital needed a blood transfusion and Ainu residents in the town offered their blood. After the operation, the child's family complained that the child's blood was defiled with the Ainu blood. When they heard, Ainu people felt vexed with non-Ainu's prejudice against them.

Example 3: In 1980, at a prefectural high school in Sapporo city in Hokkaido, a teacher of social studies insulted the hairy appearance of Ainu people and asked the students if they would marry them suggesting that even if Ainu race was savage.

This case became known three years later and the Sapporo Legal Affairs Bureau punished the teacher by a charge of instruction approving the case as a violation of human rights.

Example 4: October 24 of this year, a discriminatory expression against Ainu people was found in an educational cartoon, and the Sapporo Legal Affairs Bureau started investigation. The scene was in an educational book of geography (published by "Sa-E-Ra" publishing Co.,) introducing Hokkaido area; Some children are discussing where they will visit next and they find a dog. They throw a stone to the dog, saying, "Ah, a dog! 'Ah' and 'dog' ... Yes! let's go to 'Ainu' residential area." ('inu' is a Japanese word for a 'dog'.) They played upon words, but it sounded nothing but a discrimination against Ainu people.





“Discrimination Against Buraku, Today: Illustrated by Charts & Tables -- from the research results on the reality in each prefecture”

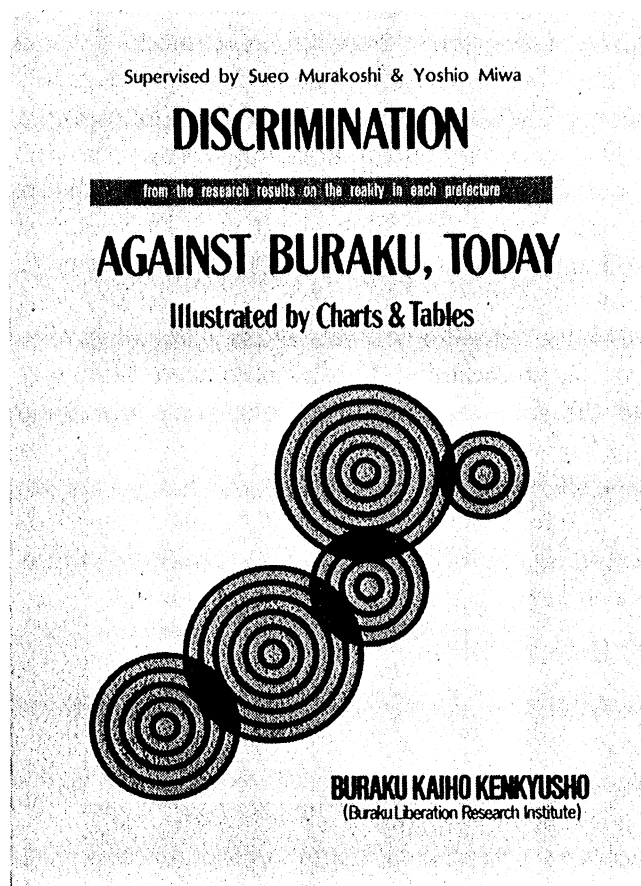
“Discrimination Against Buraku, Today,” an English version of “Konnichi no Buraku Sabetsu” (1986), was published by the Buraku Liberation Research Institute in October. It aims to clarify the real state of today’s Buraku and to heighten national awareness of human rights. It is based on a fact-finding survey of Buraku carried out by each local government.

Details: 21 by 15 centimeters; 145 pages; US\$ 14.00 (¥2,000)

The Buraku issue represents a serious violation of human rights in Japanese society. As the Integration Policy Deliberation Council pointed out in 1965: “Its solution is a national responsibility.”

Despite various projects over the past 10 years, the government has neglected to carry out a fact-finding survey of the Buraku issue on a nationwide basis. Toward this end, each local government has implemented such a survey with the cooperation of the Buraku Liberation League in order to work out a means of solving the problem. The Liberation League has also been conducting a national survey on an independent basis.

Based on these objective data, the new publication has been compiled for the purpose of delineating actual conditions in Buraku today (especially with regard to education, occupation and health), ascertaining the degree of national understanding of the Buraku problem, and passing



on accurate data on the issue to people abroad. The table of contents is as follows. We hope you will take the opportunity to make full use of the new study.

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Area Improvement Projects Council Subcommittee Report Unacceptable — Denies Government's Responsibility

On August 5, the Basic Issues Deliberation Committee of the Area Improvement Projects Council (headed by Mr. Eiichi Isomura) issued a public report. The Committee, established following a resolution of the Council, drafted the report through 13 meetings. The content neglects completely the Integration Projects Deliberation Council's Report of 1965 and opposes denunciation tactics. It seems to be intended to give a hard blow to the Buraku liberation movement. The concept of the national government's responsibility has been pushed backstage and the achievements of the liberation movement over the 40 years after the war are portrayed in a negative light.

