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Buraku Liberation News

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Pledging to Realize Enactment of 'Fundamental Law' at the 52nd National Convention

The 52nd National Convention of the Buraku Liberation League was held in Tokyo on May 30 and 31 with 800 participants including delegates and Central Committee members from all over Japan. At this most crucial time in the struggle for the enactment of the 'Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation' in the present Diet session, the participants of the 52nd National Convention made a pledge to do their best for the enactment of the fundamental law. Issues such as realizing the retrial of the Sayama case; enforcing denunciation struggle against discrimination; enforcing collaborated struggles with other organizations in Japan and abroad; sending candidates to the Diet who stand for human rights and are fighting against discrimination; and reforming our organization to promote the above issues with self-help efforts were discussed and adopted. Also the revised plan of the new 'Platform' was presented at the conference. The plan will be examined further through discussions in and outside the organization for another year to be approved at the 53rd National Convention in 1996.



Chairman, Mr. UESUGI

Through Discussions Welcome for Platform Revision

Speech by Chairman, Uesugi

We are here for a very important convention to be held at the crucial stage of the Buraku

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at the 52nd BLL National Convention

liberation movement. The struggle for the enactment of the 'Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation' is now on its last and hardest course. At this crucial moment, I would like to present the three most important issues.

The first issue is the struggle for the enactment of the 'Fundamental Law'. With the motto, "Let's attain the 'Fundamental Law' by all means under the Murayama Government", we have been deploying resolute actions since the extraordinary Diet session last year. As you may know, at the 9th Projects Meeting by the ruling parties held on May 12, agreement was made upon issues including an early ratification of the 'International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination', the need to adjust relevant domestic laws and the need for some legal measures for a drastic and earlier resolution of Dowa problems. These agreements were also approved at the Policy Adjustment Conference of the ruling parties held on May 19, and were confirmed as the policies of the ruling parties in the process. I think we can appreciate the result. On the other hand, however, we can hardly be satisfied with mere agreements on 'some legal measures' by the ruling parties, thinking of the fact that we have been promoting the movement toward the goal of realizing the 'Fundamental Law' at the 132nd Ordinary Diet Session. For us, accordingly, 'some legal measures' should be the 'Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation'. We have only two weeks left until the end of the

session. Indeed, we are struggling with time. It is important for us to take advantage of Prime Minister Murayama's suggestion to promote the conference and to enforce our struggle.

The second issue is the struggle for the retrial of the Sayama case. On Dec. 21 last year, Mr. Kazuo Ishikawa was paroled at long last after 31 years and 7 months in jail.

It was no doubt a big progress of the struggle that we were able to have him, the innocent man, at the very front of the Sayama struggle. But it is also a fact that this parole does not mean release on innocence. We ought not to be over-optimistic about it.

Taking the parole of Mr. Ishikawa as an opportunity, we should demand a fact-finding investigation and disclosure of all the evidence to the Tokyo High Court as well as the Tokyo High Public Prosecutors Office. It may be important to continue the determined struggle for full-fledged victory of the Sayama case to reveal the aspects of discrimination and the falsehood of the charge.

The third issue is the revision of the platform of our organization. At the previous 51st Convention, the necessity of revising our current platform and Regulations as the guideline to our new movement in a new age was confirmed, as all of you have known. Indeed, "A new wine should be put into a new wineskin".

Thanks to the energetic work of revising the Platform for twelve months, the plan of the new Platform is to be presented at this convention. The most distinctive revision is that more emphasis is on human rights and democracy, based on 'human rights, peace and environment', as the principle axis, shifting from the ideological class-oriented current Platform, clarifying the stand-point and character as a people's organization. We welcome various opinions in and out of the organization to make it more fruitful and more substantial in another twelve months.



