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Buraku Liberation News

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Government Panel Recommended Continuing Measures for Dowa Policy, including Legislation, after the Current Law Expires in March 1997.

The Summary Section of the Consultative Council on Regional Improvement Measures, a government panel studying the Dowa Policy in order to shift from the present special measures into ordinary measures after the 10-year-old Law Regarding the Special Fiscal Measures of the Government for Regional Improvement Projects (Hereinafter ; the current law) expires in March 1997, recently released a report.

The panel chaired by Shigeki Miyazaki, the president of Meiji University, recommended in the report to make a concrete study in all aspects, including the necessity of legislation so that the government policy on eliminating Buraku discrimination will not change drastically while the current law is not to be re-extended.

The report says that the current law almost fulfilled its roll as to implement infrastructure projects which has brought a heavy financial

burden to local governments. With regard to the gap in education and employment between Buraku and other people, as well as the still existing consciousness of discrimination, it shows a basic policy that various kinds of devices in replacement of special measures should be implemented to persistently make time-consuming efforts to solve the problems as a result of the difficulty of solving in a short term by the special measures.

The panel recommended concrete devices, such as the establishment of a relief system for the victims of human rights violations and comprehensive measures to solve the gap in

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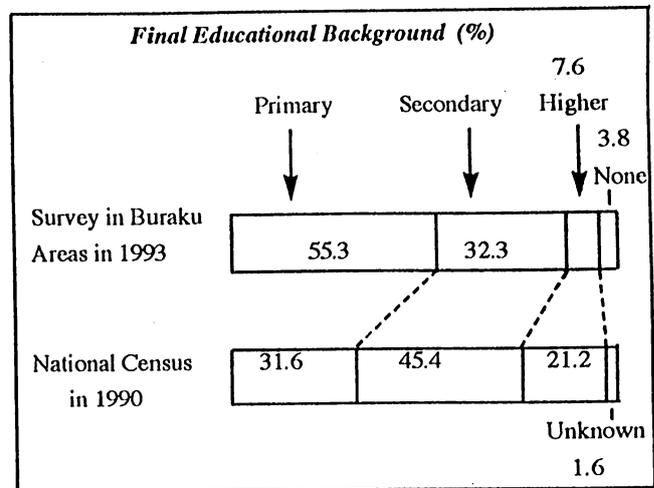
enrollment rate to higher schools.

The panel explains that it does not mean to abandon the policy aiming for an early solution of the Dowa problem just because they did not recommend the extension of the current law.

There had been, in fact, disputes until the very end of the Summary Section meeting among the panel members over the conclusion as to how to continue the Dowa policy concretely after the current law expires. As a result, the conclusion was not yet clearly made, only mentioning the need to study, including legislation, leaving it to the Diet decision following the general meeting of the Consultative Council on Regional Improvement Measures starting in April.

There will be slow progress even in the Diet due to differences in opinion among political parties just like what is seen among different Buraku people's organizations (*1) although the conclusion should be come out in July when the compilation of the budget for fiscal 1997 will be started.

While the Social Democratic Party (SDP), a ruling coalition partner, has been pushing for the enactment of a Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation, some segments of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the biggest party of the coalition, have insisted that it is not necessary to take legal measures. The Project Team for Human Rights and Discrimination Question in the coalition submitted an interim report in June 1985, but failed to show the concrete plans after that. While the SDP separately submitted a view expressing the necessity of legislative, administrative and financial measures for the fundamental solution of the Buraku problem, neither the LDP nor Sakigake Party (*2), other partner, has summarized their own view.



When it comes to opposition parties, Japanese Communist Party (JCP) has been persistently insisting on the shift to ordinary measures, confronting the views of the SDP.

The New Frontier Party, the largest opposition party, has urged the legislative measures, but has not yet discussed them concretely. (*3)

The sense of political parties on human rights will be tried over the Dowa policy on the one hand. On the other hand, politicians' concern about Buraku problems depends on whether many Buraku areas are located in their home town. They care about how Buraku people's organizations will support them in the next election. As a result, it will not be easy to sum up a view as the ruling coalition by July. (A translation of the article of the March 29, 1996 Asahi Shimbun)

[Editor's Notes]

(*1) Aside from the Buraku Liberation League, the National Liberal Association of Dowa affiliated with the LDP and the All Japan Federation of Buraku Liberation Movements affiliated with the JCP.

(*2) The Sakigake Party has submitted its concrete view on Dowa problem.

