

Building Human Rights Culture in Fukuoka Prefecture

Fukuoka Prefectural Human Rights Research Institute

THE FUKUOKA BURAKU HISTORY RESEARCH STUDY GROUP (Study Group) was established in September 1974. This was the only research institute in Fukuoka Prefecture that focused on Buraku issues. It was established by twenty-one people including the late Rinshi Imoto (at the time the director of the Fukuoka Municipal Chiyo Rinpo-kan and former general secretary of the National Levellers Society, the late Taketoshi Matsuzaki, a local historian, the late Masao Nakamura, Senzo Hidemura, and Shiro Matsushita of Kyushu University, Shigeru Takada of the Fukuoka Prefectural Federation of Buraku Liberation Leagues, and Hayashi Chikara of the Fukuoka Prefecture Dowa Education and Research Council. The Study Group received support from researchers, local administrations and many people from the prefecture.

The Study Group did not only research on the Buraku history but also the “Rokuyo” superstition and the caste system in India.

Imoto and Matsuzaki made full use of Buraku historical materials such as the “Yuya Documents,” “Mori Family Documents,” as well as the history of the leveller’s movement in Japan and documentation of the Dowa education movement in the prefecture.¹

As a result, they compiled and published collections of historical sources such as the *Buraku Liberation History, Fukuoka, Zenkyushu Suiheisha Bulletin* (Levellers Monthly Report), *Chikuzen Koku Kawaza Records* (three volumes), and the Matsubara Leather Association Documents, as well as research series and picture books.

The research results of the Study Group elevated the study of Buraku history in Fukuoka to national attention, became widely used in the field of Buraku history learning and social enlightenment in Fukuoka Prefecture, and have been highly evaluated not only for the development of academic research but also for the development of the whole country. Needless to say, this was in line with the fact that the resolution of the Buraku problem was socially indispensable.

In December 1999, the Study Group was reorganized into the Fukuoka Prefectural Institute for Buraku Liberation and Human Rights with a focus on research on human rights issues, including Buraku issues, which the Study Group had been conducting, and on organizing educational projects to make the results of research more widely known to the people in Fukuoka Prefecture.

On 8 June 2003, the Fukuoka Prefectural Human Rights Research Institute (the Institute) was established to replace the Fukuoka Prefectural Institute for Buraku Liberation and Human Rights. It became an incorporated association on 1 April 2004 and certified as a public interest incorporated association by the Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture on 19 March 2013.

In September 2024, the Institute celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Study Group.

Objective of the Institute

In order to solve all human rights issues, including Buraku issues, the Institute aims to contribute to the creation of a human rights culture based on the results of research on historical facts related to Buraku people, research related to human rights, education and enlightenment, and publication activities.

Pursuant to this objective, the Institute engages in various activities including

- (1) Research and study activities aimed at resolving all human rights issues, including the Buraku issue;
- (2) Educational and training activities aimed at resolving all human rights issues, including the Buraku issue;
- (3) Publication of results of research and study activities through journals and other publications;
- (4) Collection, organization, storage, and introduction of materials related to human rights issues; and
- (5) Other activities necessary to achieve its objectives.

Research and Surveys

The Institute expanded its wings by placing surveys and research at the core of its activities, while inheriting the research and other activities of the

former organizations. This means that the Institute responds to the social demand for the resolution of human rights issues, particularly the Buraku issue, by stimulating research activities in various forms while building on its past activities.

There are existing information centers on human rights issues in the prefecture (Fukuoka Prefecture Human Rights Awareness Information Center, Kitakyushu City Human Rights Awareness Center, Fukuoka City Human Rights Awareness Center, etc.), and they are promoting activities centered on raising awareness of prefectural residents and citizens.

Under such circumstances, the most promising function of the Institute is its survey and research function, and the dissemination of the results through educational activities in cooperation with the local government. These activities would greatly increase the understanding and efforts of the people of Fukuoka Prefecture on human rights issues.