A Draft for the Revised Platform of the Buraku Liberation League

[Preamble]

1. We aim for perfect liberation from discrimination against Buraku. That is the sole purpose of our League. A society in which all the Burakumin people can refer to their hometowns, in which all the nation is free from the yoke of discrimination; A society in which all the nation recognizes human rights, heightens, and respects the differences in each other --, we can find the way toward liberation in the process of establishing a society which respects human rights.

Our Buraku Liberation Movement should, therefore, settle the perfect liberation of Buraku as the most essential challenge, while the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the human-rights-establishing policy are definitely our own problems.

The organization of our League is the congregation of wide-ranged general-public in the Buraku communities who 'would liberate ourselves by respecting all human beings' (note 1); it is an autonomous group which aims at solidarity with all people who fight against various forms of discrimination.

2. The Meiji Government promulgated an 'Emancipation Edict in 1871, which was in effect a mere 'Derogatory-Names-Abolishing Act,' therefore discrimination against Buraku has not ceased. On the contrary, it was reorganized and fortified under the modern Emperor-monarchy system; the situation was worsened.

In 1922, the National Levelers Association was established with the grievous cry 'The time has come when we can take pride in being Eta. ' (note 2). Its spirit, in quest of 'the warmth and light of human life.'(note 3), was our glorious common property; we have always done the determined denouncement and the struggle by ourselves. However, the Levelers Association was finally forced to indirectly support Japan's War of Aggression beginning from the Sino-Japanese War to the Pacific War under the hard oppression by Japanese Militarism. It is a history which we deeply regret.

3. In 1945, Japan was defeated in the war. Our organization was reconstructed as the National Committee for Buraku Liberation as early as 1946. Its name was changed into the present one of the Buraku Liberation League with the aim of popularization. Having pointed out that the serious living situation of the Buraku people was caused by discrimination, we organized the struggle against discriminatory administrative policies in due course. Our movement could attain mass base and support from nation-wide public opinion, leading to the fruitful result of the Report of the Dōwa Policy Council issued in 1965 and the enactment of The Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects in 1969.

Due to the enlargement of administrative struggles, the environment of Buraku communities and



the living standard have been improved and the organization has grown in number. A series of tenacious anti-discrimination campaigns were conducted, such as the Sayama Case Court Strife, which roused Buraku people into direct action, and the List of Buraku Place Names. They helped widen the solidarity and co-struggle, build up a force for anti-discrimination and the protection of human rights. These forces were the source for the 'World-wide Levelers Movement' which was planned since the establishment of the National Levelers Association in 1922. The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) was founded in 1988, which shows a new stage of the Liberation Movement.

4. Our movement aiming for the liberation of Buraku can not remain as a struggle against the results of discrimination. The only indisputable way toward a discrimination-free society is to struggle against social conditions yielding and supporting Buraku discrimination.

Therefore, adhering to the principle of 'liberation-is-the-purpose-and-projects-are-measures,' it is necessary for us to address the challenges to the improvement of living, education, industry and employment, the elimination of discriminatory case, and the wiping away of a discriminatory consciousness. In addition, together with the effort to overcome the low standard of the neighboring areas, other forms of discrimination, various undemocratic systems, evil customs and a discriminatory culture, it is important to unite our movement with the world-wide tide of the elimination of discrimination.

5. Now we are just in the trend of a great change in human history. Though there may be many ordeals in the way, it is sure that the indices of change toward the 21st century will be human rights, peace and environment, which are endorsed by the human universal value. It is time for us to publicly present the true worth of our movement, and to realize our historical destiny.

We are sure that we are now in the position to look at the state of perfect liberation from such a close distance, led by the predecessors who trod upon thorny ways.

We will raise the banners of independence, 'coexistence and creation, 'open eyes toward the supreme principle of humanity' (note 4), and endeavor to liberate Buraku and to realize a society in which human rights are firmly established.

[Basic purposes]

1. We will unite under the spirit of approval of mutual respect and the spirit of self-liberation, and aim for the 'beneficent day' of liberation under the solidarity with a wide-range of people.

