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## In Pursuit of Humanism, Democracy and Peace

The year 1989 was marked by drastic changes both domestically and globally. Outside Japan we observed historic incidents such as the Tiananmen Square massacre in China, rapid political developments in East European nations as symbolized by the collapse of the Berlin Wall, elections for Namibian independence, the victory of democratic forces in the presidential election in Chile and the U.S.-Soviet summit in Malta. Inside Japan reformist camps won in the Upper House election over the ruling party and succeeded in passing the Consumption Tax Abolition Bill and the A-bomb Survivors Protection Bill in the Upper House, not to say in the Lower House.

The common thread we find though these changing political scenes in and out of Japan is the pursuit of humanism, democracy and peace by the human race. Whatever the difficulties that stand in the way and however long it takes, determined pursuit will open its way forward.

We have entered into the 1990's in this changing context. The Buraku liberation movement regards this decade as an era to advance into the third phase of its struggles under four major pillars.

The first is to engage ourselves in struggles with a clear perspective of ultimate liberation of Buraku. Priority areas in focus are the further improvement of Buraku environments, more industrial and occupational stability, better education and ideas. The passage of the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation is needed to attain progress successfully in these areas.

The second is to expand solidarity with other antidiscrimination struggles and local community-based coalitions. It is still true today that the dis-

crimination against Buraku and Burakumin is exploited as a divide-and rule means of dominating the working public. This means that the elimination of Buraku discrimination is possible only when a broad coalition is build up with non-Buraku neighbors, those who are fighting against various kinds of discrimination and those seeking for the abolition of discrimination in every corner and when a truly democratic society without any discrimination is materialized.

The third is to develop our international solidarity against discrimination. Global unification is taking place at an ever accelerating speed today. This trend is especially conspicuous in Japan, which has now become a giant economic power. We need to have a perspective of international solidarity in abolishing discrimination as well. The reason is we believe that a company that practices discrimination against Buraku in Japan is standing on the side as apartheid rulers in South Africa and those violating the rights of Aboriginal people in Australia. In this regard IMADR, of which BLRI is a member, needs to grow more powerful.

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The fourth is to build up organizational and theoretical capacities of the movement to win success in all our abovementioned endeavors in the third phase.

This year is International Literacy Year as designated by the United Nations. Discrimination deprives its victims of their rights to education and literacy. In the highly information-oriented society of today, illiteracy means the deprivation of one's right to enjoy a decent life. However, the number of illiterates in the world today amounts to a quarter of the entire adult population. If functional illiterates are to be included, the number of illiterates in Japan would be sizable. In observing this International Literacy Year we have to step up our literacy activities both in Japan and abroad.

This year is also the 25th anniversary of the UN adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. It is widely known that the framers of this convention intended to eliminate discrimination in order to suppress the surge of Neo-Nazism. As many as 128 states are now parties to it. The range of discrimination covered under this convention is broad, including not only racial discrimination but also ethnic and status discrimination. The convention stipulates as principles to be followed in eliminating discrimination 1) to ban legally discriminatory acts of vicious nature; 2) to implement special measures to improve inferior Buraku conditions; and 3) to promote education and awareness-raising pro-

grams to eliminate discriminatory consciousness.

The convention was adopted a quarter of a century ago and 128 states have acceded to it, but Japan has not joined this circle. For true internationalization, Japan is required to ratify the Racial Discrimination Convention and to pass corresponding domestic laws such as the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation, the law for the Ainu people, the law for post-war compensation for the natives of former colonies and the law for human rights protection, etc.

This year is also the 25th anniversary of the issuance of Dowa Measures Deliberation Council's report. The report maintained that the solution of Buraku discrimination problems was among the most important national issues in Japan and called for active implementation of comprehensive measures to improve environmental and living conditions, to improve education and social welfare, to bring further stability in Buraku industry and jobs, and to protect fundamental rights (including legal regulations against discrimination). As we observe the 25th anniversary this year we need to recall the basic spirit of this report. Our call for the passage of the Fundamental Law is in line with this recognition.

The Buraku Liberation Research Institute is determined to strengthen the ties with our friends in Japan and abroad and to do our utmost throughout this year to fulfill our objectives.

## **Minorities and Human Rights in Asia-Pacific Region**

Commemorating the 41st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, meetings were held under the theme of "Minorities and Human Rights in Asia-Pacific Region" at 4 places in Japan. (Dec. 4 Tokyo, Dec. 6: Fukuoka and Hiroshima & Dec. 7: Osaka.)

Four guest-speakers were invited from Thailand, The Philippines, Australia and United Kingdom.

We introduce a summary of their speeches made in the Osaka meeting as follows:

### **Prof. Chaichalong Assavasena (Thailand)**

Thai Law & Development Research Institute

In Thailand fundamental human rights are guaranteed for all people under the constitution.

As minority groups, there are some hill tribes, Muslims and refugees in Thailand.

