



July 1987

BLL 44th Annual Convention

The 44th annual convention of the Buraku Liberation League was held in Fukuoka City for three days (June 16 to 18) and participated by about 1200 representatives from burakus all over Japan.

On the first day, President Uesugi made the following remark. "We successfully won the legislation of the Special Financial Measures Law for Area Improvement backed by a broad national coalition. This law, however, is intended only for managing measures that are still left undone. Moreover, we are now increasingly being exposed to a backlash demonstrated by the government's clear opposition to our

kyūdan (denunciation) tactic and Buraku movements in general, unwillingness to admit the administration's obligation for the solution of Buraku discrimination problems, the attempt to establish a 'public-interest corporation' for managing education and enlightenment programs for non-discrimination and the distribution of guidelines for the promotion of enlightenment activities. We will counter these by, first, mobilizing grassroots mass movement from all buraku communities, and, second, strengthening our ties with movements and organizations in Japan and abroad, and, third, by invigorating anti-discrimination and human rights initiatives all over the world. In so doing, we hope that we will advance our steps toward the victory in our struggle to win the legislation of the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation and the second phase struggle for the retrial of Sayama Case. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of our father of liberation, the late president Mr. Jiichiro Matsumoto and all BLL members must be infused with the Matsumoto spirit, which is to struggle ever till all forms of discrimination are eradicated and peace is established in the world."



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On the first day in the morning, a number of guests gave congratulatory remarks, and recipients of the fourth Matsumoto Prize were announced as well as recipients of the 13th Buraku Liberation Literature Prize. In the afternoon, Mr. Tatsukuni Komori, secretary-general, proposed policy guidelines and agenda of movement for 1987.

On the second day, participants were divided into three groups and discussed among others (1) direction of the second phase struggle for the Fundamental Law, (2) direction of the second phase struggle for the retrial of Sayama Case, (3) ways to counter reactionary moves of the central government (Area Improvement Measures Office and others), and (4) schemes to enhance organizational strength. Election for the new BLL leadership was conducted after discussions.

On the third day, reports from respective group discussions were made, four representatives stated their views, Mr. Komori responded to questions on

behalf of the BLL leadership, all the proposed policies were adopted by an overwhelming majority and the election result was announced. All candidates won votes of confidence.

President Uesugi, on behalf of the newly elected leadership, expressed his determination to fight in the following words; "The harsh attack on the BLL itself proves that our movement is the most powerful in the Buraku liberation movement. We will consolidate our unity inside and outside our organization for winning the ultimate victory of liberation." The convention resolution was then adopted to conclude all the proceedings. Prof. Murakoshi, director-general of the BLRI, attended the convention as an honored guest.

The new leadership is Mr. Saichiro Uesugi, president; Mr. Takumi Ueda and Mr. Seigi Ohnishi, vice-presidents; Mr. Tatsukuni Komori, secretary-general.

The Second Stage of Our Struggle

Central Meeting to Appeal for the Enactment of the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation Held in Tokyo

A central meeting sponsored by the executive committees demanding the enactment of the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation was held in Tokyo on May 22, with some 10,000 participants. Political parties, including the Japan Socialist Party, the Clean Government Party, the Democratic Socialist Party and the United Democratic Party, each made a speech expressing solidarity. This was followed by the keynote proposal: developments in

the two — year first stage of the movement calling for the passage of the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation were summed up and a policy to expand the grassroots movement was outlined. Later, people from various fields, including business, religion and politics, delivered addresses. The meeting ended with the adoption of a declaration.

"The Declaration of the Meeting"

The new Law on Specific Governmental Budgetary Measures Concerning Projects Designated for (Dowa) Area Improvement came into force as of April 1, 1987.

We have been face-to-face with harsh realities in the area of welfare and human rights.

Under such circumstances, our two-year struggle with the executive committee demanding the passage of the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation, which has the support of a wide range of people, has been able to bear some fruit: the enactment of the new law covering Dowa area



improvement projects with a validity limited to five years.

However, judging from the contents of the "Report of the Working Group to Discuss the Fundamental (Buraku) Problems in Council for Area Improvement Measures" and the "Opinion Statement on Area Improvement Measures Hereafter," which have been issued by the Council for Area Improvement Measures, an advisory organ to the Director-General of the Administrative Affairs Agency in the Prime Minister's Office, this law is restricted to covering the so-called "left-over" projects and is based on the idea of suppressing the Buraku liberation movement. Obviously, this law is far from what we have been demanding.

