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Buraku Liberation in Imperial Japan:

Dreams of Love-Politics and Migration from late 19th to mid-20th Century

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by

Qianqing Huang

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Qianqing Huang

Doctor of Philosophy in History

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Professor Robin D.G. Kelley, Co-Chair

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This dissertation critically examines the discourses surrounding the liberation of buraku communities within and beyond the Japanese empire, tracing the historical trajectory from Japan's settler colonization of Hokkaido to the postwar Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly. By acknowledging the pivotal role played by the Suiheisha movement in shaping buraku activism, this study highlights how its influence and legacies have, paradoxically, impeded the exploration of alternative definitions and narratives of liberation. Focusing on buraku women's activism and buraku emigration to Hokkaido, the United States (including Hawaii) and Manchuria, the research aims to foreground the multifaceted contestations within buraku communities concerning liberation.

Through an analysis of diverse perspectives and understanding of liberation, this study illuminates how individuals and groups envisioned liberation in imaginative and compassionate ways, reflecting their unique experiences and challenging the dominant narrative. By examining the experiences of buraku feminists from both Women Suiheisha and Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly, who confronted the intersecting identities of both burakumin and women, this research uncovers the dynamics of patriarchy within the movement and the love-politics put forward by buraku feminists. Central to this investigation of competing narratives of buraku liberation is an exploration of buraku emigrants to destinations within and beyond the Japanese empire in different historical contexts. Although not all of these projects resulted in significant emigration, the very consideration of emigration, often aligned with the imperial expansion ambitions, reflected a broader longing for freedom and improved circumstances in both materialist and affective terms. Moreover, this research addresses the continued silence on Suiheisha's support for the Total Mobilization efforts in the 1930s and 1940s and the intricate power dynamics in the movement's collaboration with the Hyongpyongsa movement and Zainichi Korean communities in postwar buraku liberation narratives. Altogether, this dissertation attends to diverse voices and approaches within the buraku communities' struggle for liberation and the wider implications of their engagement with colonial and imperial systems.

Note on translation: Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

The dissertation of Qianqing Huang is approved.

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Introduction: Competing Narratives of Liberation

Preparing for the series of celebrations for Suiheisha's 100th anniversary in 2022, the National Confederation of Human Rights Movement in the Community (*zenkoku chiiki jinken undo sōrengō*) made an "Appeal for the 100th Anniversary of *Zenkoku-Suihei-Shya*" to commemorate the spirits and legacies of the movement for buraku liberation.[1] Divided into three parts, respectively, "The Significance of Celebrating the 100 Anniversary," "Walking the 100 Years," and "Towards a Future where Human Rights and Democracy Flourish," the appeal offered a glimpse into how the movement is remembered today and how it continues to cast influence on the minority struggles of Japan. The first part, "The Significance of Celebrating the 100th Anniversary," described the history of the Suiheisha movement as follows,

> March 3rd, 2022 marks the 100 anniversary of the founding of the Suiheisha movement. The organization was established as a voluntary movement aimed at eliminating discrimination against burakumin, which persisted as a relic of feudalistic social hierarchy, and its inaugural meeting was held in Kyoto. The founding declaration states the pursuit of human dignity, freedom, and equality and ends with the words, 'Let there be warmth in human society, let there be light in all human beings.' Over the past 100 years, progress has been made in eliminating disparities in living, labor, and education compared to surrounding areas, and the advancement of free social interactions, including marriage and residence, can be seen in local communities. This has led to the formation of citizen morality that does not accept discriminatory behavior, and the problem of discrimination against burakumin has reached a stage where a final solution is foreseeable. We hope to commemorate the 100th anniversary as a national achievement and to share the history, achievements, and lessons learned with you all. As a new starting for solidarity, we will challenge various discrimination and human rights issues in modern society.[2]

[1] "Buraku" could be literally translated as "hamlet" in Japanese. However, the word, along with "Tokushu Buraku" (special hamlet) began to be employed to refer to former *eta* (an abundance of filth) and *hinin* (non-human) communities after the Meiji Emancipation Edit of 1871. Aligning with current scholarships working on buraku communities and activists' use of terminologies, this dissertation uses "buraku" to refer to the communities where discriminated-against burakumin reside and "burakumin" for the people who reside in the communities. From time to time, derogatory terms such as *eta* would appear in translations of historical texts and analysis of certain texts to illustrate the prevalence of using such terms as attacks on buraku communities.

[2] "Zenkoku suihei-sha sōritsu 100 shūnenkinen tokusetsu pēji." n.d. Zjr.sakura.ne.jp. Accessed May 15, 2023. http://zjr.sakura.ne.jp/zensui100/.

The appeal erroneously suggests that the Suiheisha movement's call for human dignity, freedom, and equality 100 years ago is directly responsible for improving all aspects of contemporary buraku lives. The statement also uncritically asserts that disparities between buraku and the surrounding neighborhoods have been virtually eliminated, and buraku enjoy more freedom in interacting with the majority society in the realms of marriage and residence. In other words, as the statement concludes, "a final solution is foreseeable."[3]

But is integration by way of suppressing or erasing buraku identity a solution to discrimination in marriage, residence, occupation? In other words, did Suiheisha's concepts of human dignity, freedom, and equality mean becoming indistinguishable from any other Japanese? Was this how Suiheisha defined buraku liberation? The second part of the appeal might offer some insights into those questions,

> The Suiheisha movement was born amid a wave of social movements that aimed for human rights and democracy, including the movements for equality in Europe and America, the Rice Riots [in 1918], the Labor and Peasants Movements, and the Taisho Democracy movement. Those who gathered under the banner of the Suiheisha movement were motivated by their anger at the entrenched discrimination and their thirst for human equality. During the war, the movement was temporarily suppressed to cease its activities. After the war, the movement to resolve the buraku issue expanded in conjunction with democratic education and various democratic movements under the constitution that established respect for basic human rights. Population movements and changes in industrial structure brought by rapid economic growth dismantled old customs in the regions and created conditions for the formation of equal human relationships. Implementing government measures for burakumin greatly helped correct disparities in housing, occupations, and education, promote eliminating discrimination, and encourage social interaction. However, there was a backlash associated with vested interests and violence in the process of implementation. While addressing this issue, a proposal was put forward to promote "National Integration (*kokumin yūwa*)" by finding appropriate solutions to the buraku issue, such as rectifying disparities, eliminating discrimination, and promoting exchange between buraku and non-buraku communities. As the movement progressed, improvements were made to administrative practices. Special policies were abolished, and the remaining issues were handed over to general administrative policies and the movement for respecting human rights and establishing democracy.

[3] Ibid.

> Thus, we have built a democratic society today that does not tolerate discrimination against the buraku people. This is a civic experience that we can be proud of internationally.[4]

The appeal delineates the historical backdrop of the Suiheisha movement and the long trajectory of buraku struggles in the past century as "a civic experience that we can be proud of" to underscore the transformative impact of administrative measures, postwar democratic education, and then changes spurred by the economic growth on various facets of buraku lives. The claim highlights the tangible advancement in bridging the gaps between buraku and non-buraku communities through the National Integration Initiatives, a feat the committee acknowledges as instrumental in fostering a democratic society. However, rather than providing a definitive answer, the appeal provocatively raises another, more fundamental question: What truly constitutes liberation for burakumin?

This dissertation delves into the intricate discourses surrounding the liberation of buraku communities, spanning from Japan's settler colonization of Hokkaido to the postwar Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly. With the acknowledgment that the Suiheisha movement constituted a pivotal force in defining buraku activism, this dissertation sheds light on why its profound influence and legacies have also hindered the exploration of alternative definitions and narratives of liberation. Approaching the topic from two perspectives –buraku women's activism and buraku migration within and beyond the Japanese empire – this study endeavors to bring to the forefront the multifaceted contestations within buraku communities over the meaning of liberation. It aims to illuminate how individuals and groups envisioned liberation in diverse, imaginative, and compassionate ways, unearthing a tapestry of perspectives and understandings of what liberation constituted and constitutes. This aspect further prompts a reexamination of the

[4] Ibid.

legacies left by the Suiheisha movement that were excluded from mention in its 100th anniversary celebrations. The contesting notions of liberation in the history of buraku activism were not mere products of abstract imagination; they emerged organically from the lived realities of buraku feminists. Those buraku feminists, who navigated the intersecting identities of both burakumin, women, and mothers, grappled with the intricate dynamics of the patriarchal structure within the movement itself, as well as the mistreatment they faced from their male counterparts in their daily lives.

Central to this investigation of Suiheisha's history and the competing narratives surrounding buraku liberation is the exploration of buraku emigration to Japan's colonies and other destinations, such as Hokkaido, the United States (both mainland and Hawaii), and Manchuria. Notably, buraku intellectuals also proposed emigration to the Philippines, Brazil, and Peru in different historical contexts. Although not all of these projects culminated in significant movement, these imaginings of emigration and the actual movement of buraku emigrants represented a realm of possibility that intersected with the ideals set forth by Suiheisha's definition of liberation. Their very consideration of emigration, often aligned with the expansionist ambitions of the Japanese empire, still reflected the buraku's broader longing for freedom and improved circumstances. The involvement of buraku communities' participation in Japanese imperialism—from their engagement in the settler colonization of Hokkaido and Manchuria, Suiheisha's support of the Total Mobilization efforts in the 1930s, to and the leather industry's production of military equipment, notably footwear--has been acknowledged by numerous scholars in previous studies.[5]

[5] Kim Jung-Mi, *Suihei undōshi kenkyū:Minzoku sabetsu hihan*. (Tokyo: Gendai Kikaku-shitsu, 1994).

Chapter Breakdown

This study seeks to deviate from conventional historical investigations of buraku history, which often highlight the celebrated achievements of the Suiheisha movement, by amplifying the diverse and conflicting voices within the movement and beyond. By incorporating the perspectives of buraku feminists, early advocate of buraku emigration to Hokkaido, overseas buraku activists in the United States, and emigrants to Manchuria, this study examines the period spanning from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century. It explores how those groups of burakumin amidst the backdrop of Japanese settler colonialism, imperialism, racial capitalism, nationalism, and the politics of Suiheisha, negotiated, navigated, and carved out spaces for their survival. For buraku feminists like Takahashi Kurako, who delved into her own journey, drawing upon her experiences to unravel the essence of love's transformative power. She envisioned a realm adorned with ethereal brilliance- a society illuminated by light, a world unbound by shackles of constraints, and a land bathed in love. In the tapestry of her writings, the politics of love emerged, akin to the resonant voices of black feminists during the resurgence of the second wave of feminism. For advocates of buraku emigration, a glimmer of hope emerged as they contemplated the alluring path of migration intertwined with the ambitions of imperialism. This pathway held the promise of rectifying their centuries-long plight, beckoning them towards inclusion within the embrace of the Japanese empire, seeking to persuade burakumin that they were not merely unwanted remnants, but useful citizens sought after by the imperial regime as settlers.

This dissertation is divided into four parts, each of which stresses a different imagining of buraku liberation. Chapter One, *The Love Politics of Buraku Feminists: Voices from Women's Suiheisha and Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly*, explores the multifaceted dynamics within

the buraku movement, focusing on three key aspects. Firstly, it delves into Suiheisha's early discourses and their attempts to instill pride in buraku communities through the concept of burakuness to show the oppressive nature of the movement's militaristic and maculine culture for those who did not resonant with its ideologies and definitions. Secondly, it examines the history of Women's Suiheisha, highlighting their efforts to carve out spaces within the movement to shape their own agendas and ideas of liberation to challenge the dominant narrative of Suiheisha. Thirdly, it shifts focus to explore the continuity of buraku women's activism in postwar era, exemplified by the establishment of the Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly in 1956, providing a platform for buraku women to share their experiences, critique patriarchy and broaden the scope of their struggles beyond buraku-specific issues. This chapter specifically pay close attention to the Literacy Movement these postwar feminist initiated in local branches to argue that these intimate spaces constituted the prewar Women's Suiheisha's call for "love-politics."

Chapter Two, *The Ainu of Mainland Japan: Buraku Emigration to Hokkaido*, delves into discourses surrounding buraku emigration to Hokkaido during Meiji and Taisho periods. It examines the justification put forth by different groups for the migration of burakumin, as well as the responses and considerations of the buraku communities themselves. The chapter explores the utopian representation of Hokkaido in literary works, focusing on Shimizu Shikin's *Migrant Academy* and its portrayal of the northern island as an escape from discrimination and social prejudices. Additionally, it explores the experiences of Ueda Seiichi, a buraku activist who led a group of buraku emigrants to Hokkaido. The chapter highlights the joint efforts of activists, Meiji leaders, novelists and intellectuals to promote and implement the project of buraku emigration to Hokkaido, revealing the intersection between the imperial colonial governance,

Japan's settler colonial history, and the aspirations of buraku communities seeking liberation and acceptance.

Chapter Three, *The Search for Freedom: Suiheisha's Transpacific Journey and the Afro-Asian Intersection*, explores the intersections between the buraku movement, the Black-Japan Alliance, and the experiences of buraku immigrants in the United States and Hawaii. It examines the media attention received by Suiheisha, the emergence of a global perspective for buraku activists in the US, and the parallels drawn between racial discrimination faced by African Americans and the struggles of buraku communities by Tahara Haruji and Okamura Mamoru. Focusing on Tahara, a buraku immigrant who identified with African American struggles and theorized the liminality of buraku identity, it critically examines the limitations of the Japanese-Black alliance in addressing the subaltern groups within the Japanese empire. Lastly, the chapter explores the day-to-day interactions of buraku emigrants in Hawaii, their response to discrimination, and their engagement with the spirits of Suiheisha.

The last chapter of the dissertation, Chapter Four, titled *Abandoned Settlers: Buraku Emigration in Manchurian Settler Colonization*, looks at the history of buraku mobilization within the context of Japan's colonization of Manchuria. The chapter discusses the historiography of Japan's settler colonization in Manchuria, explores the economic and political conditions of buraku communities during the war mobilization period, and focuses on the history and postwar representation of the Kutami Settlement group. By bringing forward the testimonies of survivied Kutami members, the chapter examines the narratives surrounding Kutami and the challenges the portrayal of its members as solely abandoned victims, highlight their agency, desires, and complicity in Japanese imperialism as discriminated burakumin. Thus, the chapter raises the question of whether buraku emigration to Manchuria was a final solution to escape

poverty and oppression or a liberation dream that buraku leaders and emigrants found potential in.

The epilogue redirects its attention toward the historical dynamics of collaboration and conflict between Suiheisha and the postwar Buraku Liberation League in relation to the Hyongpyongsa movement in Colonial Korea. It discusses how this collaboration had been featured in the narratives of postwar BLL. It also sheds light on the obstacles Zainichi Korean writer Kim Jung-Mi faced as she delved into the question of Suiheisha's war responsibilities. Finally, the epilogue concludes by offering a few remarks on the relationship between BLL and its continuing invocation of Koreans in its activism to think about the question of reparation.

Questioning Buraku War Responsibilities

Zainichi Korean writer Kim Jung-Mi's 1994 publication first questions Suiheisha's entanglement in Japan's aggression in Asia throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Kim discerns the intricate process through which the movement underwent a transformation, eventually assuming the role of an advocate for anti-discrimination in the postwar era (as evidenced by the appeal introduced above.)[6] Kim highlighted the fact that this transformation occurred without facing any accountability for its war crimes, which was tolerated by postwar Japanese society. In addition, Kim challenged the official stances of many of Suiheisha's founding members and prominent figures, questioning the sincerity of their collaboration with the Korean untouchable groups. In *The Buraku Issue and Modern Japan*, Ian Neary sharply pointed out the unchallenged admiration for both the Meiji Emperor and Matsumoto Jiichirō, calling for a demystifying of the

[6] Ibid.

movement's legacy: "Several of those who worked closely with Matsumoto or who are now active in the movement told me that the last thing they wanted was another hagiography."[7]

Other scholars have also examined the movement's complicity in participating in the making of the Japanese Empire and the glorified legacies of the movement. The General Director of Liberty Osaka, Asaji Takeshi, emerged as a prominent voice advocating for a comprehensive examination of buraku's wartime responsibilities. In his published speech entitled "*Buraku Problem and the Movement of Suiheisha against Discrimination during the World War II*," he noted a distinct shift in Suiheisha's discourse following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on July 7th, 1937. The incident, signifying the start of Second Sino-Japanese War with shots fired in Wanping, marked a significant shift in the focus of the movement from a preoccupation with theorizing the buraku question to becoming proponents of Japan's aggression in China.[8] The speech by Asaji was an extension of his earlier book, published three years prior in 2008, titled *Ajia taiheiyōsensō to zenkoku suihei-sha*. The book aimed to unravel the process that led to the decline and dissolution of the Suiheisha movement in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War.[9] This trend of his thinking could be traced back to the initiative of the 80th anniversary of the movement when he co-wrote a book with Kurokawa Midori, Sekiguchi Hiroshi and Fujino Yutaka in 2002, titled *Suihei-sha densetsu kara no kaihō*. The four distinguished scholars in buraku studies embarked a collaborative effort to reassess the existing narratives surrounding the history of the movement to bring in new possibilities of understanding buraku liberation. Specifically, Kurokawa and Asaji devled into Suiehsha's involvement in Japanese imperialism.

[7] Ian Neary, *The Buraku Issue and Modern Japan / the Career of Matsumoto Jiichiro* (London: Routledge, 2010), 3.
[8] Takeshi Asaji, "Senji-Ki No Burakumondai to Suihei Undo (Buraku Problem and the Movement of Suiheisha against Discrimination during the World War II)," *Tenridaigaku Jinkenmondai Kenkyūshitsu Kōkai Kenyūkai Kōen* 2011-nendo, no. 15 (2012): 53–65.
[9] Takeshi Asaji, *Ajia Taiheiyōsensō to Zenkoku Suihei-Sha* (Osaka: Buraku kaihō jinken kenkyūjo, 2008).

Kurokawa's research examined the presence of ethnic discrimination within the movement in relation to its later change of discourse, aiming to challenge the movement's previous narratives regarding their support for Zainichi Koreans and identification with colonized people across the globe.[10]

In English scholarship, Jeffrey Bayliss's 2013 book, *On the Margins of Empire: Buraku and Korean Identity in Prewar and Wartime Japan*, offers a compelling exploration of the history behind the interactions of buraku and Zainichi Koreans.[11] This insightful work traces their distinct yet often interconnected experiences of discrimination and marginalization. Bayliss examined how both groups grappled with the challenges of navigating their positions within the national community, delineating the tensions that arose between those marginalization groups under the empire's discourses of race and ethnicity in defining Japanese-ness.[12] A notable aspect highlighted by Bayliss is the terminology employed by Suiheisha in the 1930s to refer to burakumin as the movement sought to avoid any suggestion of an inherent distinction between them and the majority Japanese. For instance, at the 11th national convention in 1933, the phrase *buraku kinrō taishū* (the laboring masses of the buraku) was introduced but quickly abandoned the following year in favor of *hiappaku buraku* (people of the oppressed hamlet).[13] In 1935, Suiheisha officially announced another change, adopting *tokushū burakumin* to *hiappaku buraku taishū* (the masses of oppressed hamlet) as the term for members of buraku communities.[14] This dissertation expands upon Bayliss's argument regarding the gradual shift within the movement towards defining their identities based on shared oppression rather than shared liberation. It

[10] Takeshi Asaji et al., *Suihei-Sha Densetsu Kara No Kaihō* (Kyoto: Kamowa shuppan, 2002).
[11] Jeffrey Paul Bayliss, *On the Margins of Empire : Buraku and Korean Identity in Prewar and Wartime Japan* (Boston, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013).
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid., 274.
[14] Ibid.

further examines how this emphasis on shared oppression became a rallying point of the movement but posed challenges for the feminists of Women's Suiheisha, who sought to express their distinct experiences of oppression within the movement that purportedly aimed to support their liberation.

