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Hyongpyongsa Movement In Today's Light

A Report on the International Scientific Conference to Commemorate The 70th Anniversary of the Hyongpyongsa Movement.

Introduction

Hyongpyongsa was founded on April 24, 1923 in Korea, at that time under the rule of Japan, and for 13 years it went on working to protect the rights of Paekjong and do away with discrimination. In 1935, however, Hyongpyongsa had to be renamed 'Tae Dongsa' and its activities came to an end under the pressure of Japanese Imperialism. Meanwhile the country won independence and went through the Korean War. It is said that discrimination against Paekjong does not exist any longer.

Yet it was last year when the Society for Commemoration Projects of the 70th Anniversary of the Hyongpyongsa Movement was organized in Chinju, Korea, by volunteers who desired to build a better society following the principles of the movement; anti-discrimination and the protection of human rights. Since then the organization has been active. Within less than a year such projects as the International Scientific Conference, the Ceremonial Commemoration and the enactment of a monument of the



Hyongpyongsa Movement had been prepared. The International Scientific Conference and the Commemoration were held on April 23 and 24, 1993 respectively.

As one of the projects to commemo-

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rate the 25th anniversary of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute, we had intended to take an active part in the above projects in Korea. With this intention in February this year we invited Mr. Joon-Seop Kim, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Kyongsang to give us a lecture and exchange views with us. This time, twenty-seven of us, led by Mr. Sueo Murakoshi, Chief Director of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute, attended the two-day session.

The International Scientific Conference

The conference was held at the National University of Kyongsang from 9:30 A.M. on April 23. Eight studies were reported, followed by questions and answers. It was a very productive and substantial conference. After the welcoming speech by President of Kyongsang National University, the studies were presented as follows:

1. Chin-Dukkyu (Rihwa Women's College): "Ideological Cognition of the Hyongpyongsa Movement."
2. Kim-Juunhyeeng(Kyongsang National University): "Historical Background of the Hyongpyongsa Movement in the Chinju District".
3. Lim Soon Man (William Patterson, Univ. New Jersey, USA).
4. Kim Joong-Seop(National University of Kyongsang.): "Direction and Strategy of the Hyongpyongsa Movement".
5. Shin Gisu:(Ch'ong Ku Culture Centre): "Interchange between Hyongpyongsa and Suiheisha".
6. Koh-Suukkoa(Compilatory Committee of National History) " Relationship Between the Social Movement and the Hyongphongsa



Mr. Kim Young Dae(Center)

Movement in the Era of Japanese Imperialism".

7. Ian James Neary(University of Essex, U.K.): "Hyongpyongsa and Suiheisha--Human Rights Movements in Eastern Asia".

8. Kenzo Tomonaga(Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Japan): "Comparison between Anti-discrimination Movements in Asia and Hyongpyongsa Movement.

The details of the studies will be reported on another occasion. Here is a summary of some impressive points.

Hyongpyongsa was founded in the situation and the trends of the Korean society of those days just as Suiheiheisha was in Japan. It was the time when the Japanese colonial policy was changing from rule by force to rule through racial integration, after the 3.1 Movement for Independence. It was also when various groups of nationalists and socialists were organized, and the Paekjongs in many places were struggling against severe discrimination.1 released the news in support of the movement. In spite of the distrurbance by conservative farmers obsessed with old ideas as well as severe prosecution by the Govenor General of Korea, Hyongpyongsa fought together with other social groups including Suiheisha, for the elimination of discrimination against Paekjong, the defense of human rights and living and independence of the nation.



The principle of the Hyongpyongsa Movement still has important significance in today's Korea in pursuit of the elimination of various kinds of discrimination and the establishment of human rights. The cry for liberation of the discriminated is shared by the people who fight for human rights in the world.

Through questions and answers of the studies, it was made clear that there are many subjects yet to be studied. Mr. Jung Don-ju, author of the novel 'Paekjong', pointed out that die-hard discrimination against Paekjong still exists especially among older people, for example, in the case of marriage.

Commemoration

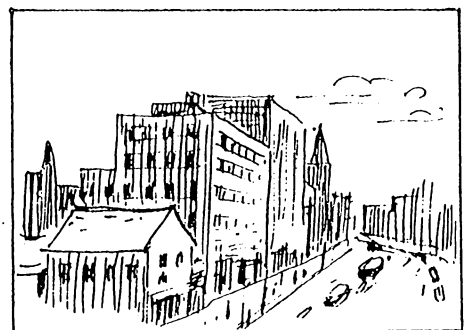
The next day, on April 24, the ceremony to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Hyongpyongsa Movement was performed at Kyongsang Hall of Culture and Art in Chinju. Following the progress report made by Mr. Joong-Seop Kim and the speech by Mr. Kim-Jangha, President of the Association of the Commemoration Project, Mayor of Chinju, and Mr. Sueo Murakoshi, Chief Director of Buraku Liberation Research Institute, each gave an address. Mr. Kang-Sangho reviewed the International Movement against Discrimination, making an appeal to join the movement. Mr. Murakoshi handed over the funds collected for building a monument of the Hyongpyongsa Movement to the Association. (The fund-raising campaign is still being carried on and donations are welcome.)