(*3) The New Frontier Party has drawn up a draft bill on Dowa policy.



The BLL Called the Panel Recommendations One Step Forward.

A spokesperson of the Buraku Liberation League said, " The report of the Summary Section of the Consultative Council on Regional Improvement Measures marked one step forward having pointed out the necessity of concrete study in all aspects, including a

legislative measure. A Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation, for which we have been seeking, should be legislated in the Diet. We will continue our efforts to have the law enacted within this Diet session in order to fundamentally solve the Dowa problem."

A Section Chief of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Made a Discriminatory Remark

It was revealed that a chief of the Domestic Publicity Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a discriminatory remark during a public panel discussion at the International Understanding Seminar held on February 16 in Sakai City, Osaka. In reaction to the remark, the Osaka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League began to look into the facts and seek the responsibility for them.

Mr _____, who made the remark, was one of the speakers at the seminar, co-sponsored by the Osaka Prefectural government and the Sakai City government, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the seminar he talked about the difference in culture between Japan and other countries, referring to the special nature of Kasumigaseki, a district in Tokyo where almost all the ministry offices are located.

He said, " When we take a glance at Japan, Kasumigaseki, in which we are

working, may be a Special Buraku. We have to obey a logic peculiar to Kasumigaseki. For instance, in drafting diplomatic notes exchanged between Japanese and a recipient government for economic cooperation, you are required to be very careful in choosing even one word since they are subject to the cabinet meeting in Japan."

The staff from the sponsor organizations who had noticed the remark indicated to the speaker after the seminar that Special Buraku was a discriminatory expression.

The term Special Buraku was first used by the administration early in 1900's to describe a discriminated against Buraku. The term negatively distinguished Buraku areas from communities of other Japanese. It has been figuratively used from time to time since then in distinguishing a different society from a so-called ordinary society as well as in describing Buraku areas, resulting in fostering discrimination against Buraku people.



Discriminatory Street Propaganda for more than Four Years in Nagoya

It was in October 1991 that the Aichi Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League (BLL) first knew about a series of discriminatory propaganda of a man (Hereinafter, S) in Nagoya City. A male caller left a message on a telephone answering machine of the office of the federation, saying that a man was shouting discriminatory remarks through a megaphone in front of the M Department Store, located in commercial district of Nagoya City, and was putting discriminatory notes on the sidewalk in addition to showing his name and address.

The federation began to persuade him to stop doing this in cooperation with the Dowa Policy Section of the city government. According to the city government, S earlier made a call to the city office protesting against the Mayor's essay in the city newsletter featuring the Dowa problem. On another occasion, he visited the city hall to complain that he got out of shape due to vibrations made by people in a Dowa area.

In April 1992, he was seen by an East Japan Railway Company worker in front of the JR Nagoya Station shouting discriminatory remarks and putting notes on the ground agitating, "Buraku people are germs as well as public enemy," and many other discriminatory words. Both the BLL and the city government were immediately informed by the JR Nagoya Station and went to the site to get him to stop. In reaction to this persuasion he shouted his remarks in an even louder voice, as bystanders gathered into a crowd.



S is putting discriminatory notes on the ground.

As far as the BLL knew, he repeated such acts 3 times in front of the station, once near the Nagoya city hall, and 8 times in the vicinity of the M Department Store, until December 1993, then 16 times from April 1994 to March 1995, and 21 times from April to December 1995. He seemed to make it a rule to perform the acts for around three hours on the weekend.

Several organizations, including the BLL and government offices related to the Dowa policy, have been seeking to forbid the acts, studying various means, such as the Road Traffic Law. However, they have found it difficult to control him, instead enlightening him in a face-to-face education, because of the absence of a law regulating Buraku discrimination.

In spite of his ceaseless acts, people who

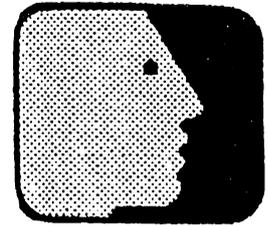


witnessed the propaganda in the street never reported the cases either to the BLL or to the city government, except for the first male caller, members of the BLL and some of the public workers who were enlightened about the issue at their workplaces. The facts suggest

that people in Nagoya seem to be poor in the sense of human rights. More than four years have passed since the propaganda was first seen while no proper measure was taken to forbid the acts.



Buraku Problem Q & A (11)



The Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation

Q

Please explain the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation.

