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## "Life, Love and Human Rights" Exhibition (Part III) Held.

A picture of a Salvadorian girl with brilliant eyes. Photos of children's vivid faces taken in Iran, Afganistan, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, etc.

On the other hand, there were many pictures of children in the world who suffer from discrimination, persecution, conflict, environmental destruction etc. For example, there was a picture of street children in Brazil who were killed for disciplinary purposes.

"Life, Love and Human Rights" exhibition Part III was held at Seibu Dept. Store, Ikebukuro branch in Tokyo from August 28 to Sept. 1, 1991. The main subject was based on the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" as described above, and the current situation of Buraku discrimination in Japan was also presented. In order to eliminate Buraku discrimination, legislation of the "Fundamental Law for Buraku" was insisted on in the exhibition with persuasive power. Throughout the exhibition, a large circle of solidarity movements against elimination of all forms of discrimination has spread domestically and abroad.

Below are some voices of the people who came to see the exhibition.

It was around 1943, I remember. I was in the 5th or 6th grade. There was a Korean child named Kim. We Japanese bullied him. It was discrimination. In those days I didn't care about it because I was small. However, as time goes by, I can't forget the memory. If I could meet Kim, I would say, "I am sorry, please forgive me, Kim". But I don't know where he is now.

(A 58 year-old woman)



2nd from the left Mr.S.Uesugi, chairman of the executive committee for the exhibition, looking at the pictures.

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My child has a physical handicap. Therefore, when I see cases of discrimination I can't help facing up to the problem. I have thought about this matter and it seems that the problem which I could not see before, has been getting clearer. That is, one shouldn't try to escape from discrimination but instead struggle against it. Otherwise, the problem can't be solved, I think. Together with my handicapped child I want to insist that I am living just same as you are. You wish to live like a humanbeing and so do I. I want you all to understand the case of my child and to feel something.

(A 44 year-old housewife)

In the company where I work the study of enlightenment for "DOWA" problem has been made, but I feel it was only superficial. Therefore, this exhibition is very significant for getting



Laotian children living in Japan. Folk dancing.

out information and knowledge. I learned about the exhibition from the circular issued by the section of my company handling the "DOWA" matter. I think, however, that not enough people will spare the time to come here. The enlightening activity for "DOWA" will have a true value only when people come to see freely. The study of human rights has to take up various topics. However, it is very important for humankind. I am eagerly going to learn this matter.

(A 47 year-old banker)

When the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" was adopted last year, I questioned why such a convention was necessary. I thought that it was only significant for those who wanted to get this right. Is it necessary for privileged Japanese children? I misunderstood. I only understood the surface of the term "Convention on the Rights of the Child". I did not understand the true meaning. I am now preparing to study for the entrance examination to the university. If I can go to college next year, I will broaden my knowledge about various fields.

(A 18 year-old student)

I saw a finger-print taken for alien registration at the corner, the display of the anti-fingerprinting movement. It was a real one. I actually felt that it was terrible. I was angry with the Japanese government's way of doing things. They force foreigners, especially Koreans to assume duties and social pressure without guaranteeing them any rights.

(A 30 year-old school teacher)

## The 5th National Literacy Meeting Staged for Exchanging Mutual Experiences.

Based on the results of the "International Literacy Year", the 5th Buraku Liberation Literacy Meeting for exchanging experiences was held at a hotel in Kyoto on September 7 and 8, 1991. The current situation of illiteracy in the Buraku, the literacy movement and various efforts were

introduced. 350 participants came from 17 municipalities. They each exchanged their experiences and stated that illiterate people should play a roll in this movement for development. In addition to the Buraku Literacy movement, the "Kotobuki" literacy class in Yokohama city, the "Fureai Kan"



(communication house) in Kawasaki city, and the "Movement to establish a night junior high school in the Yamashiro area, Kyoto" were also present and expressed their fresh determination and solidarity. This meeting has been held every 2 years.

The following are contents of the speeches:

(Ms. from Nagano pref.)

I was told that women did not need to know letters. I raised 4 children peddling vegetables. When I attended the Buraku National Women's Meeting which was held in Kobe city, I heard that someone had sent a letter to her daughter. I am also trying to write a letter by myself.