About 500,000 hill tribesmen live in the north and



From left Prof. Chaichalong Assavasena, Mrs. Purificacion Quisumbing, Mr. Paul Coe, Prof. Michael Banton and Prof. Kinhide Mushakoji.

northeast part of Thailand, and they are very poor. They are different from Thais in language, culture and religion.

Muslims live in the south and they have difficulty marrying members of other groups.

To take refugees: about 200 years ago a lot of Chinese people came into Thailand because of poverty, but now people from Vietnam and Cambodia have flowed into this country for political and economic reasons.

### **Mrs. Purificacion Quisumbing (The Philippines)**

Office of Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Department of Foreign Affairs

Under the rule of President Corazon Aquino, the human rights situation has drastically progressed.

In 1987, a democratic constitution was established and fundamental human rights are entirely guaranteed in the constitution. For that purpose the establishment of a humanitarian affairs agency was decided.

The economic situation has also changed its development from negative to positive. President Aquino promised to put her emphasis on the poverty of huge numbers of people. She addressed the problem of ensuring respect for human rights by destroying those persistent obstacles which disrupt peace and order.

Turning to minority issues, as in Thailand there are three special minority groups in the Philippines—that is, hill tribesmen, Muslims and refugees.

In the democratic constitution, respect for the human rights of indigenous people who have a unique cultural heritage has been recognized. And laws establishing two autonomous regions one for Muslims in Mindanao and another for hill tribesmen in Cordilera are being passed at present.

Turning to the problem of children: children in the Philippines are victims of poverty. They are exploited by rich tourists, in particular, who think they can buy children's dignity with money.

As for Philippine women staying in Japan, my special appeal is to help them and to protect them as human beings. The Philippine lady is regarded as an "entertainer or prostitute" if she is beautiful and as a "house keeper" if she dresses poorly.

In general, diplomats do not need to get visas to come to Japan. However, when I arrived in Japan for this meeting, at the airport I was treated as an immigrant woman and discriminated against.

### **Mr. Paul Coe, Lawyer (Australia)**

President of Aboriginal Legal Service Ltd.

As an indigenous Aborigine, I want to strongly appeal about the fact that the indigenous Aborigines are not protected in Australia.



In 1967, under an amendment of the Australian constitution, the Aborigines were officially guaranteed their rights to Australian citizenship. Until that time, Aborigines had to carry their Aboriginal ID cards with them just as in the present apartheid South Africa situation. It was necessary to get permission when Aborigines wanted to leave their reserves. They were prohibited from gathering their traditional foods. A person who wanted to hand down the traditional cultural heritage was sent away from the colony. At the present time there are still European priorities dominating various fields in Australia.

The aboriginal population is only 2% of the total population. However, Aborigines account for 45% of prisoners!

The average aboriginal life span is 44-45 years for men and 35 years for females compared with an average of more than 70 years for Europeans.

When Aborigines insisted on their land rights, there was a lot of agitation by majority Australian. It was in 1984. The Australian government's policy was represented in the Aboriginal Land Act. However, some regional governments and economic circles declared their opposition to the policy. As a result, this proposal was withdrawn. Exaggerated statements were made threatening that only 2% of Aborigine would crush the Australian economy.

The United Nations has launched a campaign to protect the rights of indigenous people but the Japanese government has expressed its attitude by doing nothing.

Between Japan and Australia there is a close economic connection. Many Japanese enterprises have gone into the Australian continent to getting oil and mining resources. They have never asked the opinion of the Aborigines who have occupied the land. They should first think about the indigenous people. Indigenous people have lived on the land. They are real landowners.

### **Prof. Michael Banton (U.K.)**

Dept. of Sociology, University of Bristol

In international human rights development, there have been three stages.

- 1) The Universal Declaration was adopted at The UN General Assembly.
- 2) The Convention put the Declaration in two kinds of legal form.

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

There was discussion and argument about which of these two conventions had priority.

- 3) Individual participation for establishing a right implemented. This is guaranteed in Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Based on the Optional Protocol, people (individual) can bring a complaint to the UN when a human rights violation happens.

At present 128 countries have ratified the "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination."

The committee is elected from these participant countries and the representatives examine the reports submitted from each country's government and monitor the human rights situation. The Japanese government has not ratified Article 4\* of this convention because the Japanese government considers it conflicts with the principle of freedom of speech.

- \* Article 4 : The state is to take action to prevent anybody from spreading propaganda inciting racial hatred.

However, according to the Japanese government, simultaneous pursuit of freedom of speech and implementation of Article 4 is not possible.

In England after ratification of this convention, a Racial Relations Act was passed instead.

The laws and the executive procedures for sex discrimination and racial discrimination are similar.

The following is an example judged to be a clear case of direct discrimination against a person simply because that person was a woman.

A woman applied for a job as a part-time waitress in a restaurant but the owner of the restaurant refused to employ her because she had a little child.

The industrial tribunal investigated this incident and judged it to be a direct case of sex discrimination according to the following reasons :

The owner would not have asked such a question if the applicant was a man.

He did not ask the woman how she would look after her child if it became sick.

