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The 40th Annual General Meeting

AUTHOR-POET DONG-JU JUNG DESCRIBES HISTORICAL AND PRESENT-DAY PAEKJONG, A KOREAN CASTE-LIKE MINORITY

The 40th Annual General Meeting of the BLRI and the 16th National Meeting of Researchers of Buraku Liberation were held on June 25 and 26, 1994, in Nara, with almost 260 participants. The General Meeting started with a welcoming speech by Chairperson Sueo MURAKOSHI of the BLRI, followed by congratulating speeches by President Saichiro UESUGI of the Buraku Liberation League, National Headquarters and Director Shunzo FUMIMURA of the DOWA Education Planning Office of the Osaka Prefectural Government.

An announcement was made of the winners of the first academic prizes awarded in Buraku history studies to commemorate the late Professor Tomohiko HARADA, the Harada Prize, by a member of the Board of Directors, Prof. Nobuaki Teraki of Momoyama Gakuin University. Of the



seven candidate studies submitted for the prize, none was selected a prize winner;

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however, two were rated fine. Those were "On relations between ferrymen and discriminated Buraku" by Kenzo INAMORI and "HEIGORO, the head Hinin of Nobeoka in the fief of Naito" by Mr. Tetsuji HIEJIMA. Prof. Teraki made brief comments on these works.

Director Kenzo Tomonaga proposed a nine-point main agenda for adoption, all of which was adopted unanimously. The following are the four new points proposed and adopted for the first time this year:

1. To disseminate and materialize the ideas conceived in the Proposals (Plan of Actions) entitled, "For the Advancement of Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Enlightenment" which was adopted in February this year.

2. To hold new lecture courses on the methodologies for learning about Buraku problems and human rights problems.

3. To start, from the next fiscal year(1995), a 10 year plan to survey on a full scale the Buraku history of Osaka

4. To elect Mr. Suehiro KITAGUCHI, an executive committee member of the Buraku Liberation League, Osaka Prefecture Federation, as a new Director of the Board, BLRI.

The Preliminary Meeting of the 16th National Meeting of Researchers of Buraku Liberation followed the General Meeting. There the Korean author-poet Dong-Ju Jung gave a memorial lecture entitled, "The Actualities of Discrimination against Paekjong Today and Problems Confronting



Author-Poet Dong-Ju Jung

Liberation." Mr. Jung categorized Korean history into three eras: the traditional era before the 1894 KOGO renovation; the era between ca. 1900 and 1950; and the era beginning with the 1950 Korean War. He also described the characteristics of each era and present-day discrimination against Paekjong.

In his talk Mr. Jung emphasized 'a total lack in Korean society of any determination to eliminate Paekjong discrimination,' which allows for the prevalence of such discrimination. He indicated the following as typical and tangible examples: the descendants of Paekjong as modeled in Jung's novel "Paekjong", sued him for libel and inflicted him with countless threats; although most of Paekjong collective habitations were abandoned by Paekjong, these areas are still subjected to emotional discrimination as well as economical and social discrimination; marriage discrimination, different in extent according to generation, is still present, and similar discrimination is observed against slaughterhouses.

The following themes were discussed



very actively in the workshops held on the evening of Saturday the 25th and the morning of Sunday the 26th;

Discussion and exchange of views with Dong-Ju Jung.

The actuality and problems of human rights enlightenment projects in Osaka. A presentation by Mr. Shizuo MATSUMOTO from the Toyonaka City Office and Mr. Sigeru MURAI of the Osaka Prefectural Promotion Association for DOA Projects.

Result from totaling the violation cases in uniform job recruiting application forms and measures for solution. A presentation by Mr. Seiji NAKAMURA, BLRI.

An Era of Local Government; the significance in local regulations and declarations for the elimination of Buraku

discrimination by many local governments and councils. A presentation by Mr. Kenzo TOMONAGA, BLRI.

Efforts and problems in the legislation of regulations against Buraku discrimination and for the promotion of human rights. As viewed from the perspective of future evolution in local autonomy. A presentation by Hiroshi HYODO of Hyogo Headquarters, the All-Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers Union.

All the details of the memorial lecture and workshops will appear in issue No.100 of the BLRI Bulletin, "BURAKU KAIHO KENKYU", to be published in October, 1994.

DISCRIMINATORY NOTES ON HOUSE WINDOW - THE MAN REFUSES TO TAKE THEM DOWN -

A man put up notes with derogatory discriminating words on a window of his own house in Kishiwada City, Osaka. He rejects and disobeys an administrative order directing him to remove the offensive notes and he still keeps the notes openly visible to the public.

