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The SAYAMA Case

Mr. Kazuo ISHIKAWA, ex-accused, is to be out on parole with exceptional treatment. He will be free after 31 years' detention without signed consent.

The regional committee for the relief and rehabilitation(of criminal offenders)in the Kanto area (Eastern Japan) has considered Mr. Ishikawa's parole and has decided to grant him parole. They have already informed the Bureau of Justice of their intention by the 25th of July 1994. Kazuo Ishikawa (55 years old) is serving a life term in Chiba prison. He is to be free before long after 31 years' detention. As a rule, before parole, a prisoner must submit a consent. In the case of Ishikawa, who has been claiming a false charge, he seems to be receiving parole without such consent as exceptional treatment. As a supporting organization, the BLL will hold a National Secretary-general Meeting on the 27th of July to discuss a plan for Ishikawa's future.

In June Mr. Nakai, the then Minister of Justice, stated at the Committee on the Budget in the House of Councilors, "I have heard that the procedure for his parole is now underway."

Kazuo Ishikawa, the ex-accused, was arrested and prosecuted as the suspected



Mr. Rokuzo Ishikawa appealed to public the support for his younger brother, Kazuo.

murderer of a female high-school student in May 1963 at SAYAMA city, Saitama pref. At the first trial Ishikawa was sentenced to death, but at the second trial his sentence was reduced to life imprisonment. This was fixed at the Supreme Court of Justice. At present the request of the 2nd retrial is under consideration.

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The Symposium on Religious Intolerance and Discrimination - 1995 United Nations Year for Tolerance

Religion and Discrimination in Japan

The Symposium on Religious Intolerance and Discrimination - 1995 United Nations Year for Tolerance was held on July 26, 1994, in Osaka, with approximate 250 participants. This symposium was hosted by the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism Japan Committee (IMADR-JC) and eight other organizations. After an opening address by Professor Kinhide Mushakoji, Meijigakuin University, on behalf of the host organizations, Reverend Ichiro Ono reported on "Religion and Discrimination in Japan" and Dr. Juliet Sheen, an Anti-Discrimination/Human Rights Professional from Australia, commented on his report. In the afternoon, the second report, "A Neglected Freedom: The Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience or Belief", was presented by Professor Kevin Boyle, Professor of Law, Director, University of Essex Human Rights Centre, U.K. and a comment by Professor Mushakoji followed the report.

In this news letter, the first report by Reverend Ono is presented in full.

Note: In Reverend Ono's report a general introduction about religion and discrimination in Japan including the Buraku problem was stated. That is why we inserted his report in the BL News with his consent.



REPORTER

Born in Ohita Japan in 1927 to a traditionally Buddhist(Jodo-Shinshu Sect) family. He was baptized in 1949 after he entered Doshisha University. Graduated from Doshisha University in 1955, he became Sub-Pastor at Kyoto Church of the

United Christian Church in Japan. He is Pastor of Heian Church in Kyoto of the United Christian Church in Japan since 1968. In 1990, he became Chairperson of the National Movement to Demand Legislation of Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation, Kyoto Prefecture Executive Committee. He is author of several Christian religious books, including those entitled The Gospel of St. John, The Life of Prayer and others. He contributes many writings on human rights and discrimination subjects to the periodical "Religion and the Buraku problems".