A

There have been three kinds of laws enacted in turn since 1969 up to the present, aimed at solving the Buraku problem; namely, the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects, the Law on Special Measures for Regional Improvement, and the Law Regarding the Special Fiscal Measures of the Government for Regional Improvement Projects.

The implementation of the laws has contributed to improve the living environment of Buraku areas to a certain extent. However, we cannot find considerable improvement in the ratio of enrollment to schools of a higher grade and the stable employment of Buraku people.

In addition, the laws were not so efficient as to eliminate discriminatory incidents and consciousness. As a matter of fact, the characteristics of the government policy in solving the discrimination lasting over the centuries have been constant since the prewar period in terms of setting a short term for each of the three laws. Among others, the Law on Special Measures for Regional Improvement enacted in April 1982 appeared not to bring a complete solution to the Buraku problem due to its character of merely paying attention to settle remaining projects.

In reaction to the government policy, a Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation was drafted and released in May 1985 by the Central Executive Committee for the National Movement to Demand Legislation of a Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation. The committee is presided over by Mr Ohtani, head priest of the Jodoshinshu Honganji sect of Buddhism, and joined by members from Buraku, labor, business, academic, education, religious, and other circles.

The draft bill has two main objectives. The first is to solve the Buraku problem quickly and fundamentally, including the elimination of discriminatory incidents and consciousness as well as improving the living environment. The second is to create a discrimination-free society. Tackling the Buraku Problem will necessarily lead to the elimination of all forms of discrimination. In order to attain these objectives, the law proposes the following ;

----The government must improve poor conditions resulting from discrimination by special and active measures, such as the improvement of living conditions, the promotion of social welfare, public hygiene, agriculture, forestry, small and medium-sized enterprises in Buraku areas as well as employment, school and social education for Buraku people.

----The government must eliminate discriminatory consciousness and enhance ideas about human rights through systematic education and enlightenment.



---The government must regulate vicious discriminatory behavior, such as family background investigations and discrimination in employment relations against Buraku people. In addition, the government must form a human rights committee to establish a relief system for the victims of discrimination.

With regards to legal measures to regulate the activities of such private agencies, there are several ordinances enacted at local government levels. In 1985 Osaka Prefecture enacted the Ordinance to Regulate Personal Investigation Conductive to Buraku Discrimination.

The law drafted also urges the government to investigate the actual conditions of Buraku areas every five years and to set up the Buraku Liberation Deliberation Council consisting of individuals of learning and experience with regard to Buraku discrimination that would recommend its opinions for the solution of the Buraku problem. At present, the wide range of the National Movement for the Fundamental Law for Buraku Liberation has been deployed.

Osaka Human Rights Museum Renovated

The Osaka Human Rights Museum, nicknamed Liberty Osaka, was renovated and opened in December 1995.

It collects, preserves and publishes historical documents on human rights issues, including those of Buraku, women, ethnic groups, the disabled and the environment, with the aim of promoting awareness of human rights and contributing to the development of human culture.

The museum was built in 1985 as the first general museum on human rights in Japan. It was renovated to enrich the contents as many issues on human rights have been focused on in the past ten years.

The museum is a two story building with 6,949 square meters. English captions of the exhibitions and leaflets are available. It is located 10 minutes walk south from JR Loop Line Ashiharabashi Station in Osaka, open 10:00 to 17:00, from Tuesday to Sunday.



An exhibit related to Buraku Discrimination

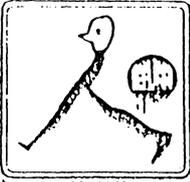
Admission is 250 yen for adults, 150 yen for students, and free for those under junior high school age, people over 65 and those with disabilities and their helpers.

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Extra Edition

No.90

Mr. Saichiro Uesugi, President of the Buraku Liberation League, Passed Away.

Mr. Saichiro Uesugi, president of the Buraku Liberation League (BLL), passed away on May 10 at a hospital in Fukuoka City due to liver failure. He was 77 years old.

President Uesugi had supported our Buraku Liberation Research Institute as advisor over the years. All of us sincerely mourn his death.

The BLL sponsored-funeral service will be held on June 3 at Kyuden Kinen Taiikukan in Fukuoka City.

Mr. Masayoshi Ohnishi, vice president of the BLL, has assumed office as acting president.

The new president will be elected at the 53rd National Convention of the BLL held in September this year.

(We will carry a more detailed article on President Uesugi in the next issue of the Buraku Liberation News.)