

One Hundred Years of *Buraku* Liberation Movement and International Solidarity

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Introduction

In the present world, where everything is internationalized, it is impossible to discuss the solution of the *Buraku* issue without an international perspective. That is why it is clear that the activities for international solidarity by the *Buraku* liberation movement, which is the main actor for achieving the solution of the *Buraku* issue, play the most significant role.

The *Buraku* liberation movement marked its 100th anniversary in March 2022. The movement has expanded its international solidarity ever since the establishment of the National *Suiheisha* (Levelers' Association). In that sense, its international activities also have had more than a hundred-year history. An analysis of this history indicates the following progress and accomplishments of the movement.

1. Learning from various movements and philosophies abroad, and applying them to the *Buraku* liberation philosophies and movement.
2. Taking actions in Japan, as part of the *Buraku* liberation movement, that contribute to the solution of issues abroad.
3. Interacting and acting in solidarity with movements abroad that are engaged in issues sharing common elements with the *Buraku* liberation movement.
4. Effectively using instruments and procedures of international organizations such as the United Nations to promote *Buraku* liberation.
5. Lobbying international organizations such as the United Nations to advance *Buraku* liberation.
6. Establishing international organizations in collaboration with movements abroad that are engaged in issues sharing common elements with the *Buraku* liberation movement.
7. Lobbying international organizations such as the United Nations to achieve the adoption of international standards and other instruments that help solve issues abroad sharing common elements with *Buraku* liberation issues.

This author has published a number of articles portraying initiatives of the *Buraku* liberation movement to promote activities for international solidarity including one that discusses their relationship to the United Nations (Kenzo Tomonaga, 2003), and another that commemorates the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the International Movement against Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) (Kenzo Tomonaga, 2013). Recently, it came to the author's knowledge that Takeshi Asaji published his research on international solidarity activities of the *Suiheisha* (Takeshi Asaji, 2018), that Masahiko Kato studied such activities by Mankichi Saiko (Masahiko Kato, 2007) and that Ian Neary portrayed international activities by Jiichiro Matsumoto (Ian Neary, 2016). Also, Kayoung Lee has analyzed recent developments in the United Nations related to *Buraku* liberation (Kayoung Lee, 2018).

This article outlines the history, achievements and future challenges of the *Buraku* liberation movement and international solidarity based on these studies.

1. Establishment of the National *Suiheisha* and Activities for International Solidarity

1 *Yoki hi no tame ni* (for a better day) and the *Suiheisha* Declaration

The history of the *Buraku* liberation movement and international solidarity began in earnest around the time of the establishment of the National *Suiheisha*.

As it is well known, the National *Suiheisha* was founded after calls from Seiichiro Sakamoto, Mankichi Saiko, Kisaku Komai and others who came together at *Tsubame-kai*, a youth organization of the discriminated-against *Buraku* people in Kashiwara, Wakigami-mura, Kita-katsuragi-gun, Nara. These men had read extensively, and absorbed progressive ideas and philosophies of the time that could be used for *Buraku* liberation. This can be seen in the accurate quotes in the booklet, *Yoki hi no tame ni* (for a better day), that called for the establishment of the National *Suiheisha*, from works such as *Tokushu Buraku-min Kaihou-ron* (Liberation of the Special *Buraku* People) by Manabu Sano, *Le Théâtre du peuple* by Roman Rolland, and *The Lower Depths* by Maxim Gorky.

The call at the beginning of the *Suiheisha* Declaration, “*Tokushu Burakumin* throughout the country: Unite!” was inspired by the rallying call “Workers of the world, unite!” at the end of the Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and the idea expressed in the Declaration that human beings should not be pitied (but should be respected) plainly captures the idea of human dignity and can be traced back to the words spoken by Satine, a character in *The Lower Depths* by Maxim Gorky mentioned above. Another section in the Declaration referring to regaining “our divine dignity” pointed out that human beings, rather than God, should be respected. This was apparently influenced by Ludwig Feuerbach, who clarified that the essence of God is the essence of the human species in *Das Wesen des Christentums*.

Moreover, the General Principles adopted at the founding meeting includes the phrase, “We shall awaken to the fundamentals of human nature and march towards highest human perfection,” which indicated that, while the focus of the National *Suiheisha* was on the elimination of *Buraku* discrimination, it had from the outset envisioned the liberation of all human beings.

For more details of the above, please refer to an article by the author (Kenzo Tomonaga, 2015).

2 The National *Suiheisha* and International Solidarity

Ever since its establishment, the National *Suiheisha* saw the activities for international solidarity as an important pillar of its activities. Active discussions were held and some resulted in actual implementation. A publication by Asaji (Takeshi Asaji, 2018) provides details of these developments, but a brief introduction of the main activities based on his accounts is as follows.

•At the second general assembly of the National *Suiheisha* held in Kyoto in March 1923, the Kashiwara *Suiheisha* in Nara Prefecture put forward a proposal on “the internationalization of the *Suihei* (Levelers’) movement.” The proposal noted that, “internationally, people who are discriminated against as an inferior race are the *Buraku* people in Japan, the Irish and Indians in the UK, and the Blacks in the US. Koreans in Japan are also in the same situation.”

“In recent years, these vulnerable groups have begun to form *Suihei* movements like ours. Therefore, our *Suiheisha* should start communicating with the liberation movements in each country, and work together with them to promote the *Suihei* movement.” A toned-down proposal, suggesting to start initially with just exchanging communications with the Irish and Indian independence movements in the UK and the Korean independence movement was adopted.

•At the third general assembly of the National *Suiheisha* held in Kyoto in March 1924, the Kobayashi *Suiheisha* of Nara Prefecture proposed the “immediate recognition of the Soviet Union.” This proposal had been put forward at the second general assembly held in the previous year, but was put on hold. After numerous discussions, a youth from Nara Prefecture, Konojiro Yamada, stepped forward and stated, “We are being too complacent to discuss the Russian revolution. Just as Marx said that the proletariat has no homeland, *Buraku* people have no homeland. We must recognize the Jewish nation in view of the perfection of human beings. This is, in other words, a praise for humanity.” The motion was adopted unanimously.

•At the same assembly, the Gunma Prefectural *Suiheisha* proposed to “contact the *Hyeongpyeng* movement in Korea.” The proposer explained that, “there is a discriminated-against group in Korea called the *Baegjeong*. These people are discriminated against by the Korean people in general, and they have organized the *Hyeongpyengsa*. The General Principles of the *Hyeongpyengsa* are similar to those of the *Suiheisha*, and we want to communicate with the *Hyeongpyengsa*.” After some discussions, the proposal was adopted by a majority. Based on this decision, the National *Suiheisha* sent a congratulatory letter to the second general assembly of the *Hyeongpyengsa* held on April 25. In response, the *Hyeongpyengsa* sent a letter of appreciation to the National *Suiheisha* on May 1, May Day. Since then, communications between the two organizations continued intermittently until around 1934, but it never solidified into a strong solidarity.

•On April 2 and 15, the US Congress and Senate, respectively, adopted the 1924 Immigration Act, which banned immigration from Asia, including Japan. In response to this development, Seiichiro Sakamoto, Tomi Yoneda and Shoken Hirano, who were members of the Central Committee of the National *Suiheisha*, visited the U.S. Ambassador Cyrus E. Woods on April 25, to deliver a letter of protest both in English and Japanese. On April 27, the National *Suiheisha* convened an extraordinary assembly in Osaka solely for the purpose of protesting against the Immigration Act. The meeting brought together some 2500 people and adopted resolutions to “urge all peoples of Asia to stand up against the Act, which was not only an act of violence against the Japanese people but a subjugating challenge against all peoples of Asia,” as well as to “denounce the weak-kneed attitude of the government authorities indulging in humiliating diplomacy” were adopted among others.

