

Buraku Discrimination in the Real Estate Business

To avoid the construction of a condominium in an area near a Buraku community, certain real estate business groups have for many years had a pattern in place for their business activities. Beginning from the purchase of land, a marketing research company conducts research into the site and submits a report to an advertising firm, which then transfers it to a developer.

The research company goes to the planned site to look into area conditions and land price trends around the site by interviewing with real estate agencies and nearby residents. Through these interviews, it ascertains whether there is a Buraku community near the site. Based on information they collect, they make an appraisal of the site, which eventually determines its price. If a Buraku district is located nearby, it is prescribed a low rate, described as “a troublesome area,” or that “the neighborhood has some problems,” or “is notorious and neighboring people stay away from it.” If the building a condominium at the site with a low appraisal goes ahead anyway, the report includes comments such as, “the new houses can be sold only at a low price level.”

Here, it becomes clear that between three parties – research companies, advertising firms and developers – there has been a systematic pattern of discrimination functioning for decades.

The Central Headquarters of Buraku Liberation League has been fact-finding since the latter part of 2010, looking into five research companies, 13 advertising firms and 15 developers. Through these findings, it has been discovered that; 1) all three parties have admitted that they try to avoid Buraku communities, especially after the corruption of the bubble economy, after which the real estate market has been stagnant and companies have become very careful in the construction of such projects; 2) the three parties do business transactions between themselves based only on oral agreements, meaning that long and informal business practices have allowed research companies to conduct whatever investigations they wish, without restrictions. It is not only research companies to be blamed, but also the practices carried out for a long time; and 3) an inexhaustible pursuit of benefits through the construction and selling of condominiums has encouraged the discriminatory practices and system. In doing business, neighborhoods in Buraku district are labeled as “difficult to sell” or “cannot be sold,” without the corporations having any sense of social responsibility.

As long as the general public retains a sense of avoidance (wishing to keep themselves away from Buraku communities), it continues to be a common and permissible idea among business people that condominiums constructed in Buraku neighborhoods are not sold, that no one wants to buy such land, and that there is nothing wrong in these practices. This behavior and way of thinking completely works against the principle that companies are public institutions of society.

<Excerpt from the Liberation Newspaper dated December 27, 2010>