(Ms. from Hiroshima Pref.)

She shared a story from her early life and said: As long as I thought that I have had a hard time, I was not able to improve. She learned letters from her child.

(Ms. from Osaka)

Since I am branch officer of the Buraku Liberation League, I thought I knew everything about Buraku people in my area. But I have seen that there are people my age who have a problem with reading and writing letters. I will concentrate my energy on the literacy movement.

(Ms. from Osaka)

She shared her struggle under terrible conditions to acquire public houses.

(Ms. from Nara Pref.)

She read the story of her early life in powerful voice, "... until I was 10 years old I was looking after a baby and ..." and she closed her speech saying that she will help other people for as long as she can.

(Ms. from Tokushima Pref.)

"I was anxious to go to school". She shared her feelings about "taken away letters".

(Ms. from Tottori pref.)

She told of her excitement on meeting here, for the first time after 30 years, someone who was born in the same Buraku.

(Ms. from Okayama pref.)

She reported on the literacy class, "DONGURI-acorn", which she belongs to. In the class she is learning letters and enjoying activities for that purpose, such as making "Liberation Cards", using musical instruments.

(Ms. from Nara Pref.)

She told of her handicapped child's situation in discrimination, not being able to get the abso-

lutely necessary information for living. As for recent activities, she reported that there are study groups for typewriting, using Japanese letters (KATAKANA), study of word-processor for braille, study of sign language etc. She also stated that high school students and school teachers also participated in the activities.

(Ms. from Tottori Pref.)

She reported on various activities, such as making "Liberation Cards" or "HAIKU-Japanese poetry" gardening, etc. in addition to just learning literacy.

Ms. who has grown up in Brazil, participated in this meeting together with members of the "KOTOBUKI" literacy class. She said that she has learned that the most important thing in the class was to live with pride as a human being.

6 Korean elderly women living in Japan told of their life of hardship since they were forced to come to Japan after the Japanese invasion of Korea. "... the Japanese armed forces stole rice, wheat for the army horses, cotton, red peppers and besides that our husbands were forcibly taken away by the Japanese...".

## THE LITERACY WORK AND DISCRIMINATION IN JAPAN

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#### Part I : Literacy Movement in Japan

*Buraku Literacy Movement / What Literacy Means for Koreans in Japan / Accredited Night School and Unaccredited Night School / Literacy for the Disabled / The Kotobuki Literacy School.*

#### Part II : Literacy Work in Japan

*Burakumin Literacy Work / Literacy Work of Korean, Night School Student, The Disabled and Night School Student in Slum.*



## Discrimination Case in Yamagata Prefecture.

This article is a continuation of Buraku Liberation News No.61, page 2.

(Brief reminder)

In several cities, town, and villages of Yamagata pref. the name which originally means "local community" was changed from "buraku" to another name such as "area", "block", etc. The term "so and so buraku" has been used by residents for a long time. However, the National Athletic Meeting will be held in Yamagata next year and the residents are worried about the image of "Buraku"-so-called "discriminated Buraku"-for participants of the athletic meeting. The Buraku Liberation League protested this discriminatory intention.

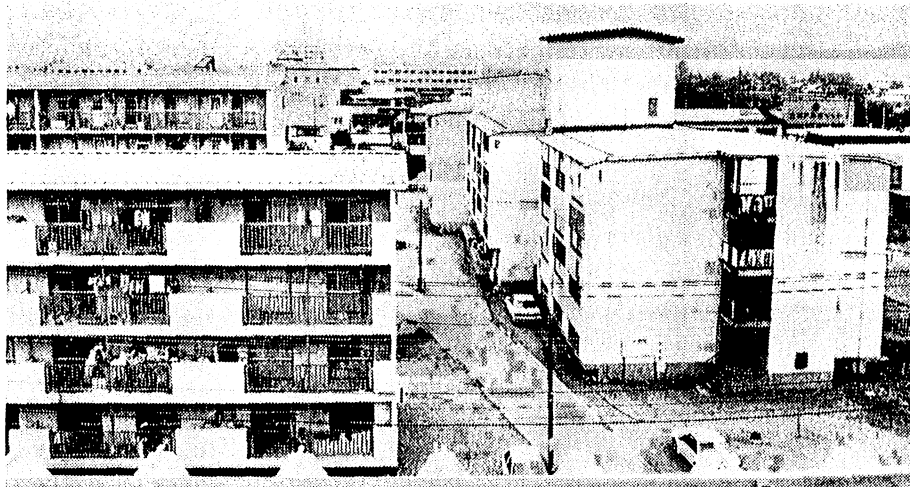
The Yamagata municipality authorities promised the Buraku Liberation League (BLL) that they would intervene in this matter.

