



January 1986

A GREAT STRIDE FOR PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO BE ACHIEVED IN 1986

Renewed spirit was felt in 1985, marking the 40th anniversary of the end of WWII and the founding of the United Nations. The important task of protecting human rights and peace was reconsidered globally.

It was particularly encouraging that the two leaders of superpowers started a dialogue in November 1985 to protect human rights and to avoid the crisis of nuclear war. In South Africa voices were raised against Apartheid more impressively than ever. The other side of the picture, however, is that concrete agreements haven't been really reached for avoiding the crisis of nuclear war.

Annual military expenditure all over the world amounts today close to one trillion dollars. Faced with the rising demands for the elimination of Apartheid, the government of South Africa is strengthening its suppressive machinery. 1986 is the International Peace Year as well as the tenth anniversary of

the effectuation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

We need to advance through 1986 specific measures to avoid the crisis of nuclear war and to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violation of human rights including Apartheid. 1986 is the 40th anniversary for Japan of the effectuation of the Japan Constitution that is firmly based on the ideals of peace, of human rights. In order to commemorate this year, we are determined to achieve the complete ratification of the International Covenants and the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Domestically, our goal is to win the legislation of the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku and a law to protect the rights of the Ainu people. We would like to ask for your continued generous collaboration with us this year and wish for your happy and successful year.



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Gathering for "Peace & Human Rights"; requesting for the early ratification of UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Dec.10) — The staff with the guests.



“ASSEMBLIES FOR PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS”

During this year's Human Rights Week, large assemblies on behalf of "Peace and Human Rights" were held in Tokyo (Dec.5), Hiroshima and Fukuoka (Dec.7), and Osaka (Dec.10). They were sponsored by the Central Executive Committee of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which consists of delegates from four labor unions, scholars, people working in the fields of culture and religion, representatives from corporations, and members of local committees in Hiroshima, Fukuoka and Osaka.

the UN regarding peace and human rights, as demonstrated by the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights;

(2) a warning about the existence of recent movements threatening peace and human rights both in Japan and overseas;

(3) the need for early ratification by Japan of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;

(4) the need for laws within Japan realizing the above Convention, such as the "Law on the Ainu" and the "Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku";

(5) agreement to reinforce the movement in support of next year's "International Year of Peace."

The assemblies also heard appeals delivered on behalf of groups facing discrimination in Japan, including Korean residents, the Ainu and the handicapped.

One of the guests, Mr. Rodriguez, gave a speech under the title, "The UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination."

He mentioned the following: (1) the background to the establishment of the Convention — racial supremacy and racial discrimination; (2) the basic rationale of the Convention, focusing on Articles 1, 4 and 7; (3) the way in which Articles 4 and 7 need to complement each other in eliminating racial



A visit to Ministry of Foreign Affairs; met the Minister Mr. Abe (Mr. Abe, Minister of Foreign Affairs, second from the right; Mr. Palmer, third; Mr. Rodriguez, fourth respectively.)

These assemblies put forward arguments in support of two causes: "early ratification by Japan of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination" and "enactment of the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku."

Two special guests, who were officially invited by Osaka City, took part in the debates: Mr. Emani Palmer, head of a special division set up for the UN Decade to Struggle against Racial Discrimination, and Mr. Luis Rodriguez, chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Keynote speeches at the assemblies were delivered under the following themes:

(1) agreement on the fundamental principles of



Gathering at Nakanoshima, Osaka



discrimination; (4) the extreme importance of Japanese ratification of the Convention in order to increase its universality; and (5) the way in which the Convention is bound to help solve discrimination issues within Japan, such as the Buraku issue, the problems faced by Korean residents in Japan, by Ainu and by other groups at the base of Japanese society which encounter discrimination — even given that ratification will not mean immediate solution.

The other guest, Mr. Palmer, discussed the following issues: (1) the intimate relationship between peace and human rights; (2) the efforts for protection of human rights being made by UN organizations; and (3) under the theme of "The Struggle against Racial Discrimination and the Role of the United Nations," the efforts being made for the elimination of racial discrimination in every country.

A book called "The World Now — Japan and the Laws on Elimination of Discrimination in Other Countries" was distributed at the assemblies. Compiled under the auspices of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute, it represents the result of research on legislation against discrimination in six

countries: the United States, Britain, France, West Germany, Sweden and India. The volume will be an essential resource for setting up adequate legal machinery for the future elimination of discrimination in Japan.