2. We will require endeavors to eliminate discrimination, by means of denouncing discriminatory cases and publicly showing their justice.

3. We will aim for the construction of appealing to communities with the key words of human rights, welfare and environment, and which is solid against natural disaster.



4. We will address the problems to improve the living standards of the households of the Buraku people suffering from the hardest problems, including homes with only one parent, handicapped people, and the elderly, establishing welfare policies.
5. We will elevate the education and employment standards, leading to the stabilization of Buraku households, so that each Burakumin can demonstrate his/her ability as much as possible.
6. We will endeavor to promote the industry of each community, and to establish a network of mutual cooperation including a nationwide distribution, thus planning mutual solidarity and unity from an economic perspective.
7. We will unite and cooperate with our nearby communities, thus improving society. we will oppose all forms of discrimination and racism, and fight together to attain all the civil rights.
8. We will contribute to wipe out a discriminatory consciousness and to universalize and heighten the level of human rights ideas by appealing for the active promotion of enlightenment activities to all layers of society such as central and local governments, mass media, schools and institutions, religious groups, judicial circles, performing artists, political parties and diet members.
9. We will try to eliminate all forms of discrimination, undemocratic systems, irrational superstitions and customs, and will oppose the traditional Japanese family system and Emperor system which will lead to the strengthening of status consciousness.
10. We will inherit various forms of life culture of discriminated-against people and pursue the creation of a culture which will contribute towards human liberation.
11. We will demand that the Japanese government ratify and actualize international treaties for human rights, and prepare legislation which promotes the drastic solution of the Buraku problem and the elimination of all forms of discrimination within Japan.
12. We will dash forward with the elimination of discrimination around the world, especially in Asia and the Pacific region, aiming at a discrimination-free peaceful world.
13. We will develop our Levelers Movement worldwide, seeking for the supreme state of human beings, with the belief of historical destiny and awakening for humanity.

[Notes]

1. This is a famous passage from the 'Declaration of National Levelers Association' issues in 1922.
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.*
4. *ibid.*



An Interview With Mr. Ishikawa On Parole (2)

Interviewer: Mr. Taketoshi Nakayama, Secretary General, Defense Panel

This is the second part of the interview with Mr. Kazuo Ishikawa who was paroled for the first time in 31 years and 7 months. Let's keep up the May 23rd Struggle to protest against the unjustified arrest of 32 years, into a nationwide movement breaking the way through to the retrial via an inquiry into the facts and a present action of all the evidence.

Nakayama: When the second trial was judged at Tokyo High Court in 1974, Mr. Yamagami said, "Judge, you cheated us", and when I also said, "What about the Buraku problem?", Chief Judge Terao just gave me a look. He had said he had read more than ten books on the problem, but he only mentioned in his judgement paper that he found no intentional picking out Buraku as a target.

Ishikawa: At the second trial, the defense team did not refute when the move of witnesses was rejected including Mr. Kyotaro Kimura who was appealing the Buraku problems. It was a great disappointment for me.

Nakayama: Chief Judge Terao said he had read more than ten books about Buraku. And he adopted the magazine 'Buraku' by his legal authority, didn't he?

Ishikawa: Yes, yes.

Nakayama: So I'm sure the defense team at that time naturally thought, "It may be all right with Judge Terao"

Ishikawa: Well

Nakayama: I myself thought that way: he would judge, 'Not guilty'

Ishikawa: I heard Mr. Nakata, the chief, also came on the day believing in a not-guilty decision.

Nakayama: You appealed in the trial that you had been deprived of the opportunity of education because of Buraku discrimination.

Ishikawa: Yes I did.

Nakayama: When was it that you yourself recognized Buraku problem was relevant to this case?



Mr. Nakayama(left) and Mr. Ishikawa (right)

Ishikawa: One or two years after I got some books from Mr. Asada (Zennosuke Asada, Former BLL Chairman). So in 1968 or '68, I guess.