The notes were discovered by a postmaster who happened to walk by a house under construction in Ueno-

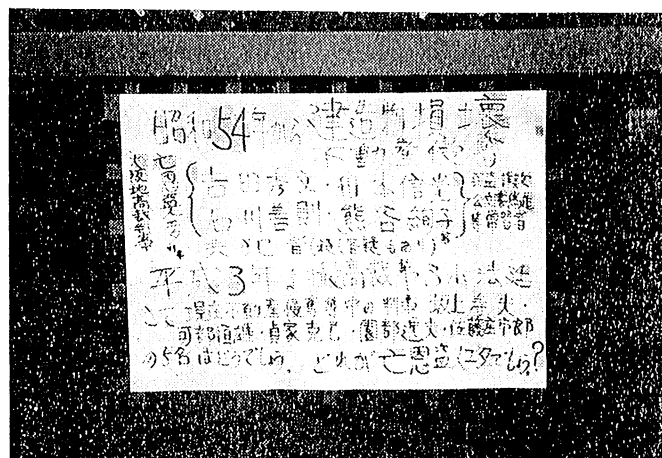


The notes are put up on window-panes of this house.



Higashi, Kishiwada City on December 28, 1993. The Postmaster reported the case to the DOWA Project Office of the city. Four notes were stuck to window panes from the room inside. One of these notes, reads as follows: "...Osaka Higher Court judges..." (followed by the actual names of nine of those) "...ungrateful ETA(meaning a lot of filth or a filthy lot; long used derogatory term for Burakumin)thieves...etc." Later, an investigation identified the note writer as company worker A (47), who owned the house. Local authorities and the company which employs the man asked him to take down the notes. But the man did not listen to these requests and obstinately insisted on his intention to show the notes to people. He also kept saying; "they are born thieves and born Eta..."; or, "we should put the word 'Eta' back into dictionaries. After all, Etas are Etas..."

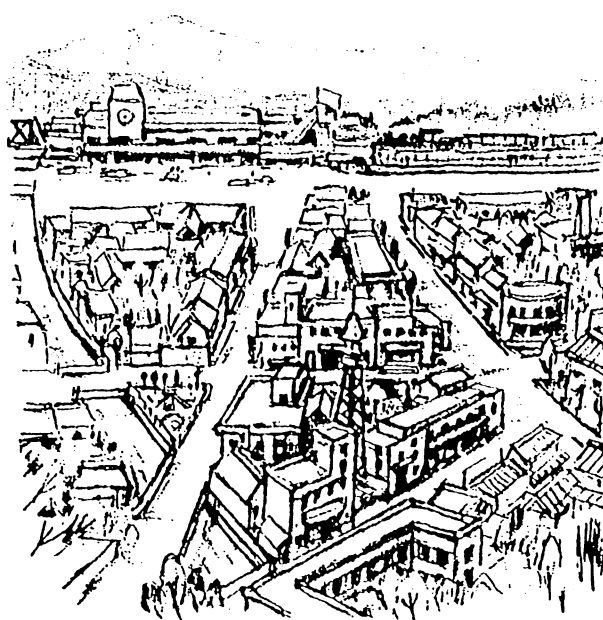
Asked why did he use the word "Eta", he said, "I think this word Eta best fits those wrong-doing judges", and insisted that he had "nothing to change my mind about". It was found that the notes had been there almost a year. The man, when he started to have his house built 14 years ago, filed a suit against the housing company for some complaints. He put up other notes to protest against the housing company while his case was pending in court. But when the judgement fell against him, turning



Derogatory notes calling judges "Ungrateful ETAS..."

down his complaints, his anger was directed towards the judges involved in his case. The local government people concerned assume that he made these new notes to put up after the judgement.

The Kaizuka Local of the Osaka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League says, "Since the man does not listen to all the persuasion by the governments and company people concerned, we may have to resort to a mass action of protest against him."



**BURAKU PROBLEMS: Q & A (1)**

Many journalists, researchers and students from abroad come to visit us at the BLRI. Although they come from different parts of the world, they come to us to learn more about Buraku problems and ask for much information. Among the many questions asked us, we piked out those most frequently asked in these occasions, and will try to answer them as a new series of "Q & A" in this newsletter. We hope this will be a help in understanding Buraku problems.

Q

Do Japanese people still discriminate against Burakumin?

I heard people say that discrimination is going away and not here anymore.