•On August 29, 1933 during the struggles denouncing the discriminatory Takamatsu court case, the National *Suiheisha* adopted a “protest against the German Fascist Government” and severely criticized Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler for persecuting Jewish people. In the background of the protest was the recognition indicated in the Declaration of the National Meeting of the *Buraku* Representatives Denouncing the Discriminatory Court Case that “the fact that unspeakable and barbaric hunt for Jews is being perpetrated in broad daylight in fascist Germany under the Nazi dictatorship, leads to a strong belief that the day may come when such cruel persecution would befall on us in fascist Japan.”

II *Buraku* Liberation Movement after World War II and International Solidarity (until the 1970s)

The *Buraku* liberation movement and international solidarity, particularly until the 1970s, was led by Mankichi Saiko and Jiichiro Matsumoto.

1 Activities for International Solidarity by Mankichi Saiko

Very little is known about activities for international solidarity by Mankichi Saiko after World War II. But Saiko dedicated his life after the war to pursuing peace and prosperity among

peoples (*Waei* policy) and international solidarity with people in India, on which Kato has published the results of his valuable studies (Masahiko Kato, 2007). The main points based on his studies are summarized below.

Saiko viewed the Constitution of Japan as “a constitution written in blood and tears of not just the many victims in our country but also of the many victims in other countries desiring for peace and prosperity with no wars” (Mankichi Saiko, “*Sai Gunbi wa Hatashite Yakudatsu no ka (will rearmament be useful)*” *Keikan no Tomo, December 1967*) and has advocated his *Waei* policy since 1951 regarding the implementation of Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan.

Conventional liberal groups in Japan have argued for allocating funds away from the military to welfare and education, as expressed in their slogan “butter instead of cannons.” Saiko saw this as self-centered, and insisted that the financial and human resources should be used for the advancement of people in difficulties in the developing countries. He called this the *Waei* policy.

He stressed the importance of the policy in newsletters of the *Buraku* Liberation League and at its National Committee and General Assemblies. He also acted vigorously to include it in the policy of the Social Democratic Party of Japan. For example, at the 12th National Assembly of the *Buraku* Liberation League held in Osaka in February 1957, Saiko himself made an appeal for his *Waei* policy. The Nara Prefectural Federation of the *Buraku* Liberation League proposed a draft resolution to “call for the establishment of the *Waei* policy,” which was adopted.

Saiko’s *Waei* policy also had the United Nations in its sights; Japan would first implement *Waei* policy and other countries who are armed would then adopt the policy in phases. Ultimately, the United Nations Forces and the World Federation of Nations would be created. Saiko sent a letter to the UN Secretary General in June 1953, and received a response from the Secretariat stating that copies would be sent to all countries.

Kato explains the *Waei* policy advocated by Saiko in the Foreword of his publication, that “the *Waei* policy which Saiko dedicated himself to was created on the basis of the Constitution stipulating demilitarization that came into being with the dismantling of the Japanese militarism and was an attempt to direct the full combined political, financial and social forces allocated to the military in many countries to the creation of non-military peace. Faced with the modern crisis of the possible extinction of mankind in a nuclear war, it sought to allocate the whole military budget to international aid in active peacetime international contribution, and was the first policy in Japan and probably the rest of the world, contributing to international peace.”

Kato also wrote on the international interaction Saiko had with India. It mainly consisted of exchanges of letters between Saiko and Indian government leaders including Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. For economic and other reasons, Saiko himself never visited India.

An analysis of the letters such as the one (written by Saiko) proposed by the Wakayama Prefectural Federation of the *Buraku* Liberation League to be sent to “the Father of Indian Liberation, Prime Minister Nehru” at the 7th National Assembly of *Buraku* Liberation League held on October 10, 1951, reveals that Saiko’s efforts for solidarity with India were motivated by the following three reasons.

The first was his sympathy towards Gandhi’s idea of non-violence. The second was his high hopes for the struggle for the liberation of colonies and world peace by the Non-Aligned Conference, organized by the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and the Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, among others. The third reason was his wish that the discrimination based on caste in India would be eliminated. Having experienced similar discrimination in Japan, he hoped that India would play a large role in eliminating such discrimination around the world.

2 Activities for International Solidarity by Jiichiro Matsumoto

Numerous biographies of Jiichiro Matsumoto, Father of Liberation, exist, but the most recent and most detailed regarding Matsumoto's activities for international solidarity is the publication by Ian Neary (Ian Neary, 2018). Considering the available transportation services and international relations in those days as shown in the publication, Matsumoto's international activities were astonishing.

He traveled abroad in his solidarity efforts nine times altogether, in 1953, 1954, twice in 1955 and 1956, 1957, 1958 and 1964. The countries he visited ranged from China (6 times), India (twice), North Korea, Burma (now Myanmar), Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand in the Asia-Pacific, France (three times), the UK, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, USSR, Sweden, and Finland in Europe, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco in Africa. He participated in the first Asian Socialist Conference, commemorative events of the National Day of the People's Republic of China, commemorative events of the Russian Revolution, the General Assembly and Congress of the World Peace Council, the first Asian Nations Conference, Bandung Conference (as observer), the celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the Birth of Sun Yat-sen, and the World Conference of the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (*Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme*). He also met and exchanged views in person with important figures with global influence. These include Professor B.R. Ambedkar (a person of Dalit origin, who became the first Minister of Justice of India after its independence and drafted its Constitution), Prime Minister Nehru (twice), Rajendra Prasad, President of India, Chairman Mao Zedong and Prime Minister Zou Enlai (six times) in China and Kim Il-sung of North Korea.

Matsumoto's international activities may be categorized broadly into two areas. The first is the "global *Suihei* movement," or activities to eliminate discrimination from around the world and protect world peace. Participation in the General Assemblies and World Conferences of the World Peace Council is symbolic of this category, as is the interaction with the *Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme* (LICRA) in France and the participation in the World Conference convened by the organization. The other is for the promotion of friendship between Japan and China. Matsumoto visited China after World War II even before the diplomatic relations were restored between the two countries, and actively promoted the restoration of diplomatic ties with and support for the development of China as well as protested against the resurgence of Japanese militarism. Ian Neary raises the following points on Matsumoto's international activities.

There are two interrelated currents in Matsumoto's international activities in the 1950s. The first is the involvement in international peace activities which stems from Matsumoto's interest in the World Government. No one seems to know when Matsumoto first used the term, but sometime during the 1950s, it seems he started to develop his ideas of creating a "global *Suihei* movement." This appears to be a combination of the idea of developing solidarity with various groups oppressed by racism and discrimination and of broadening involvement in the international peace movement. The other is Matsumoto's fascination with Chinese culture and his desire to rebuild close ties with China. These are recurrent themes throughout Matsumoto's life.

III Activities for International Solidarity from the 1970s to the End of the 20th Century

1 Promotion of the Ratification of the International Human Rights Covenants

International solidarity activities of the *Buraku* liberation movement from the second half of the 1970s started to break new ground, represented by the development of solidarity with the UN efforts to establish human rights.

During this period, the *Buraku* liberation movement was engaged in the “three major struggles.” Specifically, these were the protest against the discriminatory Sayama court case, fight for strengthening and extending the *Buraku* Special Measures Act, and the denunciation against the discriminatory case of *Buraku* directories, and for each of these issues, grounds for achieving the purpose were being sought.