Buraku Identity and Gender

It was not until the escalation of the war in the Asia Pacific that the emergence of Suiheisha's masculine culture became evident. Chapter One of this dissertation devotes a section to explore the construction of buraku identity by examining the foundational documents of Suiheisha, with the objective to illuminate how the movement's formulation of buraku liberation bore exclusive nature to buraku feminists during both the Suiheisha years and the postwar years. My work builds on several scholars, including Joseph Hankins, Timothy Amos, and Kurokawa Midori, who have extensively examined how Suiheisha disciplined, reinvented, and shaped the discourses surrounding buraku identity from various perspectives. Kurokawa's influential book, *Ika to dōka no aida: Hisabetsu buraku ninshiki no kiseki*, specifically delves into the challenges faced by buraku activists in defining the concept of liberation due to the difficulty of visibly distinguishing the differences between burakumin and the majority Japanese population.[15] Kurokawa's research highlights a longstanding dilemma within the buraku liberation movement, namely, the struggle to determine whether it is necessary to bring attention to the existing differences or to strive for assimilation: Do we have to wake up the sleeping baby? Building upon Kurokawa's questionings, Joseph Hankins's thought-provoking book, *Working Skin: Making Leather, Making Multicultural Japan*, delves into the intricate dynamics of

[15] Midori Kurokawa, *Ika to Dōka No Aida: Hisabetsu Buraku Ninshiki No Kiseki* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1999).

multiculturalism in contemporary times and its impact on the negotiation of identities among buraku tanners.[16] As he eloquently put it, "This tension, between freedom and obligation, runs through buraku politics as its leaders seek to cultivate a constituency able and willing to recognize itself as buraku as well as a broader public that is attentive to actively working against discrimination."[17] He traced this tension back to the inception of the movement and its complex relationship with Shimazaki Tōson's novel, *Hakai*, to suggest that buraku mobilization necessitated a willing acknowledgment and identification with one's buraku origins, thereby making the act of passing as a member not only frowned upon but also seen as defeatist and escapist, ultimately undermining the movement's interests.[18] Christopher Bondy's book, *Voice, Silence, and Self: Negotiations of Buraku Identity in Contemporary Japan*, delves into the perpetuation of silence surrounding buraku issues in today's Japan. Drawing from ethnographic research conducted in the communities of Takagawa and Kuromatsu (where there are influences of different buraku liberation movements), Bondy focused on the critical role of schools and social interactions to examine how these factors shape individuals' understanding and engagement of their buraku identities.[19] On the other hand, Timothy D. Amos's book, *Embodying Difference: The Making of Burakumin in Modern Japan* critically examines the perceived continuities and direct connections often assumed between outcast groups of premodern Japan and the modern burakumin. By drawing a comparison to the histories of Dalits in India, Amos challenges the notion of a homogeneous history in the making of burakumin to argue that the

[16] Joseph D Hankins, *Working Skin : Making Leather, Making a Multicultural Japan* (Oakland, California: University Of California Press, 2014).
[17] Ibid., 22.
[18] Ibid., 75-83.
[19] Christopher Bondy, *Voice, Silence, and Self* (BRILL, 2020).

contemporary term encompasses various groups that possessed distinctive social characteristics and experiences.[20]

The efforts of the aforementioned scholars to re-evaluate buraku identity from various perspectives, including Suiheisha's war crimes, its masculine culture, and the dilemma of assimilation and dissimulation, have provided impetus for this dissertation to explore different articulations of buraku identity and alternative paths to liberation. This dissertation addresses the question through two parts; the first part examines the voices of buraku feminists in Women's Suiheisha (1923-1928) and the Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly (1956-present), while the second part explores the involvement of buraku communities in emigration narratives to Hokkaido, the US, and Manchuria, organized according to destination. It is worth noting that many scholars have also discussed the voices of these feminists, primarily in Japanese scholarship. Suzuki Yūko's seminal work in 2002, *Suihei-sen o mezasu onna-tachi: Fujin suihei undo-shi*, provides a comprehensive examination of Women's Suiheisha through the examination of the personal experiences and voices of individual women, emphasizing how these feminists confronted multiple layers of discrimination despite lacking suffrage and a social security system.[21] Published in the same year, Kurokawa Midori's article "*Hisabetsuburaku to seisabetsu*" presented the notion that Suiheisha viewed Women's Suiheisha as a means to enhance their strength.[22] As Kurokawa highlighted, the male leaders of the movement recognized the delayed awareness among buraku women as a hindrance to the movement's broader impact and felt the need to enlighten and awaken them.[23] In addition, Oga Yoshiko's study on Sakamoto

[20] Timothy D Amos, *Embodying Difference* (University of Hawaii Press, 2011).
[21] Yūko Suzuki, *Suiheisen O Mezasu Onnatachi: Fujin Suihei Undōshi* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 2002).
[22] Midori Kurokawa, "Hisabetsuburaku to Seisabetsu," in *Kindai Nihon to Suiheisha* (Osaka: Kaihō shuppansha, 2002).
[23] Ibid.

Kazue, the wife of one of the founders of Suiheisha, Sakamoto Seiichirō, further demonstrates Kurokawa and Susuzki's arguments. By examining Kazue's diaries, Oga sheds light on the emotional pain and arduous household duties that Kazue endured, making a powerful argument about the oppressive culture of the movement.[24] These scholars have discussed the perception of Women's Suiheisha as a supplementary entity within the male-dominated Suiheisha, a theme that Chapter One explores further to examine how within these "supplementary spaces," buraku feminists were able to articulate their intersectionality (burakumin, women, mothers, and etc.) to challenge their male counterparts.

In addition, a recent publication by Miyamae Chikako, commemorating the 100th anniversary of Women's Suiheisha, calls for resistance against this invisiblization,

> However, this movement did not last long, and by 1928, the activities of Women's Suiheisha ended. Initially, the Suiheisha did not fully understand the issues faced by buraku women, and these women themselves were unable to articulate the oppression they experienced within their own families, as previously mentioned. Furthermore, the suppression of ideological expression and the loss of local leaders due to repression also contributed to the decline of their movement. By the mid-1930s, the Suiheisha shifted towards collaboration with the war mobilization. Buraku women, through organizations like the regional Defense Women's Association (*kokubō fujin-kai*,) became involved in supporting the war. This is an undeniable part of the history that played a role in Japan's colonialism and aggression. When tracing the history of Suiheisha and buraku women, we must never turn a blind eye to this fact.[25]

Also central to this historical inquiry on the invisibility of buraku women is the question of the agency, which Kumamoto Risa addressed in her recently published book (2020) titled *Hisabetsuburaku josei no shutaisei keisei ni kansuru kenyū*. Using the framework of intersectionality, Kumamoto powerfully rejected the tendency to categorize buraku women solely on their buraku or gender identity. Instead, she urged us to reconsider how such simplified

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Yoshiko Oga, "Sakamoto Kazue Ni Miru Suihei-Sha to Jendā," *Jinkenmondai Kenkyū*, no. 9 (2009): 43–64.
[25] Chikako Miyamae, "Fukashi-Ka Ni Kōsuru Tame Ni- 100-Nen No Buraku Josei Wan Ani O Tsutaeyō Shita," *IMADR Tsūshin*, no. 211-213 (2022).

categorization further contributes to the invisibility of buraku women.[26] In her examination of the postwar Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly, Kumamoto argued that starting in the 1950s, buraku women confronted the lack of women's representation within the movement and the disparities in treatment between them and their male counterparts. They engaged in a series of negotiations with male leaders to assert their decision-making power. This dissertation, influenced by Kumamoto's scholarship, contends that the resistance of postwar buraku feminists against the culture and politics of Suiheisha can be traced back to the legacies of Women's Suiheisha, particularly in Takahashi Haruko's emphasis on love as the focal point of buraku women's resistance.

Migration and Buraku Liberation in the Japanese Empire

This dissertation also builds on the existing scholarship of various scholars who have studied the narratives of emigration and the actual movement of buraku emigrants to different destinations, including Hokkaido, the United States, and Manchuria. While most of the existing scholarship on this topic is in Japanese, Noah McCormack's article, "*Buraku Emigration in the Meiji Era*," makes an effort to introduce this topic to English readers. McCormack examined how intellectuals during the Meiji era sought to mobilize burakumin to participate in Japan's colonization plans, particularly in Hokkaido, which had been recently acquired by Imperial Japan, and other territories envisioned under imperial ambitions (primarily the Philippines).[27] By highlighting that these plans aimed to integrate burakumin as national citizens, McCormack meticulously documents the various initiatives undertaken by Meiji governors to argue that "this

[26] Risa Kumamoto, *Hisabetsuburaku Josei No Shutaisei Keisei Ni Kansuru Kenkyū* (Osaka: Kaihō shuppansha, 2020).
[27] Noah Mccormack, "Buraku Emigration in the Meiji Era Other Ways to Become Japanese," *East Asian History* 23, no. 23 (January 1, 2002): 87–108.

practice of emigration thus appears likely to have encouraged buraku emigrants to acquire a sense of patriotism."[28] It was not a one-sided process, as these narratives intertwined with how communities themselves defined liberation in concrete terms. As explored in Chapter Two, concepts such as "free land," "a world without discrimination," and "education for a new humanity" resonated deeply with the material needs and emotional yearnings of buraku communities, which was evident in Ueda Seiichi's endeavor to relocate to Hokkaido along with his fellow burakumin, which served as a tangible expression of aspirations.

Around 1910, the Imperial Way Society (*Teikoku kōdōkai*) began discussing the inclusion of buraku communities in the settler colonization of Hokkaido. With support from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ueda Seiichi, an educator and reform activist, organized an emigrant group in Tanaka (Kyoto) and relocated to Hokkaido. The group consisted of 11 households, mainly buraku households in the area and some of Ueda's relatives. Researchers such as Ōyabu Takeshi, Shiraishi Masaaki, and Asaji Takeshi have examined Ueda Seiichi's involvement in improving buraku conditions (he opened a night school in Kyoto) and experiences after relocating to Hokkaido.[29] The major point of debate lies in whether Hokkaido emigration was a solution following his night school's financial foundation due to embezzlement. This dissertation takes a different perspective by exploring the influence of education on Ueda's decision to emigrate to Hokkaido. Education is a recurring theme in narratives about buraku emigration, which I also explore in Shimizu Shikin's short story *Migrant Academy* (*Imin Gakuen*). These narratives discuss educating buraku children in Hokkaido and uplifting impoverished burakumin, reflecting

[28] Ibid.,108.
[29] Takeshi Ōyabu, "Hokkaidō Ijū to Ueda Seiichi," *Osaka Jinken Hakubutsukan Kiyō* 10 (2007): 37–93. Masaaki Shiraishi, "Tanaka Shin'yū Yoru Gakkō to Ueda Seiichi," *Osaka Jinken Hakubutsukan Kiyō* 9 (2006): 5–36. Takeshi Asaji, "Kyōto Tanaka Buraku No Kaizen Undo to Ueda Seiichi," *Jinkenmondai Kenkyū Bessatsu* , 2009, 41–66.

both the belief in the transformative power of education and the imperial agenda to civilize the Ainu (and burakumin). This dissertation explores the historical context of Japan's imperial expansionism in Hokkaido, as well as how it shaped the discourses of buraku's positionality within the national community. It intersects with the scholarly efforts of recent decades that have aimed to understand the history of Japan's settler colonial history of Hokkaido from different perspectives, such as land reform, frontier development, modernization, and assimilation of the Ainu population.[30] Japan's earlier efforts in Hokkaido played a significant role in shaping the empire's narratives on national identity and race, foreseeing what Takashi Fujitani referred to as a new modality of governing minorities to guide them positively to encourage voluntary choices.[31]

Fujitani's theorization was based on his historical investigation of the transpacific experiences of "soldiers of color" within the Japanese and American empires. Highlighting the disavowal of racial discrimination and the emergence of an inclusive form of racism in both multiethnic empires, Fujitani recounted how this shift toward inclusion, facilitated by the concept of multi-ethnicity, was embraced by Korean soldiers in the Japanese empire and African American soldiers in the American empire for offering the possibility of reevaluating their racial statuses.[32] For buraku activists that have always rejected a separate racial identity historically, buraku's participation in the migration efforts aimed for inclusion into the pure Yamato race rather than into the multiethnic empire. The involvement of burakumin in the colonization of

[30] David Luke Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Berkeley, Calif.: University Of California Press, 2005). Katsuya Hirano, "Thanatopolitics in the Making of Japan's Hokkaido: Settler Colonialism and Primitive Accumulation," *Critical Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (September 2015): 191–218, https://doi.org/10.1086/683094. Sidney Xu Lu, "Eastward Ho! Japanese Settler Colonialism in Hokkaido and the Making of Japanese Migration to the American West, 1869–1888," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 78, no. 03 (June 20, 2019): 521–47, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021911819000147.
[31] Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire : Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley ; Los Angeles ; London: University Of California Press: 2013).
[32] Ibid.

Manchuria complicates our understanding of war nationalism, as their participation was as much about liberation as it was about Japanization. Thus, Chapter Four engages with the body of scholarship on Manchukuo. While earlier scholarships primarily focused on state-level policies and the state-initiated migration programs from an economic and agricultural perspective, leaving out the stories of non-state actors, more recent scholarships have aimed to excavate histories from below and within to bring forward the lived experiences of those settlers. This includes studies by scholars such as Louise Young, Presenjit Duara, Mariko Tamanoi, and Emer O'Dwyer, whose studies have highlighted the diversity of experiences and perspectives among those who settled in Manchuria.[33]

By bringing forward the narratives on buraku emigration to Manchuria in 1937 and onward, this dissertation further challenges the racial and ethnic homogeneity of the Japanese settler communities in Manchuria, inviting a rethinking of the dynamics of colonizers and the colonized. Through an analysis of the writings of Tanigawa Takeyuki, a former member of the Kutami settlement group primarily composed of burakumin, we observe the initial period of contentment experienced by these relocated individuals. Tanigawa wrote extensively about those happy days; they acquired land for cultivation and engaged in raising animals such as pigs, horses, and sheep. They even enjoyed the simple pleasure of fishing by drilling holes in the frozen rivers. However, Tanigawa and other buraku settlers were well aware that these newfound joys were at the expense of others; he described the settlement policies as heart-wrenching when he witnessed the forced removal of the local population from their lands and homes. For those

[33] Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire : Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism.* (Berkeley, Calif.: University Of California Press, 1998). Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity : Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004). Mariko Tamanoi and Inc Netlibrary, *Memory Maps: The State and Manchuria in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University Of Hawaii Press, 2009). Emer O'Dwyer, *Significant Soil* (BRILL, 2020).

buraku settlers, Manchuria constituted a destination that satiated both their material needs and emotive identification, as they were finally bestowed with the status of not only Japanese nationals but Japanese colonizers. However, those joys were ruthlessly quashed when the Kwangtung Army callously relinquished them following Japan's surrender, culminating in Kutami's collective suicides.

Transpacific Journey and Afro-Asian Intersection

While much of the existing scholarship on buraku emigration focuses on the experience of specific settlement groups and individuals, as well as the imperial policies that shaped the concept of emigration, this dissertation strives to look beyond the boundaries of the Japanese Empire. It delves into the exploration of how burakumin emigrants in the United States, including Hawaii, grappled with the intricate relationship between the Japanese Empire and the American Empire. Furthermore, it tries to delineate how burakumin navigated the racial politics of America and the persisting discrimination they faced within Japanese American communities. The question of burakumin in the United States was initially raised by the book edited by George De Vos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma in 1966. In a chapter penned by Hiroshi Ito (using a pseudonym), they highlighted the presence of burakumin residing in the Florin area based on their fieldwork in the Sacramento area.[34] Ito observed that the majority of buraku emigrants to the United States tended to steer clear of occupations historically associated with *eta*, such as butchering, shoe-repairing, and other professions involving the handling of animal products or meat.[35] Based on the information provided in Ito's research, Sekiguchi Hiroshi examined the

[34]Hiroshi Ito, "Japan's Outcastes in the United States," in *Japan's Invisible Race: Caste in Culture and Personality*, ed. George DeVos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1966), 200–221.
[35] Ibid., 206.

entries of Japanese Americans in the United States and interviews conducted in Fukui to confirm the presence of buraku residents in Florin's Japanese American communities. [36] Sekiguchi's finding further suggested that this buraku emigration to the US was out of the desire to "raise the living standards of the impoverished residents," as those buraku emigrants sent back remittances to "stimulate economic and social activity in their home community."[37] Both Sekiguchi's article and Koji Lau-Ozawa's recent research findings indicate the persistence of buraku discrimination within Japanese American internment camps, particularly concerning marriage and intergenerational relationships.[38]

While much about the living experiences of burakumin in the United States remains unknown due to the lack of historical documentation, the dissertation draws on the writings of two Suiheisha activists, Tahara Haruji and Okamura Mamoru. Their writings in the 1920s and 1930s drew inspiration from racial minority struggles in the US, highlighting the intersections between buraku discrimination and the racial politics of the time. Tahara confronted the hypocrisy of Japan's alliances with African Americans while perpetuating discrimination against burakumin to emphasize the parallels between the two empires. Criticizing both empires for attempting to rid themselves of undesirable subjects, Tahara's identification with African American leaders like Marcus Garvey stemmed from a shared pursuit of liberation rather than mere oppression, posing an implicit challenge to Suiheisha's 1930s changes of discourse. In addition, Okamura Mamoru's writings also drew attention to the racist administrative policies targeting African Americans and Japanese Americans to call for an end to buraku discrimination

[36] Hiroshi Sekiguchi, "Burakumin Emigrants to America: Historical Experience of 'Racialization' and Solidarity across the Pacific," in *Race and Migration in the Transpacific* , ed. Yasuko Takezawa and Akio Tanabe (Routledge Taylor& Francis Group: London, 2022), 55–84.
[37] Ibid., 61.
[38] Ibid., 70. Koji Lau-Ozawa pointed this phenomenon out in his presentation at a workshop we both participated in. Koji Lau-Ozawa, "Searching for Silence along the Archival Grain: Burakumin in WWII Incarceration Camps," Online Workshop.

among Japanese American communities for the sake of racial unity and solidarity. In his 1930 pamphlet titled "*Aku inshū wo zetsumetsuseyo* (Eradicate the Evil Habits).," he called for a Suiheisha movement in Hawaii, aiming to illustrate how "evil" custom of buraku discrimination survived the trans-pacific journey and continued to bring pains to people's lives.[39]

Several scholars have studied the Tahara Haruji's legacies from the perspectives from his political career and establishment of emigration schools upon his return to Japan.[40] Chapter Three centers on Tahara's engagements with African American movements and his scathing critique of white supremacy to contrast with the renowned "Black-Japan alliance" in the midst of war, imperialism and white terrorism.[41] Black activists and intellectuals, such as W.E.B Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and Chandler Owen, saw Japan as the "New Negro of the Pacific," a symbol of resistance against white supremacy, and drew inspiration from Japan's race-conscious defiance to broaden their struggles for black self-determination.[42] While Japan garnered support from many African American leaders through its proposal for a racial equity clause at the Paris Peace Conference, it simultaneously viewed white supremacy as a paradigm of progress, modernity, and territorial dominance that hindered the empire from joining ranks. Tahara's interest in

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[39] Mamoru Okamura, "Aku Inshū Wo Zetsumetsuseyo," 1930. The original copy is in possession of the United Japanese Society of Hawaii. The copy I rely on was recovered by Tsurushima Setsurei. Tsurumshima included a copy of the document in her published paper, Setsurei Tsurushima, "Hawai Nihonjin Imin No Buraku Sabetsu to Suihei Undo," *Buraku Kaihō*, no. 269 (1987): 92–113.

