

A STUDY OF SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION IN JAPAN

*Dissertation Submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY*

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1992



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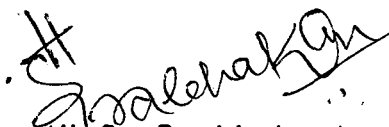
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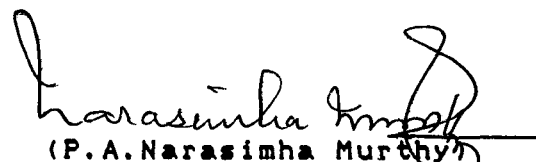
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled "A Study of Social Discrimination in Japan" submitted by D. Shalem Raju in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university. To the best of our knowledge, this is a bonafide work of the candidate.

We recommend this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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PREFACE

The practice of social discrimination in Japan is a direct feudal heritage. Despite attempts by the Meiji government during the modernization period, the practice of discrimination somehow continued into the present.

Although there are certain constitutional provisions available towards eventual removal of such practices, yet discrimination continues and gets manifested in social, educational, employment, housing, welfare and such other areas of human life.

The scattered information related to this subject are being brought together in this dissertation. An attempt is also made to analytically present the available English information. However, discussion related to the problem of Burakumin and Koreans have become disproportionate. This is purely due to the nature and volume of information available as such.

The study is based on both primary and secondary source material. Aspects that have been discussed are the legacy, nature and type of discrimination, government and non-government measures to contain and eliminate as well as their degree of success and failure. Though it is unbelievable that in such an industrially and technologically advanced society like Japan discrimination is practiced, yet it is a fact but not abstract. In the process of presentation of discussion, whatever drawbacks noticeable, methodological or otherwise, I own total responsibility.

I sincerely express my gratitude to my Supervisor who suggested to me this topic as also for showing great patience and keen interest in the process of completion of this dissertation. His own insight about this subject especially helped me in understanding the methodology to be adopted. I am very thankful to the Centre Chairman who enquired my progress throughout the process of completing this dissertation.

I am, in particular, thankful to my friend Joseph Somi and also other friends who have encouraged me during my research. I should also record my appreciation of the work of Mr. Rawat who typed the manuscript.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, brothers and sister for their patience and encouragement.

May 15, 1992

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Tokugawa Legacy

Speaking strictly from legal point of view there is no such thing as discrimination against Burakumin, Koreans and other minority groups in Japan. Article 14 of the Japanese constitution states: "All Japanese are equal under the law, and they shall not be discriminated against in political, economic and social aspects by the difference of race, religion, sex or social status."¹ In Japan, democracy is considered legally sacrosanct and it is supposed that dehumanizing conditions or undemocratic discrimination do not exist. With the beginning of the Meiji period (1868-1912), the Tokugawa feudal system was destroyed and Japan was transformed into a modern state. The emancipation edict decreed the abolition of hereditary social classes in 1871. So, legally speaking, the untouchable or outcaste class stood abolished. As far as legally recognized system itself is concerned, discrimination was totally abolished. As a

1. Yasuki Okuma, Seoul Journal of Law, April 1986, p.9.

result, it is now impossible to count the Burakumin population in a number of Buraku districts, and thus difficult to designate which areas should be considered as Buraku in that sense.

However, in real life, discrimination does exist against Buraku and other minorities in Japan. As all over the world, discrimination started in the very ancient period in Japan too. There have been all kinds of discrimination namely: occupational discrimination, educational discrimination, status discrimination, discrimination against women, religious discrimination, discrimination against handicapped and the like. In ancient period, social discrimination was formed on a political level. The origin of present discrimination against Burakumin can be traced back to the late 16th or early 17th century when the Tokugawa rulers established their modern feudal authority in Japan. They froze the social order, broadly dividing the population into four classes: Samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants. In reality, however, there were more than four classes. At the top of society were members of the court, aristocracy, and feudal lords, and at the very bottom there were outcastes (Eta and Hinin), who were engaged in menial and polluting work. They were in effect treated as a separate class of

people somewhat similar to the outcastes in India. Segregation of and discrimination against the Eta and Hinin had been institutionalized by a numerous of feudal lords, or Daimyos, on their own initiative before the Tokugawa rulers froze the social order, but the latter made the Eta and Hinin a nationwide institution. Thus for the first time their status was fixed.

In the early years of the Tokugawa era, a Hinin might still be seen as a person who had fallen into his state by breaking the law or violating a serious taboo and, in theory, could eventually rise out of his situation. Ultimately the Hinin, like the Eta, came to be consigned hereditarily to outcaste status. During the Tokugawa era, the Eta were seen as people who had been, by reason of blood, relegated to their lowly status. Even though many Eta families claimed that their struggle for power in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, ended up doing menial, "unclean" work out of necessity. Tokugawa rulers asserted that Eta families were inferior aliens. With this the most fundamental policy of the Tokugawa regime appeared "to² aggravate discrimination against the lowest-class people".
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2. Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Long-Suffering Brothers and Sisters Unite, Japan 1981, p.131.

Under the Tokugawa dispensation, people who committed a crime or violated the laws and customs of the land could easily be relegated to the status of Eta and Hinin. For instance, lovers who attempted double suicide but survived were consigned to the Eta community as such acts were prohibited by the Tokugawa Bakufu. But most of those who were frozen into the status of Eta seem to have been; people who happened to be engaged in occupations with a stigma attached to them at the time of fixing the social order by the Bakufu. Further, "the descendants of these people retained their lowly status even when they entered other clean occupations".³ As a result, these were farmers, fishermen, weavers, dyers, and laborers who belonged to the Eta and Hinin or Burakumin community. In addition to the occupations already associated with the Eta, low-level police, prison guards, and executioners of criminals also were identified with them.

Critics of the Tokugawa rulers contend that they deliberately created a class of scapegoats for the common people to lord over and to abuse, allowing a safety valve for the frustrations felt under an authoritarian, restrictive social

3. De Vos and Wagatsuma, Japan's Invisible Race, Tokyo, p.20.

order. But the entire system of class distinctions may have emanated instead, from the Confucian world view of hierarchical order, which the Tokugawa rulers adopted when they constructed their social order. Nonetheless, just as the rulers allowed the Samurai to abuse the commoners, they permitted the commoners to abuse the Burakumin. All sorts of restrictive measures were imposed on the Eta and Hinin as also Burakumin. There were restrictions as to where they could live, quality of housing, mobility in and out of their hamlets, clothing and even footwear. During this period they were treated almost as non-human beings. They were not allowed to wear any footwear but only had to go about bare-foot. They could use only straw ropes as belts, and only straws to tie their hair. They were forbidden to leave their hamlet from sunset to sunrise.

The Tokugawa laws decreed against Burakumin, not to associate with other people. When it was necessary to see others, for some business or whatever reason, they had to get on their hands and knees before they could speak. When Burakumin encountered people above them in social hierarchy, they had to get out of their way or get on their hands and knees until others passed by. In some areas, they were required to wear special identification marks, such as a yellow collar. They were banned from visiting the Shrines and temples of non-Eta communities, and inter-caste marriage with other classes was strictly forbidden.

It could be argued that the Tokugawa Bakufu sought to treat Burakumin as non-people. That was reflected in their policy of ignoring the very existence of these communities on official maps and in calculating the distance from one point to another. Thus, in many cases the official distance given out by the authorities did not equate with the actual geographical distance as Burke localities were dropped conveniently.

As the rigid Tokugawa social order began to crumble, feudal authorities labored to shore up the disintegrating system by issuing more restrictive injunctions against these communities. For example, in Tosa-han it was decreed in 1819 that "peasants could not sell land to an Eta"⁴. In the following year the Han authorities forbade the Eta from pawing things and from entering peasant homes, and ordered them to walk on the edge of the street. The Burakumin were also prohibited "from entering the city after about Eight p.m."⁵ The Tokugawa government, didn't allow the Buraku women to wear obi(sashes).⁶

4. Mikiso Hane, Peasants Rebels & Outcastes the Underside of Modern Japan, Pantheon Books, New York, p.142.

5. Ibid., p.143.

6. Ibid., p.143.

As the founder of the pre-modern four tier class system, the Tokugawa Shogunate depended upon natural economy of self-sufficiency, but it began to shake with the development of commodity economy, and the shogunate and the feudal clans began to suffer financial hardships. Hereafter, the Tokugawa Shogunate began to discriminate against the farmers also, in order to overcome such financial hardships. Tokugawa rulers who raised the rate of collecting rice as tax from farmers often issued strict discriminatory decrees of frugality and of living control, and thereby strengthened oppression of the farmers. Consequently, the farmers were driven into harder and harder living and also the oppression of farmers by the Shogunate and the feudal clans continued. In order to evade the resistive attacks by the farmers, Tokugawa Bakufu, strengthened the status system again and further strengthened the status system again and further strengthened their policy of dividing and ruling people discriminately.

The status system of Tokugawa Shogunate, favoured the ruling class, and others such as farmers, artisans and merchants, while discrimination against the Burakumin was strengthened. As the population of Burakumin increased gradually, government tendency towards strengthening of control over Burakumin and agricultural farmers also intensified. To restrict the birth rate of Burakumin and farmers,

the government continued to foster the ie (household community) system. The government maintained it strictly. It is recorded that, "sometimes newly born babies were even killed for maintenance of ie system."⁷

In 1723, for instance, Tadasuke Ohoka, "Cachi Bugyo" (magistrate) of Edo, ordered the Hinin to "crop their hair instead of tying it up with a paper cord and not to wear headgear".⁸ Consecutive decrees were issued by Tokugawa Shogunate discriminating against and oppressing controlling over the Burakumin. In 1712 the Shogunate conducted investigations into the background of Burakumins, and all the villagers on the basis of their "Danna-dera" (family temples) and were registered, and further a separate system for registering the Burakumin exclusively was begun and continued.

The Tokugawa Shogunate issued a decree in 1778, to further strengthen the status discrimination against Burakumin with a statement as follows: "In recent years Eta and Hinin are very bad-mannered and insult the farmers, artisans and merchants and freely frequent towns, inns and eating

7. J. Suginozara, The Status Discrimination in Japan - Introduction to Buraku Problem, The Hyogo Institute of Buraku Problem, Kobe, 1982, p.15.

8. Ibid.

houses, and go about dressing like farmers. As they are outrageous enough, control over them strictly." ⁹ Before this decree was issued, Hyogo prefecture also issued an order to the people of Baraku stating "Don't stop inside over the thresholds of the common people's houses, wearing clogs; do not behave impolitely or rudely where people gather, put up with them as far as possible without revenging their wrongs" ¹⁰ and in 1749 Sasayama clan issued an official notice ordering the people of Buraku to wear plain coarse cotton clothes of a light yellow color.

To strengthen further the status discrimination against Burakumin, Tokugawa Shogunate issued an order to the people of Burakumin in 1780; forbidding the villagers to build houses additionally or newly, no matter how large their families might become. The Burakumin were not allowed into city and mix with mainstream Japanese after 5 p.m. Under such a policy of status discrimination adopted by the Shogunate and the feudal clans, Burakumin were separated from the farmers, artisans and merchants and were deprived of human rights to an exceptionally great degree and consequently, were driven into an extremely poor life.

9. J. Suginoara, The Status Discrimination in Japan - Introduction to Buraku Problem, The Hyogo Institute of Buraku Problem, Kobe, 1982, p.15.

10. Ibid.

2. Meiji Egalitarian Policies

During the Tokugawa period, Buraku people were oppressed in many ways and were legally allowed to accept only such jobs as tanners, scavengers and executioners. Their being forced to take up only certain specific occupations strengthened the prejudice of others against Burakumin, and this has contributed to strengthening the discriminatory feeling concerning certain occupations. Tokugawa rulers nomenclated the outcastes as Eta-Hinin (outcaste minorities). Besides being discriminated against they were also forced to live, work, and dress in a way that set them clearly apart from others. They were even prohibited to come in contact with other upper class of society. The conditions in life of Burakumin became even more worse and telling hardship.

In such a worse condition, Meiji government established a strong system and institutions to rebuild the society and to deal with the problem of feudalism by modernization. The Meiji government was the first one to take remedial measures to remove the discrimination against the Burakumin and other minority groups. "In 1871, the Meiji government issued an Emancipation Edit,"¹¹ saying "abolish the terms Eta and

11. Takagi Masayuki, "A Living Legacy of Discrimination", Japan Quarterly, July-Sept. 1991, p.285.

Hinin and announce the status and occupation of those persons should be treated equally with those of farmers, artisans and merchants. Thus the edict of 1871, officially abolished all outcaste status positions."¹²

The 1871 decree brought the legal freedom to the people of Buraku i.e. "280 thousand Eta, about 23 thousand Hinin and 80 thousand other outcastes."¹³

By the edict of 1871, terms such as Eta and Hinin stood abolished, and thereafter the people belonging to these class, were in principle treated in the same manner, both in occupation and social standing, as the common people (Himin). The removal of the discrimination against Burakumin is highly significant for the democratization of Japan in that the government was successfully induced to issue such an emancipation Edict. For many years the Burakumin had looked forward for their emancipation day. The emancipation edict brought a sea of changes in the lives of Burakumin. They regained their rights, dignity and equality which had been deprived to them for so long by the discriminatory policies of the Tokugawa Shogunate and feudal

12. George A Devos, Japan Outcastes - The Problem of the Burakumin, March 1972, p.5.

13. Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Long-Suffering Brother and Sisters Unite, Japan 1981, p.265.

clans. With the issue of the emancipation edict, in many Buraku areas agreements were made to reject outrightly the traditional discriminatory customs. Movements were started claiming for their rights to own land which was denied to them hitherto.