Meanwhile, as part of the UN-led move to establish human rights, the two International Covenants that gave legal binding force to the rights recognized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, had entered into force. At the time, the International Covenants consisted of one on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the other on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as the Optional Protocol to the latter. The former entered into force on January 3, 1976 and the latter as well as the Optional Protocol on March 23 of the same year. However, Japan, which has a Constitution whose basic principle was the respect for human rights, had not ratified the International Covenants, and numerous articles appeared one after another in national newspapers calling for their early ratification.

Under these circumstances, the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute (now *Buraku* Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute) observed that the ratification by Japan of the two Covenants would be helpful to win victories in the “three major struggles.” At its third General Assembly, held on February 7, 1976, a policy to work on promoting the ratification of the International Covenants was proposed. The full text (in Japanese translation) appeared in the journal *Buraku Kaihou Kenkyu* Vol.6 published on February 20. The Central Executive Committee of the *Buraku* Liberation League also adopted a policy to promote the ratification of the International Covenants at the 31st National Assembly (Tokyo) held on March 3 and 4 of the same year.

Since then, the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute and the *Buraku* Liberation League have played a central role by actively engaging in study meetings, signature campaigns, lobbying municipal councils to adopt resolutions and petitioning the government.

The following three examples are notable among the activities. Firstly, the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute and the Osaka Prefectural Federation of the *Buraku* Liberation League took the initiative to organize the Osaka Prefectural Conference for the Promotion of the International Covenants (Representative: Iwakichi Wajima, Lawyer) on March 23, 1977, which was active in promoting the ratification. Secondly, Marc Schreiber, former Director of the UN Division of Human Rights, who put together the draft of the International Covenants, was invited to Japan from December 4 to 13 to lecture in the meeting in Osaka. This helped raise public recognition of the Covenants. Thirdly, a meeting of representatives from various circles to call for the ratification of the International Covenants at the 87th Diet Session was held at the Japan Federation of Bar Associations building in Tokyo on April 19, 1979. The *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee and the above-mentioned Osaka Prefectural Conference among others had called on people in various fields to participate in this meeting. Lawyer Iwakichi Wajima opened the meeting on behalf of the organizers, followed by other prominent participants including Harunori Kaya, Director-General of the United Nations Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eiichi Isomura (President of Toyo University), Fusae Ichikawa (Member of the House of Councillors), Hisakichi Matsui (President, *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee), Shigeki Miyazaki (international law expert) and others, and a resolution calling for the ratification of the International Covenants was unanimously adopted.

With the rise of public opinion, the draft proposal to ratify the International Covenants was approved in the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Plenary meeting of the House of Representatives on May 8, 1979, and in the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Councillors on June 5 and the Plenary on June 6. With the Diet's approval, the government deposited the ratification instrument at the United Nations on June 21, and promulgated the

Covenants as Treaty No. 6 on August 4. The Covenants entered into force in Japan on September 21. However, the ratification did not mean a full acceptance of the Covenants: the government attached reservations on (1) remuneration on public holidays (Article 7 d), (2) the right to strike (Article 8 para.1 d), and (3) progressive introduction of free secondary and higher education (Article 13 para. 2 b, c) in the ICESCR and made a declaration that the members of the police would be duly interpreted to include those of the fire service (Article 8 para. 2 of the ICESCR and Article 22 para. 2 of the ICCPR). It did not make a declaration under Article 41 of the ICCPR to accept inter-state communications and has not ratified the Optional Protocol of the ICCPR recognizing individual communications.

2 Activities for the Ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

After the ratification of the International Covenants in June 1979, the *Buraku* Liberation League and the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute started engaging in activities for the ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

The International Covenants can be seen as ensuring human rights in general, but ICERD limits its scope to “racial discrimination” and includes specific measures in its articles to eliminate such discrimination. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1965 and entered into force in January 1969.

Researchers and activists on the *Buraku* issue had until then understood *Buraku* discrimination as discrimination based on status and not on race. Some have been denounced for mixing up the two. Nevertheless, the *Buraku* Liberation League, the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute and others have started working for the ratification of the Convention because the “race” provided for in the Convention was broad enough to include *Buraku* discrimination. Article 1 stipulates that the term “race” under the Convention includes the five grounds of race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. The ground of “descent” means ancestral lineage and can be interpreted as including discrimination based on caste in India and other regions, as well as *Buraku* discrimination in Japan.

Further, the vital significance of the Convention is in its provision of concrete measures to eliminate discrimination (1) prohibition, (2) remedies, (3) special measures, (4) education and awareness-raising, (5) solidarity, and (6) modification and abolition of legal systems that support discrimination.

The *Buraku* Liberation League and the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute continued their campaign for the ratification of the Convention. They issued numerous publications, organized study meetings and workshops, conducted signature campaigns, lobbied municipal councils to adopt resolutions, lobbied government ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and prompted Members of the Diet to raise questions and voice opinions in the Diet sessions to promote their early ratification. These activities continued for approximately fifteen years.

The accession to ICERD was approved in the Diet on December 1, 1995, and was decided by the Cabinet on December 15. The accession instrument was deposited at the UN on the same day. It was promulgated as Treaty No. 26 on December 20, and entered into force in Japan on January 14, 1996.

There were both domestic and outside factors behind Japan’s accession at this time. The US had ratified the treaty and left Japan as the only non-member country. The domestic factor was the birth of the Murayama Cabinet in June 1994. The Murayama Cabinet was a coalition cabinet of the Japan Socialist Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, and the New Party Sakigake, with Tomiichi Murayama, leader of the Japan Socialist Party, as prime minister. A government project team on human rights and discrimination issues was organized, and on June 16, 1995, it was agreed that it would urge the government to ratify

the ICERD as soon as possible.

The accession was again not a full acceptance of ICERD. Japan attached reservations on Article 4 (a) and (b) which require States to declare as an offense punishable by law dissemination and incitement to racial discrimination or participation in an organization whose purpose is to disseminate or incite racial discrimination. It also did not accept Article 14 which recognized communications from individuals or organizations. More problematic was the government's refusal to recognize that *Buraku* discrimination, which is a form of discrimination based on status, fell within the scope of the Convention. The ICERD Q&A published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that, for the purpose of the application of the Convention, "descent" was a term referring to racial or ethnic lineage, a concept focusing on race or color of past generations or national or ethnic origin, such as Japanese or African descent and does not go beyond biological or cultural characteristics.

The fifteen years of efforts for the early ratification of ICERD resulted in two major achievements. The first was the draft Basic Act for *Buraku* Liberation which was drawn up in January 1995, and the movement calling for its legislation started in earnest in May of the same year. The basic framework of the draft Act was based on ICERD. The other was the following paragraph included in the report of the Council for Regional Improvement Measures published in May 1996.

As a member of the international community, Japan has acceded to many human rights treaties including the International Covenants on Human Rights. Japan has also acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), which had been a matter of concern, and has started making serious efforts for the 'UN Decade for Human Rights Education'. As a country that wishes for world peace, it is Japan's vital responsibility to actively fulfill its role as an important member of the international community that aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination in collaboration and cooperation with other countries of the world, as we move toward the 21st century, the 'century of human rights'...In view of the role that Japan should play in the international community, it is our international responsibility to first make efforts to resolve various human rights issues within the country, including the *Dowa (Buraku)* issue, as soon as possible. (from "1. *Dowa Mondai ni kansuru Kihon Ninshiki* (Basic understanding on the *Dowa* issue))

3 International Human Rights Symposium and International Conference against Racism

In the 1980s, the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute and the *Buraku* Liberation League expanded their contacts with researchers around the world who were interested in the *Buraku* issue. They also began to build ties with movements fighting discrimination around the world. The International Human Rights Symposium and the International Conference against Racism were the achievements of these efforts.