[40] For existing scholarship on Tahara Haruji, see Hidehiro Tatsushima, "Tahara Haruji: Mainoriti No Koe O Daiben Shita Taishū Seijika," *Buraku Kaihō*, no. 671 (2013): 40–55. Toshiyasu Koshōji, "Buraku Kaihō to Shakaishugi: Tahara Haruji Wo Chūshin Ni," in *Shakaishugi No Seiki*, ed. Haruhiko Hoshino and Naoki Kumano (Kyoto: Hōritsubunkasha, 2004). Koshōji Toshiyasu, "Senji-Ka No Tahara Haruji -- Sakai Toshihiko Nōmin Rōdō Gakkō No Saihen Katei O Chūshin Ni," *Buraku Kaihō Kenkyū/Buraku Kaihō Jinken Kenkyūjo Kiyō* , no. 183 (2008): 2–15.

[41] Many scholars have written extensively on the cross-racial solidarity and alliance between Japan and African Americans. To list a few here: Marc Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China : Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945* (Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press, 2000). Gerald Horne, *Facing the Rising Sun* (New York: NYU Press, 2018). Yuichiro Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism : Afro-Asian Solidarity in Twentieth-Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

[42] Yuichiro Onishi, "The New Negro of the Pacific: How African Americans Forged Cross-Racial Solidarity with Japan, 1917-1922," *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (April 2007): 191–213, https://doi.org/10.1086/jaahv92n2p191.

Marcus Garvey and UNIA held a distinctive character, as he maintained a critical stance towards Japan's exclusion of marginalized groups like the burakumin and the racial dynamics in America. This perspective would subsequently shape his political activism and reformist aspirations through the establishment of several emigration schools across Japan. His involvement in Japan's colonial expansion and his perception of emigration as a potential avenue for buraku liberation will be further explored in Chapter Three. Through his reform of emigration schools, Tahara expressed the belief that emigration provides a transformative perspective for burakumin seeking freedom- symbolizing new opportunities for buraku leaders and their followers to establish self-sufficiency and communal existence.

Chapter One: The Love-Politics of Buraku Feminists:

Voices from Women's Suiheisha and Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly

Introduction

In 2002, the eightieth anniversary of Suiheisha's establishment was celebrated through various publications and events that glorified the movement's past. However, amidst these celebrations, a book titled *Liberation from the Suiheisha Legend* (*Suiheisha densetsu kara no kaihō*) was published by Asaji Takeshi, Kurokawa Midori, Sekiguchi Hiroshi, and Fujino Yutaka-four prominent scholars in buraku studies. This book took a different approach to reevaluating the movement's history, challenging and demystifying its legacies. The scholars drew on Suiehsiha's participation in war mobilization, as well as the voices of women and Zainichi Koreans, to argue that it was urgent to deconstruct the movement's legend as it has, in some ways, become a barrier to the rise of new forms of activism in the buraku communities.[43]Unlike previous scholars and activists who solely blamed the Japanese state and the majority society for neglecting buraku discrimination and the conditions of buraku neighborhoods, the four scholars took a risk by breaking the eighty-year fantasy and submitting Suiheisha's narrative to a credibility test. They challenged the movement's long-term silence on its war responsibility and the disciplinary control over buraku subjects to find new modes of organizing.

At the outset of the book, Fujino emphasized the need to confront the historical reality of the buraku movement rather than its mythologized version as "a critical evaluation of the current

[43] A few scholars have also challenged the legitimacy of Suiheisha and its leaders in the past. Ian Neary, for instance, had written extensively on the life of Matsumoto Ji'ichiro to point out the contradictory nature of his leadership and the negative influence heroism has cast on buraku activism. The other example would be the aforementioned historian, Kim Jung-Mi. Ian Neary, *The Buraku Issue and Modern Japan / the Career of Matsumoto Jiichiro* (London: Routledge, 2010). Jung-Mi Kim, *Suihei Undōshi Kenkyū:Minzoku Sabetsu Hihan* (Tokyo: Gendai Kikaku-shitsu, 1994).

state of research on the Suiheisha movement reveals a lack of organization of its histories and mutual academic criticism."[44] For Fujino, the efforts to bring in the uncomfortable parts of the movement's history comes from the belief in "the historical facts (*rekishi no jijitsu*)" as it's through uncovering the historical reality can we initiate new discussions and opportunities for activism in contemporary buraku communities. However, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues in *Silencing the Past*, "the constructed past itself is constitutive of the collectivity." We shall be reminded that the production and reproduction of the buraku past go hand in hand with the constitution and remodeling of buraku-ness.[45] There is a need to challenge the content of existing buraku history writings and the reasons and methods behind their omissions. The incorporation of marginalized voices, such as those of women and Zainichi Koreans, and the recognition of Suiheisha's nationalist and imperialist past require us to do more than uncover historical truths. Instead, it calls upon us to consider alternative definitions of freedom and liberation presented by internal and external critiques of the movement. The current limitation of our ability to imagine buraku resistance is rooted in a narrow understanding of resistance and liberation, originally established by the Suiheisha movement and subsequently left largely unquestioned by scholars.

This chapter examines the history of buraku activism in Imperial Japan, focusing on the conflicting stories and narratives of liberation and freedom brought by the different perspectives from people on gender, racial and ethnic identity, and national belonging. What I call the contested burakuness constitutes a form of resistance, whether it was in response to the state's attempt to assimilate outcasts into imperial subjects or to the efforts of male buraku leaders to control their representation. Although the Suiheisha movement and its legacies have largely

[44] Asaji Takeshi, Kurokawa Midori, Sekiguchi Hiroshi, Fujino Yutaka, *Suiheisha tensetsu kara no kaihō*, Kamogawa Shuppansha, 7.
[45] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1995), 16.

dominated the narratives of buraku identity, it is important to recognize that these narratives are constantly being contested by the voices of both prewar and postwar buraku women activists who seek to define themselves rather than being defined by others. The chapter is divided into three parts. In the initial section of the chapter, the focus is on Suiheisha's early discourses regarding burakuness and the leader's efforts to establish it as a source of pride for the buraku community's empowerment and mobilization. Despite Suiheisha's efforts to instill pride in the buraku communities through their rhetoric on burakuness, the movement's focus on militaristic and masculine language and culture ultimately became oppressive for those buraumin who could not identify with their ideologies. As a result, for those burakumin, their own ideas of liberation were dismissed, and they found themselves constrained by the very movement that was supposed to empower and liberate them. This section examines the historical documents from the earlier years of the Suiheisha, such as the founding documents and the writings of its leaders, to analyze their conceptualization and mobilization of the modern buraku identity.

Both the second part and the third part of the chapter focus on the history of buraku women activists, one of the most glaring arenas of the movement's internal politics. Examining their various attempts to find spaces within the buraku movement to craft their own agendas and ideas of liberation, this chapter examines the histories of the short-lived Women's Suiheisha (1923-1928) and Buraku Liberation National Women's Assembly (*Buraku kaihō zenkoku fujin shūkai* 1956-present) to trace the continuities and discontinuities in buraku women's activism from interwar to postwar years. Inspired by the feminist movements of the late 1910s and early 1920s, particularly the New Women's Association (*shin-fujin kyokai*,) a group of buraku women became involved in the struggle for women's rights in politics, education, and employment and

advocated for increased awareness of issues such as reproductive violence and household labor.[46] As women from buraku communities, they tackled gender-related concerns that the male-dominated Suiheisha movement had cast aside; these issues included the representation of women in Suiheisha meetings and decisions, violence against buraku women laborers in workplaces, and their restricted access to the public sphere due to their domestic responsibilities. Their writings challenge the Suiheisha's established belief that the revelation of the subaltern's internal politics should be compromised in the making of buraku solidarity and reveal that Suiheisha itself has also become another actor complicit in the repression of internal voices of the buraku communities and the creation of hegemonic discourse over its resistance. Despite its brief existence of only five years, the Women's Suiheisha did not mark the end of buraku women's activism; the Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly held its inaugural national meeting in March 1956, attended by over 1000 women from 16 prefectures, rallying around the slogan "If the women change, buraku will change."[47] This movement, along with its annual meetings, has provided buraku women with a platform to share their experiences and engage in dialogues with fellow activists. Critiques of patriarchy and masculinity have emerged as central themes in the movement's understanding of their liberation, transcending buraku-focused struggles.

The part on Women's Suiheisha delves into the remarkable endeavors undertaken by women writers such as Sakamoto Kazue, Takahashi Kurako, and Okabe Yoshiko, among others. In a time marked by the prevailing patriarchal ethos of the Suiheisha movement, these women writers positioned "love" and "humanity" at the core of their struggle for liberation. In contrast to Suiheisha's identity-based mobilization, which disciplined and required a proud proclamation of

[46] For a detailed history of Women's Suiheisha, see Yūko Suzuki, *Suiheisen O Mezasu Onnatachi: Fujin Suihei Undōshi* (Tokyo: Domesu Shuppan, 2002).
[47] The original words in Japanese writes, "fujin ga kawareba buraku ga kawaru." Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute, *Shashin de Miru Sengo 60-Nen — Buraku Kaihō Undō No Ayumi*, 2004.

buraku origin, those women provided an alternative perspective on organizing and identifying to advocate for a more inclusive and compassionate self-liberation and community empowerment. Takahashi Kurako's essay, "*From Sorrow, for the Sake of Love and Freedom* (*Kanashimi no naka kara ai to jiyū no tame*)" recounts her encounters with constant bullying and discrimination and the subsequent feeling of fear and alienation growing up as a buraku woman in school. While she did credit the Suiheisha movement's call for liberation, she did not base liberation on the concept of respect (as outlined in Suiheisha's Declaration.) Instead, she drew upon her experience to explore the transformative power of love in envisioning "a society of light, a world of freedom, and a country of love."[48] The politics of love put forward by Black feminists during the second wave of feminism share parallels with what Takahashi imagined despite the different historical contexts. What Takahashi meant by "love for humanity," a form of love that transcends identity politics and personal sentiments, aligned with the arguments put forward by bell hooks and Audre Lorde regarding the definition of love beyond the personal realm, serving as a foundation for radical re-imaginings. Black feminists' attachment to love-politics originated from seeing "love as a significant call for ordering the self and transcending the self, a strategy for remaking the self and for moving beyond the limitations of the selfhood," dependent upon "a dual commitment to mutual vulnerability and witnessing."[49]

These buraku feminists also suffered from feelings of alienation within romantic relationships and marriages. As the wife of Sakamoto Seiichirō, a prominent figure in Suiheisha, Kazue's writing in her diaries shed light on the profound loneliness, alienation, and self-doubt. While Seiichirō moved to Tokyo to pursue his career, Kazue found herself left behind to fulfill

[48] Kurako Takahashi, "Kanashimi No Naka Kara Ai to Jiyū No Tame," *Jiyū* 1, no. 1 (1924).
[49] Jennifer Christine Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined after Intersectionality* (Durham London Duke University Press, 2019), 116.

the roles of wife and mother by raising three children alone. With a husband whose main career is finding liberation for people, Kazue found herself stranded in exploring her self-worth due to Seiichirō's extramarital relationships. It was those stories, emblematic of the struggles faced by many women within the buraku communities and beyond, that led to Ōta Shizuko's angry open letter titled, "To Despotic Men (*Bōkun no danshi e*)." Ōta urged those male leaders to reflect on their treatment of women activists, who were treated as "inherently inferior" and like "concubines," directly calling the movement's hyper-masculine culture as another layer of domination they had to struggle against.[50]

On the other hand, the postwar era also saw the emergence of Buraku Liberation Women's Assembly, witnessing the rise of a new generation of buraku feminists who continued many of the legacies of their predecessors of Women's Suiheisha. They boldly confronted the politics ingrained within the Buraku Liberation League, requested representation of female members in the movement's national committees, and formed local branches as sites of community engagement and empowerment. Central to their activism was the establishment of literacy movements within local branches. Through these initiatives, women, mothers, and grandmothers were introduced into the realm of written expression, intimate conversations, and the exploration of literature. Within the intimate spaces of these classrooms, those women previously deprived of chances of education due to poverty and discrimination found a sense of community and fostered bonds of solidarity. Echoing the sentiments long sought after by pre-war buraku feminists like Takahashi, these classrooms became spaces where the power of love unfolded.

[50] Shizuko Ōda, "Bōkun No Danshi E," *Jiyū*, no. 4 (1924).

Suiheisha's Early Rhetoric

This section analyzes the various iterations of Suiheisha's narratives surrounding buraku identities and liberation from its inception in 1922 to its disbandment in 1942 by highlighting how the buraku communities identified themselves in relation to the national community. During Japan's rapid nationalization, Suiheisha and its leaders employed a range of strategies and languages to mobilize the buraku population, molding the concept of buraku-ness to fit the specific historical context. The analysis begins with the founding of Suiheisha in Nara Prefecture in the spring of 1922, with a focus on its first declaration statement and established principles. The former served as a rallying call for the grassroots movement's initiation, while the latter explicitly articulated the major demands and goals for buraku liberation envisioned by the movement leaders. Suiheisha saw itself as an authorized representative to make claims on behalf of their "tokushū burakumin" identity in the pursuit of "total liberation." The three most fundamental principles are:

1. We, the *Tokushū Burakumin*, shall achieve total liberation through our efforts.
   (特殊部落民は部落民自身の行動によつて絶対の解放を期す)
2. We, the *Tokushū Burakumin*, demand complete liberty to choose our occupations and economic freedom and are determined to obtain them.
   (吾々特殊部落民は絶対に経済の自由と職業の自由を社会に要求し以て獲得を期す)
3. We shall awaken to the fundamental principles of humanity and march toward the perfection of mankind.
   (吾等は人間性の原理に覚醒し人類最高の完成に向つて突進す)[51]

[51] There have been many versions of translation of the documents; I decided to use the one from Ian Neary for its clarity and wide circulation among the English-language scholarship on buraku history. Ian Neary, *The Buraku Issue and Modern Japan: the career of Matsumoto Jiichiro*, 32. Ref. Watanabe and Akisada, *Buraku Mondai Suihei Undō Shiryo Shūsei*. (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobō) (vol. I, 1973; vol. II. 1974a; vol. III, 1974b; supplementary vol. II, 1978), 26.

The writings of the three principles by Hirano Shōken and Sakamoto Seiichirō employed a discourse that resonated with the intellectual and political climate of the 1920s. Against the backdrop of the aftermath of WWI and the Russian Revolution of 1917, socialist rhetoric, which was infused with a pervasive sense of disillusionment and a critical re-evaluation of established social structures, emerged as a powerful force that fostered ideas of self-determination and the liberation of colonized people. The early Suiheisha leaders envisioned the liberation of the buraku community, as outlined in the three principles, to entail occupation and economic freedom, achieved by their own hands and in the pursuit of human and universalistic ideals. It is important to note that although buraku discrimination permeated all aspects of life, including marriage, education, and housing, the emphasis placed on Hirano and Sakamoto on occupation and economic freedom is noteworthy as they viewed these two factors as the primary drivers behind the marginalization. To understand how this vision of freedom came about, it is important to revisit the seminal documents and theories circulated among buraku intellectuals before the founding of Suiheisha.

In 1921, a predominant Japanese socialist activist and a Waseda University Professor, Sano Manabu, published an article titled "Special Burakumin Liberation Theory (*tokushū burakumin kaihōron*,)" in which he discussed the historical origin and class formation of burakumin and how liberation would look like for the group.[52] Although Sano began his article by establishing the historical formation of burakumin as a "subjugated race since ancient times," based mainly on Torii Ryūzō's anthropological research, his analysis leaned heavily towards a class-based approach. Sano argued that the formation of the buraku class was not primarily due to racial or ethnic differences but rather resulted from the denial of access to means of

[52] Manabu Sano, "Tokushū Burakumin Kaihōron," *Kaihō*, no. July (1921).

production, which began with their ancestors, slave groups, in the Heian period. He maintained that the Heian period first witnessed the development of the slave groups into a class due to the evolution of the economic organization and differentiation of occupations, which led to the primitive form of classes as people were excluded from agricultural production, which was the means of production. Moreover, Sano discussed how such class characteristics were further strengthened during the following Kamakura and Tokugawa periods, as bias against people engaged in non-agricultural sectors increased, constituting today's buraku discrimination.[53] To eradicate buraku discrimination, Sano argued, would require burakumin to "demand the abolition of their unjust social status."[54] Although many buraku scholars criticized Sano's characterization of burakumin as racially and ethnically distinct from Japanese, his theories sparked numerous discussions among buraku intellectuals due to his emphasis on the impact of class formation on the plight of burakumin and his use of socialist language to articulate a path towards their liberation. Saikō Mankichi visited Sano in Tokyo after his article, urging him to leave his professorship and join the movement. Meanwhile, Sakamoto Seiichirō, one of the two people who drafted the three principles of Suiheisha, stated that Sano's article motivated them to begin organizing the movement immediately.[55] On the other hand, Sano's response to the rising movement was, "It seems that this article became a very small indication of the rise of the Suiheisha movement. It played a role as a catalyst for some action that was already beginning to take place among the people of Kashiwara [where they were active] at the time. I was really

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Akiko Kirimura, "Shakai Shugi No Buraku Ninshiki to Shoki Suihei Undō," *Dōwamondai Kenkyū: Ōsakaichiritsudaigaku Dōwamondai Kenkyūshitsu Kiyō* 6 (1983): 143–83, 44.

happy while reading a letter from Hirano Shōken in which he said, ‘Your article was the dawn bell for our race.’”[56]



Figure 1: the original copy of pamphlet[57]

The ideas sparked by Sano’s article quickly led to more action, with a group of buraku intellectuals called *Enkai*, which included Sakamoto Seiichirō, Yoneda Tomi, Saiko Mankichi, and others, publishing a pamphlet called “For a Bright Future- The Purpose of Establishing the Suiheisha (*yoki-hi no tame ni- Suiheisha sōritsu shuisho*)” (Figure 1.) The pamphlet was printed at the *Dōhōsha* publishing company under the arrangement of Miura Sangendō, the chief priest of Seigan Temple in the Kashiwara area and a journalist for the *Chūgai Nippo* newspaper and

[56] Ibid., 145. The original words of Sano Manabu could be found in Manabu Sano, “Suihei-Sha Hōmon-Ki,” *Tanemakuhito* February 1923 (1923).
[57] Suiheisha Historical Museum, “Mein Tenji `Wakaki Chikara Ga Atsumaru Tok’,” www1.mahoroba.ne.jp, accessed May 16, 2023, http://www1.mahoroba.ne.jp/~suihei/tenji04.html.