The emancipation edict was no doubt a great step towards social democratization. With this edict the feudalistic system was done away with and all the legal and institutional discriminatory policies against the Burakumin disappeared, or so it appeared.

However, in actual social life, discrimination does not disappear. Needless to say, the decree of 1871, did not end discrimination or put a stop to the abuses, indignities, and cruelties that had been inflicted on the Burakumin for centuries. Legal changes, as is so often the case, do not effect a rapid change in a people's way of thinking. In fact, the common people objected vehemently to the removal of the legal distinctions between themselves and the Burakumin. In the following three years of the issue of 1871 decree, even peasant riots erupted that even included anti-Burakumin demands. Two uprisings were held in large scale at a particular point of time.

In May 1875, 26,000 peasants in Okayama prefecture rioted, demanding that the Burakumin be relegated to their former restrictive status. They insisted that the Burakumin bow and scrap before them as they did in the past. When the Burakumin community refused to comply with this, a direct attack from the mainstream Japanese was the natural outcome. Four hundred Burakumin houses were burnt down or wrecked, together with public buildings. Eighteen Burakumin were killed, many were seriously injured.¹⁴

Again, in June of the same year, a massive peasant uprising involving 100,000 people broke out in Fukuoka prefecture. On this occasion, anti-Burakumin demands were presented and physical attacks were perpetuated against Burakumin communities and also a handbook published by the Ministry of Justice in 1880, referred to the people of Buraku as "the lowliest of all people, almost like animals."¹⁵

Thus the Meiji government with its emancipation Edict could not improve the conditions of the Burakumin. For

14. De Vos and Wagatsuma, Japan's Invisible Race, Tokyo, p.37.

15. Shimazaki Tozon, Broken Commandment, University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1974, p.13.

instance, Burakumin were the most miserable victims in the feudalistic society, instead of paying compensation to Burakumin, the government paid compensation to the warrior class. They were driven into poor living under strict discrimination of their status, and moreover, the emancipation edict deprived them of the guarantees of the occupations. The Burakumin got minimum predetermined food for living, and their duties included payment of tax and further military service was newly imposed upon them. In this way their living became even harder than before. The Meiji government abolished feudalistic status system including Eta, Hinin not so much for the real purpose of emancipation as much it appeared for the development of Japanese capitalism.

In general, Meiji government introduced many egalitarian policies, nevertheless. Such peerage system was formed as a new status system. In 1884, the peerage decree was enacted whereby the peers were graced with titles of five ranks, and were granted the privileges of an immunity and a voice in special schools and political affairs. The peerage system vested the principle sovereignty in the hands of the Emperor. However, the Burakumin were incorporated into the new status systems at the lowest stratum.

The abolition of the feudalistic society was, in fact, a great work of the Meiji Government. Quite a few write, all over the world, slavery, discrimination and status problem exist as a result of feudalism. The Meiji government, disorganized the status systems and released the people of Buraku and other minority population from the restraint and closed-nature of the status problem. This almost meant that the releasing of these people from the status discrimination is originally the task of bourgeois democracy and also achievable in capitalistic society. After the abolition of the Tokugawa feudalistic society, Meiji government brought a series of bourgeois freedom and also equality before law.

In the year following the instance of the emancipation edict, when Jinshin-Koseki, ie, the family register in Japan was made compulsory. Status designations, such as Kozoki, Shizoki and Henin were entered therein; where as in certain districts they entered the contemptive appellation Eta and Henin which were abolished. "The former outcastes came to be recognized as Shin-Heimin."¹⁶ After this, Meiji government welcomed people to provide many items of information such as religion, property, education and free occupation.

16. George A Devos, Japan Outcastes - The Problem of the Burakumim, March 1972, p.6.

After 1872, the Meiji government introduced into Japanese society the new modern school system which was open only for Peers and Kozoku children. Besides this, the government established separate schools for the children of Burakumin. For the first time in Japan schools were established for Burakumin children exclusively. Meiji rulers attempted to solve the social discrimination, thus, through the education system. But, the expenses for maintaining schools were the responsibility of Burakus on per head basis. This heavy burden not only oppressed the poor Buraku people more and more but also caused the deterioration of the facilities and educational conditions of Buraku school. Thus the discrimination against Burakumin were preserved further. Such social discrimination against Burakumin was prescribed and utilized in the course of forming and developing Japanese capitalism.

Thus, whatever forms of social discrimination prevailed in Tokugawa Japan were rightfully inherited by the Meiji society. Meiji government's preoccupation was with modernization which in turn was equated with westernization. Industrialization, banking, and finance, foreign trade, overseas expansion were the main theme of Meiji as well as the successor governments. In such a national exercise, however, ending social discrimination, though was attempted

at, through the Meiji edict of 1871, yet it was not attached a top priority. As a general rule labour was totally exploited by capitalist class by making them work longer and accept lower wages. Since thousands of Buraku workers were economically immobile, exploitation of Buraku labour was a practice in general but not specific or exclusive.

The psychological complex of Burakus, the mandatory family registration system together allowed the Burakus to remain as a separate distinct social entity in Japanese society.

As the years passed by, with so many Koreans brought by Japan to work in Japan as labourers, subsequently practices of discriminating foreigners also became vogue. Among Japanese citizens, those who were discriminated also included women on the basis of sex only. However, if we take into consideration the total society, as a class it was only the Burakus and to a lesser extent Koreans who stand out greatly discriminated against social justice. And it gets expressed in a variety of ways as being discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

MINORITIES IN JAPAN

1. Burakus

It is completely erroneous to maintain that "the origin of Burakumin is uncertain and to present them as possible descendants of prisoners of war or vanquished in wars, or even as residers of indigenous population." ¹ As the author of the book "The Status Discrimination in Japan Introduction to Buraku Problem", J. Suginochara writes, "there is no doubt that the Burakumin do not differ ethnically in any way from the rest of the population in Japan. It may also be wrong to present that the Burakumin are descendant of immigrant Koreans who were brought back to Japan," ² when Empress Tinju (a legendary figure who was said to have led a military expedition into Korea in the third century A.D.) went to conquer the three Korean states," ³ or Korean prisoners of war, or thought to have

1. Mikiso Hane, Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes: Underside of Modern Japan, New York, 1982, p.139.
2. Suginochara, The Status discrimination in Japan: Buraku Problems, Kobe, Japan, 1982,p.9.
3. Ibid.

"departed to Japan under Toyotomi Hideyoshi, is widely held preception in Japan. This assertion, which cannot withstand serious scholarly scrutiny, is based on a strong discriminatory consciousness against Koreans, rooted in the Kokugaku school of thought, stressing the purity of the Japanese people."⁴

The term Eta came to be used in Japan towards the end of the Komakura period as an appellation for those who made a living by slaughtering oxen and horses and skinning them, and therefore lived on river banks and received discriminative treatment. An interpretation also claims that Burakumin are descendants of generations of outcastes whose origins shade off into prehistory. But, traditionally these people were discriminated against because they are racially different. Moreover, this is wrong as a historical fact. From ancient times to the medieval times, many people came over to Japan from many countries, but never have been discriminated against, or the mean occupation of killing beasts and skinning them is also not a valid reason for the discriminations against them. If it were so, in primitive ages, people were living by killing beasts and were engaged in leather work, but they never were discriminated against.

4. Suginohara, The Status discrimination in Japan: Buraku Problems, Kobe, Japan, 1982, p.9.

In the modern era, most of the Japanese warriors by killing men and hunting animals, gained honor but never were discriminated against even slightly.

In such a non-discriminatory society, discrimination came into practice when the formation of the modern feudalistic system turned a reality. The foundation of the modern feudalistic system was laid under the regime of Toyotomi Hideyoshi who carried out land surveying throughout Japan and brought the nationwide land and farmers under his authority and in order to nip the farmers riots in the bud, he set up a policy of separating warriors from farmers by Katana-gari (confiscation of swords) depriving the populace of the right of carrying swords.

Hideyoshi Toyotomi who promulgated a social control ordinance in 1591 with a firm discrimination system of social status and dividing society into classes: warriors, farmers, artisans and merchants. It was established for the purpose of preventing the unity and solidarity of the populace and dividing and ruling them. With the induction of this modern social status systems into the society, Burakumin were placed in the lowest position of the ladder and found discriminated against most severely.

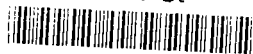
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Toyotomi Hideyoshi's political measures of land surveying (Tarko Kemcha), sword-hunt (Katanagari or the discrimination of all non-bushis and the strict separation of bushies and farmers, were laid down for the foundation of the modern centralized caste system, based on the caste, place of residence and profession, which were further classified more minutely under the Tokugawa Shogunate. During the reign of the Tokugawa, the discrimination against them was through strict rules and regulations. The basis was their dwelling places, occupations, laws of possession, assumption of duties, manner of living--such as clothing wording and residences and manner of action.

When the governing class, was based on the modern feudalistic system, oppressed farmers who occupied 80% of whole population, were fundamental producers in those days.

To put strict pressure on the farmers, the Tokugawa government issued a "Ofure-gaki" (circular notice) in 1649. It set out clearly, "engage in farming from early morning to late at night, don't smoke tobacco: don't drink tea or wine: eat cereals, such as wheat, foxtail millet and barnyard grass so as to reserve rice payable as rent; wear clothes only of cotton; divorce wives who are fond of pleasure

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trips." In order to evade and appease the dissatisfaction of the farmers, it created, a status of humble people of the warriors.

In medieval times, many varieties of outcastes came in to being such as Kawata, Eta.

Unrest arose among farmers, most of whom were in miserable living conditions. The life of these humble people became very difficult and were tied fast to the lowest echelon of the strict modern status systems and also reserved their dwelling places and jobs. In the medieval times, Kawata and Eta were treated by the government as humble people. Today Buraku's nucleus was with Kawata or Eta. These came to be used throughout Japan, especially in medieval times. Under the modern feudalistic system the status of Eta and Hinin were placed under even more strict restrictions not only on the basis of their occupations and dwelling places but also on every aspect of their daily life and they were treated as "something far below human beings."

In the Tokugawa Era, the Shogunate depended upon national economy of self-sufficiency that disturbed the

5. Suginohara, The Status discrimination in Japan: Buraku Problems, Kobe, Japan, 1982, p.9.

development of commodity economy. The financial hardships that the Shogunate and feudal clans experienced was real. In order to overcome the financial hardships feudal clans began to raise the rate of collecting rice as a tax from farmers. Tokugawa government issued a strict decree of frugality and of living control and thereby strengthened oppressions. No remedial measures to remove such social discrimination against Burakumin were in sight. The Meiji government which looked after the artisans, farmers, merchants but not and Burakumin who in fact were the most miserable victims in the feudalistic society. It did not guarantee occupations to the Burakumin. The Meiji regime abolished the feudalistic status systems not because of the implementations of the concept of "equality before law" but because of the development of capitalism in Japan.

For the development of capitalistic society, Meiji rulers disorganized the feudalistic society of the Tokugawa government. But the political, economic and social constructions of the pre-war capitalistic society of Japan retained feudalistic discrimination against Burakumin even after the abrogations of the old feudalistic patterns of Tokugawa time by the Meiji government.

The feudalistic status systems which was abolished by the Meiji government in turn allowed formation of new social status systems which consisted Kazoku (peers), Shizoku (descendants of warriors) and Heimin (Commoners) with Tenno (emperor) and Kozoku (imperial family) on top of all. Once again Burakumin were incorporated into the lowest strata of the new strata system. That is why Mr. Jiichiro Matsumoto said about the new emperor system thus: "Thus new system brought Burakumin to the category of something under human beings."⁶

The government incorporated the Burakumin community at the lowest stratum in the Emperor system after the discarding of the words like Eta and Hinin, the government again founded a new discriminatory word against Burakumin as Shimheimin (new commoner). "To keep the emperor on top, Buraku had to exist at the bottom of the society. Moreover capitalism also made use of the Burakumin and this brought further poverty to Burakumin."⁷ This kind of discrimination against Burakumin was constantly preserved and retained

6. Suginozara, The Status discrimination in Japan: Buraku Problems, Kobe, Japan, 1982, p.23.

7. Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Long-suffering Brothers-sisters Unite, Tokyo, 1982, p.6.

through a new social order of the Emperor system. The capitalist class of Japan treated the laborers of Buraku very discriminately by lowering the working conditions of the whole working class and kindled the discriminative sentiment of the laborers in general.

The people of Buraku who were oppressed in several ways and were forced to take up such dirty works in jobs of tanners, scavengers, executioners, etc and had to live at the condition of almost starvation sometime.

The depressed economic situations of Burakumin made them to accept discrimination at all levels. Because of the instability in agriculture, Burakumin had to take some other jobs like in railway, port construction, mining, overhauling and very low wage jobs and so on.

In fact Burakumin found easy way in to the worst conditions under the capitalist society. Because of poverty Burakumin were strictly forced into peasantry and were confined to be the lowest class by the Japanese capitalism. The majority of people from the Burakumin community lived on the margin of poverty, and there was little opportunity to break the cycle of their depressed state of existence. By condemning Burakumin as inferior, they were made to satisfy

the capitalists craving for a large pool of cheap labour and forced to work as slaughters, tanners, scavengers, executioners and in other roles considered dirty and beneath the dignity of ordinary people. They were made to reside in the worst parts in city, town or village so that they could become the first victims of calamities like floods or landslides.