International Human Rights Symposium

The International Human Rights Symposium was held in Osaka and Tokyo during the period of December 4 to 12, 1980. The Osaka Symposium was organized by the organizing committee consisting of the Osaka Prefectural Conference for the International Covenants, the Osaka Federation of the *Buraku* Liberation League, the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute and various other organizations. The Tokyo Symposium was organized by the organizing committee consisting mainly of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee and the Tokyo Metropolitan Federation of the *Buraku* Liberation League. Guests invited from abroad were Roger Yoshino (Professor, University of Arizona, USA), Martin Kaneko, (Assistant, Vienna School of Japanese Studies, University of Vienna, Austria), Popatrao Punaji Garud (President, Jawaharlal Nehru Law College, National Secretary,

Buddhist Society of India, India), Catherine Cadou (Researcher, Japanese Studies, France) as well as Zinovy Yakovelevitch Khanin (Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Science Leningrad, USSR) who sent his paper to the symposium. The main schedule and topics were as follows:

- In Symposium 1 held in the afternoon of December 6, the four overseas guests presented reports on the topic of “the Japanese *Buraku* issue seen from other countries” at the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

- In Symposium 2 held in the afternoon of December 8, the four overseas guests and Tomohiko Harada, Director of the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute, gave their presentations on the topic, “discrimination in various countries and challenges for defending human rights” at the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

- In the afternoon of December 10, the plenary meeting was held at the Osaka City Central Public Hall. The topic was “human rights in the world and the *Buraku* issue in Japan.” Roger Yoshino gave a lecture on “the *Buraku* issue in Japan seen from abroad,” and Saichiro Uesugi, President of the *Buraku* Liberation League, spoke on “the situation of *Buraku* discrimination and human rights in Japan” followed by the adoption of an appeal.

- In the afternoon of December 12, the International Human Rights Symposium Tokyo Meeting was held in the Asahi Shimbun Sha Hall in Tsukiji, Tokyo. Kinhide Mushakoji, Vice-President of the United Nations University gave a lecture on “the international community in the 1980s and human rights,” Roger Yoshino on “the *Buraku* issue in Japan seen from abroad,” and Shigeki Miyazaki, Professor of Meiji University, on “discrimination and human rights in Japan” and an appeal was adopted.

The historic significance of the Symposium is indicated in the words of the International Human Rights Symposium Commemorative Meeting Appeal adopted at the plenary on December 10. “In this spirit (that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in critical reflection of World War II – author), we held the International Human Rights Symposium from December 4 to 10, with the *Buraku* issue as the central topic. This was a groundbreaking effort, both historically and globally.” The appeal also summarized the conclusions of the Symposium as follows. (1) *Buraku* discrimination has continued to this day and in order to eliminate the discrimination, efforts must be made not just to improve the living environment, but also to ensure equal opportunities for education and employment, as well as to strengthen further efforts to protect human rights as vicious discrimination cases increase. (2) The *Buraku* issue is gradually becoming known globally, but still is an obscure issue for most people, and there are problems of misrepresentation of the issue. Therefore, there is a need to appeal to the UN and the world at large with the correct portrayal of the *Buraku* issue and the *Buraku* liberation movement. (3) There are various forms of discrimination in countries around the world, and diverse studies and movements have been developed to eliminate such discrimination. The *Buraku* liberation movement must learn in depth from these movements and build strong solidarity with the global trend to eliminate discrimination.

The International Conference against Racism

The International Conference against Racism was held from December 2 to 8 1982 in Osaka, Fukuoka and Tokyo in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the National *Suiheisha*. It was organized by the organizing committee consisting of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee, the Osaka Prefectural Federation of the *Buraku* Liberation League, Fukuoka Prefectural Federation of the *Buraku* Liberation League, Tokyo Metropolitan Federation of the *Buraku* League and the *Buraku* Liberation

Research Institute. Six people, Jose Ingles (Chairperson, CERD, Philippines), Albert Levy (*Le Mouvement de lutte contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et pour la Paix* (MRAP) Secretary General, France), Althea T.L. Simmons (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Director of Washington DC office, USA), Kanshi Ram (the All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF), Chairperson, India), Ravi Jain (National Association of Asian Youths (NAAY) General Secretary, UK), and Romani Rose (Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, Chairperson, FR Germany) were invited as guests.

The main itinerary and topics of the Conference were as follows.

•In the afternoon of December 4, a symposium was held at the Osaka City Naniwa Liberation Hall, on the topic of “the *Buraku* issue in Japan seen from the global movement against discrimination.” The Vice-President of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee Takumi Ueda gave the keynote presentation, followed by presentations from the six guests from abroad.

•In the afternoon of December 6, the Meeting for International Solidarity against Discrimination was held at the Kokura Citizens' Hall in Fukuoka Prefecture. The President of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee Saichiro Uesugi gave a keynote presentation, followed by appeals for solidarity from the six guests from abroad.

•In the afternoon of December 7, the Tokyo Symposium was held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Kinro-Fukushi Hall on “the state of discrimination around the world and the liberation movement.” Jose Ingles, Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) gave a keynote presentation, while the other five guests and Tatsukuni Komori, Secretary General of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee from Japan gave presentations. A Declaration and a Tokyo Resolution were adopted at this symposium.

The outcome of the Conference includes the following. (1) Solidarity with people who are actually fighting discrimination at the UN and other countries for the elimination of all forms of discrimination including *Buraku* liberation was achieved. (2) The Conference made the reality of *Buraku* discrimination and the *Buraku* liberation movement known to the UN and people around the world who are involved in the movement to eliminate discrimination, and created opportunities for deepening solidarity for the future. (3) The Conference facilitated knowledge and awareness about the situation of discrimination and liberation movements around the world, and learning about many issues. (4) Through efforts to organize the Conference, a strong momentum was created for building solidarity led by the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee with the labor unions, national and local governments, religious and business sectors, academics, intellectuals and mass media.

Following the International Human Rights Symposium and the International Conference against Racism in 1983, events commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights were held around the country. In Tokyo, in particular, the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee played a central role in creating an organizing committee. In Osaka, Aichi, Hiroshima and elsewhere, prefectural federations of the *Buraku* Liberation League also led the organizing committees and meetings with guests from the UN were held. In Tokyo and Osaka, meetings commemorating the Universal Declaration on Human Rights have been held every year since then around the time of the human rights week in December.

4 Participation in the Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and Appeal at the UN on the *Buraku* Issue

The Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination was held on

August 1 to 12, 1983 at the UN Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The *Buraku* Liberation League and the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute sent a delegation to the Conference. The delegation was headed by Tatsukuni Komori, Secretary General of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee, and consisted of four members, with the author participating as a member of the *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute. The Conference was held to review and appraise the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and to set forth the direction for the following decade. During the Conference, the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, the Israeli suppression of Palestinians and the increasing Neo-Nazi activities in Europe, among others, were discussed. On the closing day on August 12, a Declaration and a Second Program for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination were adopted.