Then, Mr. Kang Insoo, the son of Mr. Kang-Sangho, President of Hyongpyongsa of Chinju, recited the letter of promoting Hyongpyongsa which started with the outcry, "Isn't a Paekjong a human being!", and Mr. Kim

Young Dae, author of 'Factual Records of Hyongpyongsa'(Japanese translation under the title of 'Chosen No Hisabetsu Minshu' was published by Buraku Liberation Research Institute.), gave an impressive lecture in commemoration of the occasion.

Sharing Experiences Between The Two Nations.

Our group from Japan visited several places including Chinju and Pusan after the two day session. Movement of Hideyoshi Toyotomi's invasion of Korea and 3.1 Movement for Independence in the era of Japanese Imperialism were found here and there, reminding us of the past unhappy relations between Japan and Korea, and also our responsibility for it. On the other hand, we were also reassured that both the peoples have interchanged in many ways especially in culture since ancient times, and shared rich experiences including the solidarity of Hyongpyongsa and Suiheisha. Facing up to the reality and reflecting on the past history of invasion, we should link the history of our sharing into the future





Passwords are: Independence, Solidarity and Creation

The 50th National Convention of the Buraku Liberation League was held on the 3rd and 4th of March at Kyoto Kaikan in Kyoto, under the slogan, "Let's strive for full liberation breaking through the broad ground of the third phase Buraku Liberation Movement, led by cooperative struggle with 'Independence, Solidarity and Creation' as our pass-words." A total of 1,328 participants, consisting of representatives and Central Committee members were present. Regarding the struggle for legislation of a Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation, the following proposals were discussed at the convention: 1) an effective implementation of a fact-finding survey, 2) enactment and adoption of a 'Regulation and/or Declaration', 3) White Paper on our demand and a New comprehensive Plan for Buraku Liberation, 4) ratification and embodiment of international conventions on human rights. In addition, promoting the struggle of the Sayama case which is in a crucial stage of the second plea for retrial, and co-struggles against discrimination in the country as well as abroad were also proposed and discussed. Such problems as the open investigation of personal backgrounds in the process of choosing the Crown Princess, the suicide incident of a high-school girl discriminated against in marriage by a junior high-school teacher, and other various cases of discrimination were also discussed and the directions of the struggles against them were re-affirmed.

The first day of the convention started with the recitation of the Suiheisha Declaration. After electing chairpersons, Mr. Uesugi, President of the Committee, gave a speech representing the central headquarters.

The guest speeches were given by various circles including the governor of Kyoto prefecture (by proxy); the mayor of Kyoto (by proxy); Mr. Sadao Yamahana, chairman of the Social Democratic Party; Mr. Hiroichi Sakai,



chairman of the Special Committee on Dowa Problem of Komeito; Mr. Yukihisa Yoshida, member of the House of councilors representing the Democratic Socialist party; Mr. Satsuki Eda, chairman of the Shamiren (the second day); and Mr. Harumi Inui, director of human rights of the Democratic Reform Union.

Following the speeches, the 5th "Mr. Jiichiro matsumoto Award" was announced to be presented to Mrs. Myriam Schreiber, director of the International Movement Against Discrimination, appraising her international activities for the establishment of human rights.

Mid-term Report by the Central Theoretical Committee

After some reports were made in concluding the 49th term and the general plans of activities for the 50th term were proposed, the Central Theoretical Committee, where a heated discussion has been made since last August, gave mid-term reports from the respective theoretical sections of the 3rd Phase Movement, the Facts of Discrimination, the Dowa administration and Education for Liberation. From 3:30 P.M. the participants took part in more discussion at three separate places.



Direction to Break Through New Ground

On the second day the respective chair of the separate meetings made a report on the previous day's discussion, followed by free-talking discussion. Four representatives expressed their opinions and questions: 1) malicious cases of discrimination occurring in succession, 2) opposition to the Emperor system, 3) enactment of a Fundamental Law, 4) the retrial of the Sayama case, 5) ensuring independent funds of our own, 6) activating youth activities, 7) problems of education. The Central Headquarters answered all the questions.

In the afternoon, the participants took part in discussion on the themes written in the

form notified by the speakers. Six representatives expressed their opinions on; 1) enactment of regulations, 2) the retrial of the Sayama case, 3) the suicide incident of a high-school girl in Hiroshima who was discriminated against in marriage by a junior high-school teacher, 4) international solidarity against discrimination, 5) a 'Fundamental Law', 6) struggle for the general election, 7) opposition to the Emperor system. The Committee chairman, Uesugi commented in addition to the answers of the morning session and summarized the issues. Discussion on the issues, the proposals were unanimously approved by the participants.