In order to achieve this, it is necessary to enrich research activities on human rights issues, including the historical elucidation of the Buraku issue, with the cooperation of many people.

To that end, the Institute can achieve its objectives by bringing together the wisdom of more people involved in human rights issues than ever before.

The Institute aims to become the core of the human rights network in Fukuoka Prefecture, to connect with the global human rights network, and to create a human rights culture.

Starting with its predecessors, the Fukuoka Buraku History Study Group and the Fukuoka Prefectural Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute, the Institute has a track record of undertaking many projects commissioned by local governments, educational institutes, and companies.

The Institute has recently been commissioned by local governments to conduct a survey of residents' attitudes toward human rights issues. The surveys measure the awareness of the people on human rights and harmony issues and analyze the rich data obtained that other companies cannot do.

The data analysis involves people with specialized knowledge including Tatsuo Aso (Director, Tagawa City Coal History Museum), Toyomi Ishitaki (Director, Institute for Human Rights Studies, Ishitaki), Tadashi Horiuchi (Secretary General, Tagawa District Human Rights Center), Yusaku Matsuo (former President of Fukuoka University of Education), and Senichi Moriyama (Professor, Fukuoka Prefectural University).

The Institute established seven committees, namely, Buraku History Committee, Foreigners Committee, Education Committee, Awareness Committee, Gender Committee, Overseas Human Rights Study Tour Planning Committee, Buraku Issues Committee, and Ishitaki School (Ishitaki Juku).

Educational Activities

The Institute has adopted the slogan “Global Perspectives, Local Activities” since its establishment. It has always aimed at engaging in activities that are rooted in the local community and yet it has always taken into account the international human rights situation.

The Institute has sponsored projects such as the “Liberation Seminar” centered on the youth section of the Buraku Liberation League, the “Chikuzen Bamboo Spear Rebellion Walk” to conduct fieldwork in the places related to the Chikuzen Bamboo Spear Rebellion (the attack against Buraku people in 1872 that burned their houses), and “Aiming for the Combination of Historical Facts and Classes II” co-sponsored by the Fukuoka Prefectural Human Rights and Dowa Education and Research Council.

It also published six books since then, taking over the “Rapeseed Flower Booklet” of the study group, and presented the results of the Institute’s activities in “Human Rights Forum Fukuoka.”

Mini-symposium

The Institute held its first mini-symposium on 6 April 2025.

The Publication Compilation Committee of the Institute reviewed the research results published in *Buraku Liberation History Fukuoka* (the predecessor of *Liberation*) by the Fukuoka Buraku History Study Group, applied them to the present context, and drafted a publication. Since this was an unprecedented concept, the Institute decided to hold a mini-symposium in order to deepen the understanding of the content of the publication.

The first session was a reflection on Dowa education (anti-Buraku discrimination education). With the rapid generational change among teachers, a sense of crisis in pursuing human rights and Dowa education arose. The Institute thought that it would be of great significance to learn from the voices of the pioneers of Dowa education.

Shinya Yasuaki gave a talk titled “A Warning to ‘Dowa’ Education ~ What I Want to Learn Now from Mr. Yuimichi Matsunaga’s Theory of Classes~.”

The talk was followed by a question-and-answer session. Thirty participants in the mini-symposium actively joined in the discussion causing the session to exceed the scheduled time.

Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Study Group

The Institute commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Study Group on 28 September 2024 at the Sawara Citizen Center, Fukuoka City. More than five hundred fifty people (including the Institute’s staff members) attended the successful event.

The commemorative gathering included an opening show (guitar and ocarina performance, recitation of the 1922 Suiheisha Declaration,² and *taiko* performance).