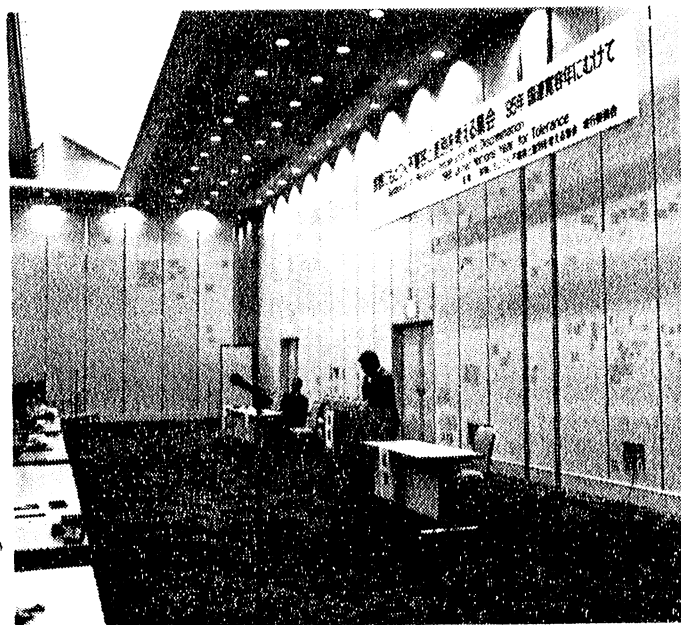
Religion and Discrimination in Japan

ONO ICHIRO(Ichiro ONO)

1. Reality of Discrimination in Japan

Thinking of the subject of religions and discrimination in Japan, we can not pass through without thinking of the affairs of the discrimination against so called "BURAKU" in Japan. The reality of BURAKU discrimination is this: even though they are the same Japanese people, some persons were eliminated by the majority as heterogeneous persons. In some ways they were deprived their fundamental human rights for many centuries; moreover, their descendants also have been discriminated against up to present times. There are many types of discrimination against disabled persons in Japan. And there are cases of sex discrimination, racial and foreign discrimination, as well.

The reality of the discrimination in Japan is very serious. It spreads wide in all fields, for instance, marriage and employment. All those discriminated against have to endure many handicaps and their voice of lamentation comes from many places in Japan. Japanese religions played an important role in the taking root, preservation and cultivation of this serious discrimination in Japan. The doctrine of impurity, the doctrine of cause and effect, the doctrine of karma, these doctrines not



only strengthened discrimination against the BURAKU and other persons, but they also have been taking root over an extended period of time.

2. Religion and Discrimination in Japan

a. Discriminatory Posthumous Buddhist Name

In Japan there is a tradition that a man carves a religious name for the dead on the face of the tomb as a sign of ancestor worship especially; it is an important duty for many Buddhist religious organizations. The name for the dead is called "KAIMYO", and is given by a Buddhist priest and is preserved in a Buddhist temple. The notebook of "KAIMYO" is called "KAKOCHO" (post-memorial-note). Recently, it was disclosed that there were some kinds of names or characters different from the general in the "KAKOCHO" and also that the same names and characters were used by the Buddhist priests



consciously. They used these for the dead persons in the discriminated place (BURAKU). For instance, they used CHIKUNAN (beast-man) for an adult man, or CHIKUJO (beast-woman) for an adult woman. It also proves that religious believers did not treat the persons of BURAKU as human but as beasts and that they extended their discriminatory thoughts even into the world of the dead. The discriminatory KAIMYO were disclosed by the dozens of kinds, dispersed all over Japan.

The BURAKU LIBERATION LEAGUE (BURAKU KAIHO DOMEI) has incriminated the Buddhist religious groups and deployed a nationwide campaign. As a result of the campaign a large number of discriminatory KAIMYO have been found in Buddhist temples and cemeteries. And this continues even to present times. Many Buddhist groups discovered the nature of their discrimination through the action of the BURAKU KAIHO DOMEI and began new actions upon their reflection. It was an action of renewal based on the belief that there is no more true religion if all persons are not treated as human.

But, unfortunately there are many Buddhist groups which have not waken up to this serious truth and continue to preserve discrimination, even promote it, today.

b. Reality of Discrimination against Marriage

In Japan marriage came into existence as a relationship between families and continued

this way for many years. It was after the end of the 2nd World War and after the appearance of the new constitution of Japan that personal marriage was openly admitted. Marriage for love was regarded as dangerous and warning was made to put family first. Lefthanded marriage seemed to have some problems. Imperial family, peer, warrior, farmer, industrial person and merchant in these social positions were separated from each other and marriage to each other had many obstacles. Moreover, persons who were "outside" were not treated as human beings. There were many kinds of discrimination: discrimination against social position, discrimination against occupation, discrimination against living place, and all kinds of disadvantageous things were burdens for them by compulsion. Moreover, they were forced to be a religious impurity. So, if they wanted to marry someone from another social class, it was absolutely impossible.