Mr. Palmer(left)and Mr.Rodrigues(right)

For Further Signatures to Support the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku

In order to thoroughly solve the Buraku issue, the Buraku Liberation Movement is currently demanding the enactment of the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku. This will replace the Law on Special Measures for Regional Improvements which expires in March 1987.

We are therefore asking for foreign support and cooperation from the readers of our B.L. News. So far 178 people from six countries (France, India, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United

States of America) have sent us their signatures supporting the enactment of the law. May I, therefore, take this opportunity to express our gratitude.

Next year, in 1986, the decision on the enactment of the law will be made. It will therefore be a very important year for the B.L. movement.

We have enclosed petition forms for those readers who are willing to support our objectives. We ask for your cooperation. Thank you.



Grappling with the Fundamental Law Discussion at a Gathering of College Presidents

49 university and college presidents gathered at the Buraku Liberation Center on Nov. 2 to stage a get-together of presidents representing the Kansai area.

Sueo Murakoshi, Chairperson of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute, gave the welcoming address, followed by an outline of the issues by Masumi Takano, professor at Kagawa University, under the title "Concerning the Recent Debates on the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku."

He stressed the following four points; (1) it is clear that legislation must play an active role in the fields of human rights and Buraku liberation; (2) in order to liberate Buraku, enlightenment, special measures to improve actual conditions and legislative penalties against malicious acts of discrimination are the three important principles underlying general policies, adding that a law governed by a time limit will not do; (3) in this sense, it is necessary to establish a form of a fundamental law which do not embed the idea of discrimination; (4) these legislative restrictions should only be limited to discriminatory background surveys and employment, and should not entail any increase in "violent denunciations" or "provocations of the nation."

A second report was made by Toshihiko Konno, professor at Mie University. He discussed the following: ways of eliminating discrimination on the basis of high school surveys on awareness of Buraku issues and human rights; the significance of the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku; and the importance of promoting courses for Buraku education in universities.

The next report was made by Kazuo Tsuge, professor at Kansei Gakuin University, on "the reality and task of 'Dowa' education in Kansei Gakuin University."

Finally, the president of Osaka City University, Eiichi Kimura, appealed for the promotion of activities in the Kinki area for the establishment of the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku.

After the gathering, a promotion committee attached to the association of academics in the Kinki area which is working for the establishment of the Fundamental Law for the Liberation of Buraku held a meeting. 22 presidents and nine professors summoned this meeting. They agreed on the following two points; (1) inspections will be made of real conditions in the Buraku districts on Nov. 29, (2) a symposium on the Fundamental Law will be held on Jan 18.

— *30,000 items exhibited, including the original Declaration of the Leveler's Association*

OSAKA MUSEUM OF HUMAN RIGHTS HISTORY NOW OPEN

The opening ceremony of Liberty Osaka, the first museum of human rights in Japan, was held on Dec. 2. The idea behind this museum was developed by the Buraku Liberation League (B.L.L.) in Osaka while the Osaka prefectural and municipal govern-

ments saw to its construction. It is a two-story ferroconcrete building occupying premises of 2545 square meters.

Items housed in the museum include land survey and taxation records from Buraku in the Edo



period, a tombstone on which discriminatory posthumous names have been carved, the Declaration of the Levelers' Association, and other Buraku-related materials.

The collection also includes enlarged copies of the diary of Anne Frank, the Jewish girl killed by the Nazis; photos taken by the late Eugene Smith who devoted most of his work to the people of Minamata, the town poisoned by organic mercury; and some folk implements made by Roma and Sinti.

Mr. Sakae Kishi, Governor of Osaka Prefecture, Mr. Oshima, Mayor of Osaka City, Mr. Takumi Ueda, chairperson of BLL Osaka, and around 250 others took part in the ceremony.

The museum is expected to serve as "a fortress against all forms of discrimination."

It is open 10.00 am to 5.00 pm, Tuesday through Sunday.



Opening Ceremony of "Liberty Osaka" (the museum of people's history) (governor and mayor of Osaka, mayor of Higashi-Osaka, and Mr. Iwakichi Wajima, Mr. Takumi Ueda participated)

Youth Meeting for International Solidarity Against Discrimination and for Peace

International Youth Conference in Osaka

As the finale of the 1985 International Youth Year, an "International Youth Conference in Osaka" (promoted by the Osaka Promotion Conference for the International Youth Year) was held from Dec. 13-18 with four guests from abroad taking part. Through meetings held to exchange ideas with the guests, Japanese young people had an opportunity to heighten consciousness vis-a-vis "peace and human rights," serving to cement solidarity between youth members of the Buraku Liberation League and other organizations.