With the passage of time as Japan entered into the post Second World War period, a series of reform measures and industrial development programmes were introduced. With this a wide range of job opportunities were available to any Japanese. Hitherto, Burakus were scattered throughout the Japan. Now they have started moving to nearby industrial areas where jobs were easy and better. With more earnings by an individual member coupled with multiple earnings at the family level benefits of modern life were introduced into urban Burakus. At individual and family levels, the economic problems of Buraku were more or less solved by individual efforts and economic opportunities. At the general social life discrimination problem continues to exist. Those who were unable to shift and utilize the opportunity were left behind in the process of Buraku economic assimilations with mainstream Japanese.

Had the occupation authorities (1945-52) introduced in social reforms some specific measures to eliminate or to reduce the Buraku general social problems, perhaps today they would have emerged a satisfied lot in Japan. Absence of this measure may be attributed as reason for the continued problems of Burakus.

2. Koreans

Koreans began to live as an ethnic minority in Japanese society after 1910 that is the year of the Japanese annexation of Korea.⁸ A large number of Koreans migrated to Japan due to economic difficulties in Korea or were forced to migrate during the second world war. Consequently, as of 1945,⁹ there were two million Koreans residing in Japan. Some of them returned to their homeland immediately after war. However, most remained in Japan due to delay in the attainment of Korean independence, disastrous economic conditions in Korea. By then, they were rooted deep in Japan. Basically the present Korean minority in Japan is composed of those who remained and also their descendants. Thus the existence of Korean minority in Japan is the direct

8. Mikiso Hane, Peasants Rebels and Outcastes: The Underside of Modern Japan, Panther Books, New York, 1982, p.236.

9. Yasuki Okume, "Legal Status of Korean Residents in Japan", Past, Present and Future", Journal of Social Law, April, 1986, p.11.

result of Japanese colonial rule over Korea. One of the serious problems of the Koreans in Japan relate to their nationality question. For one thing, the reason how and to what degree one enjoys rights and duties depend greatly on whether one lives in a country as its national or as an alien. But nationality was denied to the Korean minority in Japan, and their complaints continue and are justified.

Since the annexation of Korea in 1910, most Koreans were forcefully brought over to Japan to perform manual and menial labour. Under the Japanese policy of integration, all Koreans were required to adopt Japanese names and to accept Japanese education system.

Koreans in Japanese society began to live as an ethnic minority after 1910. Around two million Koreans were residing in Japan by 1945. After the Second World War was over a good number of Koreans returned to their homeland. Due to the economic difficulties in Korea and delay in the attainment of independence approximately 500,000 Koreans remained in Japan as foreigners. The present Korean community is the descendant of those who remained in Japan. Thus existence of the Korean minority in Japan and their problems are directly linked to the Japanese colonial role over Korea.

10. Yasuki Okume, "Legal Status of Korean Residents in Japan", Past, Present and Future", Journal of Social Law, April, 1986, p.11.

From 1910 onwards Koreans were discriminated against in Japan by the Japanese government. Korean language was prohibited in the schools and in public places.¹¹ The teaching of Korean history and culture was forbidden. Koreans who were required to take on Japanese names and the program of full integration of the Korean peninsula into the Japanese empire was greatly accelerated. Earlier in their occupation, the Japanese government set up a complete school system for Japanese children in Korea based on the German model. A parallel system was set up for Koreans, but it was of a inferior quality. Only the children of those who cooperated completely with the Japanese rulers were allowed the special honour of being admitted to Japanese schools.

During the period of Japanese occupation, Koreans were allowed to hold only subordinate positions in government. They were used as cheap labour for Japan's industrial development.¹² Koreans thus observed the manners and patterns of Japanese behaviour from the Sergeant's point of view. They came to resent their second-class citizenship and were not given training in managerial skills.

11. Paul S. Crane: Korean Patterns, Kwamgjim Publishing Co., Seoul 1978, p.119.

12. Mikiso, Hane, Peasants Rebels and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan, Panther Books, New York, 1982, pp.230-45.

Koreans suddenly found themselves in positions of authority after the liberation in 1945 to copy the external antics of the Japanese without adopting the strict controls essential to make their authoritarian system work. Since the Japanese concentrated their efforts in urban areas, about 80% of the population comprised the farmers and adjusted to a few changes in their traditional attitudes and patterns of action.

Since the occupying forces had complete control of the police, courts, transportation, utilities, communications, mass media, the schools, hospitals and large industries, only a few Koreans could dream that the Japanese would even be forced to leave Korea and many settled for trying to succeed under the Japanese. A few Koreans were appointed as Judges in the lower courts. Japanese tended to use Koreans to do their dirty work, both in Korea and elsewhere.

The government of Japan appeared to have solved Korean nationality problem in a unique manner after the Second World War. On 28 April 1952, when the San Francisco peace treaty came into effect, with that the government of Japan treated Koreans as Japanese nationals.

The government of Japan always considered Koreans as aliens. For instance, "the government of Japan suspended Korean suffrage by the amendment of election law No.42 of

the house of representatives on December, 1945" It is very clear that one of the essential rights of nationality was denied to Koreans. The Japanese government on 2 May 1947 enacted the alien registration order which looked on Koreans as aliens and government put them under its control with strict rules and regulations.

The government of Japan, exempted Koreans from the personal jurisdiction and Koreans remained under its territorial jurisdictions as long as they live in Japan. The enjoyment of rights by Koreans are much worse than of its native Japanese.

To solve the nationality problem of Koreans in Japan a circular notice was issued. In fact, this notice deprived Koreans of their nationality of Japan. The alien registration law which was promulgated on 28th April 1952, deprived Koreans of their rights. The alien registration further confirmed Korean status in Japan as aliens.

Even those born in Japan to families of Korean origin were not regarded as Japanese nationals unless they had a Japanese father. Most Koreans are reluctant to marry Japanese because of this. From 28 April 1952 onwards, discriminatory provisions came into force against the

13. Yasoki Okume, "Legal Starts of Korean Residents in Japan: Past, Present and Future, Seoul Journal of Law, April 1986, p.13.

Koreans in Japan as they must carry always the alien registration certificate and on top of it finger printing was made mandatory.

The government of Japan imposed on Koreans a number of other restrictions as well which extended to cover their rights to social welfare, freedom to choose one's occupation and even property rights. Koreans are not entitled to national health insurance, daily life security, publicity or semi-publicity marriage, housing, or public loan, other social welfare programs as well and also not entitled to become patent attorneys, notaries of public or pilots, nor could they enjoy mining rights or own or run shops and airplanes, radio wave enterprises or similar business. The government of Japan is also reluctant to appoint Koreans as public servants. Jobs to Koreans in Japan are being offered in a very limited areas as medical doctors and nurses in public hospital, research assistants in public universities and a limited number of teachers in public schools. The government of Japan was hostile to the ethnic education of Koreans. Still a large number of Korean educational institutions are run by the Choongnyoy. In fact, the Japanese government saw the problem of Koreans in Japan as one of public order. Thus it tried to prevent Koreans from continuing to exist in Japan as an ethnic minority group, and pursue a policy of total assimilation or expulsion.

In 1965 Japanese government granted permanent resident status to Koreans in Japan by a treaty, ie those who identify themselves with the Republic of Korea. But the permanent resident status was not granted to those Koreans who identified themselves with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As a result of this, approximately 300,000 Koreans failed to acquire "permanent resident status by treaty."¹⁴

By the 1980s the government of Japan, thus solved the Korean minority problem. It does not mean that the social and legal status of Koreans in Japan is settled. The Koreans always are harassed for requirements that are generally applicable like carrying an alien registration card, and threat of criminal sanction in Japan. In addition to this, alien registration order in 1980, 1981 and 1982 were amended and thus Koreans are kept under constant check by the Japanese government.

The finger-printing issue which shook Japanese society in 1985 revealed the frustrations and complaints that Koreans harbour about their social treatment. This finger printing is in itself violative of the sense of human

14. Yasoki Okume, "Legal Starts of Korean Residents in Japan: Past, Present and Future, Seoul Journal of Law, April 1986, p.13.

dignity. Koreans have remained as Koreans in Japan. This constant practice revealed against them their status as aliens. That is why Koreans are strongly opposed to the finger-printing. It is a symbolic discrimination which is still deeply rooted in Japanese society against Koreans. Therefore these people are not satisfied with improvement which were announced by the Japanese government in May 1985 that changed the method from revolving finger-printing used on suspects, to that of simple finger printing. Most of those who refused to be finger-printed regarded this improvement as no improvement at all.

Finger printing is required of all alien residents in Japan. However, since Koreans constitute approximately 80% of all aliens, whenever the Japanese government enacts laws, orders or regulations always has Koreans in mind as a major target. Thus it is natural for the Koreans to regard finger-printing as symbolic of ethnic discrimination in Japan.

The ostensible source of contention is the mandatory finger-printing required every five years for all foreign residents in Japan over the age of 16. Every alien must

15. Paul S. Crane, Korean Patterns, Kheamzjim Publishing Co., 1978, p.125.

carry along a certificate of alien registration. This is a must whenever he or she moves in public. The government justifies the practice by appealing to a need to identify and monitor foreigners. To many observers this is a blatant violation of human rights and dignity and also treating foreign residents as "criminals. More significantly, this practice is a symbolic locus of discrimination against Koreans living in Japan.

Jon Sok Ham of Tokyo in September 1980 commenced a movement to refuse finger-printing. This was followed soon by an American, Kathleem Morikawa. Soon both were indicted and tried in the local district courts of Tokyo and Yokohama respectively. The Korean minority's lives continue to be marred by discriminations in public and private. The Korean minority was bereft of ordinary rights enjoyed by other citizens. Although Koreans pay taxes, they do not have the right of access to many welfare services.

The spiral of prejudice permeates all areas of social life. Koreans in Japan are barred from all public jobs and face discrimination in all prestigious places of employment.

16. John Loe, "The Korean Minority in Japan - Discriminated Fingers", Monthly Review, 1987, Jan., p.17.

Marriages to Koreans are often violently opposed by Japanese parents. All these are violating human rights and the dignity of Korean community.

Many practices related to Japanese treatment of foreigners are historical in origin. Being closed for 250 years for any foreign contract, Japan has always trended to treat any thing foreign with great suspicion. Requirement of mandatory registration and fingerprinting is being applied as a general rule to all foreigners including Koreans. Had it been designed specially to treat Koreans only then Korean criticism becomes valid. The agencies involved like: police, ministry of justice, local municipal office, only monitor the existing rules and help the process of implementation of same. Therefore as long as Japan treats Koreans as aliens, Korean problem is likely to be continued. Only when attempts to help Koreans assimilate with the mainstream Japanese materializes only then the Korean problem could be either minimized or resolved. This is a tall order for Japanese government which is not likely to resolve in the immediate future. Till such time when Japan makes concessions in regard to mandatory alien registration and finger printing foreigners and Korean problems remains unsolved.

CHAPTER III

NATURE OF DISCRIMINATION

Among the Japanese minorities who were left out during the process of modernization as also that of social assimilation are Buraku people (people living in the hamlet). These Buraku people are subjected to severe discrimination in all aspects of social life ranging from occupation, residence, marriage and even in their manner of dressing. In earlier period, these people were called outcastes since they were engaged in the mean occupations - "killing beasts and skinning them"¹. Even in the modern days they are subjected to discrimination, being forced to live in designated areas and thus are scattered there on the Japanese archipelago. They also are engaging in occupations related to death or bloodletting, such as disposal of dead cattle and horses, in leathering crafts, such as the manufacture of armory and lock, and in disposal of corpse."²

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1. Sugihara, The Status Discrimination in Japan - Buraku Problem, Kobe City, 1982, p.9.
 2. Takagi Masayuki, "A Living Legacy of Discrimination", Japan Quarterly, 1991, July -Sept., p.285.

Even after, the 1947 constitution of Japan, the living standards of the Burakumin are hardly better than what had they been before. At present most of these people are engaged in collecting of old paper, clothes and bottles for mewies, sharecroppers of farmlands and other miscellaneous jobs, never earned enough for their families. Most of these people, are depending on charity or had to remain hungry. Thus deteriorated living conditions of these people further forced them to live separately from the mainstream Japanese.

The living conditions of Burakumin are terrible. More than 87 per cent of their houses are inferior. They are densely built and many of them are tenements. For example: "in the southern part of Hyogo prefecture there are more than 150 Burakus of which more than 60% are situated along³ such rivers as Kakagawa, Ichikawa Ibogawa and Chikusagawa." Roads are so narrow that fire-engines and garbage trucks are unable to enter into many Burakus. Even to buy the daily necessities, no shopping facilities are there in the town and no playing parks for the children of Burakus. The schools are located very far and doctors are not available easily to attend problem of patients in the Burakus. The residents of Burakus in Japan are driven to poverty because discrimination deprives them of minimum appropriate

3. Suginohara, The Status Discrimination in Japan - Buraku Problem, Kobe City 1982, p.39.

educational and occupational opportunities. As a result, their inferior living conditions, quality of life is incomparable with general mainstream Japanese. Instability in occupations especially led the day laborers and other Burakumin to miss any social security measure worth the name.

Most Burakumin are living under conditions - economic and social - that constantly keep them away from the mainstream Japanese and are confined to live in Ghettos. When these small areas get overcrowded, the density becomes worse and health and hygiene turn destructive and deteriorative. The economic condition of the Burakumin also does not allow them to plan and realize construction of own houses. In such a situation they are compelled to accept living in usual wretched slum conditions which are constant threat to the residents.

Japanese persistent practice of discrimination against Burakumin in such areas for example: marriage, has a tradition of centuries. But in theory the 1947 constitution of Japan proclaims marriage to take place on mutual consent. However, in reality these facilities are outside the reach of Burakus.