was sent to various parts of the country based on the subscriber list of *Meiji no Hikari*.[58] Having been strongly influenced by the ideas of Sakamoto and his associates, Miura supported the group through the financial resources of his temple and his connections to newspapers to aid in establishing the movement in Kashiwara, Nara Prefecture, where it originated. This pamphlet largely reflected the concepts and ideas of liberation presented in Sano's article; circulated among buraku communities, these buraku activists tried to call for the message that "the past movement carried out by non-buraku people have always been incomplete, and this time, the liberation of buraku should be pursued seriously by burakumin ourselves."[59] Throughout the pamphlet, the buraku intellectuals invoked the writings of Romain Rolland, William Morris, Maxim Gorky, and Sano Manabu to discuss how their call for liberation of the buraku mass was under the influence of Socialist values. Hirano Shōken wrote the first and second clauses, while Sakamoto Seiichiro wrote the third for the mission to "unite the local movements to supersede the local concerns for a united national movement."[60] With phrases such as "liberation," "freedom," and "human nature," they spoke a language that aligned with socialism's advocacy for economic and social equality among individuals and the elimination of social classes and hierarchies. [61] Historian Kurokawa Midori has argued that the emergence of socialism in Meiji Japan was accompanied by a tension between two distinct trends, namely the "principle of universalism" and the "politics of differences." [62] The idea of equality, which served as a

[58] *Chūgai Nippo* is a religious paper published by the Chugai Nippo company based in Kyoto. Meiji no Hikari, on the other hand, was a periodical published by *Teikoku kōdōkai*, a group that promoted buraku intergration and assimilation.
[59] Suiheisha, "Yoki-Hi No Tame Ni- Suiheisha Sōritsu Shuisho," *Suihei* 1, no. 1 (1921).
[60] Takeshi Asaji, *Suihei-Sha No Hara-Zō — Buraku Sabetsu Kaihō Undō Soshiki Ningen* (Osaka: Kaihō shubbansha, 2001), 57.
[61] The original words in Japanese were: liberation (解放) freedom (自由) humanity (人間性の原理)
[62] Mirdori Kurokawa, *Tsukurikae Rareru Shirushi — Nihon Kindai Hisabetsuburaku Mainoriti* (Buraku kaihō jinken kenkyūjo, 2004),128. Quoted and further developed by Hankins, *Working Skin*, 228.

presupposition for socialism, was not institutionalized or widely recognized prior to this period. As a result, many individuals and groups felt the need to redefine themselves and establish their position in a rapidly changing society. This process of self-definition often involved the "politics of differences," whereby minority groups asserted their unique sociopolitical situations in relation to the majority population as well as in defining their positionalities within the national community. From this perspective, the Suiheisha Declaration, which is one of the most important documents related to the movement's establishment, can be regarded as an effort to define the buraku mass and to politically mobilize them based on that definition,

> Tokushu Burakumin throughout the country: Unite!
> Long-suffering brothers! Over the past half-century, the movements on our behalf by many people and in such varied ways have yielded no appreciable results.
> This failure is the punishment we have incurred for permitting ourselves and others to debase our human dignity. Though seemingly motivated by compassion, previous movements corrupted many of our brothers. Thus, it is imperative that we now organize a new collective movement to emancipate ourselves by promoting respect for human dignity.
>
> Brothers! Our ancestors pursued and practiced freedom and equality. They were the victims of the base, contemptible class policies, and they were the manly martyrs of industry. As a reward for skinning animals, they were stripped of their living flesh; in return for tearing out the hearts of animals, their warm human hearts were ripped apart. They were even spat upon with ridicule. Yet, all through these cursed nightmares, their human pride ran deep in their blood. Now, the time has come when we human beings, pulsing with this blood, are soon to regain our divine dignity. The time has come for the victims to throw off their stigma. The time has come for the blessing of the martyrs' crown of thorns.
>
> The time has come when we can be proud of being Eta.
> We must never again shame our ancestors and profane humanity through servile words and cowardly deeds. We, who know just how cold human society can be, who knows what it is to be pitied, do fervently seek and adore the warmth and light of human life from deep within our hearts.
>
> Thus is the Suiheisha born.
> Let there be warmth in human society, let there be light in all human beings.[63]

[63] Suiheisha, "Suiheisha Declaration," March 3rd, 1922. As there are many versions of English translation of the declaration, the one I am using here is the official version from the Buraku Liberation League. Buraku Liberation

Drafted by Saikō Mankichi, the Suiheisha Declaration, considered Japan's first human rights declaration, holds significant importance in the history of minority struggles in Japan. Saikō and his colleagues used the term "contemptible class policies" to describe the structures that created and maintained discrimination of burakumin as class-based; they committed to the ideas of "self-liberation" and "self-determination" through the assertion of a proletarian class identity of the buraku population. The message at the core of the text- "Thus, it is imperative that we now organize a new collective movement to emancipate ourselves by promoting respect for human dignity"- highlights the differences Suiheisha wishes to draw from earlier buraku-related movements by confronting discrimination with their own power rather than relying on the sympathy of the broader society.[64] Ending on the notion "Let there be light for humanity," these Suiheisha activists defined humanity in term of "respect" from the majority society as their goal, rather than the previous movements that focused primarily on integration and assimilation.[65]

League Tokyo, "Suiheishasengen Eibun," blltokyo.net, accessed May 15, 2023, http://blltokyo.net/siryou/kiso/suiheisya_sengen3.html.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.



Figure 2. Saikō Mankichi speaking to buraku activists, 1923.[66]

What's more important is a new buraku identity Suiheisha tried to create based on two things: the suffering of their ancestors and the ongoing discrimination caused by their occupations (referred to as "a reward for skinning animals" and "tearing out the hearts of animals")[67] Among others, Anthropologist Joseph Hankins, has explored how this new identity problematizes those who do not rise up and fight for their human dignity. Hankins suggests that, "Not answering this summon works against the ethical fight for freedom and dignity; it also, perhaps more perniciously, denies the attempt to authorize individuals to choose their social identity."[68] The rhetoric of victimhood

[66] Mankichi giving a speech at Higashi Jujo, picture from Buraku kaihō dōmei chūō honbu, ed., *"Shashin Kiroku Zenkoku Suihei-Sha"* (kaihō shubbansha, 2002).
[67] Historian Kurokawa Midori offers an excellent account on the historical background of the founding of *Suiheisha*. Per her argument, the founders of Suiheisha defined burakumin primarily by occupational and genealogical ties. See Midori Kurokawa, "Hisabetsuburaku to Seisabetsu," in *Kindai Nihon to Suiheisha* (Osaka: Kaihō shuppansha, 2002).
[68] Joseph Hankins, *Working Skin*, 82.

is a key aspect of Suiheisha's discourse on buraku identity as exemplified by the statement "the time has come when we can be proud of Eta." This quota captures the movement's aim to find positivity from the stigmatized term that has confined their physical movement and socioeconomic mobility.[69] Furthermore, the declaration claimed that "we must never again shame our ancestors and profane humanity through servility,"; equating being subservient to non-buraku as disrespectful to humanity and shameful to their ancestors, the leaders had a very particular definition of what could be called buraku resistance. To achieve their goal of mobilization, the movement's success relied on individuals' proudly declaring their buraku identity. Subsequently, concealing one's buraku origin would be considered defeatist and a sign of low self-esteem. Therefore, the movement viewed the recognition of one's buraku identity, by both one's own and society, as a psychological, political, and ethical obligation; this becomes more obvious with Suiheisha's reception of Shimazaki Tōson's novel, *Hakai*.[70]

Hakai, translated as "The Broken Commandment," was self-published in 1906. The story centers around the experiences and struggles of a protagonist named Ushimatsu, an eta who is passing as a non-burakumin in Japanese society. Ushimatsu is haunted by the fear of getting his identity exposed and the shame of hiding while also trying to keep his father's commandment of not telling anyone his buraku origin. At the end of the story, he publicized his buraku origin and left for Texas.[71] The novel gained popularity upon its initial release, leading to its inclusion in the Shimazaki collection in 1922 and the subsequent publication by Shinchosha publisher in 1929. However, the Kanto Suiheisha branch's condemnation of the novel caused it to go out of print.

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[69] Ibid.
[70] A few other scholars, including Kurakawa Midori, Joseph Hankins and Michael Bourdaghs have examined Suiheisha's effort to discipline its buraku subjects as well as the movement's issue with the novel *Hakai*. I attempt to briefly go over the debate here. For details, please see Hankins, *Working Skin* and Michael Bourdaghs, *The Dawn That Never Comes Shimazaki Toson and Japanese Nationalism* (New York Columbia University Press, 2010).
[71] Tōson Shimazaki, *Hakai.* (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1964).

Following ongoing discussions between Shimazaki and the national committee of Suiheisha, the book was republished in 1939 with significant revisions. It was not until 1953 that the original version was finally reprinted.[72] Regarding the controversy, Michael Bourdaghs noted that the middle of the 1920s witnessed the rise of the Suiheisha movement and growth in public awareness of the buraku issue, which decreased explicit expressions against the group. Howver, as he argues, "With this shift, *Hakai* became controversial. It was attacked not because it urged the inclusion of Ushimatsu into the national community, but rather because its most prejudiced language had suggested a difference that excluded other burakumin from the same community."[73] For the "other burakumin" Bourdaghs referred to, the novel appeared to sympathize with and promote a non-confrontational approach, whether by concealing their buraku origins or relocating. In other words, the path Ushimatsu chose to find inner peace clashed with Suiheisha's approach to "complete liberation," often fought in the form of open denunciation sessions and demands for public apologies from offenders. The hiding/passing burakumin, for Suiheisha, are not only non-participants in a supposedly collective fight but also deniers of an empowering buraku identity the movement tried to create rhetoric around.[74] It is important to note that the story of Ushimatsu was identified with many burakumin who shared the same experiences despite Suiheisha's protests. Shimazaki commented on the popularity of the novel in 1928,

> A guest from a certain buraku community once visited me at my home. He had read Hakai and believed that an author who expressed such strong sympathy towards burakumin must be buraku himself. He came to visit me based on this belief, and when we spoke about our situations, we both laughed. However, there are stories that this work encouraged many people like him to work towards the relief of burakumin. Since then,

[72] Nadamoto Masahisa, "'Sanbo' o tōshite sabetsu to kotoba o kangaeru," *Toshokan zasshi*, vol 810, Nihontoshokankyōkai, 1991.
[73] Michael Bourdaghs, *The Dawn that Never Comes*, 72.
[74] Joseph Hankins goes into many details of what he refers to as the "Ushimtasu" in today's burakumin communities and the Suiheisha discourse on buraku identity, see Hankins, *Working Skin*, Chapter 2.

> numerous individuals whom I had never met before have approached me, revealing that they had read *Hakai* and confided their deep sorrows that they could not disclose [their identity] to anyone else.[75]

Seven years prior to Hakai, Shimizu Shikin had already tackled the theme of passing in her novel *Migrant Academy* (*Imin Gakuen*), which tells the story of a woman whose buraku origin got revealed and relocated to Hokkaido, the country's new frontier, in search of redemption.[76] Through these literary works and Shimazaki's disclosure of the existence of those visitors to his home, it becomes clear that many burakumin chose to pass in order to lead a life without facing discrimination. However, this decision to pass often came with feelings of shame, fear, and sorrow that were impossible to express openly. For those who visited Shimazaki's home, the withdrawal of *Hakai* from the press only meant that they no longer had a place to share their feelings and experiences of concealing their buraku identity. The Suiheisha movement, which purported to liberate burakumin from discrimination and inhumanity, caused anguish and deprived those burakumin who chose to pass the shelter to express or emphasize due to their narrow definition of what buraku liberation should entail.

Women's Suiheisha

Despite the Suiheisha Declaration's intention to connect with buraku communities and mobilize them toward collective action, it is worth noting that Saikō and his associates used the word "brother (*kyōdai*)" throughout the document when referring to their buraku peers. From the outset of the movement, the use of fraternal language to express solidarity alienated women of the buraku communities. This sense of alienation extended beyond just the organization's internal

[75] Tōson Shimazaki, "Yūwa Mondai to Bungei," *Yūwa Jihō* 1, no. 3 (1928). Referenced in Masahisa Nadamoto, "'Sanbo' O Tōshite Sabetsu to Kotoba O Kangaeru," *Toshokan Zasshi* 810 (1991).
[76] Chapter Four of this dissertation discusses Shimizu's novel in greater detail.

politics but also permeated the personal lives of buraku women. This section explores the history of the short-lived Women's Suiheisha and the postwar Buraku Liberation National Women's Assembly to examine the ways in which many buraku women attempted to carve out a space within the movement where they could voice their experiences as both burakumin and women to envision a different feminist idea of liberation from the male leaders.[77] Despite the efforts of the Women's Suiheisha to address their intersectional challanges, the significant gap in social status between those activists and the majority of buraku women who worked as low-class laborers or domestic workers many times made the language used by those female activists fail to capture the experiences of the wider group of buraku women. The postwar Buraku Liberation National Women's Assembly is also not entirely rid of the predicament; the sophisticated language used to express the struggles is not translatable to many buraku women surviving their everyday lives. Buraku feminism has consistently emphasized intersectionality, recognizing the interconnectedness between the structures of buraku discrimination and gender that shape the experiences of oppression among buraku women.

In 1923, just one year after the establishment of the Suiheisha movement, Sakamoto Kazue, who hailed from the Kashiwara area of Nara, where the movement originated, suggested the formation of a Women's Suiheisha. She emphasized the importance of buraku women joining the movement to shed light on the "double or triple layers of discrimination" they face, a struggle that male activists have overlooked. Sakamoto was subsequently joined by many other female activists, including Takahashi Kurako, Nishida Haru, and Masuda Hisae, who collaborated to bring attention to the realities of buraku women's lives by highlighting how households were also sites of oppression to reveal the gendered dynamics of oppression within the buraku

[77] Several scholars, including Kurokawa Midori, Miyamae Chikako, Suzuki Yūko and Risa Kumamoto have studied the history of Women's Suiheisha and the reasons behind its quick dissolution.

community. Their voices came soon after Japan's first women's organization, the New Women's Association (*shin-fujin kyōkai,*) which was founded in 1919 to demand women's political representation and protection in marriage and reproduction. The association, led by Hiratsuka Raichō, Ichikawa Fusaw, and Oku Mumeo, among others, aimed to secure women's social and political rights by demanding the removal of Article Five from the Maintenance of Public Order Act (*Chian keisatsu-hō*) in order to pave the path for a women's suffrage movement.[78] This article's first clause denied women the right to form associations, including joining political parties, while the second clause prohibited them from assembling and participating in or organizing political speeches, depriving women of any means to political expression. The successful petition resulted in the final removal of the second clause from Article Five and the enforcement of a legal amendment in 1922, which enabled Sakamoto and her peers to express their political views and sparked hope for further changes.

Prominent scholars on buraku women's history, such as Kurakawa Midori and Suzuki Yūko have identified three distinct phases in the history of the Women's Suiheisha. The first phase is characterized by a flourishing of women's participation in the movement and saw the establishment of the National Women's Suiheisha at the second national convention in Kyoto in 1923. With many women starting to join their local Suiheisha branches to excavate spaces of expression within the movement, this period also witnessed the emergence of female *benshi* at Suiheisha conventions held in different parts of Japan. The second phase is marked by the significant passage of the "Prospect for the Development of the Women's Suiheisha

[78] This comes from the Yasano Akiko's comment on the activities of the association. Written in 1920, Yasano published an article called New Women's Association's Petition Movement (*Shinfujinkyōkai no seigan undo*,) in which she cited Hiratsuka's original comment 「私どもはこれを以て近き将来において著手しようとする婦人参政権要求運動の下準備ぐらいに考えている」Akiko Yasano, "Shinfujinkyōkai No Seigan Undo," *Taiyō* February Issue (1920).

(*fujinsuiheisha no hatten ni kansuru ken*)" at the third national convention in 1924, allowing the institutional formation of the Women's Suiheisha, this was soon followed by the establishment of its Kanto, Fukuoka, and Osaka branches. The third phase witnessed a decline after 1926 due to increased government pressure and crackdown despite the women activists' efforts to expand, including the arrest of some of its leaders. As a result, many buraku women joined other socialist and anarchist movements.[79]



Figure 3. Members of the Fukuoka Women's Suiheisha[80]

[79] Suzuki Yūko, *Suiheisen o mezasu onnatachi: Fujin Suihei undōshi*, 11-12.
[80] Members of the Fukuoka Women's Suiheisha, Buraku kaihō dōmei chūō honbu, ed., *"Shashin Kiroku Zenkoku Suihei-Sha"* (Kaihō shubbansha, 2002).

The establishment of Women's Suiheisha was made possible only because a proposal was submitted to Suiheisha for passage, revealing that the decision-making power rested solely in the hands of male leaders. A schoolteacher from Osaka, Okabe Yoshiko's speech at the founding meeting of Suiheisha echoed this sentiment even before the proposal,

> As a woman from a buraku background, I had to hide my identity and suffer more than Ushimatsu from Shimazaki's *Hakai* when I stood on the podium. Merely enduring discrimination, insults, and persecution will not lead to freedom. Freedom and liberation must be achieved through our own efforts, and this effort is the solidarity of all buraku people. It's time for buraku women to wake up and become like Jeanne d'Arc to eliminate double and triple discrimination and oppression and become mothers who raise Sparta warriors.[81]

Okabe drew on three analogies to convey the intense suffering she experienced as a buraku woman and her vision for liberation. First, she compared her experience to that of Ushimatsu, the protagonist in *Hakai*, describing her own as more agonizing due to the "discrimination, insults and persecution" she had to endure. While Okabe shared the founding spirit of Suiheisha in her belief in self-liberation, her next two comparisons hinted at her different aspiration for liberation. She expressed her desire to emulate Jeanne d'Arc, the French military leader who played a significant role in the Hundred Years War, and believed she was divinely inspired to help free France from English rule. Okabe invoked Jeanne d'Arc as a symbol of bravery and urged buraku women to rise, just as Jeanne d'Arc fought for France's liberation. In the final comparison, Okabe urged buraku women to assume the role of raising future generations of buraku activists who should aspire to the fearlessness of Spartan warriors, ancient Greek soldiers renowned for their fearlessness in battles. By referencing a female military leader as a role model for buraku

[81] Yoshiko Okabe, "Speech at Suiheisha Founding Meeting ." Referenced in Chikako Miyamae, "Fukashi-Ka Ni Kōsuru Tame Ni- 100-Nen No Buraku Josei Wan Ani O Tsutaeyō Shita," *IMADR Tsūshin*, no. 211-213 (2022).

women to follow in their activism, she nevertheless reminded the audience of the responsibility of motherhood as women.