The guests were Mr. Robert Kehlhofer (U.N. Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs), Ms. Barungile Shembe (South Africa; student at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College), Mr. Arrell White (U.S.A; Assistant to the Executive Director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and Mr. Jean Michel Ollé (France; Chief Editor of 'Difference' the organ of the Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples).

The main event of the international conference was the seminar of the International Youth Conference in Osaka held at Morinomiya City's Pirotty Hall on Sunday Dec. 17. Youth members from various branches of B.L.L., with the regional executive committees, participated in the seminar of approximately 800 people.

Speaking as the deputy to the chief promotion secretary, Mr. Akai (chief of the B.L.L. youth department) delivered the keynote address. He stressed that "we will continue to protect peace and human rights, to join hands on an international basis and to expand the organization." Then followed speeches made by the guests. A brief summary follows.

Ms. Shembe, commenting on South Africa's apartheid system, declared "We are.....going to bleed with the enemy. Victory is certain and victory is in sight." Earning loud applause she charged Japan with maintaining strong economic ties with South Africa which constitute a major pillar of the apartheid system. "Please, do not buy South African



goods," She pleaded. "Please work upon the government to participate in economic sanctions directed against the South African government." She wound up her speech by appealing to the audience and to the B.L.L. sponsors to cooperate in eliminating all forms of discrimination from the face of the earth.



Guests at the IYY Symposium (from left: Robert L. Kehlkofer, United Nations; Barungile Shembe, ANC; Arrell D. White, NAACP, USA; Jean Michel Ollé, MRAP, France)

Mr. White pointed out that some people regard discrimination as virtually a thing of the past both in Japan and America. He gave a lucid explanation why such a viewpoint is wrong basing his analysis on the fact that the unemployment rate for young blacks in the U.S. reached 45%.

Mr. Ollé explained discrimination in Europe by reminding us of the reality of the lives of the four million immigrant workers in France and of the discrimination against Roma, Jews, and other minorities

Mr. Kehlhofer emphasized that the activities and the spirit of the International Youth Year must not be for gotten and that it should leap further forward in to the future.

Following the speeches from the guests, a representative from the Japanese Anti-Apartheid Committee took the stage, followed by a small delegation from the Japanese participants. Radio-cassette recorders and calculators were given to Ms. Shembe for use in the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College.

After the seminar, the program continued with an

exchange meeting including singing and dancing.

Members of the youth department of the B.L.L.

Branch presented matsuri bayashi (festival music), and Young Koreans from the Yao and Yasunaka districts sang a Korean song together with youth members of the Branch. Mr. Ollé and Ms. Shembe each sang a song from their mother country.

Guests Visit Nishinari District

Four guests from abroad visited Osaka's district on Nov.14 and attended an exchange meeting with B.L.L. youth members at the Buraku Liberation Center on Nov. 15. That same night two hundred people joined the guests at a symposium.

On Nov. 16, after paying a courtesy call on Governor Kishi and Mayor Oshima, they exchanged views and reinforced their solidarity with young people who are involved in organizing I.Y.Y. programs in the cities of Sakai, Kaizuka, Osaka, Ibaragi, Takatsuki and Higashi-Osaka. On Nov. 18, they visited an atomic bomb museum in Hiroshima. All four were eager to participate in every activity and the Japanese youth members themselves also had a good opportunity to get acquainted with various other bodies. They were also able to learn of trends among young people abroad who are fighting against discrimination, thereby realizing the objective of the I.Y.Y. programs.





True History of Buraku (part 2)

By Professor Nobuaki Teraki
St. Andrews University (Momoyama Gakuin
University)

In order to understand the process whereby the contemporary system was formed, it is essential to bear in mind the nature of peasant rebellions and their suppression by the centralized ruling power.

History textbooks tell us that during the Edo period, peasants accounted for as much as 90 percent of the population, with the samurai class, farmers and townspeople comprising the remainder. In other words, the samurai class represented only a fraction of the population compared with the peasants.

A "divide-and-rule" policy was therefore introduced in order to enable rule by this small minority.

This framework, however, is not adequate for interpretation of contemporary status discrimination, including that relating to the Buraku.

During the Kamakura period (1185-1333), the great bulk of the population was made up of farmers, townspeople and artisans. The fact that a status system existed even in medieval times implies the operation of a "divide-and-rule" policy in those days also.