Resistance to change this practice is very strong. For Burakus marriage with an outsider is either rare or impossible. For a non-Burakumin to marry a Burakumin meant, in effect, joining the outcaste community. Such a social stigma also adversely affect the relatives as well. Any one contemplating such a marriage will be discouraged by the family concerned for reasons of social harmony. This meant trouble for those who fall in love with a non-Burakumin and vice-versa. Such affairs frequently end in suicide. Such cases of success in love and failure to transform to a marriage, ending in suicide are often noticed in Japanese press.

For instance if the husband or wife had concealed the fact that he or she is a Burakumin further if the truth comes out later, the marriage ends in divorce or even suicide on the part of one of the spouses. This was so even in the past. For example: "in 1927, Kitahara Taisaku, who shocked the society of his day by trying to submit a petition to the emperor in which he protested discrimination against the Burakumin in the army, found that his notoriety resulted in his sister's husband finding out that she was a Burakumin. The man abandoned his wife and four children and disappeared."⁴

4. Mikiso Hane, Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes: The Under-side of Modern Japan, New York, 1982, p.148.

When a man of Burakumin will be persuaded by a woman to marry her, without his revealing his background to her, he is considered as a criminal. Because he is attempting to break the customs of society.

In contemporary Japanese society, however, intercaste marriages are frequently occurring. But strong opposition to such marriages is more than in the earlier period. For instance, a young woman who was working in a small post office at low-level wages, decided to marry a Burakumin, who was a postmaster working in the same branch. The decision of the woman was denied by father who told her that "if you, an employee of this post office, were to marry some one like that, it would bring dishonor to the post office. So give up
5
the idea."

In another case, a young Japanese woman who was a student of the Kyoto University, was in love with a Burakumin, who was a well educated and a wealthy. She decided to marry him, because, she was confident of achieving happiness by devoting her life to him. But her parents strongly refused her choice. What they said to her

5. Mikiso Hane, Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes: The Under-
side of Modern Japan, New York, 1982, p.148.

was "it is not a matter of the person's moral character. If you marry him, our ancestors and descendants will be disgraced. We will not be able to face our friends and relatives."⁶ Such incidents are testifying to the strongly embedded prejudice against the Burakumin.

In December 1975, some major companies published Buraku lists which is a book-length compilation of names, location, number of households and main occupations of the Burakumin. This gradually turned an issue debate in society. The Buraku list issue is rooted in politics and cannot be divorced from it. These Buraku lists point to the practice of discriminatory hiring policies by business companies against the Burakumin in the recruitment process. The Buraku lists are a major corporate instrument to keep alive discrimination practice against Burakumin. Frustrated by this many able bodied Burakus are committing suicide.

The Burakumin are not allowed to enter into both Shinto Shrines and Buddhist temples even today. In some places, the Burakumin are not allowed to take part even in the village festivals. In Edo district there was a Shinto god attempted

6. Mikiso Hane, Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes: The Under-side of Modern Japan, New York, 1982, p.148.

to enter the temple. For that, he was beaten to death when a chief of Burakumin appealed, the magistrate of Edo ruled "the life of an eta is worth about one-seventh the life of a townsman. Unless seven eta have been killed, we cannot punish a single townsman."⁷ Though it is a old case, it can be singled out to reveal the treatment meted out to inferiors. Gradually, most of the Burakumin turned to become devout supporters of the True Pure Land sect of Buddhism, where the mainstream Japanese also count as important. The Burakumin are, then, not allowed to enter into, but have to only go to exclusive prototype temples within the campus of main temples. Here also, they have to sit in a designated group or row in the back of the hall. The Burakumin are socially discriminated against as a particular group of people, who one supposes are not belonging to the realm of mainstream Japanese society.

The children of Burakumin have grown up in the circumstances of extreme poverty. The consequence of this is illiteracy among the Burakumin children. Because of the illiteracy and related behaviour and attitude, they are easy target for the continual humiliations and insults which they are experiencing throughout their life.

7. Mikiso Hane, Peasants, Rebels and Outcastes: The Under-side of Modern Japan, New York, 1982, p.148.

The process of modernization does not necessarily create a more humane and enlightened outlook among people is indicated by the fact that even highly educated and cultured members of Japanese society, do not overcome their longstanding prejudice against Burakumin.

Government posts, or police jobs, were closed to Burakumin till recently. But only in teaching profession can some be allowed. The educators among the Burakumin, who were first admitted to teaching profession became landmark personalities.

The children of Burakumin had an eagerness to have access to educational facilities. But this desire of the most children of Burakumin could not materialize. Wherever they were admitted, their economic condition compelled them to abandon school life even before they could finish the elementary grades. A few only have the fortitude and good fortune to overcome such obstacles in their way. Even after that, they are not allowed to teach in non-Buraku schools but were restricted to only Buraku schools.

Localities where there are no separate schools for Burakumin, children are allowed to attend non-Buraku schools. Where also they are often put to exclusive classes

or seated in the back rows of the classroom. When the Burakumin children are attending the non-Burakumin schools, schooling becomes a painful experience. They become the easy targets of insults, taunts, and even the physical attacks by their schoolmates.

The Buraku children often are piked up for abusing in the classroom as well as on their way to and from the schools. Some of the children of Buraku who attempt protecting themselves from their enemies are carrying some protectives.

When Buraku and a non-Buraku children engage in a fight, the teacher is always tempted to punish Buraku children. When the assignments to clean the school are handed out, the Buraku children usually are given the task of cleaning the latrines. The constant taunting by other children often stifle their desire to go to school at all. Such discouraging atmosphere at schools and their adverse economic conditions together drive the children to be courted by Yakuzas - the gangsters. The Buraku and Korean composition in Yakuza organization is always dominant.

The general social and economic discrimination against the Burakumin locked them into traditional, low-paying,

unclean jobs. The lack of opportunity to better themselves economically has kept them the most impoverished. Most of the Burakumin, today, are forced to live in miserable shacks in the ghettos of the cities and in segregated slums in the villages. More than three-quarters of the Burakumin population is located in fishing, farm, and mountain villages, and the rest in urban slums.

Because of their adverse economic condition, the employment of the Burakumin, is mostly restricted to the works of tanning, leather work, butchering, raising pigs, making and repairing footwear, rag picking, peddling, rickshaw pulling, day labor of miscellaneous types of work. The construction labour, throughout economic development of Japan since 1952 was dominated by able bodied Burakus. Income derived from those activities, as one might well imagine, is meagre. The economic necessity compelled the Buraku parents to send their eldest daughters to work on a low-level geisha houses. And rural Burakumin's economic situation is also just as harsh as urban Buraku residents. They also have to undertake equally menial jobs.

The Burakumin owned few fields, also usually are the most unfertile plots located in the most remote areas of living. The terms of tenancy for Burakumin are generally

less favourable than those of non-Buraku peasants. They are not even allowed access to the village woodlands which implies that they could not even supplement their income by gathering firewood.

During the entire period of Japanese industrial expansion, job opportunities for the Burakumin remained restricted. In fact, an increased number of Burakumin gained employment in the textile industry, but often put in segregated dormitories. Mining is another industry in which a large number of Burakumin were employed. However working condition for all the miners is harsh, but the Burakumin are subjected to the additional humiliation of discrimination even there. Taxi driving being most lucrative job in urban Japan, most Buraku young men dream to end up eventually as drivers.

CHAPTER IV

REMEDIAL MEASURES

1. Governmental

At times the problem of social discrimination against Burakumin had become quite serious in Japan. To reduce such a serious social problem, several measures had been taken and attempts were made to implement by the governments in the last one hundred years.

"Meiji government issued a decree of the cabinet, i.e. emancipation edict 1871,"¹ which abolished the distinctions Eta and Himin and made them equal with the commoners. In earlier period these "Himin and Eta were looked upon as non-people and Eta as genetically impure people and whose occupations were ritually polluting."² They were fallen right out of the class system of Tokugawa.

1. Suginohara J., The Status Discrimination in Japan - Buraku Problem, Kobe, 1982, p.18.
2. George A. Devos, Japan's Outcastes - The Problems of the Burakumin, London, March 1971, pp.4-5.

The emancipation edict of 1871 was intended to achieve legal emancipation of Eta and Himin by abolishing their social class. At the time of the emancipation edict of 1871, the "official statistics estimated that the population of outcastes was 300,000."³

By this emancipation edict of 1871, the Meiji government set free the people of Burakumin from the persecution and the long lasting discrimination against them and on the other hand, the government extended social and economic privileges. By this edict, the government removed the discrimination legally and institutionally against Burakumin. It was recognized as essential and significant measure for democratization of Japan. In fact, this emancipation edict was a turning point in a sense that Burakumin were self awakening to human equality and to develop their movements in various places to claim regaining of human rights which they were deprived of by the status discrimination practice under the Shogonate and the feudal clans. In this regard the Meiji era could be treated as "cultural awakening era" and "raised slogans for big democracy".⁴ Many agreements were held between mainstream

3. George A. Devos, Japan's Outcastes - The Problems of the Burakumin, London, March 1971, pp.4-5.

4. Kumio Yamagida Translated by Charles S. Terry Japanese Manners and Customs in the Meiji Era, The Toyo Bunko, Tokyo, Japan, 1957, p.94.

Japanese and outcastes as to deny the traditional discrimination and claim association on an equal footing and they started their movements all over the country and sought claiming rights to own land that they were deprived of hitherto.

In 1872, the government of Japan introduced the practice of maintaining the family register known Jinshin Koseki, an official document in which the government recorded minute details of all the households in Japan. Every Japanese had the duty of registering his name and also mandatorily required to mention more information about the place of birth and family ancestors/background. Through this method, the government grappled distinctions between aliens and the indigenous minorities, i.e. Burakus. After noticing the most miserable economic status of the Burakumin government thought of improving the economic status of the Burakumin, by providing jobs, though at the lowest levels.

In 1907 the government through the ministry of home affairs carried out an investigation into the actual conditions of Burakumin. This investigation was conducted all over the country. The investigation report noted that the people of Burakumin bore the brunt of discrimination through out their lives. The investigation also stated that

their economic conditions were major factors responsible for causing seclusion, negligence and discrimination as well. The government measures to improve the economic condition of the Burakumin were mainly through encouraging education among Burakus.

In 1920, the government set up a Committee to look into the actual occupational background of Burakumin. This Committee for the first time, estimated the population of the Burakumin. When the Committee submitted its report recommended a variety of welfare measures - social, economic and educational. To improve their economic condition, the government set up a separate budget of yen 500,000.

In 1922, the Ministry of Domestic Affairs set up the Central Association for Reconciliation Measures, because the government was horrified by the burgeoning development of the Buraku liberation movement with the foundation of the National Levelers Association in 1922. The basic principle of Reconciliation Measures found that the course of discrimination against Burakumin in such living conditions as occupation, speech, clothing and housing and aimed measures at improving these, so that the citizens could sit together, decide and provide some beneficial measures. In 1940, the Central Association for Reconciliation Measures

changed its name as Dowa Hoko Kai - a service association. This meant official measures to ameliorate the problem of discrimination against Burakumin were in the offing. Through the Dowa special measures government attempted to improve such measures as environmental conditions; housing, and also other facilities. Through the Dowa special measures programs the government wanted to raise the welfare level in general terms. In fact, the government had taken special care to implement completely the Dowa measures all over the country.

In 1945 the State had taken up a policy to improve "Burakumin environment conditions through its popular assimilation policy."⁵ It appeared as if a superficial measure and that did not seek to wipe out roots of discrimination against Burakumin but attempted to create a safety valve in order to prevent strong opposition. After the war, state as well as local bodies, brought out many measures to eradicate the social discrimination against Burakumin and immediate result was the social prejudice against Burakumin has been on the decrease.

5. Buraku Liberation Research Institute, *Long Suffering Brothers and Sisters Unite*, Japan, 1981, p.9.

"The Constitution of Japan, was promulgated on November 3, 1946 and put into effect on May 3, 1947"⁶ in which it "guarantees that all the people are covered under the law and thus shall not be discriminated against in political, economic or social relations on account of race, creed, sex, social state of family origin"⁷ as one of basic human rights. In fact, the new Constitution of Japan, strictly abolished as of 1947, the discrimination against Burakumin and other minorities. Or it seemed so.

The Constitution of Japan, strictly abolished the discrimination against Burakumin and other minority groups on a ground of equality under law. Besides that, the Constitution also did not allow any legislative body to make any kind of discriminatory law or to continue the discriminatory administration. In this context, if we can notice Article 4, Paragraph 1 that also prohibit⁸ "unreasonable differential treatment" against any person.

In the earlier period, there was strict taboo on intercaste marriages designated between minorities and mainstream Japanese.

6. Hideo Tanaka and assisted by Malcolm D. A.A. Smith, The Japanese Legal Systems - Introductory Cases and Materials, University of Tokyo Press, 1972, p.3.

7. Ibid., p.721.

8. Ibid., p.721.

In such a condition the 1947 Constitution repealed those existing discriminatory customs by the article 24 which stipulated "marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual co-operation with the equal rights of both".⁹ The Constitution had contained measures to remove the discrimination against Burakumin by extending education facilities for Burakumin. The Constitution itself put hard efforts in the name of Dowa Kyoiku (for assimilation).¹⁰

The declaration of human rights of United Nations also has been playing a vital role in providing strength to solve the problem of discrimination against Burakumin and other minorities in Japan. In fact, the declaration of human rights has become at present as a universal constitution as far as human rights are concerned. The declaration of human rights has become an effective weapon in eliminating all kinds of discrimination all over the world. It states in its article 1 that "All human beings born free and equal in dignity and rights and clearly embraces aliens as well as nationals."¹¹ The main duty of the declaration of human

9. Hideo Tanaka and assisted by Malcolm D. A.A. Smith, The Japanese Legal Systems - Introductory Cases and Materials, University of Tokyo Press, 1972, p.3.