In the light of the new legislation, we here take stock of developments in the first stage of our struggle for the enactment of the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation.

We have to intensify our struggle for the Fundamental Law and persist to the bitter end.

We regard our continuing struggle as the second stage in the fight for the Fundamental Law. We should open up a path for its enactment, expanding our campaign into a broad national movement in cooperation with each community. For this purpose, we should tackle the issues through the following objectives.

(1) To bring the terrible reality of the discrimination against Buraku to light again; and to make the limitations of the new law clear while making efficient use of it.

(2) To appeal strongly for the realization of the spirit of the Report by the Council on Dowa Projects.

(3) To strengthen a united front among the people living adjacent to Buraku areas based on the principle that the enactment of the Fundamental Law represents the first step toward the implementation of a Fundamental Law for Human Rights.

(4) To call for the early and complete ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in terms of international solidarity.

(5) To step up our appeals to local self-governing bodies and also expand the struggle at the governmental level.

Our principal objective is to eliminate discrimination of every kind — not merely discrimination against Buraku. We seek to achieve this purpose through enactment of the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation.

We are determined to tackle the issues one by one and not to give up until the passage of the Fundamental Law.

May 22, 1987



A 95 Year-Old Death Row Inmate Dies in Prison

Sadamichi Hirasawa, the suspect in the "Teigin Case," made 18 unsuccessful appeals to reopen the case.

Since being sentenced to death, Hirasawa had been detained for 32 years without either execution or release. On May 10 he died in a Tokyo prison as a result of pneumonia. He was 95 years old.

In the "Teigin Case," a large number of people were poisoned to death at the Teikoku Bank in Tokyo in 1948. Sadamichi Hirasawa was arrested seven months after the mass murder. Despite persistently pleading his innocence, he was sentenced to death in 1955, with his "confession" being used as the major item of prosecution evidence. He made 18 applications for a retrial, but they were all rejected. None of the 32 Ministers of Justice holding office since 1955 signed the decree ordering his execution.

The "Teigin Case" made a great impact on the public. It became the theme of many movies and

novels arguing for Hirasawa's innocence. Some Diet members recently formed the nonpartisan "League of Diet Members for the Release of Sadamichi Hirasawa."



the late Mr. Sadamichi Hirasawa



Discriminatory statement made by the Education Minister at an Educational Reform Promotion Meeting **Mothers——Stay at Home**

Education Minister Masajuro Shiokawa made a statement discriminating against women at an Educational Reform Promotion Meeting sponsored by the Ministry of Education, held in a hotel in Kyoto on May 16. Commenting on women's increasing participation in social life, he said: "Women should stay at home while their children are receiving compulsory education."

More and more women are getting jobs playing an active social role since Japan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which denies any distinction between the roles of men and women, and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Law. In such a context, his statement is bound to provoke public debate.

This comment from Education Minister Shiokawa came during a free discussion session, when he claimed that over half the mothers of children still receiving compulsory education had jobs. He went on to criticize the idea of women working and having a role in society by saying: "I can understand that mothers are eager to work, given the idea of equal rights for both sexes, but it's only a principle. In fact, my own feeling is that mothers should stay at home."

Citing examples from other countries, he added: "In the United States, only 40 percent of mothers of children in compulsory education go out to work. It might be a better idea if mothers started working outside the home after their children have become adults."

Also participating in the discussion were Education Ministry officials and Governor Aramaki of Kyoto. There were 11 participants representing the public: delegates from women's and elderly people's associations, PTA officials, teachers and people from academic life. The discussion focused on two issues: the shift to a lifelong education system and the improvement of the entrance examination system for state universities.

The participants included three women — in their 20s, 30s and 60s. The delegate from the women's association, a woman in her 60s, said that she agreed with Education Minister Shiokawa that women were playing too active a role in social life. The other younger women kept silent, just looking at each other in surprise. The discussion came to an end at this point.

Tell more Japanese about torture

S.O.S. Torture Translation Committee Established

A preparatory committee for a "S. O. S. Torture Translation Committee" was set up on May 20 with an office in the Buraku Liberation Research Institute. S. O. S. Torture is an international human rights organization with its headquarters in Switzerland. It acts as an information exchange center dealing with torture incidents throughout the world. Since this information is provided in English, an S.O.S. Torture translation committee will translate it into Japanese for release in this country.