Why did the modern status system develop?

Peasant uprisings pointed to the existence of a powerful source of subversive energy. The ruling class, in turn, consolidated its position to enable it to maintain national control. But the dissident movement from below became so strong that the ruling class was forced to adopt a "divide-and-rule" strategy.

Let me put this in concrete terms.

Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1536-1598), the first warlord to rule the nation, subdued the peasant rebellions and conducted a nationwide land survey.

Hideyoshi also confiscated swords and other weapons from the peasants, merchants and craftsmen. Ordinary people possessed guns, swords and spears. Carpenters and plasterers also carried short swords and daggers. These weapons had been used

by participants in the peasant uprisings and were therefore confiscated.

In 1591, Hideyoshi issued a decree establishing differences in status: samurai, farmers townspeople, etc. Change of status was forbidden. Responsibility for ashering to the regulations belonged to the village or town as a whole.

FORMATION OF A MODERN 'LOWLY' CASTE

The decree didn't include any category of status differentiation which applies to the Burakumin of today. This complicates the issue. However, land survey records do specify a class of people known as "kawata." This was one of the most important kinds of register.

"Kawata" (represented by Chinese characters meaning "leather-abundant" or "leatherfield") was a term used to denote a group of people who appear to be the ancestors of the modern Burakumin. Once they had been designated as "kawata," they couldn't escape it. The term "kawata" has been found in more than 60 land survey registers so far. Between 70 and 80 percent of these records apply to areas which are now Buraku. The Burakumin can therefore be said to derive directly from people belonging to this "kawata" status rather than from the "eta" status of the Edo period.

It was when contradictions within Edo period society intensified and the rule of the Shogunate began to lose stability that "eta" status replaced "kawata" status. The Chinese characters used to represent the term "eta" mean "filth abundant," a shockingly derogatory expression.

However, this shift in terminology was not uniformly the case. In Hiroshima, for example, the term "kawata" continued to be used throughout the



edo period. In Osaka also, "kawata" was more common than "eta."

The modern status system was established ac-

ording to this pattern under Toyotomi and was completely consolidated by the time of the third Tokugawa Shogunate in the mid-17th century.

"At that time, I was ---"

Relating my experiences of discrimination, part (IX)

Harsh Discrimination In Marriage

I married in September 1965, the same year I graduated from night high school. It was then I came face to face with discrimination. My wife's family opposed our marriage because "we were too young and because _____ is a Buraku district." I wrote a letter to her family in Nagasaki City revealing that I am a Burakumin and asked, "What is wrong with Buraku?" and "What is the difference?" As a result, my present sister-in-law sent me a reply demanding me "to think about it again because you are young."

I later learned that my wife's mother would break off relations with my wife if she were to marry either a believer of a certain religion or a Burakumin.

Soon after this, my wife went to discuss the matter with her brother and decided to remove her name from the family register. Being so poor at that time, we held a small celebration with friends and my family. Therefore, we don't have any photographs nor a go-between. When our children ask about this, we answer truthfully.

Having had this experience, I have acted as a go-between for 12 couples. Among the twelve, eight couples faced discrimination against their marriage. There was a girl who ran out of her house barefoot and a girl who came for help because she was pregnant. When I go to listen to the other party's family, words full of discrimination are thrown back at us; "I didn't raise my daughter to live a lowly life," "I won't let my grandchild cross the threshold," "They are discriminated against because they always stick together," "If I let my daughter marry a Burakumin from _____, it will ruin the opportunities for mar-

riage of my other children. Can you take responsibility for that?"

When I listen to what they say, sometimes it makes me furious. But knowing that getting angry will ruin everything, I made every effort to try to make them understand. At times I had to narrate Buraku problems from the beginning which took 27 hours over three days.

When I saw the runaway girl home, I talked with her parents in the doorway for two and a half hours.

And yet, some of these parents, after a year or two, when a grand child arrives, gradually begin to reunite their relationships bringing baby clothes secretly, or just going to look at the baby at night.

It is easier when the man is from a Buraku, but vice versa, I have less confidence. This is probably due to the fact that discrimination against women is yet a strong factor in our society.

If my daughter (now 14 years old) wants to marry a non-Buraku man and if that family has a poor understanding of Buraku problems, I don't know what I would feel myself. This makes me feel more determined to work harder in this struggle.

Executive staff, B.L.L., Osaka
Chief Secretary, _____ Branch