Nakayama: Hum.

Ishikawa: I think so. The first nationwide march was held in 1970, and so it was one or two years earlier when I could understand the problem. I studies hardest in those days. Also I was encouraged by children. I owe what I am now to those small children.

Nakayama: Did your parents tell you about the Buraku problem or Buraku discrimination when you were little?

Ishikawa: No, never. But I remember somebody threw a stone at me sometimes. Once I told my mother about it, she said, "Leave them alone" That's all. They came from Iriso to throw stones at me. Yet I could do nothing to them but ignore, with my mother's words, "Leave them alone"

Nakayama: Uh, huh



Ishikawa: I realize now it was a kind of Buraku discrimination. And I have the most impressive memory. I was told I was dirty at a barber shop. When I told my father, he said, "Don't go to the shop" so I went all the way to another barber's in the north.

Nakayama: You were called 'Ka-wa-dan-bo', weren't you?

Ishikawa: Yes, I was.

Nakayama: Did you remember the word?

Ishikawa: Yes, I did. I didn't know what Ka-wa-dan-bo meant, though.

Nakayama: You did not know the meaning, but remembered the incident?

Ishikawa: I did remember. Yes, at the 75th hearing, I told it. I suppose it was also included in the written statement.

Nakayama: Yes, sure. By the way, did you go to school in the fifth grade?

Ishikawa: Well,.....I have no memory of going to school. Rather I remember going here and there for weeding or something like that.

Nakayama: You attended for some days in the sixth grade, on paper anyway.

Ishikawa: I was supposed to, but in fact I didn't.

Nakayama: According to the information submitted to the court from the Sayama City Board of Education, you attended school for 78 days. But the figure was in fact....

Ishikawa: Yes, a nominal figure.

Nakayama: You didn't go at all?

Ishikawa: No. But I am not so sure that I didn't go even a day. Anyway I hardly attended.

Nakayama: You did not know how to write in your elementary days?

Ishikawa: No, I didn't. I did not know how to do my homework anyway. Not at all. Because I could not afford textbooks.

Nakayama: Your school registers of the fourth to sixth grade were submitted. Every subject including Japanese, arithmetic was marked minus 2, except social studies, which was minus 1.

Ishikawa: Minus?

Nakayama: All minus 2. Music, drawing and even physical education were all graded minus 2! Very strange. Even if you didn't study, and didn't understand fundamental subjects, how should you be given the bottom grade in music or physical education?

Ishikawa: That was because I didn't attend school.

Nakayama: Yes. We can see Buraku discrimination here. It shows how you, a man from Buraku had been discriminated against. You were given minus 2 in such subjects as music, physical education and drawing. And this is not only the case with you, Mr. Ishikawa.

Ishikawa: Hum.

Nakayama: Other students of the Buraku there, were also treated in the same way.

Ishikawa: All of us were.

Nakayama: Yeah, everybody was more or less under the same situation.

Ishikawa: Most of my and my younger sister's generation in the neighborhood didn't go to school. They didn't go to junior high.

Nakayama: The Board of Education admitted that discrimination resulted in such a grading.

Ishikawa: The most impressive memory was the words of a teacher. He said to me, "You had better be sleeping" So I often fell asleep in class.

Nakayama: Your teachers never visited your house, did they?

Ishikawa: No, not that I know of.

Nakayama: I joined the defense team in the fall of 1972, when judge Terao was replaced to preside over the case. Before I joined, I sent a letter to you. and you answered my letter, which helped me make up my mind to join the defense panel.

Ishikawa: Was it a post card?