S. O. S. Torture was established in 1986 with Prof. Pierre de Senardens, former human rights

director of UNESCO, as its head. It publishes newsletters and magazines compiled from data on torture from 45 affiliated organizations in 25 countries. The Japanese Foundation for Mental Health and Human Rights (with lawyer Etsuro Totsuka as secretary general) is a member of the S. O. S. Torture Network. The foundation decided to form an S. O. S. Torture translation committee in cooperation with the Buraku Liberation Research Institute.

The purpose of this committee is to bring cases of torture to public attention throughout the world and provide a translation of S. O. S. Torture's newsletter



for human rights organizations in Japan. A translation committee will be officially set up in June and headed by Iwakichi Wajima, former president of the Japan Bar Association, with Saichiro Uesugi, presi-

dent of the Buraku Liberation League, and Etsuro Totsuka, a lawyer, as his deputies. Kenzo Tomonaga, secretary-general of BLRI, will also serve as secretary -general of this committee.

The 40th Anniversary of the Japanese Constitution and Human Rights

Housing is a Human Right

Some Reconsiderations in the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

By Kazuo Hayakawa

(Professor of Housing and Land Policy, Kobe University)

1987 is the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The Japanese are not familiar with the word "homeless." The United Nations defines the homeless as people living on the streets in places which cannot be defined as a residence or in slums where the housing conditions are terrible. One-fifth of the world population live in poverty-stricken areas and 100 million people have nowhere to live, the United Nations has reported.

We sometimes see people in Asia and Africa who are stricken by starvation and disease trudging along in scenes on TV. We should never neglect them — they are the same human beings as ourselves. Naturally, one of the purposes of IYSH is to help the homeless. And the IYSH also aims to tackle any problems involving people being unhappy with their place of residence. We Japanese need to take the second purpose into serious consideration.

Japan has become a major economic power. However, there are various contradictions causing public distress lurking behind the nation's prosperity. Housing conditions, in particular, the very foundation of life, are poor. This stark fact causes various problems: ill -health, adverse effects on children's development, the elderly being deprived of the right to welfare, and violations of human dignity. The Japanese Constitution states that every person has the right to maintain minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living. Nonetheless, not all Japanese are guaranteed this right, given such poor housing conditions.

Typical examples of the homeless are the people living in the districts clustered with flophouses for low -paid laborers, concentrated in such areas as Kamagasaki in Osaka, Sanya in Tokyo, and Kotobukicho in Yokohama, along with people simply living on the streets. However, there is another type of homeless person in Japan.

There are elderly people forced to stay in hospital as long -term patients because they have nowhere to live. There are also elderly people living in homes for the aged so as not to cause trouble to their families by living together with them in a small house — even though these elderly people do have houses to live in. Here we have found the stark reality as follows. Elderly people are forced to live in overcrowded houses when they go back to their homes. Other elderly people are forced to reside together in large rooms in homes for the elderly. Though the government emphasizes the benefits of home care, there are few homes for the elderly where they can convalesce at ease. Many landlords do not like renting houses to the aged. They are afraid that these old people may die without anybody noticing, that they run the danger of causing fires, and that they do not readily accept increases in rent.

The other day I had a call from a 74 -year -old woman living in Kobe. She was complaining about her high rent. She said that she had to pay ¥ 32,000 for rent from her monthly pension of ¥ 60,000. She maintained that she could easily live on ¥ 60,000 if only she didn't have to worry about her rent. I sup-



pose there must be a lot of other people who feel in the same way. Japan has to become seriously aware of her aging society. Given this, we should bear in mind that housing is the basis of welfare.

Current housing conditions in Japan prevent the physically disabled from living independently. The difference in levels, the narrow corridors, the high sinks and upstairs bedrooms are usual in a house. And these factors make it difficult for the handicapped to live on their own. Though an independent life is needed to guarantee human dignity, Japanese housing conditions make it difficult.

To mark the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, I have got my graduate students to form an "exploratory team to research human rights related to housing." Their objective is to research into the fact that Japanese housing conditions are violating human rights. One of the students reported that the homes for the elderly in Japan reflected the poor housing policy. Some students visited every house where the physically disabled live. And they were astounded by the fact that the handicapped can actually live in such houses. One such person living in a private apartment is forced to get out of the wheelchair and crawl from room to room.