The purpose of the *Buraku* Liberation League delegation's participating in the Conference included the following: (1) to participate in the Conference as observers, (2) to make contact with UN organs and relevant personnel working for UN human rights protection, (3) to make contact with organizations fighting discrimination around the world, and (4) to introduce the *Buraku* discrimination issue and the *Buraku* liberation movement to the UN and the world. To fulfill this purpose, the delegation distributed materials in English on the *Buraku* issue and the *Buraku* liberation movement to Conference participants, talked with relevant people working in the UN sections on human rights protection, and interacted with other participating private sector organizations. But the biggest achievement was, having received credentials from the Minority Rights Group (MRG, headquartered in London) which had consultative status with the UN, the delegation was able to make an appeal about the *Buraku* issue on August 9 at the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights that was being held at the UN Headquarters at the same time as the Conference. On August 12, Miriam Schreiber (who had visited Japan in 1977 with her late husband Marc Schreiber, former Director of the UN Division on Human Rights, and had visited *Buraku* areas) also made an appeal on the *Buraku* issue, and on August 23, the Japanese government representative responded in relation to the two interventions. These exchanges were included in the UN records, and it was the first time in history that the *Buraku* issue was officially discussed at the UN.

The delegation was able to hear in detail about civil society organizations with consultative status with the UN while participating in the Conference and this was another important achievement that led to the creation of the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) in January 1988. Also to be noted is the exceptional support extended by Yo Kubota, a UN Human Rights Division staff, who made it possible for the delegation to talk with people involved in human rights at the UN and to speak at the Sub-commission during the Conference.

From August 9 to September 12 of the following year in 1984, a delegation headed by Saichiro Uesugi, President of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee was sent to Europe and Nairobi, Kenya. On August 14, the delegation spoke again on the *Buraku* issue at the UN Sub-commission held at the UN Headquarters in Geneva. In Nairobi, Kenya, they participated in the 4th World Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

5 The Creation of the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) and Acquisition of the UN Consultative Status

Based on the *Buraku* Liberation League-led delegation's experience of participating in UN meetings related to human rights and the networks built since the second half of 1970s with organizations and individuals working on elimination of discrimination around the world, the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) was founded at the Matsumoto Jiichiro Memorial Building in Minato-ku Tokyo with 200 participants on January 25, 1988. At the inaugural general assembly meeting Saichiro

Uesugi, President of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee spoke firmly as follows on behalf of the founders. "I am deeply moved that the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism has been formed today, inheriting the tradition of international solidarity that has existed since the National *Suiheisha*, which aimed to create a global *Suihei* movement. I would like to devote all my efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination in Asia and the rest of the world." At the meeting, the report about the preparation process until the founding was presented, and the charter, statute, list of officers, plan of activities as well as the budget from 1988 to 1990 were proposed, all of which were approved by unanimous applause. Later, Saichiro Uesugi spoke on behalf of the officers approved by the general assembly, followed by a commemorative appeal proposed by the Deputy Chairperson Miriam Schreiber, which was approved by unanimous applause.

The officers and secretariat of IMADR at the time of its founding were as follows. (The names, titles and organizations are from the inaugural general assembly materials.)

Chairperson

Saichiro Uesugi (President, *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee)

Vice Chairperson

Miriam Schreiber (Lawyer, Belgium)

Directors

Lim Soon Man (Professor, William Patterson University, New Jersey USA)

Roger Yoshino (Professor, Arizona University, USA)

Albert Levy (Secretary General, MRAP, France)

Romani Rose (Chairperson, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, FRGermany)

Freddy Dlamini (ANC International Department, South Africa)

Tatsukuni Komori (Secretary General, *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee, Japan)

Giichi Nomura (President, Hokkaido *Utari* Association, Japan)

Manae Kubota (Activist, Member of the House of Councillors, Japan)

Tsutomu Nishioka (Secretary General, Japan Association of Disabled People's Liberation Movement, Japan)

Sueo Murakoshi (President, *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute, Japan)

Yi Inha (Representative, Japan Association against Ethnic Discrimination, Korea)

Auditors

Takumi Ueda (Vice-President, *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee, Member of the House of Representatives, Japan)

Kim Dong-hoon (Professor, Ryukoku University, Korea)

Secretary General

Sueo Murakoshi

Under-Secretary General

Catherine Cadou (Activist, Japanologist, France)

Martin Kaneko (Lecturer, Vienna University, Austria)

Kenzo Tomonaga (Secretary General *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute, Japan)

Akinobu Tanimoto (Deputy Secretary General, *Buraku* Liberation Research Institute, Japan)

Staff

Mieko Suzuki (Staff Japan)

<photo: IMADR Inaugural General Assembly (January 1988, Tokyo) Courtesy of IMADR>

The significance of the founding of IMADR includes the following. (1) The efforts since the times of Jiichiro Matsumoto to achieve the goal of “global *Suihei* movement” culminated in launching a concrete international organization. (2) It was built on solidarity with organizations and individuals fighting discrimination in Japan. (3) An international organization with its headquarters in Japan, which is a part of the Asia-Pacific region, was created. (4) It was an international organization created on a basis of solidarity with organizations working towards elimination of discrimination against minorities around the world.

Since its founding, IMADR has been active in many areas, such as organizing the Second International Conference against Discrimination (Japan, December 1988), calling for abolishment of apartheid in South Africa, protesting against oppression and discrimination against democratic forces and ethnic minorities by the military dictatorship in Burma (Myanmar), and active participation in UN meetings related to human rights. In January 1991, it opened an office in Geneva, Switzerland, where conferences related to human rights were frequently held after the creation of the Human Rights Division in the UN. These international activities were recognized and in March 1993, the UN Committee on Non-governmental Organizations holding its session at the UN Headquarters in New York, USA, granted IMADR consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. The first UN NGO related to human rights with its headquarters in Japan was born.

Another important initiative related to the *Buraku* liberation movement and international solidarity during the period from the 1980s to the first half of 1990s that needs to be mentioned, is the founding of the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (Hurights Osaka) in Osaka in December 1994.

IV International Solidarity in the 21st Century

1 Activities for the Implementation of Human Rights Treaties Ratified by Japan

The focus of international activities led by *Buraku* Liberation League after the ratification and accession of the International Covenants and the ICERD by Japan was the critical analysis of the Japanese government human rights reports, preparation of NGO reports and engaging with the treaty bodies. These activities were making use of the state reporting system. International human rights treaties including the International Covenants and ICERD require submissions of periodic reports from State parties to ensure the implementation of the treaties after ratification. The reports would be examined by the relevant committees under the treaties, and concluding observations including recommendations would be published.

The submission of reports by Japan, the examination by the relevant committees and the adoption of the concluding observations have been summarized in the chart below. As a general rule, the *Buraku* Liberation League and *Buraku* Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute prepared counter-reports to the government report and sent delegations when the committees examined those reports. The adopted concluding observations included recommendations calling for elimination of *Buraku* discrimination.

For example, when the first and second report on ICERD was examined on March 8 and 9, 2001 at Palais Wilson in Geneva, Switzerland, both organizations prepared counter-reports while Shigeyuki Kumisaka, President of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee as well as the author as Director of the *Buraku* Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute participated in the committee session to lobby CERD Members and provide information to people from the Japanese media. Because the Japanese government maintained the view that *Buraku* discrimination did not fall within the scope of the Convention, and therefore did not include *Buraku* discrimination in its report during the

session, Committee Members indicated that *Buraku* discrimination was within the scope of the Convention, and that the government needed to take necessary measures to eliminate the discrimination. In the concluding observations published on March 20, following recommendations were made. (The numbers indicate the relevant paragraphs.)

7 ...It is recommended that the State party provide in its next report full details of the composition of the population, as requested in the reporting guidelines of the Committee, and, in particular, information on economic and social indicators reflecting the situation of all minorities covered by the Convention, including the Korean minority and Burakumin and Okinawa communities....