Okabe, similar to Sakamoto, employed the notion of "double and triple discrimination" to emphasize the distinctive obstacles that buraku women confronted. This idea, which forms a cornerstone of their advocacy for an intersectional approach, was elucidated by Okabe in her greetings written to the Kanto Youth Suiheisha as the representative of the National Women's Liberation. In her message, she argued that the French Declaration of Human Rights only recognized men's rights and that women's status in modern marriage and inheritance laws resembled that of a slave.[82] In other words, the Suiheisha Declaration's audience was only buraku males. This idea was further explained by a writer using the pseudonym Kei in the "women's column (*fujin-ran*)" in Suiheisha's newspaper, *Suihei Shimbun*,

> That is, needless to say, the fact we are suffering from:
> 1. Because we are buraku people (we are much more despised than men)
> 2. Because we do not have the freedom to live freely (especially because buraku people have their freedom of occupation taken away, they are usually more economically exploited as proletarians)
> 3. Because we are women (not just buraku women, but women, in general, are treated more like slaves than men in society)
>
> However, these are not merely natural inevitabilities beyond human control, instead, they are moral principles constructed by humans to exert control over others, as well as longstanding erroneous customs.[83]

Kei elucidates the three forms of oppression buraku women faced simultaneously, which encompass the societal prejudices against burakumin, the constrained socioeconomic prospects resulting from the absence of occupational freedom, and the gender-based discrimination entrenched in a patriarchal society. Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, developed in

[82] Yoshiko Okabe, "Kanto Suihei Undō E Aisazu," in *Shoki Suihei Undo Shiryōshū: Fukkoka-Ban*, ed. Tōru Tanabe, 1996.
[83] Kei, "Buraku Fujin No Tachiba Kara," *Suihei Shimbun 3*, August 20, 1924.

her seminal essay "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," highlights how Black women's experiences are not simply a combination of racism and sexism but a complex interplay of multiple intersecting forms of oppression.[84] In Kei's writing, the concept of intersectionality recognizes that the experiences of triple layers of oppression are distinct from those experienced by buraku men, working-class people, and women. Buraku women, in this case, are required to negotiate three subordinate identities, which frequently have conflicting agendas in which they are overlooked or misrepresented.

[84] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989): 139–67.



Figure 4, Portrait of Takahashi Kurako[85]

[85] Portrait of Takahashi Kurako, in Buraku kaihō dōmei chūō honbu, ed., *"Shashin Kiroku Zenkoku Suihei-Sha"* (Kaihō shubbansha, 2002).

Negotiating with the masculine culture and finding themselves a place in the Suiheisha movement, these buraku women activists found their own way to define themselves and push for an alternative agenda of liberation that is based on the idea of love; Takahashi Kurako's essay, "*From Sorrow, for the Sake of Love and Freedom* (*Kanashimi no naka kara ai to jiyū no tame*)" served the guide for many buraku women. Takahashi, who was born in Nagano Prefecture in 1907, faced discrimination from both non-burakumin and male students during her elementary and middle school years. In this article she wrote at the age of 17, she expressed her strong determination to join the Suiheisha movement and fight for buraku liberation. What sets her apart from the prevailing narrative of the movement at the time is her emphasis on love:

> We are poor girls who were born under the fate of being oppressed and are forced to live at the bottom of society.
> We have suffered from the cruel persecution of society.
> I have been subjected to unspeakable pressure and discrimination since elementary school, when I did not really understand anything. Even now, my little heart is still in pain. I went to the garden where my classmates were playing and begged, 'Please let me join you,' but my nasty friend said, 'I do not like it because if I play with *chōri* [a derogatory term for burakumin], I will get dirty,' False! Sad! Why would you get dirty if you played with us? We are discriminated against as if we were inferior animals. How many times have the eta's children hugged each other and wrung their sleeves, unable to be saved? Every time we complained to the teacher about the rejection we received from the people in our class, we were always coldly reprimanded by the head, who said, 'You guys are bad.' In addition to the discrimination and rejection from our classmates, we were also rejected by the teacher, whom we depended on the most. How heartless it would be for a teacher who teaches many children to glance at us and leave without a single word of consolation. Should we refer to him as a caretaker of many children? May I address you as a teacher? The grief, pain, and suffering that *eta* was born into were etched deeply in my heart daily. Every day, I had to go to school with a heavy, oppressive feeling. In elementary school, supposedly the most enjoyable time of our lives, the persecution around us was so intense that we suddenly became burdened with a depressed mood. The fragile eta children were always crying in the corner of the garden, talking about their sad circumstances. Some sisters even dropped out of school out of anger toward teachers and students who did not understand. Our compatriots were tortured to such an extent that they could not even receive compulsory education. In an irrational society, people pressured my brothers and sisters out of school and called us uneducated. It is like asking someone to run with both legs tied up. All our brothers and

> sisters live under such cruel whips all the time. After enduring such suffering for a long time, I finally approached graduation.[86]

Takahashi begins her writing with a poignant recollection of her childhood experiences in elementary school, where she was ostracized by her peers, ignored by her teachers, and subjected to discriminatory language and behaviors. This leads her to offer a scathing critique of the systematic discrimination that she and her fellow buraku children have faced since they step out of the households for schooling. Takahashi questions the morality of teachers who turn a blind eye to bullying, stating, "How heartless it would be for a teacher who teaches many children to glance at us and leave without a single word of consolation. Should we refer to him as a caretaker of many children? May I address you as a teacher?"[87] This sharp rebuke highlights the teachers' irresponsibility as educators and the lack of basic human decency in treating buraku children. By exposing the indifference of complicit teachers, Takahashi exposes the paradox of buraku liberation. On the one hand, she notes that many buraku children were so severely tormented that they were unable to obtain even compulsory education. On the other hand, the majority of society had long considered burakumin uncivilized, unclean, and uneducated as the basis of their discrimination, without acknowledging that the very schools intended to impart education for the sake of socioeconomic mobility had become battlegrounds of discrimination and bullying towards buraku children as young as seven years old. What's also noteworthy from the paragraph above is the solidarity among buraku children that Takahashi suggested- "How many times have the eta's children hugged each other and wrung their sleeves, unable to be saved?"- she not only refuted the stigma associated with burakumin but also suggested how other

[86] Originally published as Kurako Takahashi, "Kanashimi No Naka Kara Ai to Jiyū No Tame," *Jiyū* 1, no. 1 (1924). I acquired this text from Suzuki Yūko, *Suiheisen o mezasu onnatachi: Fujin Suihei undōshi,* 17-22.
[87] Ibid.

buraku children were her only comfort in those dark days. Such experiences in elementary school definitely shaped Takahashi's thought on buraku liberation and activism in later years.

> At that time, I was preparing for the girl's school entrance examination for the first time. I strongly desired to enter a girls' school, so I begged my parents. Starting the next day, I put everything aside to study. One day, one male student suddenly shouted in front of a large group of people, 'Kurako is a *chōri*, so she will not be able to pass the exam.' I was insulted. At that time, I thought I would be bold enough to say something, but the person I was talking to was a boy, and small demons lined up around him.
> What can a weak woman like we do? I thought about hurting myself and told myself, 'Even if I had to bite a stone, I am determined to pass.' Fortunately, or unfortunately, I managed to get through such a sad day, and now I am enrolled in a girls' school. I thought that a girls' school was a place where there would be no discrimination at all, surrounded by kind people. However, the black devil, with its mouth wide open and terrifying hands spread out, gradually approached me, and no one could truly comfort me. Several times I cried in the corner of my room due to the loneliness and sorrow of being alone, and none of my friends left with no sympathy, even when they saw my swollen eyes. My mother got so worried and visited me a few times. I told her that, 'I did gymnastics in the garden today, so dust got into my eyes.' I applied medicine to my eyes that did not hurt more than once or twice. Whenever I thought about this pain, I wondered when I would drop out of school, but if I failed here, society would ridicule me, saying, 'You thought you could imitate others with your ability, *chōri*?' Furthermore, people would say to my parents, 'It's too exceeding your status or ability to send your kid to a girls' school as *chōri*, drop out of school' or 'It's probably because they do not have money, they have no determination.' Even if my flesh is torn or my heart is pierced, I can endure it myself, but once I think that even my innocent parents will be spit and ridiculed, how can I drop out? I tried to endure it. Aside from the taste of anxiety and sorrow, I lived a boring life. Not only did I go to school in a relaxed and lively mood. Every move I made felt like it was going to break me. Why does society torment innocent people like us?[88]

Takahashi proceeds to discuss her "strong desire" to pass the entrance exam for the girls' school, which was fueled by an incident in which a male student publicly humiliated her for her buraku origin. The guy's comment suggested that her buraku origin, in this sense translated into intellectual incapability, would not let her pass the exam. She felt that this incident was not just about buraku discrimination but also about gender discrimination. Takahashi was too timid to defend herself because the offender was a boy, and he was surrounded by a group of boys. She referred to herself as a "weak woman," but this incident only strengthened her determination to

[88] Ibid.

pass the exam, partly to prove the boy's comment wrong but also to enter a space where she hoped she would be free from discrimination. For Takahashi, the movement she was bullied by the group of boys, she felt that she was treated the way she was because she was both a burakumin and a woman and that her response was also influenced by her identity of both. It was not just one or the other but the intersection of both subordinate identities. Nevertheless, Takahashi's hope for a fresh start at the girl's school was soon dashed; the very same behavior she had experienced from her elementary school teachers was now exhibited by her so-called "friends," who showed no sympathy when she was crying alone in a corner. Despite her desire to avoid discrimination by attending a girls' school, Takahashi was still haunted by the indifference of those around her. However, she refused to leave the school out of fear that her capability would be questioned or her parents ridiculed if she did. This left her no choice but to endure the pain as she did before her elementary graduation. However, her experience at the new school did not imply that gender was no longer a factor. Rather, it revealed that for individuals like her, who grapple with the intersectionality of various oppressive structures, safe spaces are few and far between.

> Moreover, I think there is a huge human rights problem in Japan, as our five million brothers and sisters are discriminated against and are nurtured under the same sun that rises every morning. What is the situation of our country now? Due to the earthquake disaster in Tokyo and the surrounding areas on September 1st of last year [referring to the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake], the nation suffered great damage, and the national debt has increased greatly. Additionally, immigrants are being rejected by the United States due to racial discrimination [the Immigration Act of 1924], and it is said that there is a shortage of food for the growing number of people. Instead of hating the United States, it is more important to take care of our businesses first; ensuring equality within the country is an urgent task. However, even if I say this, wouldn't a stubborn society want to keep our brothers and sisters depressed and tormented? Therefore, we who have awakened to love for humanity must use the weapons of justice and humanity to improve human society that has not woken up. The cruel society is impatient to annihilate the movement that we are sweating and working for under the idea of 'for the sake of mankind.' Having been oppressed for hundreds of years with a bloody history, we protest against the irrationality of society and demand justice, humanity, freedom, and liberation from this

> wrongful society. Advocating for human rights is a natural thing to do. Therefore, we women must fight ahead of men. No matter what task you undertake, you cannot complete it without a girl on the front or back.[89]

In this paragraph, Takahashi diverted her attention to addressing the buraku discrimination from a more theoretical perspective. She listed several significant events within Japan, including the discrimination suffered by five million burakumin, the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923, the rising national debt, poverty, and shortage of food due to both the earthquake and the retrenchment from the boom of World War I. She made the point that the government the people's overfocus on the United States' 1924 Act of Immigration was beside the point as Japan had many internal affairs to tackle first. During a time when Japan was protesting hard against the racist characteristics of the US immigration laws, Takahashi implicitly critiqued the government for being hypocritical as there continued to be serious violations of human rights issues within its own borders. This echoes the argument of Tahara Haruji, a buraku intellectual who studied in the United States. Both Tahara and Takahashi saw the underlying insincerity behind Japan's push for eradicating racism and protesting white supremacism as they viewed the persistence of buraku discrimination as evidence of the government's lack of willingness to solve the issue at home.[90]

More importantly, Takahashi raised a critical point in her activism: the notion of love for humanity. Despite her explicit identification with and support for the Suiheisha movement, her emphasis on love- as a political action- transcended identity-based politics that required people to claim their buraku-ness. Instead, it encompassed a broader and more unrestricted concept of love. This perspective on love preceded the emergence of love-politics of Black feminism during

[89] Ibid.
[90] For detailed discussion of Tahara Haruji's arguments and legacies, see Chapter Three.

the second-wave feminism, in which it was not about a singular identity or a personal feeling of romance, but rather a self-empowering weapon against irrationality and a powerful endorsement of humanity- "justice, humanity, freedom, and liberation."[91] In closing, Takahashi emphasized the importance of women in her vision of buraku activism by stating, "Therefore, we women must fight ahead of men."[92]

> I believe that we must not forget that behind Sakura Sōgorō's work for the people, there was a wife who supported him. For a world-famous economist like [Karl] Marx, his reputation was due to the help of his devoted wife. Blind economist [Henry] Fawcett also dedicated his life to economics with the support of his wife. We must remember the sturdy Jewish women doing so much for humanity. Many others have gained world fame through the help of women. In this way, women truly possess great power. If we only sleep, there will be nothing. We were born to struggle. As women, we must be more and more courageous and fight desperately with a stubborn will and the power of love. Let us unite with each other and rush into the world of freedom to enjoy honor, diversity, and respect. How happy I am now! I am blessed to have been brought up under the guidance of my older brothers and sisters, who have awakened to love for humanity. And I cannot help but be grateful that I was able to realize the pride of the Suiheisha movement. Until yesterday, I was a foolish woman that demeans myself. However, today I am able to breathe fully. I have become a strong woman who can confidently assert that she deserves admiration and respect in a stubborn society. I live by the human conviction that I am not afraid of anything. Above all, we will fight desperately against an irrational society. I am determined to fight unchallenged until I can create a society that enjoys an era of diversity and a world of love and freedom. I believe the time will soon come if people can stand equally. My sisters, scattered across the country, let's shine each other with the hope of moving forward to a society of light, a world of freedom, and a country of love! Let us unite with each other and create a world of truth.[93]

Takahashi also recognized that love in personal and romantic settings could be translated into a theory of justice for buraku women. She listed the female partners of established male intellectuals like Marx and Fawcett, arguing that the domestic, intellectual and emotional labor of these women is rendered invisible by gendered power relations. But Takahashi did not stop at criticism. Instead, she imparted a sense of empowerment, urging women no longer demean

[91] Originally published as Kurako Takahashi, "Kanashimi No Naka Kara Ai to Jiyū No Tame," *Jiyū* 1, no. 1 (1924). I acquired this text from Suzuki Yūko, *Suiheisen o mezasu onnatachi: Fujin Suihei undōshi,* 17-22.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

themselves but be proud of their labor and contribution- a call that aligns with her personal transformation. It is worth noting that, in contrast to the Suiheisha Declaration's use of "brothers" to address the buraku masses, Takahashi consistently used either "brothers and sisters" or "sisters" alone throughout the article. Moreover, while the Suiheisha called for earning respect from the majority society for liberation, Takahashi's definition of liberation was not about earning respect but about creating a space that is revolutionarily different: "a society of light, a world of freedom, and a country of love."[94] Rather than an attempt to forge solidarity based on buraku origin, Takahashi envisioned people sharing the same hopes, imaginations, and love for a common goal. In other words, she did not want to build liberation on the shared experiences of oppression alone but on a shared principle of liberation, a future-oriented collective.[95]

Although Takahashi used the examples of Marx and Fawcett's female partners to illustrate how female domestic and intellectual labor is often discredited, her reference to these women solely as the wives of the intellectual giants reveals was ironic. Within the Suiheisha movement, there was a couple that exemplified the kind of relationship Takahashi described between Karl Marx's with Jenny von Westphalen or Henry Fawcett's with Millicent Fawcett. The story of Sakamoto Kazue and Sakamoto Seiichirō (referenced to as Kazue and Seiichirō in following pages) was a striking example of how female labor was not only overlooked but also how the activism of Women's Suiheisha was seen as supplementary to the male-dominated Suiheisha and the voices of those women were marginalized within the movement. Kazue

[94] Ibid.
[95] I also touch on this distinction between the shared principle of oppression and the shared principle of liberation in Chapter Three in my discussion of Tahara Haruji and Marcus Garvey. The phrases come from Robin D. G. Kelley, "From the River to the Sea to Every Mountain Top: Solidarity as Worldmaking," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 48, no. 4 (2019): 69–91, https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2019.48.4.69..

married Seiichirō, one of the founding members of Suiheisha, at the age of 21 in 1915. In September of that year, Kazue gave birth to their first son. In May 1916, less than a year after marrying Kazue, Seiichirō moved to Tokyo with Saikō Mankichi, who was majoring in scientific mechanics at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. For Seiichiro, this move provided him with an opportunity to pursue his studies with greater freedom. However, the birth of their eldest daughter in 1917 and their second daughter in 1919 left Kazue struggling to raise three children alone, without the support of her absent husband and the children's father.[96]

As well as fulfilling her responsibilities for the household chores and childcare, Kazue also managed the family glue business while Seiichirō devoted most of his time to organizing the Suiheisha movement. While Kazue did not link her personal experience to her proposal for Women's Suiheisha at Suiheisha's second national assembly. For male leaders at the time, the Women's Suiheisha was primarily seen as a means to organize women and enhance the overall strength of the Suiheisha movement, with little attention paid to the gender oppression experienced by buraku women. However, Kazue's proposal shed light on the "double or triple layers of discrimination" faced by buraku women, and she and her colleagues worked to expose the male oppression of buraku women within the family (*ie*) system. They aimed to draw attention to the reality of buraku women's lives, including hers, who were often overworked due to their household duties. Kazue's diary from those years tells us how much pain she suffered from the romantic relationship with Seiichirō, who had always been remembered as heroic figure for buraku liberation,

> Recently, my husband has been seeing a woman who shared the same name as me. He wears fancy clothes and goes to *gosho* every night with her, and returns home between two or three in the morning. At first, I believed in my husband and thought that nothing like that was happening. However, I cannot seem to shake off the feeling. Three years ago, I gave up my ego and dedicated myself to my family, our three kids, and our

[96] Yoshiko Oga, "Sakamoto Kazue Ni Miru Suihei-Sha to Jendā," 44.