10. Ibid., p.733.

11. Richard B. Lillicy, The Human Rights of Aliens in Contemporary International Law, Hamchester University Press, 1984, p.42.

rights is the protection of the human rights. Within its framework, the declaration of human rights is working for elimination of all forms of social discrimination, discrimination even against handicapped etc. The declaration of human rights also targets elimination of discrimination against Burakumin in Japan and aims establishment of a strong fundamental human rights in Japan.

The violation of human rights in Japan often affected the Burakumin in terms of income and employment conditions. To prevent such employment discrimination against Burakumin and other minority communities, the declaration of human rights has taken radical steps to terminate it. Meanwhile, it stated in article 2-2 and 6 of covenant A and article 2 of covenant B, that "discrimination in employment shall not be allowed."¹² The 1947 Constitution also states that "in article 3, an employer shall not treat workers differently in terms of their wages, working hours or other conditions on the basis of nationality, creed or social status."¹³ As a result, the government of Japan has promulgated an official order and circulated among administrative offices

12. Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Long-Suffering Brothers and Sisters Unite, Japan, 1981, p.210.

13. Hideo Tanaka assisted by Malcolm D.H. Smith, The Japanese Legal Systems - Introductory Cases and Materials, University of Tokyo Press, 1976, p.731.

and private management of industries, etc. telling them not to force the job applicants to submit their family registers or to insist written information concerning their family background. But in reality, the discrimination against Burakumin and other minority continues in Japan. If we take to consider writings on street walls of Japan with the slogans against Burakumin, "slaughter the Burakumin or expel the Burakumin"¹⁴ were prominent. For instance, a Burakumin youth by name Makota Ikova fell in love with a mainstream Japanese girl and he had decided to marry her after completion of his graduation from school and obtaining a job, but the parents of the girl reacted by saying "how could we allow our daughter to marry a Burakumin?"¹⁵ This incident points out the behaviour of non-Burakumin towards a Burakumin and also witnesses the increased discrimination against women from their right to freedom and right to liberty. To look into these matters, the United Nations organizations set up a committee for human rights, which called up on, all the countries for a world conference of the United Nations decade for women, held at Copenhagen and Denmark. There, some Japanese representatives took but were reluctant to sign on a convention for elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

14. Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Long-Suffering Brothers and Sisters Unite, Japan, 1981, p.210.

15. Ibid.

Even the law of the Japanese government itself says that if a person is arrested as a suspect, he or she be treated as culprit by the police and even by mass media. Such laws are prohibited strictly by the committee for human rights and also declares them as null and void.

The international convention of human rights made a provision that "A criminal dependent must be supposed innocent until found guilty"¹⁶ and also from "1-3 and Article 7-3 covenant B"¹⁷ state that a dependent must be allowed to meet with defence counsel of attorney and be released on bail.

The declaration of human rights is an effort to curtail the social discrimination against minorities in Japan too, as elsewhere, and is attempting to protect human rights of Burakumins and Korean minority.

When the problem of social discrimination was more worse, the government thought it alone has the responsibility to solve the problems of discrimination against Burakumin. To improve the conditions of the

16. Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Long-Suffering Brothers and Sisters Unite, Japan, 1981, p.210.

17. Ibid., p.217.

Burakumin, the government set up a Dowa Policy Deliberation Committee, which in its report stated that the discrimination against Burakumin, is more visible in employment opportunities and in educational institutions in particular. this report recommended to the government for inclusion of more provisions towards employment opportunities for Burakumin in various places.

In 1969, the Dowa Policy Deliberation Committee adopted a special law to promote Dowa policy called the law on special measures for Dowa projects. But it was effected for a limited time. It has recognized the necessity for administrating Dowa measures including the improvement of educational conditions for Burakumin.

The government underlined the need for elimination of all forms of discrimination against Burakumin. the government brought forth the measures for solving the problem of discrimination by the policies of assimilation and integration. In 1978, the government strongly decided to implement the policies of assimilation and integration" to remove the discrimination against Burakumin as the true spirit of laws.

The problem of employment has become a more serious problem among the Burakumin and other minority groups. For

instance, most of these minorities are in unstable jobs where the discrimination is more than in stable jobs. In general, when an applicant seeks employment, he is required to give an explanation about his background. In case he is a Buraku - no employment opportunity will be available for him on a regular basis. To remove such discrimination, the international convention forbids the discrimination against employment opportunity. This convention was also ratified by the Japanese government. The international labour conventions concretizes that right to work and in article 17, provision B, guarantees the legal protection of privacy and article 20 prohibits discrimination in general:

In 1982, the government of Japan has rendered a separate budget of Yen 250 billion to improve educational, economic, health, housing and the environmental conditions of Burakumin.

Non-governmental Measures:

The people of Burakumin have been forced to lead a low-level life in miserable living environment since the four tier class system was formed. But the Burakumin in their long history of discrimination neither yielded to unreasonable discrimination nor been contended with a life of cruel treatment and wretchedness. The indignation of

Burakumin on several unreasonable discrimination of status already exploded, in the last days of the Tokugawa government and they begin struggle for human equality all over the country by themselves.

In Japan, from 1877 onwards till the present day several non-governmental organizations emerged to work towards elimination of such unreasonable discrimination against Burakumin and the other minority groups in Japan.

"The democratic movement for establishment of human rights in 1874",¹⁸ intensified its movement through out the country after 1877 and condemned that the discrimination against Burakumin and in order to break off the discriminatory laws and customs. Most Burakumin actively joined in this movement. the consequence of this movement were the people of Burakumin in Kobe city allowed for participation in the village festivals, and also they were awaken to political ideas. After all most of the Burakumin were allowed to join the liberal party to work collectively. In those . days the liberal party was known as reformist political party.

18. Suginochara, The Status Discrimination in Japan - Buraku Problems, Kobe, The Hyogo Institute of Buraku Problems, 1982, p.56.

Through the Democratic movement for establishment of human rights, people of Burakumin have been complaining about the injustice of discrimination against themselves. When this movement had received more complaints from the people of Burakumin they advocated the importance of abolishing of discrimination against Burakumin. Chomin Nakae (1847-1901) who came from Kochi prefecture was one of those who complained about the discrimination of Burakumin to the democratic movement for establishment of human rights. In 1888, Chomim Nakae had written an essay on "Shimmin¹⁹ Sekjai" (World of New Commoners). He stated in his essay the following: "People despise us for skinning dead beasts stripping dead men of their cloths and begging for food and drinks, but there are worse fellows in the world who skin dead men, strip living men of their clothes, beg for salaries, twist brothers hands, catch a wessel asleep, commit a fraud, play a confidence, trick, raise a fire, steal things, offer and take a bride, divorce their lawful wife and a concubine, pursue personal profit and self interest in conspiracy with men of power these bogeys dressed in fine clothes and ranking in the upper class spoil society and ensure the meals of people for more than we who are shabbily clothed and walk about barefoot "Heimin .ls1

19. Suginoara, The Status Discrimination in Japan - Buraku Problems, Kobe, The Hyogo Institute of Buraku Problems, 1982, p.56.

(commoner is antonym to 'Kizoku' (nobles) and signifies those people in former days who had their human rights trampled upon and were despised by Shizoku (warriors). Indeed, we Shin-Heimin (new commoners) or Shin-min (new people) are Shinmin (truth people). Those who discriminated against Shin-heimin Be Quick and became really true Shinmin (new people) or Shinmin (truth people)."

52 representatives of Buraku in Okayama prefecture formed Bisaku Heimin Kai (Baraku commoners association) in 1902. This association intensified its struggle in various places of the country to emancipate the Burakumin. The association for commoners has brought the Burakumin close to the problems of their social life, economic life and political life. When those people got social and political consciousness, thus started struggles independently for the emancipation. That social and political consciousness had also made them to join in this allocation and asked them to start their struggles independently for the discarding of all kinds of discrimination.

In 1903, 300 representatives of Burakumin from all the prefectures of Japan gathered in Osaka and held the inaugural general meeting of the nation wide organization called Dai Nippon Doho Yuwakai" (the Japan greater fraternal

reconciliations association) This was pushed on chiefly by those who were comparatively favoured in Buraku and local influential persons. These movements for Buraku improvement were characterized by ascribing the cause of discriminations to the wording, clothes and manner of living of the dwellers of Buraku themselves and harmonizing them with the populace with the understanding and sympathy of the people in general.

In 1912, in Nara prefecture the dwellers of the Buraku formed "Yamato Doshi-Kai (Yamato Comrades Association) which in reality was based on great democratic ideal principles: equality, liberty and fraternity. This organization got into work after its formation. The main policy of this movement was to bring the Burakumin into mainstream and demanded the government not to use any kind of discriminatory words against Burakumin. In fact, this organization could not achieve good result in eliminating the state's discrimination against Burakumin in Japan. But a little improvement was seen in the dwellers of Buraku in Nara prefecture.

A tremendous improvement was seen during the Taisho era, with the formation of Zengoku Suheisha (All-Japan

20. Suginochara, The Status Discrimination in Japan - Buraku Problems, Kobe, The Hyogo Institute of Buraku Problems, 1982, p.57.

Dwellers Association).²¹ It took democratic and radical steps to eliminate the discrimination against the Barakus. this was at its early days called self-awakening movement.²² Mankichi Saiko and Seiichiro Sakamoto from Kashiwara, Nara prefecture, started working for its foundation and called on others to join this association. For this inaugural meeting many influential persons of Buraku attended, among them Unyakichi Minami, Koken Hinano and Yomi Yoneda were prominent. In this inaugural meeting more than 1000 representative of Burakus participated. In its inaugural meeting, it adopted a declaration called Suiheisha declaration. This declaration may be called as the first declaration of human rights in Japan and Minami had become the first chairman of the Zengoku Suiheisha.

The Zengoku Suiheisha stated clearly that the liberation of Burakumin is the real basis for human liberation. The foundation meeting resolved to conduct through denunciation method of discrimination. Thereafter the Burakumin had become more conscious of their own rights - as well as the issue of human rights. Burakumin who had started to organize on national scale attempted fight against suppression collectively and they organized 300

21. Suginochara, The Status Discrimination in Japan - Buraku Problems, Kobe, The Hyogo Institute of Buraku Problems, 1982, p.56.

22. Ibid., p.138.

branches in 30 prefectures. This movement spread all over the country immediately.

The organization of Suiheisha after its foundation heightened human self-consciousness more and more among the people of Burakus through the process of impeachment against discrimination which meant the people who discriminated the Burakumin in social life were dealt by this association. By the impeachment method, the Suiheisha movement united the farmers and the labourers under one banner and its activities were based on the ideas of class and began to develop its struggle at the levels of discrimination i.e. modern feudal system, emperor system and capitalism as well. When the Suiheisha united the farmers and labourers, it was called by a new name: triple alliance of labours, farmers and Suiheisha. This new organization, became more popular than the earlier one and preached against the practice of discrimination all over the country.

With the foundation of the national league in 1923, discrimination against Burakumin came to be considered from a scientific point of view but factional politics also surfaced. Jinchiro Matsumoto who was elected as Chairman of the levelers associations in May 1925. This association adopted a policy to construct a centralized powerful organization. The fifth meeting of levelers association adopted an important policy to advance the liberation movement on basis of advocating class consciousness.

The struggle for impeachment against the discrimination occurred in the Fukuoka regiment in 1926. This struggle was jointly set up on the basis of the triple alliance between laborers, farmers and Suihesiha. In fact, this struggle was supported by farmers, labores all over the country. The government was worried at the strength the movement was gathering. The government fabricated an incident called Fukuoka regiment explosion plot and the Chairman of the levelers association was falsely implicated. With him, also ten other association members were arrested, inclusive two higher officials by name: Jiichiro Matsumoto and Kyotoro Kimura. In 1927 when the grand Manoevrs were held in Nagoya, Taisaku Kitahara hailing from Gifu prefecture made a direct appeal to the emperor for the abolition of the discriminatory treatment in the army. this shocked the people in general all over the country.

In February 1928, the first time in general election some influential members or chiefs of the Suiheisha movements like: Mankichi Saiko, Kiichino Matsunue and Shijiro Miki contested and were approved publicly by the Labor-farmer party. But no one of them could succeed in this election. However, they were able to get a large number of votes, not only from the labors, farmers and Burakus, but also from the non-Burakumin people/voters. This was the

democratization attempt by the Suheisha and also efforts to enter offices of public importance. In 1920, when the eighth meeting of the levelers association was held, solidarity was required, leftist members readvocated the dissolution of the levelers association, thinking that the movement was in a difficult situation and thus could not solve the problem of discrimination generally, democratically. In 1933 the Takamatsu court passed a discriminatory judgement that "Burakumin committed a crime by getting married without disclosing his origin being from a Buraku family to the partner in marriage."²³ This triggered off the decision of the Leftists on the question of the dissolution of the Suiheisha and at the 10th meeting of Suiheisha, the leftists adopted the new tactical method stating that Buraku Committees failed to improve the conditions of the Burakumin anyway. This activity of Buraku Committee and leftists continued tough stand coupled with the discriminative judgement of Takamatsu court, the Burakumin for sometime were disappointed and directionless.

The organization of levelers association which rose up impeachment and also organized the movement for impeaching the discriminatory judgement in each Buraku had performed a

23. Buraku Liberation Research Institute, Long-Suffering Brothers and Sisters Unite, Japan, 1981, p.8.

grand demonstration of courage and thought. This struggle brought about a change in the attitude of the government towards these people and in that victory to Burakumin. Realizing the injustice, the president of the court of Takamatsu and the Chief of the police station of Takamatsu were changed and the public persecutor and the judge who had passed this discriminative judgement having been transformed to other posts.