Regarding this matter the BLL, East Japan block negotiated with the Yamagata municipality on September 9, 1991. As a result, the authorities of the municipality promised that they would explain BLL's protest and intervene with the authorities of 5 towns who had decided in their town meeting to change the name of "Buraku" to another name. In addition to this, they promised to discuss the actual situation of Buraku discrimination with 4 cities who each have big Buraku communities.

Prior to this, the Yamagata municipality had



On the left, public apartment houses constructed by Yamagata city. The Buraku community was removed for that purpose. On the right, improved, but timeworn housing for the Buraku faces the south but there are no windows.



negotiated with BLL in June 1991. At that time, they had promised to make clear the following points: 1) The process of this matter, 2) The actual conditions of the discriminated Buraku community, 3) Comments about this matter, 4) Concrete measures for enlightenment.

However, discussion concentrated on matters No.1 and No.2, and Nos.3 and 4 will be discussed later.

Yamagata municipality explained matter No.1 as follows:

Yusa-town and Iida-town decided to stop their plan to change the name "Buraku" and acknowledged their discrimination. It was said that the 2 towns were afraid that at the time of the National Athletic Meeting, which will be held next year, participants coming from all over the country may have a bad image influenced by the "Buraku"

However, with regard to 5 towns which have passed resolutions of the change in their assemblies, the Yamagata municipality judged that there were no discriminatory motives. The 5 towns are Yawata-town, Hirata-town, Matsuyama-town, Kushibiki-town and Atsumi-town. To this reply, BLL pursued the discriminatory facts with concrete evidence. The municipality recognized this evidence and promised to intervene with the 5 towns.

At first the municipality very strongly denied the existence of "discriminated Buraku" in Yamagata prefecture. However, according to historical facts, it is clear that the 4 cities of Tsuruoka, Sakata, Yonezawa and Yamagata have Buraku community in them. Therefore, the municipality also promised to discuss the actual situation of Buraku discrimination with these cities.

## *Where Is The Buraku ?*

# **An employee in Nagoya inquired about the location of the Buraku at the Hamamatsu city office.**

Recently it has become clear that 2 employees of the Manufacturing Co., Nagoya branch (Head office in Osaka) came to the Hamamatsu city office in Sizuoka Pref. and inquired the location of the Buraku.

According to the Dowa Policy Dept. of Hamamatsu city, 2 men from the above company came to the city office in the afternoon of February 20, 1991 and, after showing their calling cards, they asked if there was any "wrong" place to



establish sales offices in Hamamatsu. The dept. office asked them the purpose of their inquiry. Replied with the name of the place where the sales office will be set up and asked again about the location of a "wrong" place. The city official advised them that such type of questioning was discrimination but he could not get them to understand.

Since then authorities of Hamamatsu city and Nagoya city have made inquiries twice. As a

result, the following was made clear. The 2 persons replied at first, "wrong place" means environmentally wrong, that is, the presence of gangsters. The official asked them why they put such a question to the DOWA dept. and they realized that they were asking whether or not the place was DOWA. They also stated that their true intention was to look for their own residences when they move to Hamamatsu city. They used the establishment of sales offices as an excuse to cover up their private reason.

## **A Counterargument to the Report Submitted by Japan under the Int'l Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (12)**

### **Article 26** (All persons are equal before the law.)

1) According to the consideration of reports submitted by States under Article 40 of the covenant, the "Dowa matter" (the Buraku problem) is stated in the last part of the report as follows:

"Residents in Dowa districts are kindered from the stability and improvement of living environments, etc. for historical and social reasons. A variety of measures, which aim to improve their living environments, promote their industrial activities to protect human rights, and improve their social welfare, have been taken to achieve the stabilization of life and improvement of welfare for these residents.