Many of religious believers followed in the steps of marriage discrimination and did not become aware of the injustice of this discrimination. And they played an important part in preserving and promoting the discrimination of marriage. Many of the discriminatory sayings prove to this truth. Some regard as dangerous the marriage with BURAKU persons, and others say, "I must be hesitating if my child married with BURAKU persons". These discriminatory religious leaders are many.

Many young persons committed suicide



due to BURAKU discrimination. In this situation many religious organizations have set about a new campaign of "we refuse to inquire into a person's antecedents". This is a new action of reflections against discriminatory characters themselves. Religious organizations and believers in Japan used to voluntarily support inquiry into a person's antecedents. This was the discriminatory action toward BURAKU persons. There are many discriminatory religious believers and organizations who violate human rights.

c. Reality of Discrimination against the Disabled

Many religious groups and believers made the disabled by nature an object of religious discrimination. This came from the religious thought that present obstacles are the result of a former existence. This thought expanded into a mistaken understanding of Karma. Religious organizations and believers discriminated against the disabled and placed a heavy burden on them who are struggling against discrimination. Sometimes religious organizations used this discriminatory thought to catch their own believers and invented a new order of worship to conform with this thought. This shows that religious organizations and believers played a role in making the disabled a dread future happy world instead of this painful and discriminatory world. Those who have been discriminating

went against the idea of Karma by the fact of their attitude toward the disabled as well as the Buraku. Religious organizations had to inspect their own scriptures and also their own doctrines in order to maintain this attitude.

Many discriminatory characters in the scriptures and doctrines of religious organizations have been attested to in many cases and in many places by indictment from liberation groups. But there are yet no correct answers from religious organizations. The discriminatory problems in the scriptures and doctrines of religions are the problems of the founders or their early successors. If someone intends to dig into the discriminatory cores of religions, he must fight against the mythology or erroneousness of the founders or early successors. It must be very difficult in religious organizations. This is the reason why the answers are late in coming. But as long as discrimination continues to live the investigations against the discriminatory scriptures and doctrines will never cease.

d. Reality of Racial Discrimination

In Japan there lives a mythology of the "oneness of the Japanese nation". The ideology of "Japan as a uniracial country" is still strongly alive. This ideology supports the thought of a "One series eternal emperor" and also "the nation as a member of the family of the Emperor". This ideology possesses an attitude of rejection



toward foreign people. The history of the compulsory Japanese policy forcibly making the Ainu and the Ryukyu peoples become Japanese citizens gave priority only to Japanese interests and shows the obvious discriminatory policy against foreigners. Religious organizations in Japan positively supported this policy. Moreover, Japan forced a war of aggression on other Asian countries and colonized to the Korean people. In this situation a cruel discrimination against the Korean people was strengthened. In general, religious organizations in Japan not only did not protest this policy, but strongly supported it for carrying out of the national policy. This discrimination especially against Asian foreigners was thorough going in living, employment, marriage, and all other fields. The same kind of discrimination was vented against the people of China and the Southeast Asian countries. Japanese religious organizations supported this discrimination by way of exception.

We can not forget the reality of the cruel discrimination which was born with the discriminatory national consciousness and the discriminatory policy and many discriminations with the memories of post wars. Japanese religious organizations and believers had to go ahead with severe reflection, but it did not go in that direction. Some religious groups and believers who tackled this difficult problem were looked at with unfriendliness. And sometimes they were disturbed and suppressed. The

religious groups and believers of conscience had to bear many burdens with discriminated persons as minority groups.

e. Reality of Discriminatory Speaking and Literature

The reality of discrimination among Christians and Christian organizations in Japan has come to light through many prosecutions against discriminatory speeches and literature from inside. Included are the discriminatory writings of Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa who was called "a saint" by many Christians in the United Church of Christ in Japan. A lot of discriminatory writings and speeches in many other denominations have also come to light. The discriminatory writings and speakings are prosecuted in almost all religious organizations in Japan. This is a serious problem in Japanese religious organizations and is much the same in Christian organizations.

3. The Joint Council of Religious Organizations for Liberation from Buraku Discrimination

a. The Course till Starting the Joint Council

The religion and religious organizations in Japan (Shinto, Buddhist, Christian, new religions) have been involved in discriminatory characters inside of themselves. Besides, there has come to light a lot of discriminatory problems:



discriminatory names for the dead, marriage discriminations, discriminatory writings, discriminatory speeches, etc. But these discriminatory problems were used to put out somewhere because of the closedminded characters of religious organizations even if someone prosecuted them inside.