> happiness. Tsuku-san and my old sister went to Osaka for the first time for the sake of our two children. However, compared to how I feel now, I am not even sure if I am capable of doing it.[97]

The majority of Kazue's diary focused on her tumultuous relationship with Seiichirō. She documented her emotional and physical struggles resulting from Seiichirō's absence as a father and husband, his extramarital affairs, and their disputes related to family business matters. She wrote several times about the emotional distress this marriage has brought her and how Seiichirō's indifference made her reflect painfully on her faults. Even when she decided to leave, she still spoke of the verbal suppression that Seiichirō had inflicted upon her, "I am always called a fool by you as if it were a habit. It is precisely because I am such a fool that I do not understand the depths of your heart, which seems to have been intertwined with mine for eight or nine years, and thus I am so hesitant…If it turns out that my current doubts are indeed true, then at that time, I will firmly decide in my heart to run away from home rather than doing it hastily."[98] The crying of Kazue was never fully heard by Seiichirō, an activist who devoted his entire career to the business of liberation. On January 6th, 1983, Suzuki Yūko interviewed Seiichirō for his opinion on Women's Suiheisha. Seiichirō said,

> I believed that the Suiheisha could not progress without the awakening of women. There were instances where a man was actually approached by a woman during our promotional activities for Suiheisha. This made me consider the establishment of Women's Suiheisha, an organization for women activists who believed that the most effective way to awaken women was for women to share their stories directly.[99]

While Seiichirō played a role in the establishment of Women's Suiheisha, mainly administratively supporting it for passage, he fell short of fully recognizing the agency and autonomy of women in their own activism. His words portrayed himself and other males (who

[97] Sakamoto Kazue, *Kazue nikki*, September 3, 1925. Her diary is currently kept at the archive of Suiheisha hakubutsukan (Suiheisha Historal Museum) in Nara.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Yūko Suzuki, 60.

were approached by the woman) as the ones who appealed for women's participation, suggesting a hierarchical relationship where women's involvement is contingent upon men's approval. Furthermore, what he said suggested that women's awakening helped proceed the Suiheisha movement instead of centering the experiences and voices of women themselves. The aforementioned writings of Okabe and Takahashi suggested otherwise; women's activism should not be dependent on men recognizing the need for their participation, and their unique experiences have allowed them to offer different visions of buraku liberation, including challenging the underlying assumptions of male authority within the movement. Last but not least, Seiichirō's assumption that women need to be awakened or that their stories could only be effective when told directly by women advertently reinforced a paternalistic notion that women require male guidance or validation for their activism. This attitude of Seiichirō and his male peers had already been challenged almost sixty years ago; Ōta Shizuko wrote a piece powerfully titled "To Despotic Men (*Bōkun no danshi e*)" in 1924 as an open challenge to the Suiheisha leadership,

> Do male individuals hold a view that women are inherently inferior? Or do they engage in despotic behavior as a result of ingrained customs and a system that perpetuates male dominance and female subordination?
> It is crucial for you to consider, as individuals who have awakened to contemporary ideologies, that society can no longer tolerate the degrading treatment of women as mere playthings, even extending to those of us who have become conscious of prevailing societal trends.
> …
> You are still attempting to manipulate women like concubines, even those who have awakened to the currents of modern thought. Such indecent ambivalence towards women will no longer be tolerated by society. I urge you to reflect upon your actions.
> Now men cry out for liberation from the chains of oppression that bind them, advocating for freedom and liberation. We, as concubines, also seek liberation from the dual layers of discrimination. However, as concubines associated with the Women's Suiheisha, our experience entails not only two layers but rather three or four, which deprive us of everything.[100]

[100] Shizuko Ōda, "Bōkun No Danshi E," *Jiyū*, no. 4 (1924).

Ōda's critique of the Suiheisha leadership was a poignant and compelling one. In her analysis, she directly confronts the patriarch culture embedded within the Suiheisha movement and sheds light on the degrading treatment of buraku women as mere playthings by male leaders. This treatment perpetuated the existing layers of oppression that buraku women faced and added another layer of domination. However, Ōda's emphasis on "contemporary ideologies (g*endai shisō*)" also revealed the inherent inaccessibility and untranslatability of the language employed by many buraku women activists to the broader community of buraku women, who predominantly occupied positions as domestic laborers and belong to the low social strata. During the 1920s, the working-class buraku women faced pressing financial concerns (as Takahashi discussed) that took precedence over abstract conceptions of gender equality, a predicament not shared by the majority of activists discussed in this chapter. The underrepresentation of working-class buraku women within the Women's Suiheisha further hindered their ability to identify with and find resonance in such spaces, be it through written works or public orations, thereby creating a disconnect from the lived experiences of figures like Okabe, Sakamoto, Takahashi, and others.

The Postwar Buraku Liberation National Women's Assembly

With the disbandment of Suiheisha in 1942, the buraku liberation forces underwent a transformative process and reemerged as the Buraku Liberation Committee in 1946, subsequently assuming the name Buraku Liberation League in 1955. The significance of the 10th National Convention for Buraku Liberation League (BLL), convened in 1955, extended beyond its symbolic gathering, as it encompassed strategic guidance aimed specifically at buraku youth and women to underscore the urgency of embracing the groups' ambitions and address their

unique needs for the holistic betterment of buraku communities. This resolute call propelled the establishment of the Buraku Liberation National Women's Assembly (*Buraku kaihō zenkoku fujin shūkai*) to be included in the overall strategic planning of the nationwide BLL movement. In alignment with this overarching strategy, the central committee advocated for the prioritization of initiatives catering to buraku youth and buraku women. Acknowledging the potential hurdles faced by the two groups within the movement, the convention stated, "It is incumbent upon us to provide a platform where youth and women can freely articulate their aspirations and illuminate the adversities they encounter, thereby recognizing the root cause of their tribulations in discriminatory governance."[101] This recognition was swiftly followed by a resolute call to action: "We must exert utmost diligence in forging a nationwide coalition against discrimination and strive to cultivate a fresh wave of youth and women leaders and activists for the Buraku Liberation League through immersive education and practical experiences within the respective prefectures."[102] While the central committee demonstrated a degree of recognition regarding the distinct challenges faced by buraku women, it is lamentable that this acknowledgment remained cursory, with the emphasis still primarily focused on utilizing buraku women as instrumental agents to propel the movement forward.

During the transformative decades of the 1950s and 1960s, prior to the efflorescence of the postwar wave of Japanese feminism that burgeoned in the late 1960s, a resolute cohort of buraku women activists, embodying the spirit of Ōda's powerful call from 1924, persistently confronted the entrenched masculine ethos pervasive within the BLL. With unwavering tenacity, they interrogated the dearth of women's substantive representation at the decision-making

[101] Buraku kaihō kenkyūsho , ed., *Buraku Kaihō Undō Kiso Shiryōshū 1 Zenkoku Taikai Undō Hōshin Dai 1] 20-Kai*, vol. 1 (Buraku kaihō dōmei chūō honbu, 1980), 192.
[102] Ibid., 193.

authorities within the movement and the disparities in treatment between its male and female members. [103] The General Secretary of the Central Headquarters of the BLL, who faced criticism on the under-representation of women on the central committee, offered a response that prompted more questioning: "One reason is that the directives from the Central Headquarters were insufficient. However, the bigger problem is that your [the buraku women activists] have a very weak comprehension of theories of liberation and a very low [intellectual] standard. I want you all to reflect on that, and we must systematically overcome this as soon as possible. I want to make sure that two or three people are selected for the national committee at next year's convention."[104]

The unabashed gender-based discrimination deployed by the male leaders of the BLL, as an attempt to appease the voices of buraku women activists, showed the deep-rooted hyper-masculinity of the movement's culture. Those leaders reluctantly acknowledged, if at all, the inadequacies of the central directives, yet concurrently demeaned the intellectual capacities of buraku women, casting aspersions upon their comprehension of liberation theories and intellectual capacities. Such condescension was aimed at redirecting the critique back onto the buraku women activists themselves, subtly insinuating that their own reflections were necessary to rectify those insufficiencies. This rhetoric not only perpetuated gender inequality within the movement but also entirely dismissed the legitimacy of buraku women's aspirations for liberation. Nonetheless, these women sought to carve out spaces of empowerment themselves. They initiated a literacy campaign to recognize the pervasive illiteracy that plagued their

[103] Kumamoto Risa provides a detailed account on the formation of buraku women's agency in relation to the BLL movement as well as how the group challenged the masculine culture of the movement, see Risa Kumamoto, "Hisabetsuburaku Josei No Shutaisei Keisei Ni Hatashita Zenkoku Fujin Shūkai No Yakuwari Ni Kansuru Ichikōsatsu," *Jinkenmondai Kenkyūjo Kiyō*, no. 29 (2015): 21–56.
[104] Ibid., 28.

communities and the barriers the movement's male leadership imposed on their political participation. Started in 1965, this project stemmed from their understanding that knowledge is the most potent tool for emancipation. During the 1990 Buraku Liberation Women's National Assembly, Zaiko Sadako's testimony illuminated the power of writing in her pursuit of liberation. Motivated by the curiosity to know the history of her own community, she joined the local branch of the women's assembly and later participated in the literacy movement run by the local buraku women activists. In describing her own journey, she recounted:

> Our children were not born to be born. The literacy movement stemmed from a genuine concern to shield our children from delinquency. My understanding was limited, as no teaching materials were available at the time, compelling me to engage in heartfelt conversations with our teachers to grasp the essence of our way of life and confront its challenges. Through these interactions, I acquired a multitude of words and their meanings.
> It may sound implausible in the present day, but I was unfamiliar with the art of writing New Year's cards. However, at night, I gathered the courage to send a New Year's card to the teacher's wife, marking my initiation into the realm of literacy. For the first time, I could independently express myself in writing and communicate with others. This newfound literary journey became a pivotal step towards the liberation of the buraku communities. I absorbed an abundance of knowledge, which widened our worlds.
> This small glimmer of enlightenment quickly spread like wildfire, extending its reach to all seven branches [of the Women's Assembly] within a mere three years.[105]

Zaiko's pursuit of literacy was intertwined with her commitment to cultivating a sense of empowerment, not only within herself but also within her children. As Zaiko started with her fear of children's potential delinquency, she saw literacy to offer personal growth and the reshape the trajectory of her children's lives. For these buraku feminists, the concept of liberation transcended the individual realm and extended to the familiar and communal spaces.
The transformative power of literacy became apparent as Zaiko discovered her ability to write New Year's cards and convey her thoughts independently. As Zaiko suggests, the relationship

[105] Sadako Zaiko, "Naze Shikiji Undo Ga Hitsuyō Dattaga," in *Onna Tachi No Keikan Hata- Watashi No Ayunde Kita Michi* (Kaihō shuppansha, 1993), 54.

these women forged in the space of the Literacy Movement's classrooms became a site for intimate conversations, authentic self-expression, and the power of love; this was also confirmed by the words of Hirata Fumiko, the former manager of the BLL Women's Association Amagi Asakura district council in Fukuoka,

> Regarding discrimination, even when someone tells you, 'This is an important matter, you must write it down,' it was unclear what exactly constituted the importance. From asking questions like 'Is there a banker in this villager? A teacher?' to realizing that my work was not stable, to the unjust disparities in land sale prices between villages, we were taught to understand one by one.
> There are grandmothers who diligently returned home, writing down the characteristics they learned in their literacy class on paper. After arriving late to work, mothers hurriedly made their way to the meeting place without having lunch. Together, we have persevered in our pursuit of liberation, finding solace and motivation in one another. As we contemplated the plight of our children who have been denied the ability to write, our attention shifted to the educational challenges we faced. We fought tirelessly to enhance the conditions of supplementary classes, sought opportunities for advanced studies, and advocated for smaller class sizes, achieving victories along the way. Ultimately, our struggle expanded to encompass the realm of childcare, for it is intricately intertwined with our pursuit of equality and justice.[106]

During a symposium held in 1990 to celebrate the International Literacy Year Declared by the Women's Assembly, Hirata eloquently shared her experiences of attending literacy class organized by the local women's association. She unraveled the intricacies of discrimination that had hitherto eluded her perception, from basic questions about the town she lived into the relationship between segregation and land prices. For Hirata, it was a voyage of self-discovery of her personal history and the world surrounding her; it was through the written words that she understood the workings of discrimination better. The eloquence with which she articulated this journey here owed its existence to those classes that endowed her with the power of writing, reading, and speaking. Her depiction of the mothers and grandmothers who dedicated themselves to those literacy classes evoked a profound sense of collective "pursuit for liberation," where

[106] Fumiko Hirata, "Zadan-Kai- Mu Kara Yū O Tsukutta Koro," in *Onna Tachi No Keikan Hata- Watashi No Ayunde Kita Michi* (Kaihō shuppansha, 1993), 156.

they found "solace and motivation in one another."[107] As Hirata and her fellow classmates embarked on this journey of knowledge, they discovered a path to liberation, embodying what Takahashi referred to as "love for humanity." It was within these exchanges that the transformative power of love unfolded, encompassing the aspirations sought by both pre-war and postwar buraku feminists. The nurturing of community and interdependence became their focal point, challenging the isolating grip of discrimination.

Conclusion

In her book *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, Jennifer Nash defined black feminism's love-politics as one based on "vulnerability and witnessing" to see how black feminists treat "intersectional work as loving practice."[108] Instead of getting caught up in debates about intersectionality (whether defending or reclaiming it,) Nash is interested in a loving engagement of intersectionality that propels us to different radical imaginings. Through Hirata's testimonies on the classrooms of the literacy movement, we glimpse what Lauren Berlant meant by "one of the few places where people actually admit they want to become different."[109] This embracement of a shared desire for change, out of a collective openness to each's vulnerability, gave those postwar buraku activists the tools to imagine new possibilities. Predating the black feminists in the second-wave feminism of the 1960s, Takahashi's call for love came after her vivid descriptions of pains and sufferings from her childhood and teenage years, exposing her vulnerability to embrace love as she imagined liberation for a buraku woman like herself would

[107] Ibid.
[108] Jennifer C. Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, 114.
[109] Ibid., 116. Nash was citing Lauren Berlant and Michael Hardt, "Coalition MARGINS | No One Is Sovereign in Love: A Conversation between Lauren Berlant and Michael Hardt," accessed May 16, 2023, http://coalition.org.mk/archives/646?lang=en.

constitute. Sakomoto Kazue, who lived in the pains of Seiichirō's neglect of family obligations and extramarital affairs with other women, cried her thoughts to her diary entries; the pages of her diary became the space of her vulnerability where she bears witness to the moments when she endures violence from the person she loves.

Chapter Two: The Ainu of Mainland Japan: Buraku Emigration to Hokkaido

What people know as the Hokkaidō Prefecture of Japan today has been the home to the Ainu indigenous population for more than seven centuries.[110] For much of their history, the Ainu people lived as hunter-gatherers, with a culture based primarily on fishing, hunting, and gathering wild plants. Ainu residents were the first victims of modern Japan's settler colonial expansion, which pushed them farther and farther north in the decades following the Meiji.[111] Historically referred to as *Ezo* or Aynumosir, the Ainu home island was officially renamed Hokkaidō in 1869.[112] In the same year, the Meiji government established *Kaitakushi*, the Hokkaidō Development Commission, to task the government agency with the administration and settler development of the northern frontier. The first set of laws the Commission introduced included outlawing the Ainu language and lifestyles, forcefully removing the Ainu from their land and property, as well as crafting settlement projects for impoverished ex-samurais. The Commission also invited a group of 75 foreign advisors, many of whom were American agricultural experts, to assist Japan in designing its frontier development with the introduction of modern technology. Those advisors later facilitated the subsidized projects of migration settlement for ex-samurai and displaced farmers (in the later phase) into Hokkaido. The northern

[110] Though there is no scholarly consensus on when the Ainu people became residents of Hokkaido, it is commonly believed that the Ainu culture was established around the 12th or 13th century. There are also Ainu inhabitants in Sakhalin and the Kurils of today's Russia.

[111] Several scholars have explored the settler colonial history of Hokkaido from various perspectives. See David Luke Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Berkeley, Calif.: University Of California Press, 2005). Katsuya Hirano, "Thanatopolitics in the Making of Japan's Hokkaido: Settler Colonialism and Primitive Accumulation," *Critical Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (September 2015): 191–218, https://doi.org/10.1086/683094. Sidney Xu Lu, "Eastward Ho! Japanese Settler Colonialism in Hokkaido and the Making of Japanese Migration to the American West, 1869–1888," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 78, no. 03 (June 20, 2019): 521–47, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021911819000147.

[112] The phrase Aynumosir means "land of the Ainu human." The literal translation of Ezo means "shrimp barbarians," a derogatory term to refer to the Ainu people. In terms of terminology, this chapter will use Aynumosir and Hokkaido, depending on the different historical periods discussed.

island became the first settler colony of modern Japan, resembling many aspects of American settler colonialism, including agricultural development and colonial migration.

Scarcely discussed in the story of the colonization of Aynumosir is the government body's call to lure buraku emigrants to the island, as well as the historical experiences of those buraku emigrants. Throughout the Meiji and Taisho periods, both the Meiji government and prefectural authorities targeted particular buraku communities as potential participants in its Hokkaido emigration plans. The deliberate choice of targeting this former outcaste group renders the concept of disposability explicit; in the decades to come, burakumin would be repetitively chosen as the most suitable subjects to settle into Japan's new frontier in Manchuria as imperial expansion continued. The promise of liberation continued to entice buraku communities to become settlers. In the early 1980s, more than half a century after buraku emigration to Aynumosir, Takushima Houyū describes what buraku emigrants from Shiga Prefecture faced in Hokkaido: "The settlers of unliberated buraku were called 'the Ainu that came from mainland (*naichi.*)' The Hokkaido Government Office did not allow group settlement of more than ten buraku households at once. Incidents of discrimination were manifested."[113]

This chapter examines how the discourse of buraku emigration unfolded in the debates over the empire's plan to colonize Aynumosir. As early as 1786, the chief retainer of the Shōgun, Tanuma Okitsugu had submitted a proposal to the Bakufu's Council of Elders (*Rōjū*) regarding a plan to send 70,000 *eta* as colonizers.[114] Although those early proposals of sending the Tokugawa outcastes or Meiji new commoners (*shin-heimin*) to the northern frontier did not turn into real practices, new calls for emigration to Hokkaido from official bodies and non-official bodies alike emerged again after 1869. A cultural discourse emerged, evident in literature and *rakugo*

[113] Ōyabu Takafumi, *Hokkaidō izhū to ueda seiichi*, 68.
[114] Noah McCormack, *Buraku Emigration in the Meiji Era- Other Ways to Become "Japanese,"* 91.

promoting relocation as a means of liberation.[115] This chapter illustrates how 1) different government bodies justified burakumin as suitable settlers and how buraku communities responded to these calls, 2) Shimizu Shimizu's fiction *Migrant Academy* (Imin Gakuen) depicted utopian ideals of emigration for those former outcast women, and 3) these accounts compare with the historical experiences of those buraku emigrants. The chapter begins with an overview of the emigration history to Hokkaido throughout the Meiji and Taisho periods by focusing on which groups those projects were designed for and intended to target. While the Meiji government used both overpopulation theory and the concept of *terra nullius* (masterless land) as constant justifications for territorial expansion, those leaders also catered their plans to specific groups of domestic population, including ex-samurais, impoverished farmers and burakumin (new commoners.)[116]

The first part of the chapter highlights the different theories that justified burakumin as potential emigrants among Meiji officials, intellectuals, as well as leaders of buraku communities. Specifically, it looks at how different groups pushed for a utopian image of Hokkaido as the ultimate solution to persisting discrimination buraku communities faced after the Emancipation Edict (*Kaihōrei*) and their long-overdue liberty. It also examines the reasons behind the mixed responses from buraku communities to these calls, who were attempting to understand what this chance of migration might mean in economic, social, and political terms. The second part of the chapter analyzes how the utopian representation of the northern island was constructed in literary works. This part focuses on Shimizu Shinkin's *Migrant Academy*

[115] Rakugo is a traditional form of storytelling that involves a solo performer who sits on the stage and uses only a fan and a small cloth as props. The storyteller plays all the characters in the story, differentiating them through changes in voice, postures, and facial expressions.
[116] Sidney Xu Lu, *Eastward Ho! Japanese Settler Colonialism in Hokkaido and the Making of Japanese Migration to the America West*, 523.

(*Imin Gakuen* 1899) and its portrayal of Hokkaido as the dreamland for new commoners to escape existing prejudices in romance and marriage. Shimizu's work touches upon the idea that marrying a burakumin purportedly contaminates the family lineage, a point commonly held by many at the time, and proposes Hokkaido as the perfect destination for those "cursed couples." Furthermore, as a feminist writer, Shimizu endeavors to dismantle the notion of women's subordination in marriages while concurrently crafting a utopian portrayal of emigration to Hokkiado. Different from the government's focus on the broad notions of liberty, these other literary works offered more sensational accounts that resonated with individuals and couples. By focusing on the representation of Hokkaido in the realm of literary production, this section seeks to address the ways in which those writers promoted buraku emigration.