There were lectures by Atsushi Uesugi (Buraku history researcher) entitled “Where did Buraku discrimination come from and where does it go?,” Hisako Sonoda (Vice-chairperson of the Institute) entitled “Both sides exceed the wall~Turn it into a problem~,” and Ian Neary (Emeritus Fellow, St Antony’s College and the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies at the University of Oxford) on the *Buraku Problem Handbook*.

There was also an exhibition of the picture book *Flower of Life*, and the 50th anniversary materials and photographs.

Toshiyuki Maruki’s original artwork, publications including *Buraku Liberation History Fukuoka* and *Liberation* and the works by Koji Yoshikata, who has long illustrated the cover and cuts for *Buraku Liberation History Fukuoka*, were exhibited.

The opening ceremony included greetings from the Fukuoka Prefecture, Fukuoka City, Kitakyushu City and Buraku Liberation Alliance Fukuoka Prefectural Federation.

Workshops

The Buraku Issue Committee holds a workshop every year. In 2025, the Committee held two workshops.³ The first workshop was held on 26 July 2025 in Inatsuki District Community Center, Kama City. The workshop had two topics:

- a. Unraveling the breeding ground for discriminatory attitudes from the preface of the Buraku Place Name;

- b. Toward the development of teaching materials on Buraku history and the Buraku issue.

Masashi Yamazaki of Kama City Inatsuki Higashi Compulsory Education School spoke about the Buraku Place Name Inspector Case and the discriminatory attitudes that have been ingrained in society behind it. He also discussed the existence of companies using social media for background checks in recruitment, in relation to the Buraku Place Name Inspector Case, while watching the news video “Demand for Social Media Secret Account Investigations is Exploding: The Current State of Corporate Recruitment Activities and Legal Issues.”

Hisako Sonoda, Vice President of the Institute, reported on her participation in the July 2024 event “Considering Human Rights Issues 2025 - Toward the Development of Buraku History Teaching Materials - Sponsored by the Saga Buraku Liberation Institute.” She also presented materials such as the 25 April 2025 *Kaiho Shimbun* article “Questioning the Kurume City Board of Education’s Perception of Buraku” and the July issue of *Buraku Liberation*, “Questioning the Kurume City Board of Education’s Perception of Buraku Issues in Fukuoka Prefecture: Kurokawa Midori.”

The second workshop featured a talk by Yukimura Tanaka on the theme of the Suiheisha Declaration. The workshop was held on 22 November 2025 in Fukuoka City Teachers’ Union Eastern Office.

Tanaka’s presentation entitled “Suiheisha Declaration and Me - My Encounter with the Buraku Liberation Movement” discussed the beginnings of the Suiheisha Levelers movement. In discussing the proposal to adopt the Declaration of Human Rights (Suiheisha Declaration), he raised several questions: What is its spirit? How many declarations are there? When and why did the Suiheisha end?

Its 2024 workshop was held in 26 October 2024, as a follow-up to the January 2023 workshop entitled “Lesson Practice Report and Picture Book ‘Life Flower’ was born!!” Koga reported on the efforts to connect human rights studies and social studies classes for the three years of middle school.

The 2023 workshop content (From Practice Case Collection) focused on practical case collection classes, the 2024 workshop on the other hand discussed in detail how to create a connection between the subjects (using medieval examples) in the three-year curriculum of middle school, and how to make students feel more like their own selves.

The 2024 workshop also had an exchange of opinions among the participants on how to link the primary and secondary schools in human rights learning, as well as on concerns and questions about human rights learning.

Field work

The Institute organizes field work every summer known as *Ishizuka*, where people learn about the history of places in Fukuoka Prefecture. On 17 August 2024, the Institute organized *Ishizuka* in the town of Chikujo in the prefecture.

The participants visited the sites around Tsukijo base where battles were fought in 16th century between armies of opposing fiefdoms. The visit was designed to make the participants think about past and present wars.