A

Nowadays, people do not openly use derogatory words, nor do they openly express discrimination against Burakumin as they used to do. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that discrimination has gone away and is not here anymore. For example, a survey conducted among people in a Fukuoka town asked them if they would allow a family member to marry a Burakumin. 32.9% answered favorably, 30.6% replied unfavorably and 19.4% answered "absolutely no". Just about the same ratio was observed in several other surveys conducted in other prefectures. Another survey conducted by the Area Improvement Measures Office (responsible for Buraku problems) of the Cabinet Managements and Coordination Agency, November 1985, entitled "The Actualities of the Area Enlightenment Project (Intermediate Report) gives a breakdown of married couples in Buraku areas as: both partners of Burakumin origin, 65.6%; Burakumin husband couples, 21.5%; and, Burakumin wife couples, 8.8%. Those couples with non-Burakumin partners totaled 30.3%.

However, a local newspaper, the "Kyoto Shinbun", said, in its report in 1988 on marriage of Burakumin, "not even one case of love marriage, to say nothing of an arranged marriage between people living in close neighboring communities, is observed among 190 families" in a rural Buraku in Kyoto



Prefecture. The facts show that if anyone knew that the other party was Burakumin before they met, they didn't even fall in love! The increasing inter-marriage with non-Burakumin are all "love marriage" which overcame opposition and discrimination against their choice.

All discriminatory ideas normally hidden in everyday life, disclose themselves on the occasion of the marriage of close kin. Discrimination pulls apart two young people in love and sometimes leads them into doom. We still see many of those young lovers, when they find out that their partner is Burakumin, turning away from their partner as they meet strong opposition from parents and relatives who consider such marriages awfully "unrespectable." There are also countless numbers of divorces where Burakumin identities were disclosed after having been married for sometime. Some even killed themselves after their lovers, husbands or wives left them. A private detective agent tells us that in about 90% of marriage inquiries, people ask them to be sure to investigate Burakumin identity.

Discrimination in marriage is not the only plight that keeps Burakumin suffering. Discrimination at their job opportunities and in jobs are still frequent.

Q

Everyone denies discrimination of the job and every company says that they don't discriminate. True?

A

In 1975, a publication entitled "Buraku List", giving all information on discriminated-against-Burakus, was discovered being covertly on sale. The biggest buyers of the List were private companies, including many of the leading big companies of Japan. If they had no notion to discriminate, no one would have tried to make quick money in publishing such an "evil-minded" List.

Japan is far from free of such discrimination even after the discovery of the Buraku List. Discrimination still stays here. Discrimination keeps Burakumin out of the better income jobs and forces them to work at less stable jobs, even though they fully qualify for position. The unemployment rate among



Burakumin workers is considerably higher than the non-Burakumin rate, making it harder to get by. Many of them are compelled to work at temporary jobs or as day laborers. In most of the job environments where these people are working, dangerous and hard working conditions lead to higher accident and sick rates. Higher unemployment rate and sick rate eventually lead to an extremely high relief rate compared with the non-Burakumin community. Measures especially provided in Buraku Areas brought about better housing. Still, not all Burakumin families are provided with improved housing programs. Quite a few Burakumin families still suffer difficulties in their life.

Discrimination, however, is not always limited to these visible or perceivable aspects. A covert but strong discriminating mentality among many non-Burakumin citizens, as it is still prevalent, may come forward and show apparent discrimination. And this is what scares many Burakumin. They are not scared without reason. They are scared because discrimination still is here and now in the mentality of people.

The evidence is in many of those increasing graffiti with broad remarks found in schools, train stations, public toilets and bridges; discriminatory statements, too, are still frequent. Those more recent graffiti, however, are little different in encouraging and inciting other people to follow suit indiscriminately. They are more intentional, more persistent, more blunt and more challenging against all those movements to abolish discrimination. Discrimination, however is not only limited to verbal offenses. Below the harsh words which are disclosed, lies the biggest part of an iceberg.

• White Paper on Human Rights in Japan 1984

Compiled by Buraku Liberation Research Institute

Various types of human rights situations in Japan are described: Discrimination against Buraku, Koreans, AINU, Handicapped people, Okinawans, Women, A-bomb victims, Hansen's disease and Japanese Americans.

Size : 210mm×143mm, 205 pages, Price : ¥ 2000

• Buraku Problem in Japan – Buraku Liberation News No 1~50 (1981~89) –

Compiled by Buraku Liberation Research Institute

Combined edition of English language newsletter (bimonthly), "Buraku Liberation News" from Nos. 1~50, covering the period of 1981~1989.

Size : 256mm×182mm, 442 pages, Price : ¥ 2000