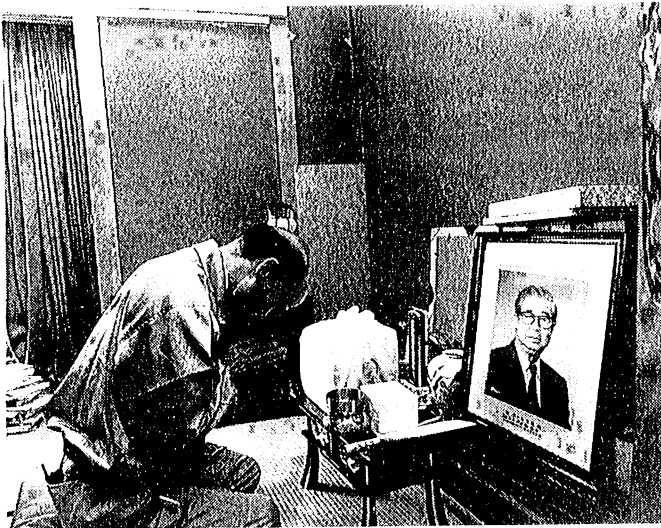
Nakayama: No, a letter.

Ishikawa: A letter?

Nakayama: Yes, it was. I was very much impressed with your writing. You described in your letter the cruel treatment of the state to those who were deprived of an education.

Ishikawa: Yeah,

Nakayama: You said in your letter, "I cannot



Mr. Ishikawa visited late Mr. Sasaki's house, who was a chief defence panel. He reported his parol in front of Mr. Sasaki's picture.

forgive it"

Ishikawa: Did I? I don't remember.

Nakayama: It was the first letter I received from you.

Ishikawa: I was studying very hard in those days. I was given a lot of books from the BLL.

Nakayama: You appealed ardently. To say it frankly, your letters in those days were more touching to the heart.

Ishikawa: More than recent ones?

Nakayama: Not so sophisticated.

Ishikawa: Yeah, I remember. My hand writing was better then. I studied very, very hard.

Nakayama: Let me read part of it:

"To Mr. Nakayama, I hear you went to school while working. As my family was poor, I could not do like you. So I was ignorant. Because I was ignorant, I made a mistake. It am like wring my neck with my own hands. Also because I am from a Buraku, I was used as a tool for protecting the National authorities. Looking back now, I cannot help but regret the stand which I was put into. I wouldn't say I have a grudge against the fact that I could not get even the minimum education because of my poverty. Still I cannot hate enough for the

treatment of the state to those who were deprived of education. The thought that I won't forgive remains in me"

Ishikawa: I was a better writer, then.

Nakayama: Well, you were appealing the fact. That is the most touching.

Ishikawa: I was told to appeal the fact more simply than the way I am writing now, without mentioning authoritarian powers or something like that, but appealing why I was put into such situation.

Nakayama: That's right.

Ishikawa: Now that I have been out of jail, I am going to do it ahead.

Nakayama: At the high court, you appealed why you had made a false confession, but the presiding judge did not believe you, did he?

Ishikawa: No, he didn't.

Nakayama: How we have him really understand it is the point, the goal, indeed. Through the defense activities over the years, the reliability of evidence has been denied one by one, as you know. Finally the problem will be focused on your confession and that the confession was maintained.

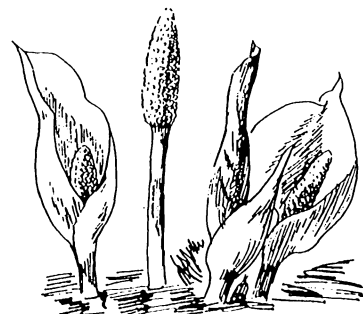
Ishikawa: How should I have the court understand why I had to.

Nakayama: That's it. The time is drawing near.

Ishikawa: The best way is that they let me stand in the court. That is the fact-finding investigation. To win the investigation will be the most important.