For the last part, I focus on the experience of Ueda Seiichi. Ueda worked as a primary school teacher in Kyoto Prefecture and founded a night school in the Tanaka buraku community. A buraku youth activist deeply involved in buraku improvement projects, Ueda led a group of buraku emigrants to Hokkaido in 1917 and wrote extensively about the hardship they encountered as settlers. Many of the members moved back shortly after the initial settlement due to the frigid winters and scarcity of resources in the destination. Ueda himself also returned to Kyoto after five years on the northern island. Although many historians characterize Ueda's group settlement as a failed attempt, this chapter is interested in exploring how Ueda and many buraku leaders at the time imagined Hokkaido emigration as a plausible path to liberation and an end to the struggles they faced in mainland Japan.

This chapter explores the roles that the liberated new-commoners played during the formation of the Japanese empire and how this shaped their identities in connection to the developing narratives of nationalism and imperialism expansion. It questions the extent of their

involvement in this process and how it impacted their sense of self and belonging withint the changing socio-political landscape of Japan. My analysis echoes existing scholarship that discusses the intersections of the mechanism of imperial colonial governance, Japan's settler colonial history, and its parallels to American expansionism. Focusing on buraku emigration to Hokkaido, this chapter adds the concept of untouchability to the discussion in order to also showcase the liberating aspects of imperialism. Many buraku intellectuals and rank-and-file members saw how becoming a settler afforded recognition and acceptance as fully Japanese, a highly coveted identity or status symbol for the "new commoners" in the early Meiji hierarchical system. This chance to shake off the underclass label to become agents of empire, for many burakumin, signified the Meiji emperor's benevolence. Moreover, the Meiji government's emigration calls laid out the intellectual foundations for incoming decades-long efforts to include colonial subjects that lasted until the end of World War II.[117]

The removal of the Indigenous Ainu population from their lands and the educational assimilation efforts targeting the Ainu were critical factors that allowed for the imagined and actual migrations of other groups, such as buraku emigrants. Nevertheless, the absent voices of the Ainu population in archival records, stemming from what Ann Laura Stoler describes as "organized colonial governance," created narratives of the vanishing Ainu in historical accounts. It is only by examining the educational aspects embedded within these migration narratives that we can discern the faint presence of the Ainu population.[118] This chapter endeavors to foreground the civilizing influences of buraku emigration, as imagined by Shimizu *Imin Gakuen*, to depict

[117] Many historians have written extensively about the Japanese Empire's intention and efforts to include colonial subjects in later periods. Specifically, Takashi Fujitani has provided a compelling discussion on the racial discourses of the Japanese Empire and the American Empire during WWII. See Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire : Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley ; Los Angeles ; London: University Of California Press, 2013).

[118] Ann Laura Stoler and Princeton University Press, *Along the Archival Grain : Thinking through Colonial Ontologies* (Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, Copyright, 2009), 9.

the perception of burakumin as agents of civilization. It elucidates how the Ainu, in particular, were identified as the group requiring civilizing measures with no explicit mentioning, and through this process, the burakumin themselves could attain civilizing objectives to move toward Japanization.

The Beginning of Emigration to Hokkaido

Right before the Meiji Restoration, Ayunumosir had about sixty thousand Japanese and a few thousand Ainu inhabitants. The population reached 3.3 million seventy years later, in 1940.[119] This mass-scale emigration from mainland Japan to Hokkaido was imperative to the initial blueprint of the Hokkaido Development Commission (*Kaitakushi*.) The Meiji leaders, with their strong commitment to embracing westernization, saw the colonization of Aynumosir as a means to present Japan as a modern and civilized nation on the global stage.[120] To become one of the dominators and secure Japan a seat in the age of New Colonialism, Meiji leaders were eager to emulate expansionist techniques and embrace social structural changes in making a modern nation-state. Fascinated by western education and culture, Shimazu Nariakira argued, "Hokkaido, as known as Ezo, serves as the gateway to northeastern Japan and a strategic point for Russia. In recent years, there have been frequent disturbances and conflict…It is a true treasure for Japan…We should cultivate fields, engage in fishing, exploit timber, and extract gold, silver, copper, iron and other untapped resources."[121]

[119] The exact numbers for the island's population around the time of the Meiji Restoration is uncertain. I use the numbers from the registration compilations from the Diet Library of Japan and the Office of Population Research at Princeton University.
[120] Many scholars have explored this topic. See Akira Tanaka, *Hokkaidō to Meiji Ishin: Henkyō Karano Shiza* (Sapporo: Hokkaidō Daigaku Toshokenkōkai, 2000) and the aforementioned work by Sidney Xu Lu.
[121] Nariakira Shimazu, *Shimizu Nariakira Genkō-Roku* (Iwanami Shoten, 1944), 132.

One of the Meiji leaders' first tasks was to declare the feudalist nature of Japanese society. According to the third and the fourth clauses of the Charter Oath, "The common people, no less than the civil and military officials, shall all be allowed to pursue their own calling so that there may be no discontent" and "Evil customs of the past shall be broken off and everything based upon the just laws of Nature."[122] Those clauses, drafted by the early Meiji leaders, laid the legal and intellectual foundation for several initiatives at once. The Land Tax Reform (*chisokaisei*) was introduced in 1873 with the aim to modernize the country's tax systems and stimulate agricultural productivity, involving the transition from fixed rents to a new land tax system based on the assessed value of the land. It also marked a shift in land ownership in Japan; as prior to the reform, the Public Land Public Citizen Law *(kōchikōminsei)* declared that all land belonged exclusively to the emperor, and individual did not have the right to own land as private property. However, the Meiji Civil Code introduced as part of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan in 1898 allowed landlords to engage in activities such as purchasing, selling, and leasing land, which led to the displacement of numerous tenant farming families who had been cultivating the same land for generations.

In the case of burakumin, the Emancipation Edict of 1871 did not come in the name of liberty or rights but out of Ōe Taku's concern over "practical problems that resulted from allowing a minority group with distinct customs to exist within the country".[123] However, many buraku residents today still remember the Meiji Emperor fondly as the edict officially abolished the derogatory names of *eta* and *hinin*, granting the burakumin nominal liberation. To comprehend why the edict came to be perceived as emancipatory, as Daniel Botsman notes, we

[122] *Charter Oath* (*Gokajō no Goseimon*,) was promulgated in 1868 to outline the main goals of Meiji Restoration.
[123] Daniel V. Botsman, "Freedom without Slavery? 'Coolies,' Prostitutes, and Outcastes in Meiji Japan's 'Emancipation Moment,'" *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (December 2011): 1323–47, https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.116.5.1323, 1345.

must consider it in light of the Japanese state's subsequent emphasis on the liberating aims of the Meiji emperor with the intention to prevent the radicalization of the Suiheisha movement.[124] Furthermore, the pre-Suiheisha buraku activists sought to garner support from the state in order to validate their demands for civil rights, as many promoters of buraku emigration to Hokkaido examined in this chapter. Revisiting the Emancipation Edict, it not only did not free the former outcastes, now the "new commoners," from institutional discrimination but also pushed them into deeper poverty. Although clothing restrictions and prohibited use of specific public spaces were gone, burakumin were simultaneously deprived of their tax-exempt status and lost monopolies over their traditional industries, especially leather-making.[125] Trading in their economic security for formal equality, burakumin went from geographically and occupationally locked subjects to landless free laborers in preparation for Japan's rapid industrialization in the decades to come. Land, since then, has become the ultimate desire for countless tenant farmers in Japan, burakumin and non-burakumin alike- the emigration programs to Hokkaido and Manchuria always included land as a subsidy.

Many opposed the emancipation of burakumin. Incidents of riots and raids broke out across Japan immediately after the promulgation.[126] Many rioters, peasants who refused to be seen as on equal footing as the former abject classes, physically attacked burakumin and damaged their homes. The tension continued throughout the next few years. Triggered by the passing of both mandatory public schooling for all children (1872) and the Conscription Ordinance (1873) impoverished farmers and low-class samurais grew more discontent with the

[124] Ibid.
[125] To know more about what *Kaihōrei* affected buraku communities, see Joseph Hankins' *Making Leather: Making a Multicultural Japan* and Kurokawa Midori's *Ika to Dōka no Aida: Hisabetsu Buraku Ninshiki no Kiseki*.
[126] For detailed discussions on peasant riots against the emancipation edit, see Kurokawa Midori's *Ika to Dōka no Aida: Hisabetsu Buraku Ninshiki no Kiseki*.

Meiji government. They started a series of violent uprisings throughout the country, historically referred to as the Blood Tax Riots (*Ketsuzei Ikki*). The name "blood tax" referred to the mandatory military conscription of all male citizens, a sarcastic approach to call out the Meiji government's blood-extracting.[127] Additionally, the two ordinances deprived rural farming families of their young-male and children labor, and the Conscription Ordinance also meant that former samurais had officially lost their monopoly over military services. These laws also further encouraged the mingling of people who previously belonged to different social stratifications. This meant that burakumin could now attend the same schools and be in the same military services as their former superiors. Aside from the many civic offices and newly built schools, the rioters also escalated their violence toward buraku villages, which resulted in the deaths of many burakumin and the destruction of their houses. Figure 1 below shows a map of which villages became the targets of those riots and the resulting casualties:

[127] The Meiji government introduced the Conscription Ordinance for many reasons, including building a strong army for future colonization interests, creating a strong national identity, and promoting a sense of belonging in the name of serving the emperor, among others. Regarding the "blood-extracting" metaphor, scholars Gerald A. Figal have argued that the metaphor comes from an old Japanese misconception of blood-drinking westerners before the Conscription Ordinance. People believed that the westerners "take the lifeblood of children and refine medicines with it, mix the fresh blood of pregnant women and drink it in medicines and also coat electrical wires with the blood of virgins." Gerald A Figal, *Civilization and Monsters : Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan* (Durham, Nc: Duke University Press, 1999). 34. Also see 1. Stefan Tanaka, *New Times in Modern Japan* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

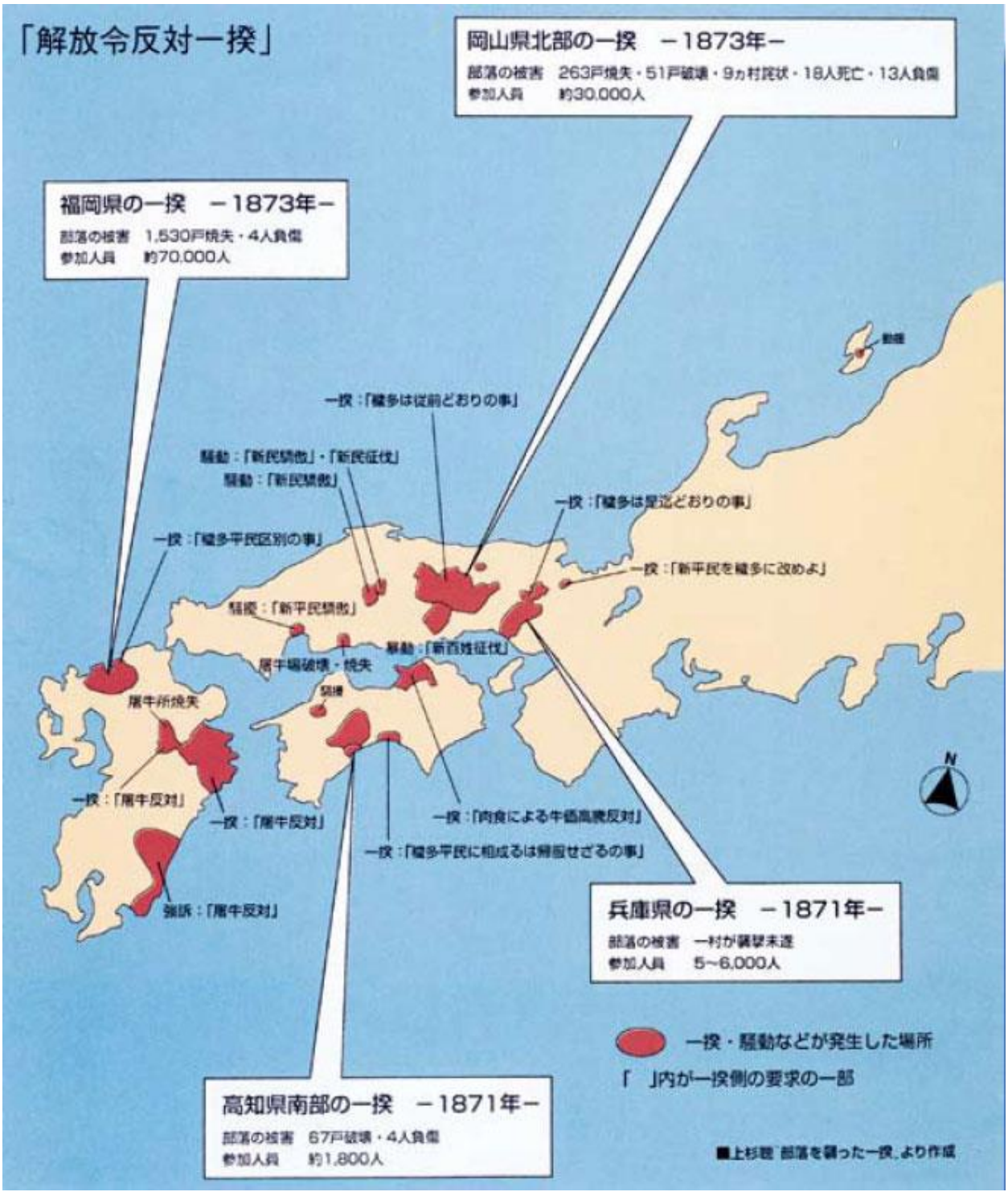

Figure 5: The Peasants Riots against the Emanicipation Edict[128]

[128] The image was founded on Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute's website: Satoshi Uesugi, "Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute_HOMEPAGE," blhrri.org, accessed May 16, 2023, https://blhrri.org/old/blhrri_e/Buraku_Reality/010.htm.

This map only includes the incidents that explicitly made the Emancipation Edict their main target. As the map shows, 1,530 houses in Fukuoka and 263 houses in Okayama were set on fire in buraku neighborhoods. Moreover, 67 houses in Kōchi and 51 houses in Kōchi were destroyed via other means. The riots that targeted burakumin alone left at least 18 dead and 21 injured, not counting the other riots with broader scopes and targets. The Meiji government suppressed the riots with massive arrests and a shoot-to-kill approach, without yielding to any of their demands nor attending to the problems those protests raised, including the continuing discrimination toward burakumin.

The rioters, both lower-class samurais and poor peasants, faced another challenge at the time. In the same year of the riots, land reform was underway in both Aynumosir and the mainland, imitating the privatization of property. With the large displacement of the many peasants and other landless people across the country, the government started hoping that the northern island, with its vast "empty" land, could host the redundant population. Initially, the migration programs targeted lower-class samurais to pacify the de-classed people and acquire the labor to cultivate the new colony. In 1874, the Hokkaido Development Commission launched the program, *tonden-hei*, to recruit those former samurais to be soldiers stationed in the fields of Hokkaido. In exchange for their military services (defending the colony from potential threats, mainly from the Russian Empire,) those soldiers would receive free housing and farming land to be self-sufficient. Those new settlers faced the cruelty of the climate during Hokkaido's winters and their own unfamiliarity with the land's characteristics. Not long after launching the program, the Commission realized that by only relying on the former samurais, they would not get enough people as soldiers and farmers to cultivate and "civilize" the colony in any foreseeable future. As a result, they soon started admitting peasants as *tonden-hei*.

Although many tenant farmers moved to Hokkaido under the project of *tonden-hei*, more settled in Hokkaido as farming units under the land development programs. Farmers from the same hometown migrated in strong leader-centered groups, and they were provided land and other farming facilities as subsidies from the Meiji government. Many other different forms of migration also took place. Private cultivation companies (*kaikon-kaisha*) purchased large tracts of undeveloped land from the government and recruited migrant tenant farmers to work on large, company-managed farms. Others relocated to Hokkaido for religious reasons, notably Christian groups aiming to build their own utopian faith communities based on common doctrines.[129]

Emigration Calls: Targeting Buraku Villages

Burakumin were not the first targets of those call for emigrants to Hokkaido, but they were the next in line. Those calls did not arrive in buraku villages until after the state disbanded the Hokkaido Development Commission in 1882. The earliest call to turn new commoners into emigrants to the island appeared in *Doyō Shinbun* on April 23rd of 1884. The author, Matsumoto Gōrō, titled his article *Relief Policy for New Commoners* (*Shin-heimin kyūsai-saku,*) in which he discussed both the old habits that prevented burakumin from inclusion and assimilation after the Emancipation Edict and the continuing oppression they faced from the commoners' communities.[130] As for the choice of location, Matsumoto argued that the most suitable and convenient destination would be Hokkaido for several reasons, 1) new commoners would be able to become wealthier over there, 2) they would be able to get rid of old filthy habits and customs, and 3) they would be able to interact with commoners on equal footing. On top of these reasons,

[129] The Urakawa Church (today's *Kyū urakawa kōkai kaidō*) was a community center for those Christian settlers. It is located in today's Sapporo Historical Village of Hokkaido.
[130] Gōro Matsumoto, "Shinheimin Kyūsai-Saku," in *Kindai Buraku-Shi Shiryō Shūsei Vol.3*, ed. Tomohiko Harada and Yoshikazu Akisada (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1987), 547–49, 548.

he also claimed that Hokkaido's suitability also lies in the fact that it is the most remote territory of the country, in addition to the protection *tonden-hei* could offer and the colonization plan of the Japanese Empire, making Hokkaido a desired place for those new commoners to reform themselves and find a solution to their plight after liberation.[131]

Two years after Matsumoto's call, another newspaper commentary published by *Yomiuri Shinbum* on July 3rd of 1886 made a more concrete effort to explain what new commoners could contribute to Japan's expanding empire.[132] The piece was titled *Appeal to New Commoners* (S*hin-heimin shoshi ni gekisu.*) The author, who remained anonymous, argued that the colonization of Hokkaido and beyond was necessary if Japan was to rise as a world power and compete with the British empire:

> Among all these European countries, especially if we look at the British Empire, it does not limit itself to the small metropoles. With colonies scattered around the world, we can see its national flags flying everywhere. That is certainly not a coincidence; its people are pioneers who put energy into their actions and extend their abilities beyond the country's borders…If you people can do the same.... when we are angry at the fact that we are not on the same footing with people of other races at this time of enlightenment…If you throw yourselves into such ambitious and active businesses, build New Japan (*shin-nihon*) in colonies beyond more than sixty districts, and have *kyokujitsu-ki* (rising sun flag) brought to wherever you go, your reputation will be restored. The national prestige and strength will be shining overseas.[133]

The writer went on to urge new commoners to become the pioneers of colonization before their Japanese counterparts. With "strong bodies, endurance, and money ready on top of their unity," the writer concluded, "the world is big, and you can find your business and ambition overseas."[134] Emphasizing the momentum of the time- joining ranks with the western imperial

[131] Ibid.
[132] Anonymous, "Shin-Heimin Shoshi Ni Gekisu," in *Kindai Buraku-Shi Shiryō Shūsei Vol.3*, ed. Tomohiko Harada and Yoshikazu Akisada (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1987), 551–52.
[133] Ibid., 551.
[134] Ibid.

powers- the writer argues that the power of the West lies in its imperial expansions. In order for Japan to gain a position in this Age of New Imperialism, the writer urged burakumin to demonstrate both their fitness and loyalty to the nation in cultivating existing colonies and exploring new colonies. The same argument appeared in many other writings of the same period, in both commentaries and literary works. Hokkaido was only the starting point in those writers' blueprint; the expansion had to continue into other parts of East Asia and Southeast Asia, given the popularity of the Southern Expansion Doctrine (*Nanshin-ron*) at the time.