He also did not confirm how the woman managed to work in her previous work place.

Why does Japanese government not ratify this convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial



Discrimination? It may be that the Japanese government thinks that if she ratified it, it would only be criticized and "Japan-bashing" would greatly increase.

After the 4 guests had finished their speeches, Prof. Kinhide Mushakoji, Prof. of Meiji Gakuin University (Japan) concluded this meeting with the following words:

- To understand the human rights situation in the Asia-Pacific region. That means people must share the pain and anger against human rights violation.
- To isolate the factors common to all human rights situations e.g. There is a similarity between human rights violations involving Aboriginal identification cards and those connected with the requirement to carry an alien registration card in Japan.

- To get to know each other will lead to discovering problems in one's own country.
- Discrimination has a world-wide structure. What kind of role does Japan play in this structure?

• International solidarity :

- 1) to cooperate on specific problems, such as the foreign migrant issue.
- 2) to urge internationally that the Japanese government ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- 3) try to establish a Human Rights Information Center in the Asia-Pacific region for mutual activities.

I do hope IMADR will work toward peace, democracy, respect for human rights and culture in the Asia-Pacific region.

*Protest and Appeal by "The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan."*

## **Korean Students Resident in Japan Attacked in Many Places**

Recently, the Japanese government, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and some of the massmedia slandered the "General Association of Korean Residents in Japan" and injured their reputation in connection with political donations suspected to have been made by the PACHINKO (pinball game) trade market to the Socialist Party. This caused anti-foreign sentiment and stirred up discrimination. And as a result of it, acts of violence, abuse etc. against Korean students occurred repeatedly in a lot of places.

On October 17, 1989, in the Budget Committee of the House of Representatives, an official of the Public Safety Inspection Agency said the "General Association of Korean Residents in Japan" was "a dangerous

organization" and that their movements must be watched.

On October 20, 1989, Justice Minister, Gotoda explained at a pressconference that the public safety official's expression was inadequate but that the Korean organization was a target of investigation.

Following the announcement, Mr. Gotoda repeated his opinions in an interview with the press that the idea that the Korean organization was dangerous was reasonable and supported the reply by the public Safety Agency's official.

On October 31, 1989, the Liberal Democratic Party attacked the Korean organization in the Budget Committee, saying that this group is in danger of



violent subversive activity in the future.

On November 1, 1989, Mr. K. Hamada, a Dietman belonging to the Liberal Democratic Party made the criticism in the Budget Committee that Korean schools in Japan gave an anti-Japanese education. Education Minister, Ishibashi agreed and promised to investigate this matter.

The following are the examples cited by the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan.

— October 18, 1989

In Sapporo city, Hokkaido, two Korean students (both 14 years old) were abused by a bus driver who said that Koreans are apt to do something wrong.

— October 18, 1989

In Kanagawa Pref., a Korean girl (13 years old) was surrounded by 5 Japanese highschool students and told to go back to the Korean peninsula.

— October 21, 1989

In front of Hiroshima city office, a child (9 years old) was abused and told that he was a fool because he is a pupil at a Korean school.

— October 24, 1989

At Matsudo railway station, Chiba pref., a high-school student (17 years old) was abused by a middle-aged man only because she was Korean, and her "Chima" (a kind of traditional Korean skirt) was torn

up.

— October 24, 1989

On a Takasaki Line train in Gunma Pref., two Japanese female students foulmouthed two Korean sisters saying Koreans were unpleasant.

"The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan" stated the above were only a few examples which had appeared on the surface.

They also reminded us that at the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, a lot of Korean people were massacred by ordinary Japanese citizens.

Under these circumstances, "The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan" protested to Japanese government and appealed as follows:

(1) The Japanese government must bear responsibility for the results caused by the campaign against the Korean organization.

(2) Internationally there has been no such violent attack by a government.

(3) Retract the term "dangerous organization" abused by Justice Minister Gotoda and the government.

(4) Guarantee the democratic racial rights of "The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan" and not to look upon them as an enemy.

# A Counterargument to the Report Submitted by Japan under the Int'l Covenant on Civil and Political Rights(10)

## Article 22

Section 1 and 2 of this article stipulate that those other than members of the military and police are entitled to organize labor union and to participate in union activities. But fire service personnel in Japan are not permitted to organize their union. This is clearly violating the spirit of the Covenant.

Japanese railway services were long operated by the national government. Workers had organized several unions. The biggest union was the National Railway Worker's Union with the total membership of some 200,000. These national services were privatized in April 1987, and divided into several private

companies. Accompanying this drastic change of management structure were various anti-labor harassments. For example, a skilled driver with the experience of several decades was assigned suddenly the task of picking grasses along rails instead of driving. It was solely because he was a member of the Union. Many other union members have been stationed at platform noodle shops and kiosks. There have been cases where union members had their wage cut just because they wore union pins. Similar practices are still going on. Now the union membership has decreased to around 40,000. These facts clearly testify infringement of rights to organize and participate in labor union activities.