As part of the Buraku history in Chikujo town, the participants listened to lectures about the story of the construction of the Chikujo castle and related matters. This session was held at the Chikujo-machi Products Hall “Metase no Tsubo.” The participants also visited the former Horiuchi residence, the house of the Horiuchi family, which operated coal mines mainly in the Chikuhō region of Fukuoka Prefecture from the Meiji period to the early Showa period, and also managed cedar plantations.

On 23 November 2024, the Institute organized a field work under the theme “Overcoming religious differences ~Living a Multicultural Symbiotic Society~.” This field work involved visiting Christian church, Buddhist hall and Islamic mosque used by non-Japanese residents in Japan. The participants learned from various people working across religious differences on the different programs for non-Japanese residents.

The participants visited the following places:

a. Catholic Minoshima Pastoral Center (Hakata-ku, Fukuoka City)

The Minoshima Pastoral Center work with non-Japanese residents in the Kyushu DARC, a facility for drug and alcohol dependency recovery, homeless people and other vulnerable people in Japanese society. The participants listened to the presentation of a Catholic priest and the center staff on “walking together” with the vulnerable people in society.

b. Yoshizuka Mido (Hakata-ku, Fukuoka City)

At the Yoshizuka Mido in the Little Asia Market of Kichijo Market, a Shaka-sama (Buddhist statue) from Myanmar welcomed the participants. This is the place where Buddhists from other countries in Asia come to pray. During the visit, the participants learned about the situation in Myanmar from Mr. Takino, the caretaker of the temple.

c. Fukuoka Masjid Annur Islamic Cultural Center (Hakozaki, Higashi Ward, Fukuoka City)

This is the first mosque in Kyushu that opened on 12 April 2009. Male worshippers pray on the first floor and female worshippers pray on the second floor. The interior of the place of worship is relatively simple that brings in natural light, and is equipped with facilities necessary for worship such as *mihrab* (a niche that shows the direction of Mecca) and *minbar* (a raised platform in the front area of the prayer hall of the mosque). The interior of the hall is decorated with silk imported from the United Arab Emirates and gives a sense of exotic feelings.

The Institute also organizes the Chikuzen Bamboo Spear Rebellion Walk in Ashiya every two years. The 2025 walk marked its 17th anniversary. Ashiya is a port town famous for the Ashiya Temple and Ashiya Kilns. The walk toured historical sites in Ashiya related to the Bamboo Spear Rebellion.

The 17th anniversary walk was held on 1 November 2025 and included visit to Kindaiji Temple, former site of Daikokuza Theatre, shrines and temples, Ashiya Kama no Sato and Ashiya History and Folklore Museum. There were also lectures by Toyomi Ishitaki (“The Chikuzen Bamboo Spear Rebellion and Ashiya”) and Satoshi Uesugi (former professor at Osaka City University).

The “Chikuzen Bamboo Spear Rebellion” was a large-scale uprising that occurred on 16 June 1873, two years after the Emancipation Edict of 1871, and engulfed the Chikuzen region (the old name of what is now northern Kyushu). It is said that 100,000 people participated. The uprising engulfed Fukuoka and Hakata, destroying the prefectural office. The uprising was sparked by opposition to the Meiji government and Fukuoka Prefecture’s policies of modernization and enlightenment. They attacked Buraku communities under the banner of “opposition to the Emancipation Edict,” burning over 1,500 homes.⁴

Awareness-raising

The Institute organizes seminars on different topics to raise human rights awareness. Below are some of the topics in the seminars:

- “Does knowledge have no power to eliminate discrimination?” ~Thinking from the results of a survey on awareness of the leprosy issue~ (27 October 2024)
- “Reading books about children’s human rights” – Children’s right to express opinions and advocacy (24 November 2024)
- “Is it kindness? Is it a human right? ~How to nurture ‘subjects of rights.’” (26 April 2025)

Overseas Human Rights Study Tour

The Institute organizes the Overseas Human Rights Study Tour every year. The 16th “Overseas Human Rights Study Tour in Tsushima~‘Jeju 4/3 Incident’ and Tsushima~” was held on 21-22 September 2024.⁵ It was meant to learn more the so-called “Jeju 4/3 Incident,” the biggest tragedy in modern Korean history, when the Korean government violently suppressed the armed uprising on Jeju Island, South Korea on 3 April 1948, which victimized approximately 30,000 islanders.⁶ The villages of Jeju Island were burned due to the scorched-earth operations and massacres carried out by the military during this time.