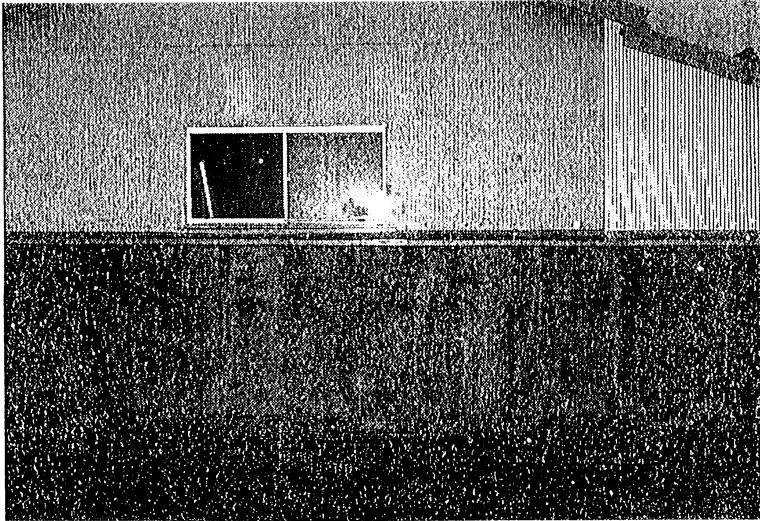
Nakayama: Right!

Ishikawa: When I am allowed to stand in the court, I. will explain in detail until the judge understands me fully. I will do it properly.





'More Dreadful Than AUM, Early Death to Them' Graffiti on Walls Found in Suzuka, Mie Pref.



Graffiti on walls(photo by BLL , Mie Prefectural Federation)

A series of malicious graffiti of discrimination against Buraku was found in Suzuka, Mie Pref. recently. The Prefectural Federation of BLL is taking legal steps according to arrangements made on May 6th by the Executive Committee of the Federation which has agreed to bring a charge against discriminatory incidents depending on the characteristics of each case. The Federation will appeal to Suzuka Police.

The discriminatory graffiti were found in three places. One was found on the block wall of a house in Suzuka city on April 22, and the other two were found on May 11, on the concrete wall of a shrine at Sakurajima, Suzuka, and on the block wall of Tamagaki Station of the Ise Railway. The graffiti were written in letters as big as 50 square centimeters each, using a black or grey colored spray. They read as follows:

"Buraku (Dowa) is More Dreadful Than AUM. Early Death to Them" "(District name) is a Buraku Enclave" "Death to Buraku: by (a person's name), Yokkaichi. Buraku is below AUM. Death to them"

* The Mie Prefectural Federation of the BLL went to the first scene on April 22, along with the staff of Mie Pref., the Mie Board of Education, Suzuka City, as well as Mie Dowa Education.

They identified the spot and discussed how to deal with the incident. The owner of the house is going to sue those responsible for damage to the building, and the prefectural federation of the BLL will sue for libel.

The other two graffiti were identified on May 11 by the Federation along with staff from Mie Pref., the Mie Board of Education, the Bureau for the Residents of the Northern part of Mie, and Suzuka

City. Suzuka City reported, "We had Suzuka police identify the spots and take photos. The Damage Report of the Yoshida Shrine was submitted in the name of the Chairman of the Self Government Association of Sakurajima District. The graffiti at the shrine were erased by the city and that at the station by Ise Railway". Mr. , Chief of the General Affairs Dept., Ise Railways head office, said, "We reported the incident in written form to the Suzuka police and sent our men to patrol all over to confirm that no other graffiti were found. We also reported the case to the Railway Police Force of the Mie Prefectural Police:".

As to the latter cases of graffiti, , Chief of the First Division of Criminal Affairs of the Suzuka Police Station, explained, "Those cases will be charged as damage to utensils (under 2 years' prison term). I am afraid damage to a building(under 5 years' prison term) may not be applied, referring to previous cases. To arrest the responsible may be difficult unless caught in the act. We cannot apply district names to the charge of libel unlike the case of personal names. The description somewhat like a person's name in the graffiti will be investigated in cooperation with the city"