In the course of time the movement of Suiheisha were weakened because of state oppression. Thought control in prewar Japan was so severe that besides general public, anti-war intellectuals and radicals were legally dealt by the government agencies. Buraku liberation movement had to pay its own price and eventually had to disappear. But in January 1942 Suiheisha was dissolved by the regulations controlling speech. As the clouds of war gathered, both the people and the government had to concentrate on matters of greater importance.

In 1946, the representatives of Burakumin from all over the country gathered in Kyoto and organized National Committee for Liberation of Buraku which requested the people to remain keenly interested and participate in the Buraku liberation struggles for democratic revolution to be launched with support from working class as leading force.

This liberation Committee fought against the government and demanded measures for abolition of the peerage system through the growing execution of the farming land reform and the revival of the traditional industry in Buraku. Because of this Committee struggles, the constitution of Japan 1947, made it in "article 14 of paragraph 11 states that "peers²⁴ and peerage shall not be recognized".

The new constitution of Japan came into force on May 3, 1947. Under this constitution, the first general elections were held in 1947. Many candidates from the Buraku Liberation Committee contested the selections of whom three representatives were elected to the House of Representatives, and Jiichiro Matsumoto, Chairman of the Liberation Committee was elected to the House of Councillors.

The newly elected Vice-Chairman in the Diet (Parliament) fought for democratization and strongly demanded minimization of the budget for the imperial family, and for privileged status people in general. Such democratic attitude and behaviour of Buraku members in Parliament provoked the antipathy to the governing

24 Hideo Tanaka, assisted by Malcolm D.H. Smith, Introductory Cases and Materials, University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1976, p.5.

class. But in 1949, the Yoshida cabinet Purged Matsumoto from public service. Against this, the National Committee for Buraku Liberation, started public awareness activities about the protection of human rights, and individual democratic freedom. The National Committee for Buraku Liberation was able to spread nationwide a movement for the protection of human rights. Supporting this movement were many political parties, labor unions, and farmers who collectively voiced for withdrawing the governments Purge against Matsumoto.

Through these struggles the movement began to lay emphasis on administrative reforms by calling the authorities to be administratively accountable and provide better conditions for Burakus on daily basis. Thus the Liberation Movement made rapid developments.

At the national mass meeting in August 1955 the National Committee for the Buraku Liberation changed its name to Buraku Kaiho Domei (Buraku Liberation League). In order to gain more benefits as a popular campaign body, it began to advance extensive activities including holding the first all-Japan Women's meeting for Buraku liberation in 1959 and first all Japan youth meeting for Buraku Zengoku held its meeting in Kobe city. This appealed to young Burakumin to literate their illiterates in a large number. Therefore, to the Buraku Kaiho Zengoku, education has become an important weapon in resolving their problem.

In 1958 the Buraku Liberation League held a national meeting in Tokyo for requesting the formulation of a national policy for Buraku emancipation. This was also to make the government and the Diet establish a national policy on the basis of administrative struggle against the local self-governing body. Though established earlier, the movement for the liberation of Burakus became strong only after 1961. This, also wielded good influence in demanding from the government more and more measures for the Buraku emancipation. All along this had the strong support of the reformist political parties and other democratic bodies. It is a spontaneous struggle and demanding from the government immediate remedial measures to remove the discrimination against the Burakumin. In fact, the government never committed an interest in solving the Dowa problem which is the most serious problem in Japan. Though a segment of the Japanese society, the existence of Burakumin at the bottom of the social ladder is attributed to the historical reasons due to which even in the modern times and in contemporary Japan, Burakus continue to silently suffer the discrimination socially, culturally and economically. The Buraku liberation movement states that the Dowa problem is a problem of human freedom and equality, are thus related to universal principle on human rights. The government needs to guarantee that the fundamental rights under the Japanese constitution and provide appropriate environment to help

implement the reform measures. Further there is a need to formulate comprehensive countermeasures which should contain measures to improve the living environment, the amplification of social culture, the stabilization of industrial employment, the elements of education and culture and protection of fundamental human rights. Because of such countermeasures the government demolished in urban areas the inferior houses of Burakumin and improved the housing conditions through constructing new houses. Through the Buraku liberation movement provided for improved housing and environment conditions of the Burakus like land readjustment, road widening and ditch mainstream and also providing a space for playing in a free and relaxed area for the children of Burakumin. In fact the non-governmental measures, have been playing a vital role than government action in removing the social discrimination against Burakumin and other minority groups in Japan.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND REMARKS

The core of the Korean minority problem in Japan is the contradiction between the prevalent myth of the single nation society and the actual existence of the Korean minority in Japan. This problem underlines most of the constitutional issues involving rights of aliens in Japan, because, on the one hand, most Koreans in Japan do not have Japanese nationality, and, on the other their population comprises approximately 80 per cent of the total number of resident aliens in Japan.

As of 1984, approximately 680,000 Koreans lived as foreign nationals in Japan. The accumulated figure of those who were naturalized has reached approximately 130,000. Though no figure is available as to naturalized Koreans in Japan today, still there are many illegal immigrant Koreans as well as Koreans who were born from the inter-marriage between Japanese and Koreans and have Japanese nationality by birth. Taking all these figures into consideration, however, one can estimate that Koreans in the ethnic sense residing in Japan number less than one million. This means

they comprise less than 0.8 per cent of the total Japanese population of 124 million and constitute the largest ethnic minority. When compared with other countries, which usually have a large minority populations, this figures indicates and strengthens the point that Japan is a relatively homogeneous country in terms of ethnicity. However, this fact by no means verifies the prevailing myth that Japanese society is single nation.

This appearance of relative homogeneity is heightened by factors beyond the overwhelming numerical proportion of the ethnic majority. In terms of physical characteristics and culture, the differences between Japanese and Koreans are relatively few.

1. First of all, there is hardly a difference in color of physical appearance, as both Japanese and Koreans belong to the same racial stock.
2. Second, in language, religion and culture, the Korean minority has much more in common with the Japanese majority than minorities in other countries [such as Turks in West Germany, the Algerians in France, and other linguistic and religious minorities in Europe, Asia and Africa]. Two following reasons underline this second point.

First, both Korea and Japan have been peripheral nations to Chinese civilization and were greatly influenced by Chinese culture. In addition, Korean culture itself had a strong Chinese influence, especially in the ancient period. Consequently, a relatively high degree of similarity has developed in the ways of thinking and in the behavioral patterns of the two nations.

Second, due to the lengthy stay of Koreans in Japan, their relatively small proportion in the total population, and among other things, a strong pressure for assimilation into Japanese society, their assimilation (Japanization) has progressed considerably.

Consequently, Koreans as an ethnic minority differ relatively little from the majority group. This is one of the most important reasons for their invisibility in Japanese society. Put otherwise, Koreans are relatively better assimilated ethnic minority whose existence is hardly visible in the Japanese society than other minorities elsewhere.

The problem of social discrimination against Burakumin and Korean minority has in fact received only a little attention both within and without Japan.

The discrimination against them is growing day by day and visible when minutely observed. The Burakumin are

generally treated as descendants of the outcastes from Tokugawa Japan. The social discrimination against them was also a product of the Tokugawa period. More than 250 years of internal stability (1600-1868) rigidified by a formerly somewhat fluid occupational and feudal hierarchy had led to the legal delineation of the outcastes as a separate segment of society prohibited by legislative decrees and judicial decisions from participating in majority life. The outcastes were forbidden from marrying commoners, living outside their exiled ghettos working as servants. They could not sit, eat or smoke in the company of commoners and their dress and hair in the conventional manner.

Various myths of their origin refer to racial difference. Anthropologically it is proved that these people are racially, linguistically, and culturally identical to other Japanese. The status of these outcastes was largely based on occupation rather than ethnic or cultural differences. Although occupational differentiation was hardly welcome, even then, were denied an economic stability.

The emancipation edict of 1871, marked the formal liberation of the Burakumin from their feudal status as outcastes and non-human. However, the legal emancipation

meant only a little. The government was indifferent throughout implementation of its own measures. Although, it provided loans to former Samurai to help them adjust to the social turmoil of the period, it did nothing for the Burakumin - rehabilitation either socially or economically. The Kasaki family registry were open to the public and it was simple for other Japanese to determine whether a possible spouse of employee was of outcaste origin or not. Since descent from a Tokugawa outcaste is only distinguishing feature of Burakumin, the new commoner designation was indispensable to identifying and to discriminate against them. But in reality, the former practice of identifying a Burakumin continued further to discriminate against them.

In 1872 and 1873 a series of programmes aimed at exterminating the new commoners were introduced but official indifferences also continued, accompanied by social hostility. Even the legal emancipation was not a complete blessing. Along with formal but totally unrealized equality came the loss of feudal occupational monopolies. Although the personal distaste for Burakumin in Japan remained strong, the tradition and bias did not prevent the Burakumin capital moving into areas such as shoe manufacturing that had previously been outcastes monopolies. Attempts by wealthy Burakumin to capitalize on former monopolies and to raise their general economic level failed partially.

The negligence of government and overt social discrimination continued through the first decade of the twentieth century but by the end of the world war I general social unrest had contributed to a growing militancy among Burakumin. The spiraling inflation and relatively stagnant wages led to a series of rice riots throughout the Japan. Burakumin had played a noticeable role in these riots. Such leading role strongly afflicted their attitudes towards themselves, society and the government. Till today, Buraku leaders tend to explain discrimination as the majority reaction to the low standard of living of the Burakumin. To deal with the Burakumin problems, funds were allocated for improvement of urban Burakus and various joint government-Buraku organizations were formed to monitor. These efforts, however, also utterly failed to prevent the growing alliance of Burakumin with the growing Leftist movement of workers and tenant farmers and even the popular organization Suiheisha was also founded by young militant Burakumin who were strongly influenced by Marxist and Christian philosophy.

After the promulgation of the constitution of 1947, Suiheisha underwent a change in its name and is now called the Buraku Liberation League. Came with this a renewal of its political and social efforts for equality. the Buraku

Liberation League quickly forged a close alliance with the Japanese Communist Party as well as the Japanese Socialist Party, and started demanding for the revival and strengthening of prewar efforts by the central and local governments to improve Buraku conditions. The result of its participation in the 1960 anti-security treaty rally was the creation of the deliberative council for Buraku situation and to recommend possible action to eliminate the social discrimination against the Burakumin. In fact, government's deliberative council for Buraku assimilation, was supposed to take action only to remove the discrimination against Burakumin. But in its report it said 'Burakumin are racially or ethnically different from the other Japanese' and emphasized that the problem of social discrimination is simply a remnant of feudalism which would inevitably disappear with the progress of advanced capitalism. The emancipation efforts were purely just formalistic, and brought no substantive change in the Buraku conditions and even the efforts of government were incomplete and paternalistic. The governmental organizations and the government itself, were responsible for poor physical environment among Burakumin. The Government consistently located ghettos in the worst locations topographically, and are often subjected to flooding and such disasters. In these slum areas, public services - fire protection, sewers, water lines, streets, street lights, public offices are often absent and even the housing condition is very poor also

prone to damage easily. However, Tokyo is exception. Educational level of Burakumin is fair but is far below the national average. Employment opportunities for Burakumin are good only at the lower levels. In fact, very few are engaged in permanent employment. Wages and income of Burakumin are very low and job security is absent.

The remedial measures of the government and nongovernment organizations also failed in solving the problem totally. However, in practice some of the large industrial enterprises, are showing no interest in following the employment policy of government. For instance, some companies in Kansai area are commissioning research agencies to prepare a detailed list of all Burakumin areas with such minute details relating to the family title origin, age, education, sex, residence and all other individual backgrounds. Once the report is submitted the companies takes precautions to eliminate Buraku community carefully and keep only non-Korean, non-Burakumin, but not Burakumin.

Though such practices by private companies, are known to the government, still the government remains passive in not taking any action against the Buraku list or the concerned companies. Even then the government initiated steps to improve the conditions in the Buraku. "With the law

for special measures for regional improvement, which was renewed by government in 1987,"¹ and also set up "an advisory Council at the end of 1990"² to study the root cause of discrimination against Burakumin. The Council estimated the population of the Burakumin at "382,866 (280,000 Eta, 23,000 Hinin and 79,000 other castes like Ainus etc".³ In order to take drastic steps for the removal of such discrimination, the Council held its first meeting in January 1991"⁴ Here the government decided that the problem of social discrimination will be disapproved when an advanced capitalism come. But in fact past history of capitalism itself is responsible for the growth of discrimination against the Burakumin, farmers, peasants, labourers and other minority communities. There is an urgent need for strengthening the movement for the liberation of Burakus from social and economic discrimination. The movement must work in close liaison with the government agencies and cooperate in implementing the welfare measures.

1. Takaga Masayuki, "A Living Legacy of Discrimination," Japan Quarterly, July-Sept. 1991, p.283.
2. Ibid.
3. Buraku Liberating Research Institute, Long-Suffering Brothers and Sisters Unite, Japan 1981, p.265.
4. Takagi Masayuki, "A Living Legacy of Discrimination," Japan Quarterly, July-Sept. 1991, p.283.

When the efforts of the Buraku liberation organization and the government of Japan are put together, the chances for solving the problem are better.

The Buraku liberation organization countrywide acquired a popular name in solving problems.

In the field of education, it has been suggested, while retaining the special schools for Buraku children strengthening the programs and facilities, the general schools which are hitherto closed for Buraku children must be opened. Exchange of teachers between special and general schools is also desirable. As far as possible, education must be compulsory and free for Buraku children. Since Burakus cannot qualify for all types of higher jobs, certain types of jobs at the lower and medium level need to be reserved for the Burakumin.