At the time of the incident, hundreds of victims’ bodies, with their wrists tied, washed up on the shores of Sago Bay in the northwest of Tsushima, Nagasaki Prefecture, and were buried by the residents of Tsushima. In 2007, a memorial tower was built by volunteers, and a memorial service for the victims was held.

The 2024 Human Rights Study Tour included the following activities:

Day 1 – visit to the Tsushima Chosen Tsushinshi History Museum (this museum introduces the history of the ‘Chosen Tsushinshi’, a diplomatic mission sent to Japan by the Korean Dynasty), Satsuma Bansho-in Temple (a temple of the Tendai sect in Izuhara-cho, Tsushima; it is the family temple of the So clan in Tsushima Fuchu Domain and successive domains), Taiheiji Temple, Genkai Nuclear Power Plant;

Day 2 - participation in the Mourning Ceremonies (4/3 Jeju Incident Memorial Festival), visit to the Hill Observation Center (an obser-

vation tower set up in a protruding shape near the top of the hill, circling Mt. Chihama, designated as Iki Tsushima Quasi-National Park) which has a view of neighboring countries, etc.

Movie Screening

The Foreigners Committee of the Institute showed the film “Nitobe’s Dream” on 8 November 2025 in The University of Kitakyushu. Professor Yoshifumi Soeda (Fukuoka University Faculty of Humanities) gave a lecture on the film.

The Committee screened on 22 June 2024 the movie “Watashitachihaningenda! (We are human beings!)” in Kitakyushu City. The screening was followed by a lecture by Sochi Takaya (Associate Professor at Tokyo University) and lawyer Yu Ikegami, who deals with non-Japanese residents in his hometown in Kitakyushu.

The movie screening was held in one of the classrooms of the Law School of the Kitakyushu City University, which co-hosted the event. As a result, nearly seventy students participated out of the total of one hundred forty participants.

The movie had substantive content on the Japanese immigration problem. Thus it was followed by a lecture by Takaya and Ikegami, who dealt with non-Japanese residents in Kitakyushu.

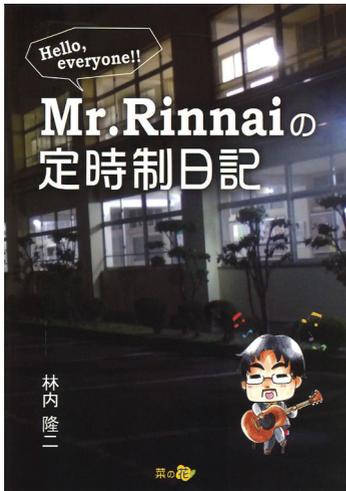
The event enabled the students to understand the immigration problem better.

The Institute plans to have a field work at Minoshima Tsoshimaki Center in Fukuoka City, where activities of non-Japanese residents are held, as the next project.

In its 6th Monthly Meeting of the Committee, Kim Yeokyung (Associate Professor, Faculty of Letters, University of Kitakyushu) gave a presentation entitled “Sociological Approach to the Korean Community in Japan.” In the 4th Regular Meeting of the Committee Section on 30 July 2025, Mai Yoshida (Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Kitakyushu) gave a report entitled “People who don’t move; focusing on the struggle of the Aeta, an indigenous people of the Philippines.”

