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## *The 45th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

### *A Step to the 21st Century without Discrimination*

#### *Appeals from the Discriminated in the Country - Tokyo Rally*

To commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Tokyo Rally was held on December 3, 1993 with a thousand participants from the Buraku Liberation League, labor unions, private companies, religious organizations, the educational sector and the administrative sector.

At the rally, the issues of internal discrimination against Buraku people, Ainu people, Korean residents, women, disabled persons, illegitimate children, and foreign migrant workers were presented by the victims of the discrimination. Also the issue of international human rights laws was one of themes of the rally. Mr. Kenzo Tomonaga concluded the rally by stating twelve points required in the Japanese policy on human rights and appealing to each participant to work for the elimination of discrimination and protection of human rights in daily life. The rally was sponsored by the Central Committee for the Universal



Declaration of Human Rights and IMADR(International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism).

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The members of the Central Committee for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights conducted a petition campaign on the streets around Tokyo Station on the 3rd of December and in Sukiwabashi Intersection on the 4th of December for Japan's early ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

On December 3, the Central Committee for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and IMADR - Japan Committee handed Mr. Masayoshi Takemura, Chief Cabinet Secretary, an appeal letter for Mr. Morihiro Hosokawa, Prime Minister. The letter called for realization of 8 points regarding the Japanese policy on human rights. Three of the points were: 1) the complete ratification and implementation of the international human rights conventions, 2) passing of the legislation that leads to the elimination of discrimination, and 3) creating the complete administrative machinery. It was also requested in the letter that the Prime Minister make an official statement on December 10, the 45th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, showing a resolution to have Japan actively participate in the international human rights conventions and to promote the elimination of internal discrimination.

#### ***New Challenges for Human Rights***

#### ***Mr. Hans Thoolen Gave a Speech for the 45th Anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights - at the Osaka Rally***

The Osaka Rally for the 45th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was held with 1,500 participants. It was sponsored by the Osaka



*Appeal letter to Prime Minister Mr. Hosokawa  
Handed to Mr. Takemura, Chief Cabinet Secretary (in the  
middle)*

Liaison Committee for Universal Declaration of Human Rights and supported by IMADR -Japan Committee. Mr. Hans Thoolen, Coordinator for Consultative Service and the Voluntary Funds for Technical Assistance of the U.N. Centre for Human Rights was invited to the rally. The Osaka rally had the following purposes:

1. To assess achievements at the time of the 45th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to confirm our future tasks.
2. To nationally and internationally put in practice the contents of the Vienna Declaration and the Plan of Action.
3. To start working for the International Decade for the World's Indigenous People.
4. To confirm agendas for the elimination of discrimination and the establishment of human rights in Japan and in the Asia-Pacific Region facing the open of the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Centre in December, 1994.

***Mr. Thoolen gave the following  
speech at the rally:***



The United Nations has been working for standards of human rights. It has made clearer the areas of protection such as genocide, civil and political rights, cultural and social rights, slavery, torture, and sexual discrimination. It has better defined the target groups to be protected such as refugees, stateless persons, disabled persons, migrant workers, and indigenous people. It has also been working to create a mechanism for implementation of the standards.

The U.N. Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly, since the early '80s, have tackled the human rights issues by creating monitoring machinery, pressuring governments and arousing public opinion.

Our first challenge is to pursue and complement the work of standard setting and to guarantee the healthy development of a comprehensive and effective mechanism for implementation of the standards. This should be done even under the ongoing fast changes in the framework that originally enabled implementation of the standards. The world needs to see immediately a universal ratification of human rights conventions by all the nations including Japan, especially the Convention Against All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Optional Protocol to the Civil and Political Rights. At the World Conference on Human Rights, it was decided to pursue ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child by 1995.

The second challenge is how to match the truth that the state is the best guarantor of human rights while it is a violator of human rights. The traditional distinction between internal order and international order is being drastically undercut with the rapid development of information technology. Since World War II, we have

had more than 127 wars, most of which were caused by ethnic conflict. It is essential to respect the sovereignty and the integration of a state. The question arises, should the U.N. intervene when a state is being destroyed or collapsing due to an ethnic conflict? There is the necessity to create and strengthen the protective system of human rights. By setting up a permanent international criminal court or special tribunals like those set up to deal with the incidents taking place in former Yugoslavia or a High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The U.N. Centre for Human Rights tries to assist governments in their efforts to improve in the area of human rights by increasing the number of their staff, furnishing governments with information technology in both software and hardware, and giving training or technical assistance to the governments.

The third challenge is to achieve all of these in a spirit of constructive dialogue, achieving "consensus" but not losing momentum, and without replacing the East-West struggle with North-South tensions. More than 40 governments have asked us for assistance building their human rights infrastructure. There is a need to match the willingness by donor governments to provide resources with an accept that multilateral channels are sometimes the most appropriate.