Since generally elected public officials rarely evince keen interest in either articulating or solving problems related to socio-economic life of minorities, there is a need for providing representation for minorities on the basis of their strength or ratio to general population. This has to be from the Diet to the local offices.

The role of the committee of human rights of United Nation is an important one in solving these problems. Since Japan is a signatory to the covenants of Human Rights, an exclusive United Nations Human Rights Committee can be set up which may suggest remedial measures. Implementation of the United Nations Human Rights Committee recommendations must be made mandatory on the part of Japanese government. A sincere and joint effort by the United Nations Human Rights Committee, Japanese government and the local minority movements may gradually end the problem of minority discrimination in Japan.

Appendix I.

Chronology of Events

Meiji Era

- 1868 Meiji Restoration
- 1871 (Oct.12) Emancipation Edict proclaimed. Such terms as eta and hinin abolished and Burakumin equal to commoners with respect to social status and occupation.
- 1872 (Mar.8) Census conducted and a discriminatory census register (Jinshū Register) compiled.
- 1888 (Feb.14 and Feb.25) Chomin Nakae wrote an article on the Buraku problem from a democratic reformist point of view in Shinonome News titled Shinmin Sekai ("World of New-Commoners").
- 1902 (Dec.17) Hiroshima Court of Appeal granted a divorce due to the spouse's Burakumin origin.
- 1906 (Mar.) Hakai (Destruction) by Toson Shimazaki published.

Taisho Era

- 1918 (Aug.) Rice riots spread and Burakumin participated throughout Japan.
- 1920 (Mar.) The first government budget, 50,000 yen, for improvement of Buraku conditions.
- 1921 (July) Manabu Sano made public "Liberation of Special Burakumin" in magazine Kaiho (Liberation).
- 1922 (Mar.3) The Suiheisha (Levelers Association) organized at Okazaki Public Hall in Kyoto and its principles, appeals and resolutions adopted.

1923 (Mar.17) Impeachment action by Shimonaga Levelers Association in Kawanishi Village, Nara Prefecture, obstructed by Kokusui-Kai (Nationalist Group).

1924 (Jan.18) The neighboring 2,000 non-Burakumin farmers attacked Serata Village, a Buraku of only 22 families.

Showa Era

1926 (Nov.12) Jiichiro Matsumoto, Kyotaro Kimura and others arrested as ringleaders of "Fukuoka Regiment Explosion Plot."

1927 (Mar.3) Taisaku Kitahara, second-class soldier, directly appealed to Emperor for abolition of discrimination against troops at Nagoya Parade Ground.

1931 (Dec.10) Proposal to dissolve Levelers Association presented at 10th National Convention.

1933 (May 25) Takamatsu Discriminatory Judgement Case. Discriminatory statement given by public prosecutor against two Burakumin youths in Kagawa Prefecture, Shikoku, at public trial for kidnap case at Takamatsu District Court.

1934 (Jan.1) Levelers Association adopted policy for Buraku Committee activities.

1936 (Feb.21) Jiichiro Matsumoto, Chairman of Levelers Association, elected member of Lower House.

(Mar.21) Fourth Central Committee of Levelers Association opened. Adopted policy to strengthen anti-fascism struggle by all means.

1942 (Jan.20) Levelers Association dissolved by regulations prohibiting "speech, gathering and association."

- 1946 (Feb.) National Committee for Buraku Liberation (Buraku Kaiho Zenkoku linkai) organized at meeting of buraku representatives from all over Japan.
- (Nov.) Japanese Constitution proclaimed.
- 1947 (Apr.) Jiichiro Matsumoto elected member of Upper House, becoming first Vice-Chairman.
- 1948 (Jan.21) Vice-Chairman of Upper House, Jiichiro Matsumoto refused an audience with Emperor at opening ceremony of Diet; so-called "refusal to walk crablik in front of the Emperor."
- 1949 (Jan.) Ten activists including Matsumoto, Imoto, Yamamoto and Tanaka purged from public offices.
- 1951 (Aug.) Jiichiro Matsumoto and other released from purge.
- (Oct.) Struggle against All-Romance Case.
- 1952 (Apr.) Discrimination case by Nishikawa, member of Wakayama Prefectural Diet.
- (Jan.) Discrimination case at Yoshiwa Junior High School.
- 1953 (May) National Dowa Education Research Council (Zenkoku Dowa Kyoiku Kenkyu Kyogikai) organized.
- 1955 (Aug.) Former Levelers Association renamed Buraku Liberation League (Buraku Kaiho Domei) at 10th national convention.
- 1956 (Mar.) First National Burakumin Women's Meeting.
- (Dec.) "Appeals by 3,000,000 Burakumin" appeared daily in Asahi News during Human Rights Week.
- 1957 (July) First National Burakumin Youth Meeting.
- (Dec.) 12th National Convention of BLL held and adopted policy demanding formulation of national measures.
- 1961 (Oct.) Struggle against uniform scholastic achievement examination.

- 1964 (Mar.) Kazuo Ishikawa sentenced to death at Urawa District Court and appealed to higher court.
- (Aug.) First National Meeting of Burakumin Children.
- (Sept.) Kazuo Ishikawa professed his innocence in murder case at first public trial of court of appeal.
- 1965 (Aug.) Dowa Policy Deliberation Committee report issued.
- 1967 (May) First National Meeting of Researchers on Baruku Problem.
- 1968 (Jan.11) Ministry of Justice prohibited public inspection of Jinshin Register.
- (May) Struggle developed against "sending children of non-Burakumin to schools in different school districts from those of Burakumin."
- 1969 (Mar.) Yata Educational Discrimination Case.
- (Nov.) First National Meeting of Burakumin Scholarship Students.
- 1970 (Sept.) Ningen (Human-Beings), a free supplementary text for Buraku Liberation, distributed to primary school children in Osaka Prefecture.
- 1971 (Sept.) Sumiyoshi Marriage Discrimination Case.
- 1972 (May) A young man discriminated against in marriage committed suicide.
- 1974 (Oct.) First recipients of Buraku Liberation Literature Award.
- (Oct.) Kazuo Ishikawa sentenced to life imprisonment.
- 1975 (Jan.) The Cultural Conference against Discrimination (Sabetsu to Tatakau Bunka Kaigi) organized.

(Apr.) Supreme Court admitted identification surveys by investigating agencies to be against Constitution.

(Dec.9) Publication of Buraku lists, discriminatory directories of Buraku districts or occupations, revealed and nationwide kyudan struggles begun.

(Dec.) Central Joint Conference for Buraku Liberation(Buraku Kaiho Chuo Kyoto Kaigi) organized.

1976 (Jan.) International Covenant took effect and BLL began ratification activities in Japan.

1978 (Oct.) Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects extended by three years at 85th Extraordinary Diet.

1980 (Dec.) First International Symposium on Human Rights held in Japan.

1982 (Apr) The Law on Special Measures for Area Improvement Projects was enforced instead of the law on special measures for Dowa projects.

1987 Special Measures for Regional Improvement renewed.

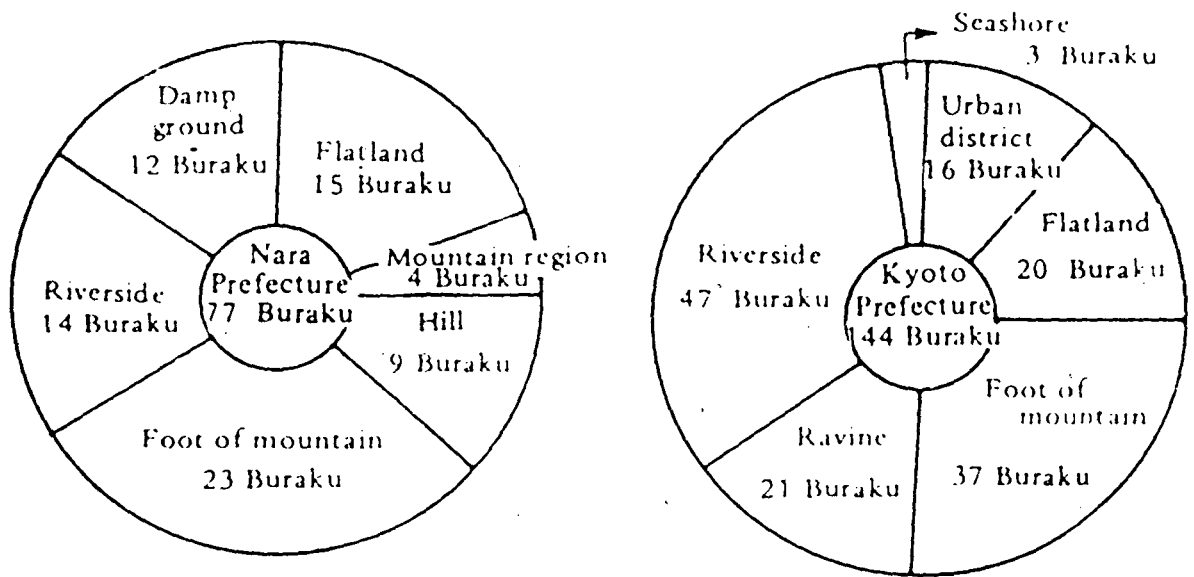
1990 The Government set up an Advisory Council at the end of 1990.

Heisei Era

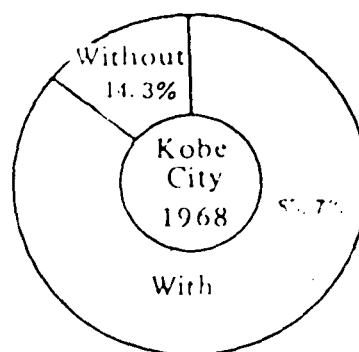
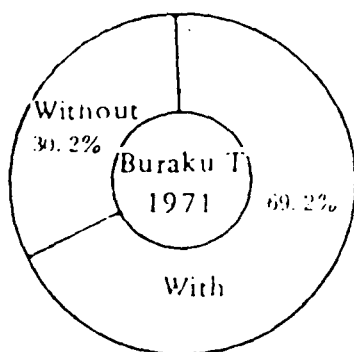
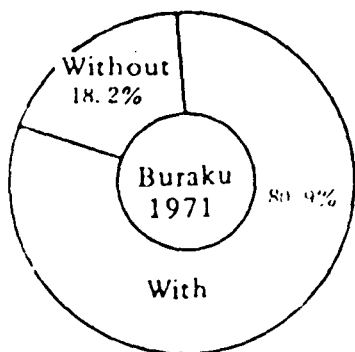
1991 (Jan.) The Advisory Council had its first meeting.

1992 (Mar.) The Special Measures for Regional Improvement were expired.

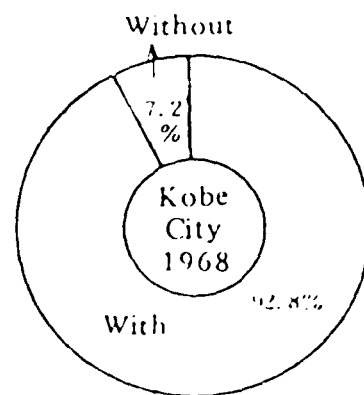
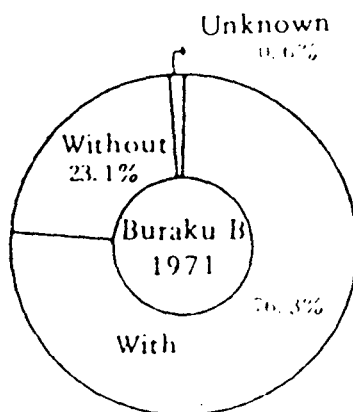
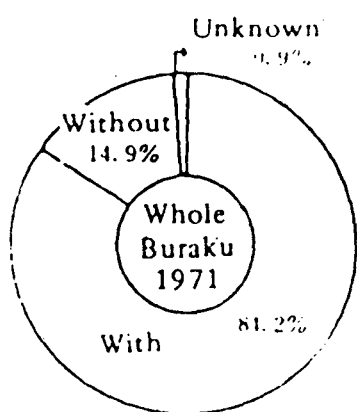
Number of Buraku areas by locations



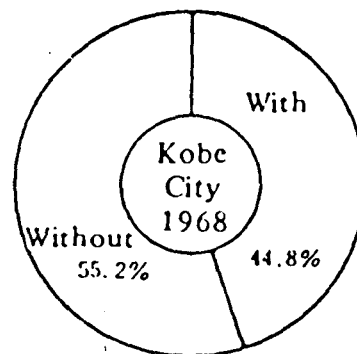
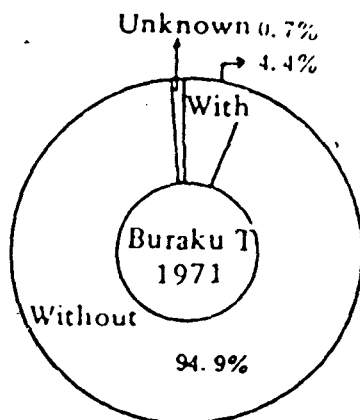
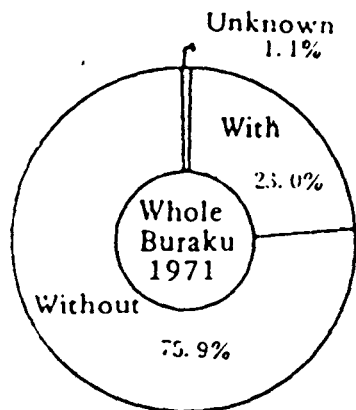
Component ratio of households with and without private lavatories