Books

The Institute organized a book launching in its booth at the Kitakyushu City Fureai Festa on 24 November 2024. The new book entitled *Hello, everyone!! Mr Rinnai – Part-time Diary* written by Professor Ryuji Hayashiuchi of

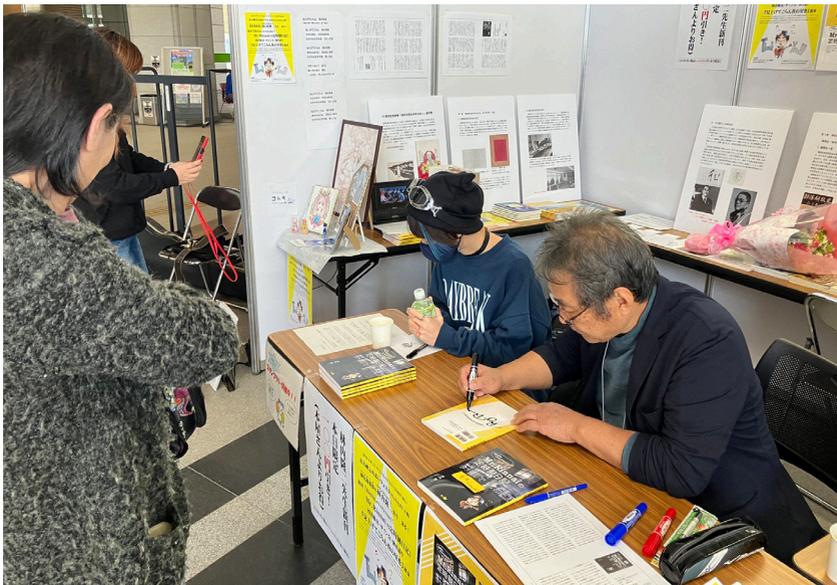


Hello, everyone!! Mr Rinnai – Part-time Diary

the human rights band Ganjigarama was launched during the Festival. Professor Hayashi wrote the serial “A little good story” as part of the “Mr. Rinnai’s Part-time Diary” series in the *Liberation* newsletter.

He signed copies of the book along with Kotoki, a student who drew the illustrations in the book, during the festival. They also gave a performance entitled “Look up and see the stars of the night” in collaboration with Recorder Rainbow Earth. Due to Professor Hayashi’s personality, many of his students came to see him frequently at the back stage at 10 o’clock before the performance. Both Hayashi and Kotoki were chased by those who bought the book for their autograph leaving them without any break before their performance at 12 o’clock.

The Kitakyushu City Fureai Festa features stage events related to human rights, panel exhibitions, and presentations on the daily activities of human



Ryouji Hayashiuchi signing copies of the book along with Kotoki, who drew the illustrations in the book.

rights and welfare organizations, allowing people to think about the importance of human rights in a fun and enjoyable atmosphere. In the 2024 Fureai Festa, there were also the Barrier-free Stage at the Arts Festival for People with Disabilities and a lecture on human rights by lawyer Yukio Kikuchi, entitled “The Internet and Human Rights.”

The Institute also launched the long-awaited book version of The Town with the Pure River (清らかな川の町) series, which was serialized intermittently in Liberation. It was authored by Mieko Iwasaki. The book version included unpublished stories.

This work is a humorous depiction from a young girl’s perspective of the joys and sorrows of people living in the former entertainment district of the late Showa period. It is the story of a resilient girl with a “will to live,” who interacts with adults on an equal footing like a Hakata version of “Jarinko Chie,” remains cheerful even in the face of adversity, and is shrewd enough to use tattooed adults to get some advantage.

The book was the winner of the Fukuoka Mayor’s Award in 2025. Naoko Higashi of the Fukuoka Mayor’s Award Selection Committee described the book as a

highly engaging work that vividly depicts the real lives of people working in Fukuoka’s entertainment district in the 1960s and 1970s through the eyes of a young girl who lives there.