The U.N. Voluntary Funds for Technical Assistance has the external appointed by the Secretary General. I am proud to say that Mr. Mushakoji from Japan is one of the trustees.

At the World Conference on Human Rights both the Vienna Declaration and the Plan of Action were adopted. The most important of all is never to allow cultural differences to be a cause of human rights violation.



## *Discrimination against Buraku People by Real Estate Agents Continues*

### ***Discrimination Found in Advertisement in Kochi Prefecture***

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Discrimination exercised in the community is more serious as it is usually done in public by the community residents. In recent years, discriminatory practices by buyers or real estate agents have been increasing in housing lots and building transactions.

In Wakayama prefecture in 1991, a woman from a Buraku area was refused to rent an apartment by a landlord because she was from a Buraku area. In Shiga and Hyogo Prefectures in 1992, people who planned to buy lots attempted to find out if those lots were part of the Buraku areas and called the relevant city halls to investigate it.

In Kochi Prefecture in 1993, a real estate agent many times advertized property for sale or rent in the newspaper property emphasizing that it was outside of the school district where Buraku children went. For this, the Buraku Liberation League requested that the newspaper company correct the advertisement as it fostered discrimination and proposed that the Housing Dept. of the Kochi Prefectural Government take strict measures against the real estate industry.

Under the Japanese public education system, children should go to school in a

school district designated by the authority according to residential area. Usually real estate advertisements demonstrate how convenient properties are by indicating how many minutes it takes to get to schools, stations or shopping centers. The advertisements in question in Kochi not only indicated distance from school but also had circled the school districts on maps emphasizing that these did not include a Buraku community. There was a school district nearby where Buraku children usually went. For people who are familiar with the area it was apparent what this indication really meant.

According to a survey of real estate agents conducted by the Osaka Prefecture from 1992 to 1993, 41% of the agents said they have been asked by a high percentage of customers if property on sale was part of a "Dowa district." The survey also showed that property in Dowa districts or around Dowa districts was usually transacted at cheaper prices. This survey clearly reveals that widespread discriminatory practices still exist.



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## *Inauguration of the Support Committee for the Foundation for the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center*

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### *Count-down for Establishment of Foundation*

On December 9, 1993, the Support Committee for the Foundation for the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Centre was inaugurated and called its first meeting.

At the meeting, it was announced that the Support Committee was composed of Mr. Kazuo Nakagawa, Governor of Osaka Prefecture, Mr. Masaya Nishio, Mayor of Osaka City and Prof. Kinhide Mushakoji as the representative commissioners, and 13 other commissioners from different sectors including Mr. Saichiro Uesugi, President of IMADR - Japan Committee. From the Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Mr. Kenzo Tomonaga, Secretary General, was



sent as an executive secretary for the Committee.

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The preparatory work for the opening was mainly undertaken by the former Preparatory Committee and the Osaka Prefectural and Osaka Municipal governments. With formation of the Support Committee, other organizations such as the Osaka Bar Association have joined in the preparatory work to establish the Foundation thus making it more versatile.

The Support Committee will work toward an earlier creation of the Foundation in 1994.

***Social Gathering:***

After the first meeting, a buffet style social gathering was held with about 100 invited guests. Three representative commissioners gave the following messages at the gathering:

***\* Mr. Kazuo Nakagawa, Governor of Osaka Prefecture:***

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sees its 45th anniversary this year. On Nov. 11, Mr. Gahli, Secretary General of the U.N., sent us a 45th anniversary celebration message. In his message he emphasized the importance of making the protection of human rights a universal goal and appealed for support for the U.N. institutions which work for the promotion of human rights. I believe that the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Centre for which we have worked together will be a significant response to the message from Mr. Gahli. The Center should be the base for the international information exchange on human rights.

***\*Mr. Masaya Nishio, Mayor of Osaka City (represented by Mr. Sakaguchi, Vice Mayor):***

Human rights issues have been given

worldwide attention as being of the most immediate priority. It has become a global trend to seek the elimination of all forms of discrimination and to establish a framework of human rights.

In Japan, as international exchange between ourselves and foreign countries is further developed, it is becoming more important to recognize the necessity to mutually accept cultural differences and respect each other as human beings

***\*Mr. Kinhide Mushakoji, Representative of the Preparatory Committee for the Foundation for the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center:***

I would like to celebrate the formation of the Support Committee for the Foundation for the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Center with all of you here. The idea was suggested 10 years ago by Mr. Yo Kubota, the U.N. official, and Mr. Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, the former President of Bangladesh. The world calls the present time the "Century for Asia and the Pacific." What better time to enrich the concept of human rights in our region? We would like to work together with you to achieve the goal of opening the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Centre in December 1994.

Mr. Hans Thoolen, the Coordinator of the Voluntary Funds for the Technical Assistance of the U.N. Centre for Human Rights also attended the social gathering. He gave an encouraging message saying, "In our fight for human rights, information about human rights plays a vital role. The plan to open the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Centre is indeed farseeing."