In August of 1979 the 3rd general assembly of the "World Religious Council for Peace" was held at Princeton Theological-Seminary in the U.S.A. In this meeting Mr. Sou You Machida, the chairman of the All Japan Buddhist Council, and the head-chief of the Soto sect stated that there were no problems of BURAKU discrimination in Japan. This statement was proof of the ignorance of and indifference toward the serious reality of discrimination against BURAKU and it was proof of the discriminatory characters of Japanese religious organizations. Buraku Liberation League took this opportunity to strengthen its indictment of religious organizations. It started a new action in the religious organizations in Japan, too, and it was the first historical action in which many Japanese religious organizations joined together to tackle a human rights subject. Such a kind of joint action with many religious organizations was the first in Japan's long history.

On the 28th of November, 1980 a consultation with some delegates from religious organizations in Japan was held in Tokyo and on the 9th of December five religious organizations' leaders assembled at

SHINSHU OOTANI HA in Kyoto. They consulted together about the joint action for the liberation movement. That day JODO SHINSHU HONGANJI HA, SHINSHU OOTANI HA, TENRIKYO, NIHON KIRISUTO KYODAN and RISSHO KOSEIKAI came together. After 4 meetings, on the 2nd of February 1981, the 4 religious organizations sent a letter to 316 religious organization movements. The contents of the letter were: We want to join together to make an effort for human rights, especially for the liberation from BURAKU discrimination, based on self-reflection of the discriminatory character in ourselves.

On the 17th of March, 1981 about 1000 religious leaders in Japan came together at SABO KAIKAN in Tokyo and a new starting point was established. On the 9th of June, 1981 a new religious conference was organized. It was "The Joint Council of Religious Organization for the Liberation from Buraku Discrimination" (Doshuren). At first, the participants of DOSHUREN numbered 55 religious organizations and 3 religious federations, but there are 68 organizations and 3 federations joining together in it now.

b. The Contents of Action and Its Problems

Firstly, DOSHUREN has to make an effort to abolish all kinds of discrimination in itself, awaking to the discriminatory character inside of each organization. To attain its purpose, it must pile up many



kinds of training programs and assemblies in joint actions.

Secondly, DOSHUREN must contribute to abolish discrimination and to establish human rights, tackling the difficult discriminatory problems.

Thirdly, DOSHUREN must fight against those who go backward from liberation against discrimination or establishing human rights. For this purpose it must strengthen joint actions as religious organizations and believers. At present DOSHU-REN is cooperating to act for the release of Mr. Kazuo Ishikawa who has been in prison for more than 31 years due to a false accusation. DOSHUREN is making an effort to enact the fundamental law of BURAKU liberation in joint movement with many other organizations in Japan. These actions must continue as a duty of the religious organizations and believers for liberation from discrimination.

But there are still difficulties in permeating human rights in all religious

organizations. There are still many discriminatory problems in religious organizations. The establishment of human rights has not become a central problem for believers. It is the most serious problems today.

4. Urgent Problems in Japanese Religions

We must not allow discriminatory religions to continue without reflection. Japanese religions must not be selfish, exclusive, indifferent and ignorant to the unhappy world of discrimination. The urgent problem for Japanese religions is to progress toward the establishment of human rights and peace, since the movements for human rights and peace are widely spreaded in Japan. Japanese religions must go ahead with the joint movements, looking at the reality of discrimination in Japan. I am sure that is the urgent problem of Japanese religion today.



Discriminatory Case

Real Estate Agent Made an Inquiry about the Seat of Buraku Community to Takarazuka City Office, Hyogo Pref.

In March 1994 a discriminatory case caused by a real estate agent was brought to light. The similar cases also happened in 1990. The BLL, Osaka Prefecture Federation fears that such cases may occur in many places in the real estate business and they will make a representation to the administration and the trade. According to the facts, on March 10, 1994, 2 employees (one was a man hereafter referred to as A and the other was a female referred to as B.) of the House Industry Co.(Head office: Managing Director: Mr.) visited the Takarazuka City office, Desk for DOWA affairs in Hyogo Pref. and they inquired about the seat of the Buraku community. The BLL, Osaka Prefectural Federation examined the facts and before long a meeting for denunciation will be held.