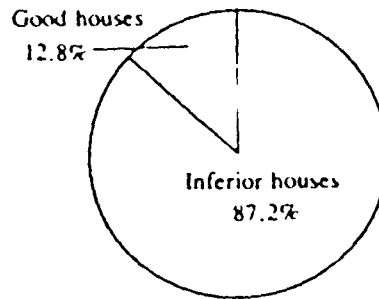
Component ratio of households with and without private waterwork



Component ratio of household with and without private baths

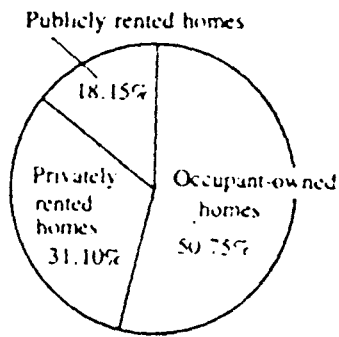


Inferior condition of housing (1973)

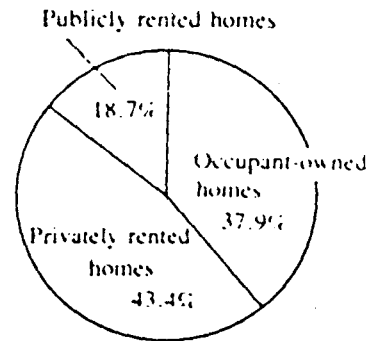


Home ownership

All of Izumi City
(National survey, 1975)

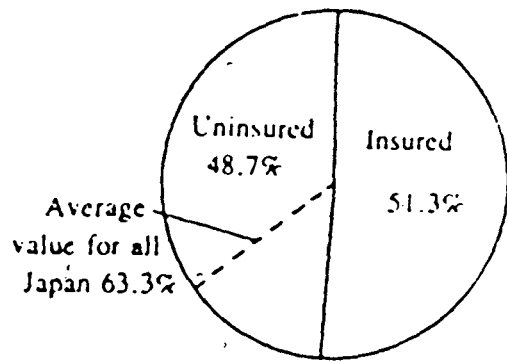


Saiwai-Ōji District
(investigated in 1977)



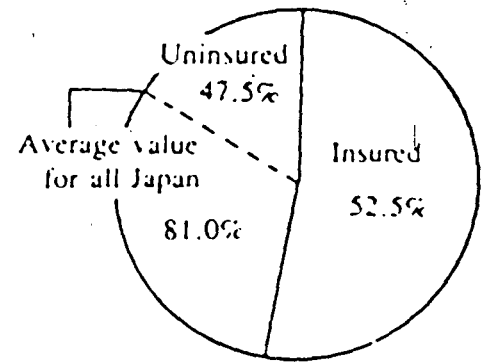
Percentage of working households insured

Unemployment insurance



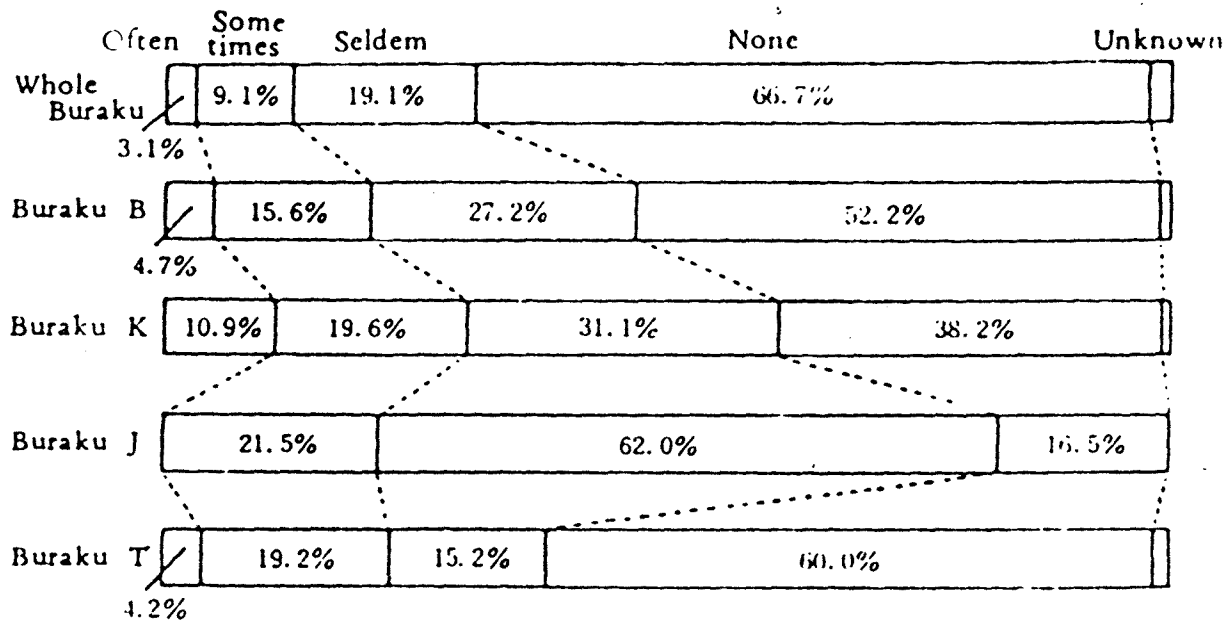
(Total: 1087)

Workmen's accident compensation insurance



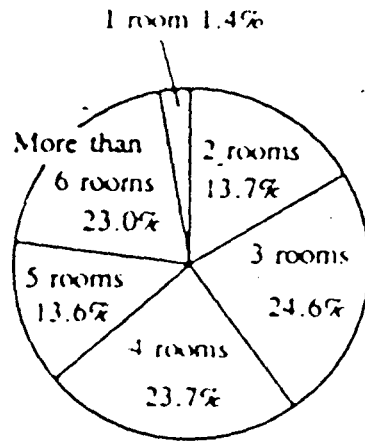
(Total: 1087)

Component ratio of households by degrees of inundation
(Buraku areas in Kobe City, 1971)

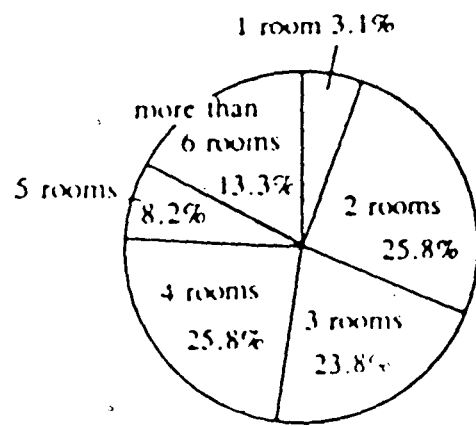


Number of rooms per family

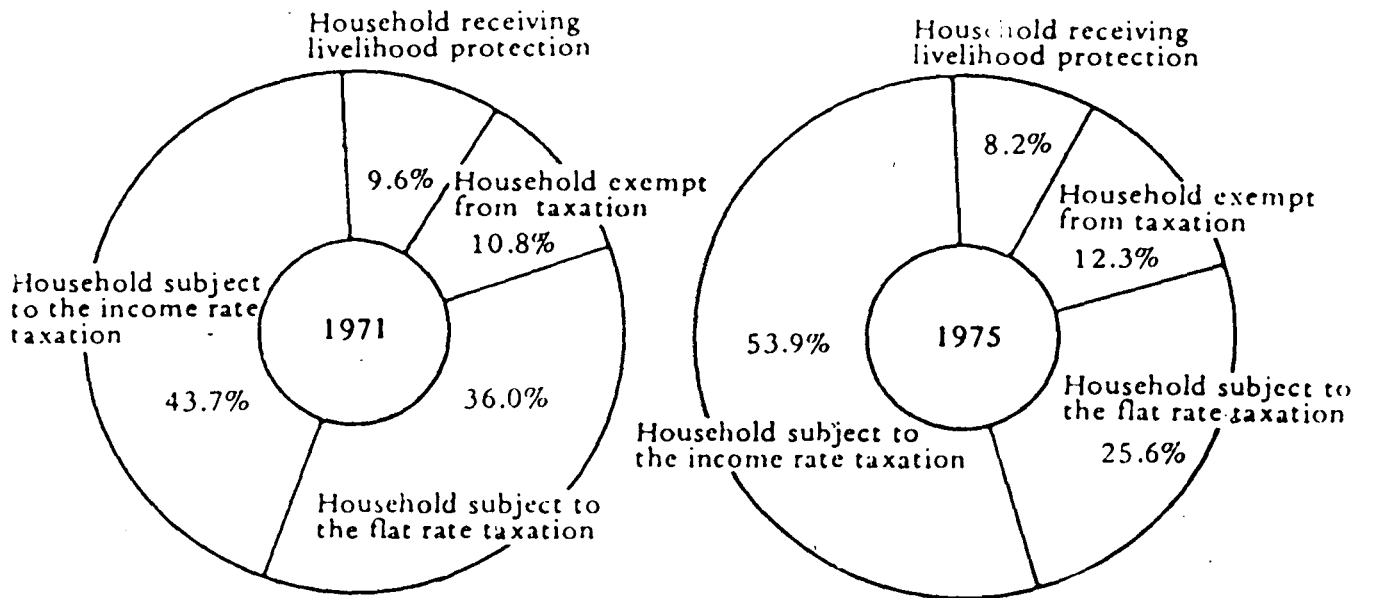
All of Izumi City
(National survey, 1975)



Saiwai-Ōji District
(investigated in 1977)



Transition of conditions of imposition
of inhabitant tax (Buraku areas in whole country)



Transition in Employment, 1898-1977

1898-1907	a				p				
1908-1917	a	b	c	d	p				
1918-1927	a	b	c	e	d	p			
1928-1937	a	b	c	e	f	p			
1938-1947	a	b	c	e	f	g	p		
1948-1957	a	b	f	h	p				
1958-1967	a	b	f	i	o	p			
1977	b	f	j	k	l	m	n	o	p

Occupation:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| (a) agriculture | (i) water service work |
| (b) production of artificial pearls | (j) clerk work |
| (c) sandal making | (k) retail trade |
| (d) rickshaw pulling | (l) office clerk work |
| (e) repair work | (m) metal work |
| (f) construction work | (n) driving |
| (g) street peddling | (o) civil servant |
| (h) production of ampules | (p) others |

Transition of component ratio of employed persons
in Buraku areas by occupations (Kyoto City) (%)

	1951	1970	1977
Professional and technical workers	1.9	1.5	2.5
Managers, Officials		0.7	1.9
Clerical workers	1.9	4.3	6.5
Farmers, Lumbermen, Fishermen	0.8	0.9	0.6
Workers in transport and communication	3.6	5.3	4.2
Craftmen, Production process workers	68.1	47.8	34.9
(1) Leather and rubber products	12.8	1.4	0.8
(2) Construction	6.1	12.8	9.3
(3) Simple labor	33.1	17.4	16.9
Sales workers	14.7	12.2	13.7
Service workers	3.4	11.6	7.6
Protective workers		0.4	0.6
Government and municipal office	5.8	15.2	27.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Appendix III

Notes

Ainus	-	Outcastes
Ashigaru	-	footman
Bisaku Heiminkai	-	Bisaku commoners association
Buraku Chimei Sokan	-	Buraku lists
Buraku Kaiho Domei	-	Buraku Liberatin League
Buraku Kaiho Domei Seijoka Zenkoku Renraku Kaigi	-	the national liaison conference for normalizing the Buraku Liberation League.
Buraku Kaiho Zenkoku linkai	-	the national committee for Buraku Liberation.
Chonin	-	townspeople
Daimyo	-	feudal lords
Dai Nippon doho Yowakai	-	the greater Japan fraternal reconciliation association.
Donna dera	-	family temple
Doho ichiwa	-	Citizens should assimilate.
Dojo yuwa	-	sympathy and reconciliation.
Dowa Taisaku Shingi Kai	-	the integration policy deliberation Committee.
Eta	-	full of filth
Gakushuin	-	peers schools

Gyaku Sabetsu	-	reverse discrimination
Heimin	-	commoner
Hinin	-	non-people
Honbyakusho	-	common people
Hyakuno Ikki	-	a form of revolts by peasants
Ie	-	household
ikko-ikki	-	insurrections by farmers.
Jinshin-Koseki	-	first family register
Kachi	-	foot soldier
Kaido	-	main roads
Kaiho rai	-	emancipation edict
Kasaku	-	tenant farmers
Katanagari	-	disarmament of all non bushi
Kawata	-	Outcastes
Kazoku	-	peers
Kazoku seido	-	peerage system
Koshin buraku	-	backward communities
Kyudam	-	denunciation
Mikaiho buraku	-	Undeliberated communities.
Mizunami	-	poor peasants
Nikkyoso	-	The Japan teachers union

Ofure-gaki	-	circular notice
Oyakata	-	masters
Ryomim	-	good people
Saimim buraku	-	indigent communities
Sanjo	-	unfertile land
Senmin	-	low people or humble people
Shin-heimin	-	new commoner
Shinmin	-	new people or truth people
Shinmin Sekai	-	the world of new commoners
Shizoku	-	descendants of warriors
Shokko-jijo	-	conditions of workmen
Shoya	-	village headmen
Sokai-chi	-	place of refuge
Suiheishha	-	the levelers association
Syokumin	-	craftsmen
Taiko Kenchi	-	land surveying
Tenno	-	Emperor
Tokushu buraku	-	special communities
Zaibatsu	-	financial combines
Zengoku Buraku Kaiho undo Rengokao	-	the national buraku liberation movement federation.
Zengoku suiheisha	-	the all Japan levelers association
Zennippon Dowa Kai	-	All Japan Dowa association.

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