8 With regard to the interpretation of the definition of racial discrimination contained in article 1 of the Convention, the Committee, unlike the State party, considers that the term “descent” has its own meaning and is not to be confused with race or ethnic or national origin. The Committee therefore recommends that the State party ensure that all groups including the *Burakumin* community are protected against discrimination and afforded full enjoyment of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights contained in article 5 of the Convention.

23 The State party is also invited to provide in its next report further information on the impact of: ... the Law concerning Special Government Financial Measures for Special Regional Improvement Projects and envisaged strategies to eliminate discrimination against *Burakumin* after the law ceases to apply, i.e. in 2002.

Status of Examination of the Periodic Reports of Japan by the HRC CESCR and CERD

	Periodic Report	Submission to the UN	Examination by the Committee	Adoption of Concluding Observations
ICCPR (Note 1)	4 th Report	June 1997	October 1998	November
	5 th Report	December 2006	October 2008	October
	6 th Report	April 2012	July 2014	July
	7 th Report	March 2020	October 2020	November
ICESCR (Note 2)	2 nd Report	August 1998	August 2001	September
	3 rd Report	December 2009	April 2013	May
ICERD	1-2 nd Report	January 2000	March 2001	March
	3-6 Report	August 2008	February 2010	March
	7-9 Report	January 2013	August 2014	September
	10-11 Report	July 2017	August 2018	August

Note 1

For the 1st to 3rd periodic reports of Japan under the ICCPR, reports of the examination were submitted to the UN General Assembly, and concluding observations were not adopted.

Note 2

The submission of the initial periodic report under the ICESCR was made on a partial basis, and submitted to the Economic and Social Council. From the 2nd periodic report, the procedures were changed to requiring submission of comprehensive reports, to be

examined by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which would publish the concluding observations. The periodic reports of Japan under the ICCPR, ICESCR and ICERD as well as the concluding observations are published (in Japanese and English) on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2 Participation in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) was held from the end of August to early September 2001 in Durban, South Africa. WCAR was organized by the UN: the Youth Forum was held on 26 and 27 of August, the NGO Forum was held from August 28 to September 1, and the inter-governmental Conference was held from August 31 to September 8. The NGO Forum and the intergovernmental Conference each adopted a Declaration and a Program of Action.

The *Buraku* Liberation League, *Buraku* Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute and the Osaka Liaison Conference for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sent a delegation of more than 30 people to WCAR. The Conference covered various topics, and the main topics of discussion were (1) apologies and compensation for the slave trade/slavery and colonialism, (2) oppression of Palestinians by Israel, and (3) “discrimination based on work and descent” such as the *Buraku* discrimination in Japan and discrimination against Dalits in India.

The delegation led by the *Buraku* Liberation League organized a panel exhibition on *Buraku* discrimination in Japan and discrimination against Dalits in India, and jointly organized a workshop on the topic with IMADR, as well as participated in demonstrations. More than 200 people from Dalit organizations also participated in the Conference, and organized demonstrations calling for the inclusion of elimination of “discrimination based on work and descent” in the Conference’s Declaration and Program of Action.

The Declaration and Program of Action of the intergovernmental Conference, which had taken two years of preparation, had included the term “discrimination based on work and descent” proposed by the Swiss and other governments. But in the end, the phrase was not included in the final document due to objections from the Indian and other governments. Meanwhile, the NGO Declaration and Program of Action explicitly referred to “discrimination based on work and descent” such as the *Buraku* discrimination in Japan and discrimination against Dalits in India. The following texts were included regarding *Buraku* discrimination in Japan.

Work and descent-based discrimination against the *Buraku* people of Japan has existed for over 400 years and continues to be experienced today by over 3 million people in regard to marriage, employment and education, with new forms of discrimination emerging such as discriminatory propaganda and incitement to discrimination against them, especially on the Internet. (Declaration)

Undertake a survey of the situation of the *Buraku* people in Japan to ascertain the nature and extent of the discrimination they continue to face despite the enactment of temporary 'Special Measures' by the Government of Japan, and take all necessary legal, administrative and other measures to eradicate such discrimination. (Program of Action)

3 The Adoption of General Recommendations by CERD

Since the second half of the 1990s, CERD has indicated the view that the discrimination against Dalits in India, Nepal, and other countries as well as *Buraku* discrimination in Japan fall within the scope of “descent” stipulated in Article 1 paragraph 1 of the Convention in its concluding observations adopted after examination of the reports of the relevant countries.

This was the result of the engagement by the NGOs of relevant countries with the Committee, but the governments of India and Japan did not recognize these views.

CERD therefore convened a thematic discussion on the term “descent” under Article 1 paragraph 1 in Geneva, Switzerland on August 8 and 9, 2002. There were many participants in the discussion, including not only the Committee members but also from NGOs interested in the issue. Shigeyuki Kumisaka, President of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee and Masanao Murakami, Professor of Osaka University participated from Japan. Based on the thematic discussion, the Committee adopted the General Recommendation on discrimination based on descent XXIX.

The General Recommendation consists of a preamble and 48 paragraphs. The preamble confirms the consistent view of the Committee that the “term ‘descent’ in article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention does not solely refer to ‘race’ and has a meaning and application which complement other prohibited grounds of discrimination” and reaffirms “that discrimination based on ‘descent’ includes discrimination against members of communities based on forms of social stratification such as caste and analogous systems of inherited status which nullify or impair their equal enjoyment of human rights.”

The main text consists of eight sections, Measures of a General Nature, Multiple Discrimination against Women Members of Descent-based Communities, Segregation, Dissemination of Hate Speech including through the Mass Media and the Internet, Administration of Justice, Civil and Political Rights, Economic and Social Rights, and Right to Education, each with recommendations to State parties on concrete measures to eliminate descent-based discrimination.

Masanao Murakami, who participated in the discussion, lists the following significance of the General Recommendation. (1) It was the first international instrument specifically on descent-based discrimination. (2) The General Recommendation would help identify descent-based discrimination around the world, and also remedy the victims. (3) The provision of information including those from the *Buraku* Liberation League in Japan was reflected in the contents of the General Recommendation (international contribution). (4) It would contribute to the elimination of *Buraku* discrimination (Masanao Murakami, 2005).

4 Preparation of the Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent at the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights adopted the resolution 2000/4 noting that “discrimination based on work and descent is a form of discrimination prohibited by international human rights law,” and requested Mr. Rajendra Kalidas Wimala Gooneskere of Sri Lanka to submit a working paper on the issue. The significance of the resolution, according to Yozo Yokota, member of the Sub-commission at the time, was that while “discrimination based on work” was covered by ILO Convention No. 111, and “discrimination based on descent” by ICERD, UN linked the two and directly addressed the “discrimination based on work and descent” as a unique issue of historic and social discrimination (Yozo Yokota, 2007).

After the adoption of the resolution, the Sub-commission continued its work on the topic until 2007 as shown below.

- In August 2001, Rajendra Gooneskere submitted a working paper reporting on discrimination based on work and descent in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Japan and Pakistan.

- In August 2003, an expanded working paper by Asbjorn Eide (Norway) and Yozo Yokota was submitted, covering examples in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Yemen and Nigeria of discrimination based on work and descent. It also reported on discrimination seen in the South Asian and West African diaspora in Western Europe.

•In July 2004, an additional working paper by Eide and Yokota was submitted which included an overview of the legal, judicial, administrative and educational measures taken by relevant states, and indicated a framework of “principles and guidelines” that states and relevant organizations should follow to address such discrimination.