The following is a critique of the Report made in the 6th National Rally for the Enactment of the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku.

(1) Disappointing content

After learning the content of the Report, we were surprised and greatly disappointed. The Report failed to indicate clearly whether or not new legislation for controlling discriminatory acts was necessary by focusing mainly on the improvements made in Buraku. Only a small number of measures and enlightenment efforts remained to be implemented, the Report said. Basic issues for the solution of Buraku discrimination problems, according to the Report, were as follows:

- (i) To avoid deceptive advocacy of Buraku liberation
- (ii) To discourage denunciation acts by liberation organizations
- (iii) To reinforce the initiative of local governments and relegate the integration measures basically to general public administration

In regard to the necessity of legal control over

malicious discrimination, the Report simply stated "No."

(2) Only areas of improvement exaggerated

The first point in our critique is that Report does not face squarely the reality of present discrimination against Burakumin. Last fall, the Central Committee of the National Movement conducted a nationwide march to make a close survey of real conditions in the Buraku. Even in the area of housing conditions, regarded as the most advanced of the integration projects, there are many problems yet to be solved. A large number of Buraku are still not designated for integration measures and thus don't benefit at all. We learned firsthand the realities requiring activities for improving life in general, the stability of businesses and jobs, public health, hygiene and education. The Report deliberately overlooked such serious realities of discrimination. On the contrary, the Report proposed that integration measures, especially individual benefit measures, be handled within the general administrative framework by giving only a positive assessment to partial improvements. However, as the Report rightly anticipates, even the present level of conditions may not be maintained once the integration measures are terminated. It is obvious that the conditions are bound to regress by 10 to 15 years. This illustrates the lack of sufficient activities in the past to improve business, occupational and educational standards. The Special Measures Law for Integration Projects has inherited this weakness. Execution of positive measures for improving education and stabilizing businesses and jobs is a must if we are to face squarely the realities of discrimination and to achieve self-reliance. Recognition of this point is missing from the Report.

(3) Continuing discriminatory incidents overlooked

Discrimination is still alive. Discrimination



against prospective in-laws and employees of Buraku origin, the sales and purchase of Buraku Lists (the full story of this has not yet emerged even 11 years after their discovery), secret distribution of family register copies by phony lawyers and judicial scriveners, distribution of discriminatory handbills in Fukuoka and Tokyo for an extended period, and others. Such serious realities of discrimination are completely hidden from sight.

Discussion of basic problems for the solution of Buraku discrimination requires one to face and analyze the realities of discrimination in order to indicate the path leading to their solution. This process was skipped in the drafting of the Report. As we still face occurrence of discriminatory incidents, we feel it is necessary to critically review the overall nature of public administration for human rights protection and to establish legal control over vicious discriminatory acts. The Report of the Integration Measures Council also pointed to this.

Nevertheless, the Subcommittee Report contradicts this by saying that human rights protection institutions within the Ministry of Justice are well established and indicates satisfaction with the current system. Moreover, the Report opposes legal control and rejects the principles of the Integration Measures Council Report.

(4) Denunciation tactics rejected

Claiming that denunciation tactics by liberation organizations hamper free exchange of opinion and increase prejudice against integration issues, the Report discourages such tactics. Further, the Report advises those who discriminate that they have no obligation to attend the denunciation meeting and urges them to go to the police if denunciation goes beyond certain limits.

We consider it natural for those discriminated against to confirm and denounce the act of discrimination. This is an inalienable right securing respect for human dignity. Many positive achievements have resulted from this approach and the position of the Report on this point is totally unacceptable.

(5) Government's obligations neglected

The primary defect of this Report is that the fundamental assertion made in the Integration Measures Council Report is missing: that is "the responsibility for the solution of the Buraku discrimination problem lies in the hands of the national government."

The Report comments on various inadequacies on the part of liberation organizations, local



A Meeting to discuss on the Area Improvement Projects Council Subcommittee Report was held; November 4, '86.



governments and citizens in general, while requesting no particular efforts on the part of the government.

The Area Improvement Projects Council was originally set up to recommend policies to be executed by the government for a drastic solution to Buraku discrimination. Given this background, the Council ought to be condemned for not fulfilling its role.

(6) Report drafted in the absence of the party directly concerned

Why has such a poor Report emerged? It is primarily because Burakumin who have fought discrimination for many years, were not represented on the Council. We had communicated on various occasions our intention to represent ourselves in the Council for over a year prior to the selection. The government would not listen to those working for the fundamental solution to the Buraku discrimination problem.