The story depicts the interactions between local people, and a number of truly unique characters make an appearance. I thought the author’s ability to portray these people not only in pretty words, but also unashamedly show their vulgarity, cunningness, fear, and weakness, and then connect them to a certain lovability was wonderful.

The conversations, which casually made use of the Fukuoka dialect, were deep and touched my heart. A lingering, sad feeling remained after I finished reading. After reading, the meaning of the title will appear in a different light.

Kitakyushu Human Rights Forum 21

The Institute participates in the Kitakyushu Human Rights Forum 21 by organizing Citizens’ Course on human rights issues.

The Course had the following topics:

- a. 71st Kitakyushu Human Rights Forum 21 – 25 September 2024



Mieko Iwasaki with her book.



Town with the Pure River

Theme: Current incidents of discrimination against Burakumin and efforts by schools and governments to overcome these and eliminate discrimination

b. 72nd Kitakyushu Human Rights Forum 21 – 8 November 2024

Theme: Today's state of discrimination in Buraku and eliminating discrimination.

Takashi Akai, Secretary of the Buraku Liberation League Central Headquarters, was the main speaker in the Course during the 71st Kitakyushu Human Rights Forum 21.

The Course was held with the following rationale: The Anti-Buraku Discrimination Promotion Act was entering its eighth year. However, the state of Buraku discrimination continued to be serious, as seen in online Buraku discrimination. In Kitakyushu City, “discriminatory graffiti,” “discriminatory postcards,” and “discriminatory memos” were found one after another even after the enforcement of the Law for the Promotion of Elimination of Discrimination. In addition, at school sites, discriminatory remarks by children and parents have been repeatedly made.⁷

Thus the Course during the 72nd Kitakyushu Human Rights Forum 21 focused on how to overcome the reality of Buraku discrimination and create a city free of discrimination in Kitakyushu.

Akai, the Buraku Liberation League Central Headquarters Secretary, presented examples from various regions across the country on how to overcome Buraku discrimination during the 72nd Kitakyushu Human Rights Forum 21.

Participants' Responses

The participants of the activities of the Institute express their thoughts by answering survey form at the end of each activity.

In the lecture held on 15 December 2024 entitled “Visiting the Past, Charting the Future” given by Uesugi, the participants expressed the following thoughts:

- I'm glad I listened to you teacher. I want to study. I want to talk about the teacher. (50s)

- I wondered how much discrimination was created by the “family system” (discrimination against Buraku, discrimination against women). In order to realize the idea that there should be no “family system” anymore in order to be truly free, I thought it would be best to realize the separate couples formulation (it seems that “female bloodline is not a big deal”). From the Heian period to the Meiji period, there were many stories about Buddhist scriptures, and it was interesting. Thank you. I'm going to read my books again. (50s)

- As I listened to the story, I finally wanted to study further the relationship between boundaries and discrimination in the process. I found a lot of very insightful things about customs and institutional changes. (60s)

- I understand better the answer to the question “Where did Buraku discrimination come from?” than the last time it was discussed. It was interesting to know related Buddhist scriptures. In addition, Buraku discrimination was created by politics, so there were fewer Buraku people in the Tohoku region, I thought, “I see.” (50s)

- The fact that Buraku discrimination originated from Hinduism in India was taught in a very easy-to-understand way that I didn't understand just from the previous presentation. I'm a teacher at a primary school. In teaching history, I want to create materials on ancient places that can be used before linking [it to Buraku discrimination]. I'm going to try my best to create a lesson with a long span that will allow me to think about how discrimination works and how it is being created. Thank you for planning this. I'm glad I came.
- [The topic] was explained through the chronology of human rights, and it was quite easy to understand. (60s)
- It was a very interesting three hours. I think I learned about the use of the education field [in eliminating discrimination] and teachers have to think about it. And I hope we can eliminate discrimination in education by giving advice and other things. (60s)
- Do teachers feel a ray of hope for ending discrimination? Gotta keep going! I thought. (50s)

People who read the book *The Town with the Pure River ~ The Little Female Warrior of the Entertainment District* expressed their impressions during the forum on the launching of the book:

The brightness and toughness of the main character, a girl, was impressive. Even in an environment where terrible father, flower streets, and yakuza are familiar to her, she lives her life to the fullest, valuing her connections with people. Even though I am not blessed by any means, I also have a kind heart that cares about my adopted child. I enjoyed reading it while empathizing with the unique characters, slightly funny episodes, and various things that represent the times.