•In July 2005, Yokota and Chin-Sung Chung published a preliminary report on the overview of discussions in the Sub-Commission on the subject, a draft questionnaire for a more detailed study, and the draft “principles and guidelines.”

•In the summer of 2006, Special Rapporteurs Yokota and Chung presented the progress report in the final session of the Sub-commission. The Sub-commission requested both Rapporteurs to prepare a final report.

Since then, the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission were reorganized into the Human Rights Council and the Advisory Committee as part of the UN reform, and therefore, the collection of responses to the questionnaires as well as regional consultations on the subject were limited, but the Final Report of Yozo Yokota and Chin-Sung Chung, Special Rapporteurs on the topic of discrimination based on work and descent, was submitted to the Human Rights Council on November 5, 2007.

The Final Report consists of a Summary, an Introduction, and Chapters I Activities of the Special Rapporteurs, II Government’s Replies to the Progress Report of the Special Rapporteurs, III Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent, and IV Conclusions and Recommendations.

The Draft Principles and Guidelines of Chapter III includes a Preamble, Scope and Application, Definition, Principles, and Guidelines (18 areas). The Conclusion of the Conclusion and Recommendations in section IV includes the following contents.

(1) The issue of discrimination based on work and descent continues in many parts of the world to this day. The various studies by the Special Rapporteurs revealed that this issue was broader than discrimination based on caste in South Asia, and that it continues to exist in Africa, Latin America and parts of the Middle East, as well as in some countries of Western Europe (particularly among the diaspora community).

(2) It must be emphasized that in South and East Asia, such discrimination is seen as an acute and urgent human rights issue, and affected countries have taken legislative, administrative, budgetary as well as positive measures to address this issue. Nevertheless, discrimination persists, even in these countries which have taken corrective measures. One of the reasons is that this kind of discrimination is deeply rooted in social customs, beliefs, rituals and behavior which distinguishes affected individuals and communities from the majority or dominant individuals or groups on the basis of impurity and pollution and, unless the attitudes, modes of behavior or value systems of ordinary citizens drastically change, eradication of such discrimination is difficult.

(3) To eliminate such discrimination, it is essential that national and local governments take all possible effective measures vigorously to achieve this goal. All actors of society (business companies, schools, universities, institutes, religious groups and organizations, hospitals, newspapers and broadcasting networks, non-governmental organizations and other welfare and humanitarian organizations, trade unions and employers’ organizations, internet operators, and UN bodies and agencies as well as other universal and regional international organizations), should take immediate and effective steps to eliminate all discriminatory social, psychological or physical acts.

In the Recommendation part of the Conclusion and Recommendation in Chapter IV, the

following were included.

(a) The Human Rights Council should include the topic of discrimination based on work and descent among the studies to be conducted by an expert or experts appointed by the Council.

(b) The Human Rights Council should adopt the draft Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent included in Chapter II of this report, with necessary amendments and improvements, and send the revised Principles and Guidelines to the General Assembly for adoption. (recommendations (c) and (d) are omitted.)

Civil society organizations such as the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee, the *Buraku* Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute, IMADR and International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) played a significant role in achieving the resolution on the elimination of discrimination based on work and descent in the Sub-commission, the preparation of the working papers by the Sub-commission members and Special Rapporteurs, and the draft Principles and Guidelines.

5 Multiple Discrimination

A characteristic of the human rights activities under the UN in the 2000s was its focus on multiple (intersectional) discrimination. For example, in the concluding observation by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) after examination of the report of Japan in August 2009, the Committee urged “the State party to take effective measures, including the establishment of a policy framework and the adoption of temporary special measures, to eliminate discrimination against minority women. To this end, the Committee urges the State party to appoint minority women representatives to decision-making bodies. The Committee reiterates its previous request that the State party include information on the situation of minority women in Japan, especially with regard to education, employment, health, social welfare and exposure to violence, in its next periodic report. In this context, the Committee calls upon the State party to conduct a comprehensive study on the situation of minority women, including indigenous *Ainu*, *Buraku* and *Zainichi* (resident) Korean and Okinawa women (paragraph 52).”

The importance of giving special attention to the situation of women among those who are discriminated against on the basis of “descent” or “work and descent” in the elimination of discrimination has been strongly emphasized in recent years. The active lobbying of the CEDAW members by minority women including the Women’s Department of the *Buraku* Liberation League which participated in the IMADR Japan Committee was behind the adoption of these recommendations.

6 The Official Visit to Japan by the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism

The UN Commission on Human Rights, and later the UN Human Rights Council, has established a mechanism of Special Procedures of independent experts for important human rights issues or countries with grave human rights situations. The *Buraku* issue in Japan began to be taken up by the special procedures. For example, in July 2005 Doudou Diène, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance made an official visit to Japan. IMADR Japan Committee welcomed Diène and cooperated fully with his interviews with people suffering discrimination as well as his visits to relevant areas. His report was submitted to the Human Rights Council session held in September 2006, and as shown below, it contains some important indications.

• Racial discrimination and xenophobia exist in Japan, affecting three discriminated-against groups, namely; (1) the national minorities, such as *Buraku* people, the *Ainu* and people of Okinawa, (2) people from former Japanese colonies, including those from the Korean peninsula (Zainichi) and China as well as their descendants and (3) other foreigners and migrants from Asia and other parts of the world.

• Minorities including *Buraku* people are living in conditions with marginalized access to education, employment, health and housing among others.

• The minorities including the *Buraku* people are placed in a state of invisibility in national government institutions.

• The government should recognize that discrimination against minorities such as the *Buraku* people exists, and should clearly express its intention to fight for the elimination of such discrimination.

• The government should conduct a survey.

• It should adopt a law prohibiting discrimination.

• It should establish a national institution for equality and human rights.

• It should create an appropriate administrative function for the solution of *Buraku* and other discrimination issues.

• The media should provide more space to programs on minorities.

• The rights of women within minorities should be improved.

Since then, some twenty Special Rapporteurs have conducted studies and published reports in relation to discrimination based on work and descent. These are compiled by the IDSN.

7 UN Guidance Tool on Descent-based Discrimination

In March 2017, the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities compiled a Guidance Tool on Descent-based Discrimination. According to Lee Kayoung, this is an internal document intended to be used in formulating plans for eliminating descent-based discrimination when the UN provides development and technical assistance (Lee Kayoung, 2018). Behind the publication of the Guidance Tool was the lack of progress in the domestic implementation in relevant countries even after the adoption of the General Recommendation on discrimination based on descent by CERD and the Principles and Guidelines by the Sub-commission. An important concept in understanding the Guidance Tool is the human rights-based approach, an idea that human rights would be ensured, and therefore descent-based discrimination would also be eliminated, even within the development assistance framework. The Guidance Tool also refers to some important points, such as the need to identify multiple factors, specifically not just gender but also a broad range of multiple situations such as disability, or whether they are boys or girls. It also identifies four areas to review whether individual rights have been achieved in a particular country, namely human rights protection in general, civil and political rights, economic and social rights and access to justice.

In April 2018, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and IMADR co-organized consultations in Osaka and Tokyo, with the participation of OHCHR

staff, Special Rapporteur, members of the Dalit community and representatives of the *Buraku* Liberation League, on the topic of how to implement the Guidance Tool in Japan. The methods presented in the Guidance Tool should provide a basis for the implementation of the Act on the Promotion of the Elimination of *Buraku* Discrimination.

8 The Joint 4th Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Convention in Fukuoka

On September 22 and 23, 2018, the 4th Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Convention Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights – carrying on the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar and Jiichiro Matsumoto - was held in Fukuoka, Japan.