Seen from another perspective, the government has not been willing to learn from international trends for the abolition of discrimination and protection of human rights as symbolized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants, and the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and Discrimination against Women.

(7) Toward a drastic solution of Buraku discrimination

As the Central Executive Committee for the National Movement for the Enactment of the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku, we strongly demand that the Area Improvement Measures Council make a complete review of the Report and fulfil its role for the drastic solution of Buraku discrimination in accordance with the following:

- (i) To engage in discussion in recognition of the concrete realities of discrimination, including discriminatory incidents
- (ii) To engage in discussion in accordance with the Japanese Constitution and Integration Measures Council Report
- (iii) To engage in discussion in view of international trends for the abolition of discrimination and establishment of human rights as

symbolized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

- (iv) To engage in discussion in meeting the demand for the fundamental solution of Buraku discrimination problems as laid out by the resolutions of the Central Executive Committee for the National Movement for the Enactment of the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku and local government councils as well as by requests made by the Buraku Liberation League and other organizations.

(8) In this commemorative International Year of Peace and the 40th anniversary of the Japanese constitution

At this point, we would like to emphasize again the basic nature of Buraku discrimination problems as created by politics and how they should be solved through political processes.

In the years after the Meiji Restoration, the government only issued the Emancipation Edict (1871) and took no substantive measures to correct enduring discrimination and oppression. On the contrary, the discrimination against Burakumin was exploited and reinforced for the industrialization and military build-up of the nation.

After the war, the new constitution was proclaimed with principles opposing discrimination. Concrete measures, however, were executed only after the Integration Measures Council Report of 1965. As we recall this past history, it becomes obvious that the national government is in the key position to actively pursue the solution of Buraku discrimination.

We strongly request the government and the Diet to engage in discussions in the light of such past developments in order to actively pursue the enactment of a law useful for the fundamental solution of Buraku discrimination problems.



Marriage Discrimination Case -- Mr. N. of

cho

BREAKING THE NEWS OF A SUDDEN SEPARATION

An incident involving discrimination in marriage occurred in cho, Nagano prefecture. Mr. N. turned to the Buraku Liberation League out of vexation and anger, declaring: "I've got to know about discrimination against Buraku for the first time in my 29 years of life. I'm determined to take a stand on the abolition of discrimination, whatever it costs me."

The Saku Regional Council of BLL held a confirmation meeting on June 10 at which they established that the case of marriage discrimination had indeed taken place.

Mr. N., 29, of cho and Miss Y. of

City were both at the Nagano School for the Deaf and Dumb and got to know each other in a finger language group. Their relationship began in August last year.

Miss Y.'s family questioned the matron of a dormitory at the school. When they learned that Mr. N. was from a Buraku, they objected to his relationship with their daughter. But with the encouragement of the members of the finger language group, Mr. N. presented a ring to Miss Y. on her birthday on January 22 this year and pledged marriage.

However, on January 24, Mr. N. received a "mini-facs" from Miss Y., bearing the totally unexpected news that she wanted them to separate. Mr. N. was quite out of his mind and ran to Miss Y.'s house. But her parents shut the door on him with the words, "You're annoying us! Go away!"

The following day Mr. N.'s vexation and anger drove him to appeal to the Buraku Liberation League. Despite his attempts to pursue the matter, he eventually resigned himself to the end of the relationship on May 31.

The confirmation meeting was held in the presence of Mr. N., the Y. family and the City government.

Miss Y.'s father protested: "I didn't discriminate. It was for the sake of the child I love. It's usual for someone to ask about the partner's origin. Everybody does it."

"And even if he is from a Buraku, if consultations at the family conference had gone well, we might well have permitted the relationship." He thereby shifted responsibility for the issue onto Mr. N., implying that there had been something wrong with his attitude.

Miss Y.'s younger sister commented: "Why are you making such a great fuss? It's only a love affair... I had 'Dowa' education for the first time at junior high. But I felt that if they give us 'Dowa' education, there will on the contrary, be discrimination. I thought of the Buraku as something frightening and scary." Her words made it clear that she didn't understand the gravity of the matter.

The Y. family eventually admitted that they had objected because Mr. N. was of Buraku origin and apologized.

To Mr. N. This is Y.

Please cancel the matter of the 26th for the sake of circumstances in my family. Please forgive me. I don't have the courage to continue our relationship. Even if I think about the future, things will certainly be impossible. Please forget about me. I've had a wonderful time until now. Thank you very much.

Please find new happiness.

Good-bye. Take care of yourself.

(Full text of the "mini-facs" bearing the news of the farewell)

