



The Founding of the National Levelers Association and Levelers Declaration

Report by Megumi Komori, IMADR Under-Secretary-General | FEATURE STORY

On March 3, 1922, influenced by the Taisho* Democracy movement and calls for self-determination that had accompanied the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the League of Nations, the National Levelers Association (Zenkoku Suiheisha) was founded. The Levelers Declaration, adopted by the Founding Congress of the National Levelers Association, holds an esteemed position as Japan's first "human rights declaration." It states, "human beings are not to be pitied, but respected," and calls for "light in all human beings."

The Buraku Liberation League, as the organization's successor, will celebrate the 90th anniversary of the National Levelers Association on March 3, 2012. To celebrate the 80th anniversary almost ten years ago, the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute (BLHRRI) based in Osaka published a leaflet containing the full text of the Declaration in eight different languages, including contemporary Japanese, Chinese, English, French, German, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Ainu. The work took more than a year to complete, to carefully translate the text while preserving the spirit of the Declaration. The Declaration is inspiring for all who work for the elimination of discrimination and for the realization of human rights in the world today.

The Declaration begins with the statement, "Tokushu Burakumin throughout the Country Unite!" Tokushu means "special," referring to the fact that the Buraku community was different from others. The Japanese government deliberately used this word in a discriminatory manner. The Declaration continues:

IMADR IN THE WORLD



Calling for an Effective Human Rights Mechanism in South Asia

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) organized the second Sub-Regional Workshop on a Human Rights Mechanism in South Asia on July 25 and 26, 2011, in Kathmandu, Nepal. IMADR President Nimalka Fernando attended, delivering a lecture on challenges faced by human rights defenders in South Asia.

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IMADR AND ITS CONCERNS



The Human Rights of Migrants in Japan Must be Realized

On July 28, 2011, a meeting with members of the Japanese Diet was organized in Tokyo by Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, in cooperation with IMADR-JC. The meeting focused on the report of UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants Jorge Bustamante following his visit to Japan in 2010.

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