I was very angry with the father. The violence is terrible, and I realize that he only cared about the woman he live with and his own self rather than the happiness of his child. I couldn't help but think that it would have been nice if this man had been changed. The way each character is portrayed is interesting and can be imagined realistically. I am very happy that this story was written as I felt and saw the town and people of Kiyokawa from the time as a four-year old, shed light on people who lived through the times to the fullest, and people who would have been forgot-

ten without anyone caring if she had not written it. Everyone is living life to the fullest.

The enactment of the Anti-Prostitution Law and the abolition of the red line coincided with the year I was born. When I was a child, I heard the word “red line” without knowing what it meant, and I remember the place where I went, which I don’t know anymore. Mieko, who grew up among the people who live in Kiyokawa, is smart, active, and strong. No matter what kind of adversity she faced, she was able to get out of it because she received love from the people around her. The warmth of not abandoning the weak is strangely nostalgic and comfortable. Nowadays, people who live smartly in smart cities come out, but we must not forget that there are still people who are hurt by being a woman and who live their lives by making a business of sexuality.

I thought that the main character was a person who really had the power to live. I learned the power of relating to people and the ability to ask for help. And there were people who responded to it and people who were involved, and the relationship between people was warm and interesting and sad. At the same time, the harshness of the times was depicted as it was, and it made me think about the fact that although the semi-official red line was abolished, there would have been no support and no change in consciousness just by abolishing it.

Concluding Remark

In recent years, the human rights situation has become more diverse and internationalized. While the Buraku issue remains a central issue, the Institute has come to recognize its social responsibility to respond to these needs as an even more important issue.

Endnotes

1 For the results and issues of the research activities of the study group, see the special feature in “Buraku Liberation History: Fukuoka” No. 100 (部落解放史・ふくおか 第100号).

2 The English version of the Suiheisha Declaration [Declaration of Human Rights in Japan] adopted in 1922 the National Levelers’ Association (Zenkoku Suiheisha) is available here www.hurights.or.jp/archives/other_documents/section1/1922/04/declaration-of-human-rights-in-japan.html.

3 See Information about the Buraku Issues Committee, www.f-jinken.com/activity/burakumondai.html.

4 See Information on Sekiryu Juku and Chikuzen Bamboo Spear Rebellion Walk, www.f-jinken.com/activity/ishitakijuku.html.

5 See Information on the Overseas Human Rights Study Tour Planning Committee, www.f-jinken.com/activity/kaigaistudy.html.

6 In South Korea, this tragedy is described as follows:

The Jeju April 3 Uprising and Massacre refers to a period of political violence on South Korea's Jeju Island from 1948 to 1954. It began after a protest in 1947 was violently suppressed by police, triggering mass unrest. The conflict escalated into an armed uprising against government forces, who carried out brutal crackdowns. Over the course of seven years, as many as 30,000 civilians—around 10% of Jeju's population—were killed. The tragedy, once heavily censored, is now seen as a symbol of state violence and a pivotal chapter in Korea's modern history.

The Chosun Daily, www.chosun.com/english/national-en/2025/04/11/VRDGLKS5BDHHG2M5L27NEK7ZA/.

7 Based on joint announcement of the course in the 72nd Kitakyushu Human Rights Forum 21 by respective Chairpersons of Kitakyushu Human Rights Forum 21 and Fukuoka Prefectural Human Rights Research Institute, www.facebook.com/fukuokajinkenken/.