Since the Nakasone administration began emphasizing exploitation of private-sector vitality, real estate brokers and large companies have been manipulating the space in big cities like Tokyo and Osaka in order to make money. They hire hoodlums known as "yakuza" to evict the tenants and purchase the land.

In December 1986 the law controlling ground and housing rent was repealed. Ever since, ground and housing rent have leaped up an incredible pace. And elderly people have been evicted from the places where they live. These acts of dispossession are being justified on the pretext of making effective use of land related to urban redevelopment.

The rent of an apartment house built by the Japan Housing Corporation has increased terribly. Existing rents have also increased. In particular, the cost of rebuilding apartment complexes has registered several increases. It has become impossible for people living on a pension to stay in an apartment. The number of people failing to pay their rent has been growing rapidly: the rate of nonpayment has reached the 40-percent level at some public apartments in Osaka City. It has become next to impossible to purchase a new house because of the appalling rise in

A comparison of the size of houses in Japan and England

(%)

The number of rooms	Own House	Public Rented House	Private Rented House
JAPAN			
~ 2	2.8	21.6	47.6
3	7.9	52.2	29.5
4	19.1	25.0	15.8
5	23.2	1.0	4.4
6 ~	47.1	0.2	2.5
ENGLAND			
1	2.0	12.8	22.1
2	28.1	27.6	34.6
3	57.5	56.6	35.3
4	12.4	3.0	7.9

Notes: 1. The general idea of a room is as follows:

Japan: one room - no minimum standard

even a one-mat-room (m²) is

counted as a room

England: one-bedroom house = a bedroom (over 12 m²) + a living room (over 15 m²) + a dining kitchen + a bathroom + a boxroom

2. Over half of public rented houses in England are bigger than a 3LDK and their standards are almost the same as of one's own private house.

By contrast, over half of the public rented houses in Japan are 2K in size. makes the

That makes the standards very low.

Source: Housing Survey, 1978 / Prime Minister's Office (Japan)

General Household Survey, 1971 / Department of Environment (England)

(excerpt from New Japanese Housing Conditions by Kazuo Hayakawa / published by Asahi Sensho)

land prices. Housing conditions have been made even worse by the rapid increase of the municipal fixed property tax.

In Japan the right of residence, which is the fundamental basis of people's livelihood, has been diminished and threatened. How can we live under such conditions?

I feel very deeply that housing is equivalent to a human right. But Japan has not tried to guarantee the right of residence after World War II. Even worse, people are actually being deprived of the right of residence. Everyone accepts the fact that Japan has acquired economic power. However, life of people cannot be enriched as long as these miserable housing conditions are not improved. We should regard these poor housing conditions in Japan as a violation of human rights.



Readers' Reply to Questionnaire: Summary

We have received so far 18 responses to our questionnaire that we sent out recently. We thank these readers for promptly returning their candid and thoughtful views. Also, we thank in advance for comments to be received from other readers. The replies pointed to the following as topics to be covered in our future issues: teaching on Buraku discrimination in schools, prospect of liberation, specific examples of discrimination, mass media's negative stance in reporting on Buraku-related matters, historical analysis of statistics on various major indices of Buraku

life, problems that exist among Buraku organizations, cause of split between the BLL and the JCP (communist party), Buraku discrimination seen from the eyes of other minorities such as Koreans and Ainu people, kinds of reaction from abroad to Buraku discrimination, etc.

We will give our replies and discussions on these issues one after another in the "Reader's Corner" of our Buraku Liberation News. We would like to take this opportunity also to invite further questions and inquiries from our readers.

A Letter of Thanks from O. R. Tambo, President, ANC

Dear Mr Tomonaga,

One of the most exciting moments of the visit of the ANC delegation to Japan, which I was privileged to lead last April, was our stop-over in the city of Osaka where we were greeted most enthusiastically at a great meeting organised by your Liaison Conference. That meeting, comprising members of various organizations, including the Buraku Liberation Research Institute, gave us the feeling that in our speech we were addressing the whole of Japan.

I thank you most sincerely and all the friends who met us at the railway station, as well as the organisers of the meeting, for giving us such a rupturous welcome.

I wish also to thank you for the generous donation which you gave to us in the name of the people of Osaka.

I wish to introduce to you, and to all our friends in Osaka, members of another ANC delegation of two, namely, Paul Ravelson, member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC and Dan Cindi, senior official in our Department of International Affairs. We commend the delegation to your support.

Yours for Liberation.

O. R. T a m b o
President, ANC

(21 May 1987)