2) Compared to previous reports, the Buraku problem is mentioned in this report. We appraise it as one step forward. However, we must say that the fundamental character or present situation of Buraku and its relation to international human rights provisions are not clear.

3) The Buraku problem is discrimination which historically originates from the caste system established at the time of feudalism. According to the statistics compiled by the government, today there are 4603 Dowa districts all over Japan and the

population is 1,160,000 people. However, as this survey was based on a working plan of the Special Measures for Dowa Projects, the actual number of districts and the population has increased.

As a result of long-suffered discrimination, "Buraku" districts have been located under unfavourable situations, with unstable employment and a low level of education. Moreover, discrimination in marriage and social life has occurred.

4) However, there are still numerous problem to be solved from the point of Buraku problem liberation. For example:

Environmental rehabilitation is the most advanced among all improvement efforts. However, even in this area, 30 to 40 percent of projects are still incomplete.

Problems still remain regarding employment guarantees and educational matters. The unemployment guarantees and educational matters. The unemployment rate is above the norm and Buraku people labor in unstable working conditions. Thus, the average household income for Buraku families is only 60 % of the national average.



With regard to education, the ratio of students advancing to high school has been on the decline in the past few years of economic recession (10 % compared to the national average.) And the ratio of Buraku high school students advancing to college or university is half the national average of 35.5 %.

Moreover, discrimination in marriage or employment leads young Buraku men and women to commit suicide.

Since 1980, graffiti such as "Send Buraku people to the gas chambers and kill them!" or malicious letters and phone calls have been noted.

5) Effective April 1987, the Law Concerning Special Government Financial Measures for Regional Improvement Specific Project" has been carried out. The law is in force for five years, until 1992. The law is available mainly in the Buraku area, where "Dowa Project Measures" have been carried out and will have to be done in the place of incompleteness. This law has a serious weak-point.

a) About 1000 Buraku, where the law has not been enforced, are excluded legally in relation to their environmental improvement measures. Under the law the promotion of education and guarantees for employment programs are drastically reduced.

For example, a scholarship for advancing to high school has so far been but it has been changed to a loan system. Moreover, under this law, case of discrimination, especially discrimination on the occasion of employment, personal background investigations, discriminatory propaganda, incitement, etc. are not included in the legal regulations at all.

Even though such serious discrimination still exists, the government announced its decision that the "Law Concerning Special Government Financial Measures for Regional Improvement Specific Projects" is the last special law.

6) From these points of view, in order to solve the Buraku problem, it is necessary to take legal measures based on international human rights instruments.

a) The low-level standard of living should be improved by special measures. (Environmental improvement as well as education promotion and employment guarantees are necessary.)

b) In order to eliminate discriminatory con-

sciousness, educational activities and enlightenment should be done.

c) For the abolition of serious discrimination cases, legal regulations should come into force.

7) Legislation of the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation with supported from not only the Buraku Liberation League but also from labour unions, democratic organizations, religious people, companies, scholars, educators, men of culture, municipalities, etc. is now required.

This requirement will put into concrete form the measures of the International Human Rights Agreement which was signed by 354 people from 22 countries.

8) For the purpose of solving the Buraku problem, it is not too much to say that the Buraku Liberation League and other civil organizations' roles are very important.

However, in the area improvement council, which is an advisory body of the Japanese government, there is no delegate from Buraku. (quorum 20)

Moreover, our Buraku Liberation movement is one-sidedly criticized in documents of the area improvement council or in governmental writings. This is against the minimum rule of democracy.

To put it concretely, the government criticizes the Kyudan (denunciation) struggle with prejudice and intervenes to avoid the Kyudan struggle, which has been enforced by the Buraku Liberation League as one activity of protest and education for discrimination.

Such anti-democratic intervention by the government, which excludes those concerned, should be improved under the spirit of the International Human Rights agreement.