BLL Central Headquarters

Protest And Representation To Imperial House Council

On March 16, BLL, Central Headquarters made a protest and representation to seven of the Imperial House Council members including the heads of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, against the conduct aggravating discrimination as shown in the investigation of personal backgrounds in reference to the selection of the Crown Princess. Since the unofficial news was disclosed of the fiancée of the Crown Prince on January 6, the trend of taking advantage of the Emperor in politics has been enforced. It was also disclosed that the Imperial Household Agency itself had openly instructed its sole agent of inquiry to investigate personal backgrounds in the process of deciding the Crown Princess. The BLL Central Headquarters made a protest against such conduct as aggravating discrimination. The

written protest was sent to Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, Chairman of the Imperial House Council; the President and Vice President of the House of Representatives; the President and Vice President of the House of Councilors; the Director of the Imperial Household Agency and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court respectively. The following is an excerpt of the protest;

".....While movements for peace and human rights have been promoted, unhappy suicide incidents resulting from discrimination, especially from marriage discrimination, have often occurred. Other vicious cases of discrimination have also occurred frequently. For instance, personal backgrounds are investigated through discriminatory means: copies of family registration are unjustly



acquired and sold by administrative clerks or social insurance workers, and information of 'Buraku List' which gives all the locations of Buraku in Japan are provided, or some abusive discriminatory messages are run through personal computer communication networks. Meanwhile, we, the Buraku Liberation League have been working to do away with discrimination and fighting against the acts of human rights violation such as the investigation of personal backgrounds, including 'Buraku Lists', cases which gave rise to a big social concern. We have made actions to restrict the free access to family registration and refuse the investigation of personal background. Consequently, the Osaka prefectural government set up the 'Regulations on Discriminatory Investigation of Buraku,' which control the discriminative investigation by inquiry agents or detective service companies.

The Japanese government has also taken measures toward the elimination of Buraku discrimination. In 1965, the Dowa Policy Council submitted to the government a report, "Dowa problem is concerned with human freedom and equality --a universal principle for mankind --and with the fundamental human rights guaranteed in the Japanese Constitution" "The government and all citizens are responsible for its prompt solution." With those recommendations, 'The law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects' was enforced in 1969 and various measures have been carried out in order to eliminate discrimination ever since.

Since the unofficial news of the Crown Princess was disclosed, however, we have found that some news reports in mass media should not be overlooked from the view point of eliminating discrimination as well as establishing human rights. In particular, they excessively reported on the Owada's family tree and on her good birth. It was also disclosed that the Imperial Household Agency had openly

instructed its inquiry office to investigate the background of the future Crown princess, throughly tracing back four generations.

As a matter of course, all people are equal under the law(constitution: article 14) and marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes(Constitution: Article 24). We think, therefore, that the Imperial Household Agency instruction to investigate personal background is a serious problem which not only aggravates or increases discrimination, but also violates the Constitution. We also strongly protest against the fact that the Imperial House Council unanimously determined the engagement of the Crown Prince without discussion on the matter we are concerned about.

Standing on the ground of elimination of discrimination and establishment of human rights, the Buraku Liberation league is very much concerned about the news reports on the Imperial House, including the process of determining the Crown Princess, the personal investigation involved by the government as well as the Imperial Household Agency., the forced celebration campaign and the excessive police guards. We oppose to the use of the Emperor in politics, and are determined to continue working for the establishment of peace and democracy, as well as a society without discrimination.

Today, it is a universal task for all human beings to establish peace, democracy, freedom, equality and human rights. Our nation should lead the world in promoting them. You, as the guardian of the Constitution, have a great responsibility. Therefore, we insist that you be aware of your position and take the distinct stand on the elimination of discrimination and respect of human rights in participating in the Imperial events as well as the national events such as the 'Wedding Ceremony' and the 'Wedding Celebration' in June.



English Slides About Buraku Problem, "Discrimination in Japan" Produced.

Since the founding of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute in 1968, we have been engaged in a wide range of research and education activities to fight human rights violation problems in Japan. In addition, we have published books and periodicals in English, regularly introducing Buraku issues to people overseas. To promote international solidarity, we have invited human rights activists and researchers from overseas to our meetings commemorating Human Rights Week every December. We are also active participants in the initiative of IMADR(International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism) which was established in 1988.

The issues of human rights have become ever more important in today's world of globalization. In this context, the Buraku discrimination issues draw much attention from abroad as well as in Japan. We have produced English slide materials for the first time to tell the history and the current situation of Buraku and the experiences of the liberation movement in a compact manner. We are convinced, the slides will provide a good overall introduction to Buraku issues and help improve their general understanding outside Japan.

We will appreciate your frank opinions and make further improvement to the slides and other publicising activities.

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- 1) Discrimination in Japan: Discrimination against Burakumin
- 2) Origin of Buraku Discrimination
- 3) Buraku Discrimination in Modern Japan
- 4) Birth of the Buraku Liberation Movement
- 5) Buraku Liberation Movement after World War Two
- 6) Buraku Discrimination Today
- 7) Buraku Liberation Movement Today

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Mr. Sueo Murakoshi(SLIDE), Director

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Abt. 30 minutes color film, 80 frames, cassette tape and explanation material(both in English and Japanese) attached.

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