The following is the conversation exchanged between the real estate brokers and 2 gentlemen in charge of the city office. At first the 2 employees of the real estate agent came to the city office and showing a map, asked the 2 city officers to indicate the place of the Buraku. In reply to an officer's question, "A" showed his name card and introduced himself.

A: "I am a freshman of the Company and I was asked by my superior to check on the seat of the Buraku community."

Officer: "Are you doing the same thing in other areas?"

A: "I have heard there is an Airin Kaikan (name of a community hall in the Buraku area). I would like to know some rough information about it. The details are not necessary."

Officer: "What is your purpose?"

A: "I came to check on the seat of the Buraku area. Please tell me."

Officer: "What kind of area?"

A: "I mean DOWA area."

Officer: "What are you going to do checking?"

A: "It's just for my information."

Officer: "Who instructed you?"

A: "I am doing this on my own discretion. We, the two of us decided."

Officer: "What are you doing with the information? Is there any supply and demand?"

A: "Yes, I bought a map of 2500/1 describing the city and came here. I expected to get information here in brief."

Officer to B: "Have you learned about Dowa education?"

B: "I learned about DOWA education at the university."

Officer: "Can I have your name card?"

B: "I don't have it."

Officer: "After you have confirmed the area, you will inform customers about it, won't you? Naturally customers will avoid



the area. Don't you think so?"

A: "Quite so."

Officer: "I think you will use this information in your business activities. Do you know it is very important matter? How many people are working in your company?"

A: "Less than 10 people."

Officer: "Are you using this information for your business customers without understanding the Buraku problem? You do not realize what the results of your action will be. If you deliberately use the information you got, you are very wicked."

B: "I understand the deed without knowing that it is wrong. We wanted to get information about the seat of the Buraku community for business activity. I also understand the use of this information for our business will result in harm to the Buraku people."

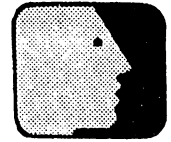
In a fact-finding meeting held recently, the following attended: the BLL Osaka Prefectural Federation, the Hyogo Prefectural Federation, the Kyoto Prefectural Federation, Mr. _____, the Managing Director of _____ House, Mr. A, Ms. B, and the related administration (Osaka city and Takarazuka City.) Mr. A and Ms. B agreed in all that they said. They expressed their lack of understanding about the Buraku problem. They confessed that, "We did not know that inquiring about the seat of the Buraku area would result in discrimination." Further, A insisted that the inquiry was not instructed by the company but that it was made on his own judgement. Mr. _____ also stated that the Company did not give him such instruction. However,

I felt responsibility for it as president of the Company even though it was the employees' personal deed," he said.

Mr. A also stated that, "I thought it would be of benefit to the Company and at the same time I wanted to show better achievement for my own interest. I was hasty since such feelings resulted in this discriminatory case. Another factor was a customer. Last February a customer and I made a deal. However, the customer rejected the deal because the area is in a DOWA area. But I did not check to see if the customer was right or not. I remembered this anyway and I thought it would be helpful information when I sell real estate. There are some clients who do not like to buy property in a DOWA area. I expected my inquiry to be highly evaluated by the company." These things indicate a deep rooted of discriminatory character in the real estate business. Ms. B stated, "I have a friend who is Burakumin. Through her, my impression of the Buraku has been improved. However, I still have the image that a Dowa area is not a place for a girl to visit alone." This is clearly prejudice to the Buraku. For raising consciousness Mr. _____, the Managing Director said, "We consider this discriminatory case very important and we intend to hold a study meeting regularly." This company apparently held such a study meeting before but because of slow business they have not done so recently. In Osaka the company has to study the Buraku issue according to a municipal administrative order. It can be said that such an administrative order has become a ruins.



BURAKU PROBLEMS: Q & A (2)



Origin of the Buraku

Q

When and how was the Buraku born?