The organizing committee of the 4th Convention consisted of Ambedkar International Mission (AIM), *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee, the Fukuoka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League, Fukuoka Prefectural Human Rights Institute and other organizations.

AIM, one of the organizers, is an organization of mostly Dalits who left India and are living abroad, which aims to carry on the spirit of Dr. Ambedkar and eliminate discrimination against Dalits. It was founded in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia in April 1994, and has branches in the US, Canada, France, Australia and Japan.

The first World Convention was held in October 1998, the second in December 2011, both in Kuala Lumpur and the 3rd in July 2014 in Paris, France. Shigeyuki Kumisaka, President of the *Buraku* Liberation League Central Executive Committee, has participated in all of them.

The International Convention was held for two days. Sushant Godghate, President of AIM Japan, gave the keynote proposal, “the reason why AIM-BLL Global Convention on Human Rights is being held and what to expect from the Convention,” followed by numerous presentations on the discrimination faced by Dalits in India and around the world, as well as on *Buraku* discrimination. On September 23, a Declaration of Resolutions on the 4th International Convention consisting of 14 paragraphs was adopted. It included recognizing the great legacies of Jyotiba Phule, B.R. Ambedkar and Jiichiro Matsumoto as leaders who fought human rights violations, placing the issues of Dalits, *Buraku* people, and other oppressed minorities in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and related policy documents through UN and other international organizations, and calling on the UN to establish an independent office with dedicated resources to address the practice of untouchability and caste-based discrimination.

V Where We Currently Stand

The activities for international solidarity by the *Buraku* liberation movement through more than one hundred years since the founding of the National *Suiheisha*, have achieved the following.

- The *Buraku* issue in Japan has become a topic to be specifically mentioned in the concluding observations after the examination of the government report by treaty bodies including the UN Human Rights Committee, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee, CERD and CEDAW.

- The *Buraku* issue in Japan has attracted the interest of and has been subject of recommendations for its solution by the Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council) and the Commission on Human Rights (the Human Rights Council) as well as its Special Procedures.

- The *Buraku* issue has become a matter of international concern and recognized as

discrimination based on descent in CERD and as discrimination based on work and descent in the Sub-commission along with discrimination against Dalits in India and other South Asian countries, as well as with similar discrimination found in some African countries and the diaspora (migrant) communities of Indian and other origin.

- CERD presented various factors to identify the existence of descent-based groups, as well as basic measures that need to be taken to eliminate the discrimination in its General Recommendation XXIX, and the Principles and Guidelines on the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent by the Special Rapporteurs Yokota and Chung of the Sub-commission included a definition of discrimination based on work and descent and measures that should be taken to eliminate such discrimination.

- The recognition that the solution of the *Buraku* issue is an international responsibility has become more widely shared in Japan. For example, the Consultative Council on Regional Improvement Measures Report pointed out that making “efforts to solve as soon as possible various human rights issues such as the *Dowa* issue is an international responsibility.”

- Organizations such as IMADR and IDSN have been created and developed as actors systematically engaging with the UN organs so that they will take interest in discrimination based on descent or work and descent, such as the *Buraku* issue. Solidarity with organizations such as AIM has also been built. IDSN was created in London, UK in March 2000 to call for elimination of discrimination against Dalits around the world. The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) of India, IMADR and Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) of Nepal are part of the Network.

Conclusion

Discrimination based on descent or work and descent, such as the *Buraku* issue, is now a matter which attracts the attention of the UN. To eliminate such discrimination and build a world of peace, there are considerable challenges not just in Japan but also at the UN level. The future challenges are listed below.

Domestic challenges

- Urge the Japanese government to recognize that the *Buraku* issue falls within the scope of “descent” under the ICERD, and call for the compliance with the recommendations issued by the CERD and the General Recommendation XXIX on discrimination based on descent.

- Press the Japanese government to accept the recommendations issued by the Human Rights Committee, the Diène Report and other documents in good faith, and call for active efforts to eliminate discrimination including the *Buraku* issue.

- Disseminate and promote domestically the Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent by Yokota and Chung, and call for their implementation.

- Call on the Japanese government to comply with the recommendations on minority women including *Buraku* women issued by CEDAW.

- Call for the amendment and realization of the Act on the Promotion of the Elimination of *Buraku* Discrimination, adoption of a Basic Act on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and early adoption of a law establishing a human rights commission as well as a

comprehensive anti-discrimination law.

Challenges for the UN

- The efforts to eliminate “discrimination based on work and descent” under the UN Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (the compilation of the Principles and Guidelines) should be discussed and continued by the Human Rights Council.

- A Special Rapporteur on discrimination based on descent as well as work and descent should be appointed by the Human Rights Council.

- The elimination of discrimination based on descent as well as work and descent should be included in the efforts being made during the period of 2015 to 2030 under the UN Sustainable Development Goals with the slogan, “leave no one behind.”

- A declaration or treaty for the elimination of discrimination based on descent as well as work and descent should be adopted by the UN.

Challenges for research institutes and organizations

- Strengthen dissemination of information on the *Buraku* issue and the *Buraku* liberation movement in English. This is an urgent matter, as shown by, for example the development of extremely discriminatory portrayals of the *Buraku* issue and the *Buraku* liberation movement by Mark Ramseyer, Professor at Harvard University (“On the Invention of Identity Politics: The Buraku Outcastes in Japan” *Review of Law and Economics*, Volume 16 issue 2).

- Conduct further studies and research into where in the world and what form of discrimination based on descent as well as work and descent exist, and what measures are to be taken to eliminate such discrimination.

- Strengthen IMADR and IDSN.

In October 2009, the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay (South Africa) issued a statement titled Tearing Down the Wall of Caste.

As a woman of color from a racial minority growing up in apartheid South Africa, I know a thing or two about discrimination.

“Untouchability” is a social phenomenon affecting approximately 260 million persons worldwide. This type of discrimination is typically associated with the notions of ritual purity and pollution which are deeply rooted in different societies and cultures. The problem is neither confined to one geographical area nor exclusively practiced within one particular religion or belief system. It is a global phenomenon...

The international community should come together to support these efforts as it did when it helped put an end to apartheid...

The Human Rights Council, the premier intergovernmental body for the protection and promotion of human rights, should promote the 2009 Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination based on Work and Descent. This study complements existing international standards of non-discrimination. All states must rally around and endorse these norms. The time has come to eradicate the shameful concept of caste. Other seemingly insurmountable walls, such as slavery and apartheid, have been dismantled in the past. We can and must tear down the barriers of caste too.

Elimination of discrimination based on descent as well as work and descent is, as the statement indicates, now a matter of strong concern for the UN and the international community. In these efforts, great international expectations are placed on the *Buraku* liberation movement in Japan which has a history of more than 100 years since the founding of the National *Suiheisha*.

Postscript

Due to space limitations, the following matters were not addressed in this article: interaction between the Fukuoka *Buraku* History Study Group and Dalits in India conducted from the second half of 1970s to 1980s, interaction and solidarity led by the youths of *Buraku* Liberation League Kanto Block with the indigenous peoples of Cordilera region in the Philippines since the second half of the 1980s, interaction and solidarity with the *Buraku* Liberation League Tochigi Prefectural Federation and Dalits in Tamil Nadu, India since 1990, as well as interaction and joint studies by the *Buraku* Liberation and Human Rights Institute with researchers on *Hyeongpyengsa* in Korea since 1988, and interaction with the Yi people, an ethnic minority group in China since the 1990s. It should be noted that these are all important activities.

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