A

It is said that the so-called BURAKU was formed during a period from the TOYOTOMI to the early EDO era, that is, from the beginning of the 16th century to the middle of the 17th century such a social class structure was legally and systematically fixed.

Q

And why was the Buraku formed in this period?

A

During the period from the end of the 16th century to the 17th century, there were frequent riots caused by Buddhist(IKKO sect) or peasants in Japan. The military commanders in the age of civil strife, ODA NOBUNAGA, TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI and the Shogun TOKUGAWA IEYASU were occasionally unable to manage them. As experienced rulers who knew the power of united people, they needed a caste-like social system in order to divide people's unity and to get them to decrease their power against authority. For that purpose the Burakumin was placed at the very bottom of the social structure.

Q

What kind of people were classified as Burakumin?

A

According to the latest research, a part of the peasants, craftsmen and other various classes of people in addition to the discriminated people in general at that time, were included and such a social structure was legally and systematically fixed.

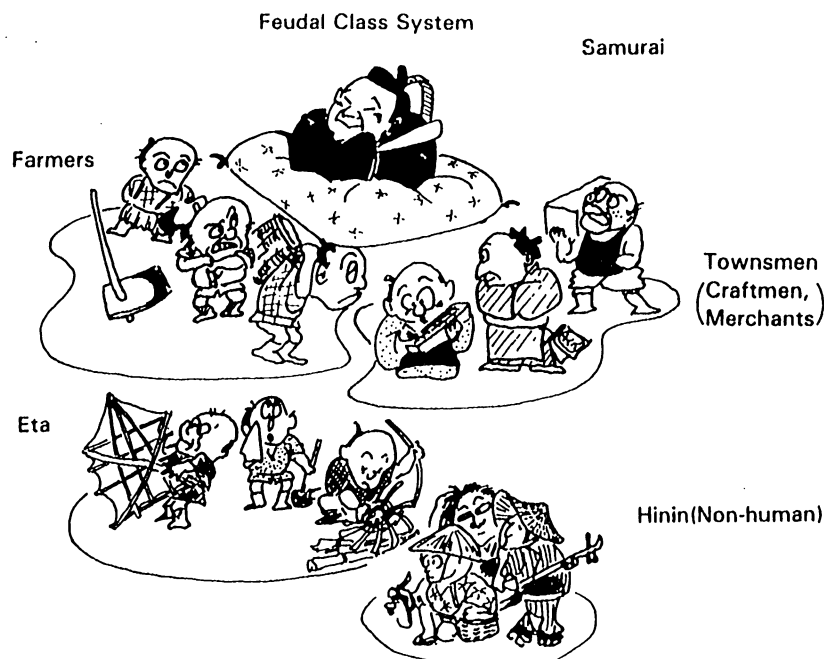
Let's see how a man of power managed people in those days.

As the accompanying illustration shows, in the TOKUGAWA era the social structure was based on a levied tax mainly from the agricultural class since these people were the major



We can see a part of the difficult situation of farmers in those days through a historically based televised play. In those days, 2 million people of the SAMURAI class managed the other 28 million people. That is to say, one SAMURAI ruled over 14 other lower class people. Such a social formation made the SAMURAI class fear that these people might unite and oppose the men of power. Accordingly, the ruling class formed a hierarchy classified as the illustration succinctly illustrates. As a result the social outcasts called by the derogatory terms "ETA" (extreme filth) or "HININ"(non human) were placed at the very bottom and the hierarchy was legally and systematically fixed.

"ETA" and "HININ" class people engaged in jobs such as the arrest and execution of criminals, etc. They were restricted even to the type of clothing that could be worn. It caused antagonism among the outcast class people, peasants and townsmen. The severe social system of feudal times is the origin of a discriminatory consciousness against the Burakumin.



Japanese rock garden in Ryoanji temple.

Japanese NOH Plays and KABUKI Plays are traditional performing arts. The style of NOH was completed in the MUROMACHI period of Feudal time by KANAMI and ZEAMI, who were discriminated people. And KABUKI was created by a lady who was called IZUMO NO OKUNI. She also lived at the bottom of society. Further, famous Japanese gardens such as those in GINKAKUJI temple(Silver Pavillion) and in NANZENJI temple were created by a discriminated class of people called KAWARAMONO.