Burakumin were among the primary conscripts for Japan's expansionist designs in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. In 1886, Sugiura Shigetake published a novel called *Hankai Dream Story: One New Commoner's Path to Redemption* (*Hankai Yumemonogatari: Ichimei shin heimin kaitendan.*) A fervent promoter of Japanese nationalism, Sugiura pursued his career in education and politics.[135] He was from a former samurai family in today's Otsu City of Shiga Prefecture, the birthplace of Ōmi merchant. Historically, the place has also had a significant presence of buraku communities and has sent out many migrants. *Hankai Dream Story* could be interpreted as Sugiura's effort to pose a solution to the long-time buraku issue, in which he proposed to have about ninety thousand young buraku men migrate to a new land they could call home.[136] Much of the narrative consisted of a conversation between a crowd of burakumin and a buraku leader about where to go. The story tells about the journey of a hermit that accidentally ran into a gathering of burakumin.[137] Most of the story depicts how the hermit heard burakumin's discussion of the ideal of migration, the suggestion of the buraku leader came

[135] For a detailed discussion of Sugiura's theorization on the links between domestic reform and maritime expansion, see Jun Uchida, "From Island Nation to Oceanic Empire: A Vision of Japanese Expansion from the Periphery," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 42, no. 1 (2016): 57–90, https://doi.org/10.1353/jjs.2016.0005.
[136] Shigetake Sugiura and Nichinan Fukumoto, *Hankai Yume Monogatari: Ichimei Shinheimin Kaitendan* (Sawaya, 1886).
[137] Though not specified in the novel, the hermit mostly likely is a figure related to Buddhism and a person living in seclusion.

through as divine revelation and inspiration to the new commoners. After encouraging buraku men in good physical shape to explore potential territories and laying out the benefits of building their own settlement and country, the leader went on to discuss the potential choices.

The first place he mentioned was Korea given its close distance to Japan and its weak national army. However, he reasoned that because China, Russia, and Japan had designs on Korea it was an impractical choice. Qing China was also out since ninety thousand burakumin stand little chance of occupying even a small portion of a nation of four hundred million. Myanmar was also ruled out as an unideal fit given the established British presence there. Ultimately, he settled for islands located the West to the Pacific, the East to the Indian Ocean, the South to the China Sea, and the North to Oceania. He gave three reasons. First, it was possible to take control of the vast lands there. Second, it would demonstrate Japan's prestige and power. Third, it could be a great addition to the empire's Asia prosperity plan.[138] The story continued, and the buraku crowd portrayed got excited about the plan, being introduced to the basic information of the targeted islands. The leader portrayed the ideal picture of these buraku men making friends with the local Filipinos before they wait for the right time to rise and take control. The story ended with the buraku crowd chanting a song together out of excitement and hope for the future. The first lines of the lyrics went:

> Our party can go forward and back,
> New commoners are breaking out of old habits.
> Why would we ask inside or outside about one's pursuit,
> Time to rise after a long depression and observation.
> Four oceans and eight directions where is good,
> We eye the islands in the South Sea.[139]

[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid., 13.

The story ended with a hopeful tone, full of hope for a bright future for burakumin that aligns with the ambitious expansion of the Japanese empire. Coupled with the burgeoning Southern Expansion Doctrine at the time, Sugiura labelled burakumin the inferior citizens of the nation and the best subjects to be expelled and utilized for colonization purposes. The intention behind the expulsion of burakumin, together with the attacks on and removal of buraku villages, clearly shows how intellectuals like Sugiura hoped to simultaneously use them to advance Japan's colonial aims and purge the nation of its outcastes. By contrast, burakumin believed the empire valued their role as pioneering settlers, marking a fundamental break from a long tradition of oppression and exclusion. The cheering of the buraku crowd at the end of the novel ironically pointed out the contradiction: they celebrated the ideal of being the agents of the empire while the empire saw them as a disposable population to be removed from the metropole and sacrificed for the empire's colonization plans. The Meiji leaders emphasized that the prestige of the nation lies in colonial expansion and saw burakumin's sacrifice as a cost-effective tradeoff for that prestige.

However, the cheering of burakumin should not be interpreted as evidence that they had been completely duped, as it would potentially erase the subjectivity of the group. Specifically, the reasons why migration was an alluring idea for some buraku residents was a more complicated issue. Activists like Ueda Seiichi volunteered to organize his fellow buraku residents within the local buraku community as settlers to Hokkaido because they saw the opportunity for free land, housing subsidies, and farming facilities offered by the emigration programs. Ironically, the disposability of burakumin reflected in many leaders' and writers' narratives worked hand in hand with the desire for recognition and acceptance, which has always been an imperative of buraku liberation. The argument that burakumin were deceived into becoming

emigrants does injustice to their efforts to lead better lives with economic stability, self-sufficiency, and no discrimination.

The idea of redemption, which appeared in the title of Sugiura's work, also was common in how intellectuals' phrasing of buraku emigration in the following decades. While Sugiura's theory found resonance with the Southern Expansion Doctrine, most buraku-emigration theory promoters focused on settler colonialism in Hokkaido for its practicality and urgency. Two decades later, Andō Gidō's piece in newspaper Chūgai Nippō's March 9th issue of 1907 put forward a similar argument.[140] Titled *New Commoner Propagation* (*Shin-heimin fukyō*), Andō started the commentary by describing buraku communities as crime-ridden. Calling these communities "crime factories," he argued that the fundamental solution and redemption does not only lie in "three-months long short-term detention to reform the rotten hearts [of new commoners.]"[141] Andō argued that the real redemption would be education and foreign emigration. He thus continued to argue that "if we have strong men and women sent to nearby places like Hokkaido, Manchuria, Korea or farther away places like the South Sea or the United States" under the complete protection of our government, these men and women could enjoy "constructing the refreshing joyland [*raku-dō*.]"[142] For Andō, buraku men and women owed an obligation to the empire as citizens and for the benefits they received as emigrants.[143] This piece is particularly interesting given its criminalization of burakumin. For him, burakumin needed "mental healing," a process to allow them to understand the concept of shame, education, and poverty.[144] The references to religious practices throughout the article also suggested Andō's firm

[140] Gidō Andō, "Shinheimin Fukyō," in *Kindai Buraku-Shi Shiryō Shūsei Vol.4*, ed. Tomohiko Harada and Yoshikazu Akisada (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1987), 476–77.
[141] Ibid., 477.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid., 476.

belief in burakumin's inferiority and uncivilized manners, which could be salvaged by religious education and emigration.

Andō's emigration call came shortly before the Central Government's effort to target particular buraku villages for emigration. According to Temeoka Kōsuke, an official of the Home Ministry and the Principal of a family school in Hokkaido, noted that the ministry had distributed brochures titled *Guide to Relocation to Hokkaido* (*Hokkaido ijū annai*) to every prefectural government to target buraku communities with heavy subsidies.[145] Temeoka found the move plausible, especially for agrarian settlers who sought land. However, he also pointed to the high crime rate in the poverty-ridden buraku communities. Different from Andō, he used a concrete example to illustrate how crimes were prevalent in such communities; citing the number of crimes in a buraku community near Ueno-chō of Ayama-gun in Mie Prefecture, "among all the criminals, 193 people committed theft, 85 for gambling, 38 for assault and battery, and 15 for handling stolen goods…According to this calculation, all crimes except for assault and battery are all money-related crimes," he illustrates how crime has become one of the major characteristics that buraku communities have to improve on for better integration.[146] Besides crime rates, he accused them of poor hygiene: "impurity is another feature of buraku communities…and there is the necessity to reward them if they can improve on the matter of hygiene. In essence, if we want to improve the conditions of the buraku community, we must encourage them to work on hygiene."[147]

Temeoka was primarily concerned about which directives Meiji leaders shall take for buraku improvement. An overview of the so-called *buraku mondai* (buraku problem) led him to

[145] Kōsuke Temeoka, "Hokkaido Ijū Annai," in *Kindai Buraku-Shi Shiryō Shūsei Vol.5*, ed. Tomohiko Harada and Yoshikazu Akisada (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1986), 67–72, 68-69.
[146] Ibid., 69.
[147] Ibid.

the conclusion that relocation offers the best solution as it allows burakumin to leave the geographical location and the sociality. He also argued that the most suitable occupation for burakumin would be agriculture, as a useful solution to liberate them from geographically dependent occupations. Moving forward, he stated "taken this into consideration, I think relocation is an ideal solution to improve their situation. As they have lived in those places named special buraku for hundreds and thousands of years, they are fenced from the larger world and enclosed from traffic…it would be the best option for them to change the location if they could."[148] Assuming a sympathetic yet derogatory tone in describing burakumin, Temeoka's writing makes no mention of the goal of empire, focusing instead on buraku improvement. He identified two significant obstacles to buraku relocation. First, the community had very strong ties to the land. While he acknowledged the difficulty of leaving one's homeland, it was preceded by a disparaging remark if he were in their position "I would want to walk out of a buraku community as soon as possible."[149] The second problem he identified was the buraku's strong identity and social cohesion. He argued that migration alone would not solve their social dysfunction, but merely relocate the buraku issue to another region. Although he acknowledged that group settlement is the most convenient, having buraku communities in Hokkaido would only worsen their situation. Instead, he suggested having "dispersed relocation, three people here and five people there" for better integration and improvement effects.[150] This theory was later supported by settler colonialism theorists on Manchuria as both a way to assimilate the burakumin and a preventive measure for buraku resistance to discrimination. In the name of integration, sometimes acceptance disguised with sympathetic tone, its core is to break up buraku

[148] Ibid., 68.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.

communities out of reasons such as hygiene or crimes. Essentially, Meiji intellectuals like Temeoka saw the presence of burakumin as a stigma to the prestigious and civilized image Japan tried to build at the time- an inherently lower group incapable of progression. Some saw the group as potentially useful subjects for settler colonialism while accomplishing the goal of removing them from the mainland. From Temeoka's perspective, they should also be cautious about possible buraku communities full of filth in the new colonies if settler colonialism was to demonstrate Japan's civilization. For him, the group's inferiority does not wither away via relocation but only via re-education.

None of these theories resulted in large-scale emigration to Hokkaido, mainly due to the lack of concrete implementation plans; some plans were initiated but never completed for the lack of continual administrative or financial support.[151] However, this chapter argues that the significance of those theories does not depend on the actual movement of the burakumin but the very idea of removing, abandoning, utilizing, and assimilating the group. Though intellectuals differed on the function of buraku emigration and how it should be carried out, the common thread among them lies at the intersection of assimilation, national identity, and imperial expansion. Their untouchability justified their removal and re-education, while their disposability offered the best reasoning for them to become settlers of the new colonies. The idea of needing improvement to end segregation and the concept of being allowed to integrate also shifted the blame to burakumin. In other words, assimilation and disposability do not occupy the polar opposites in those buraku emigration theories. However, many burakumin became settlers in

[151] Both Kurokawa Midori and Noah McCormick have commented on this. See Midori Kurokawa, *Kindai Buraku-Shi Meiji Kara Gendai Made* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2011) and Noah Mccormack, "Buraku Emigration in the Meiji Era Other Ways to Become Japanese," *East Asian History* 23, no. 23 (January 1, 2002): 87–108.

Hokkaido of their own volition, as they saw the possibility of gaining living essentials in those narratives, as will be seen.

Buraku Emigration Theories in Literature

Meiji governors and intellectuals were not the only ones to promote buraku emigration to Hokkaido and other colonies. Novels by Shimizu Shikin's *Migrant Academy* and Iwano Homei's *Fukumatsu the Axe*, for example, contributed to creating a utopian image of Hokkaido for burakumin who were desperate to escape discrimination in marriage and the workplace to pursue romance and liberty. This section explores the intricate relationship between utopia and aggression. Hokkaido was not the only place utopian ideas of buraku emigration touched upon; Shimazaki Tōson's *The Broken Commandment* (*Hakai*, 1906,) examined in Chapter 1, still remains one of Japan's best-known and celebrated novels. The book ends with the main protagonist, Ushimtasu, leaving for Texas after he reveals his buraku identity. Although Shimazaki devotes much time to Ushimatsu's decision to disclose his identity, the prospect of integrating into the community with his new identity never comes up. The question of whether Ushimtasu's move to Texas was about escape or desire has been the focus of many scholarly works. When an escape becomes the desire and desire becomes an escape, it challenges the core of Suiheisha activism since it is based on embracing burakumin identity and mobilizing a people who share that identity.[152]

Even before Shimazaki ending his story with Ushimatsu's move to Texas, Shimizu Shikin's *Migrant Academy* came seven years before the publication of *The Broken*

[152] For a detailed critique of Suiheisha activism and why many buraku residents have difficult and mixed feelings about the movement, see Chapter One of this dissertation.

Commandment to suggest emigration as a viable path for burakumin.[153] Though Shimizu did not directly discuss the question of buraku identity, the novel remains one of the only literary works that speak at the intersection of buraku emigration, feminist theory, and utopianism. In Shimizu's writing, the ideal world of a migrant academy she constructed on the land of Aynumosir becomes a place free of discrimination and patriarchy, ideal for past victims of subjugation for both burakumin and women alike. A feminist activist, many of Shimizu's works challenged the Japanese patriarchal society and its oppression of women. In her first novel, *Koware yubiwa* (*The Broken Ring*) published in 1891, she used her own marriage as the blueprint for a powerful critique of the male domination and female subordination in marriage power dynamics with the attempt to deconstruct the feminine ideal of "suffering in silence."[154] This theme is also evident in her later works, including *Migrant Academy*, in which she turns her attention to the buraku question to tell the story of a buraku woman's emigration to Hokkaido in pursuit of peace and happiness.

[153] Some researchers have suggested the possibility that The Broken Commandment was thematically based on or inspired by Migrant Academy. See Yūichi Sasabuchi , "Shimazaki Tōson to Shizen Shugi – 'Hakai' O Chūshin Ni," *Fuzoku Hikaku Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō* , no. 4 (1957): 213–39.

[154] For an elaborated discussion of *The Broken Ring*, see Rebecca L. Copeland, "The Meiji Woman Writer 'amidst a Forest of Beards,'" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57, no. 2 (December 1997): 383, https://doi.org/10.2307/2719483, 39.



Figure 6: A Portrait of Shimizu Shikin[155]

Migrant Academy tells the story of Okiyo, a female teacher who was born in a buraku community and raised by her father alone after her mother's passing. Her father hid their buraku background from her and then disappeared after Okiyo married Imao Harumori, the cabinet minister who devoted himself to promoting humanitarianism. One day, she received a letter from

[155] "Shimizu Shikin Portrait," Wikimedia Commons, 1933, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shimizu_Shikin.jpg.

her father revealing his whereabouts and her buraku background. She went to her father and offered to care for him, but ordered her to leave immediately. Upon revealing her buraku identity to her husband, he made the decision to resign from his position. Simultaneously, rumors regarding her buraku origin began circulating, although Shimizu did not specify the means by which these rumors spread. At the end of the story, the couple deiced to move to Hokkaido to open a Migrant Academy for emigres, creating a shelter space for the abandoned burakumin and their children from all over the country and raising them in this discrimination-free new world. The story ended on a hopeful note,

> Minister Imao now understands this well [referring to all the derogatory comments about Okiyo after the revelation of her buraku identity.] If you want to add bricks and tiles to the building of civilization, it's better to join the vortex of struggles than remain silent bravely. People are effeminate and laughable. For the sake of humanity, I should devote myself to education for a while and wait for the right time. I can move to Hokkaido with all my assets. Under the name of Migrant Academy, all the desperate and self-abandoned kids who are now scattered all over the country can gather. Together with the new land, we raise a new kind of people. I will redeem all new commoner's sons and daughters in my own hands. I am the father, and Okiyo is the mother; this is how we joke about it. We lead the family and set off. Only two or three high-ranking officials can be heard when we see each other off in Ueno.[156]

The ending suggests an optimistic future in Hokkaido and parallels the conclusion of *The Broken Commandment*. The optimism of the ending comes hand in hand with the tragic nature of oppression burakumin and women faced at the time, Hokkaido thus has become a symbol in Shimizu's writing to signify a form of new humanity she imagines for both groups.

Shimizu's idealistic ending has been the subject of much debate. Murakami Nobuhiko, based on the fact that Shimizu made visits to buraku communities in Nara and Shikoku Prefectures before writing the novel, evaluates this work as grounded in reality: "the tragedy of

[156] Shikin Shimizu, "Imin Gakuen," in *Shikin Zenshū* , ed. Yoshishige Kozai (Sōdo Bunka, 1983), 222. Originally published as Shikin Shimizu, "Imin Gakuen," *Bungei Kurabu,* no. August Issue (1899).

parents and children portrayed in Migrant Academy is not an imagined product but based on materials in our reality."[157] On the other hand, Wada Hanjirō argues that instead of seeing this literature as exploring the possibility in the current reality, it should be evaluated more as "a literature of idealism with an old-fashioned utopian ideal."[158] Shimizu's piece definitely contains idealist portrayals of many components that would seem to be detached from the social reality of the time, ranging from the deep attachment and loving relationship Imao and Okiyo share in their marriage to the altruistic depiction of Imao as a politician with no interest in power or money but the wholehearted commitment to the happiness of the nation's citizens. The biggest utopian element of the literature, the note it ended on, is the free land of Hokkaido as the symbol for both physical and psychological liberation.

Migrant Academy is Shimizu's first and only work thematically related to the buraku question. Recognized as a feminist activist and writer, her works focus primarily on the absurdity of feudalistic gender discrimination against women with portrayals of daily interactions within the household and intimate relationships. Okiyo faces the dual hardship as a woman of buraku background, trapped in more than one structure of inhuman absurdity. While Okiyo enjoys a happy marriage with Imao, the reaction of the public after the revelation of her buraku identity further demonstrates that rumors and the institutionalized house registration system (*koseki*) create a systematic production and reproduction of discrimination toward burakumin. The couple's ultimate relocation to Hokkaido certainly suggests one option to escape this structural problem, Shimizu also alludes to another act many burakumin took at the time: passing/hiding. Okiyo visits her sick father, who lives as a recluse in the Yanagihara buraku of Kyoto Prefecture, and gets ordered by her father to conceal her buraku identity. Setting her foot in the

[157] Nobuhiko Murakami, *Meiji Josei-Shi: Chūkan Zenpen. Joken to Ie* (Riron-sha, 1969), 158.
[158] Hanjirō Wada, "Shikin 'Imin Gakuen' Shiron," *Ōtanijoshidaigaku Kiyō* 20, no. 2 (1986), 153.

neighborhood, Shimizu describes Okiyo's experience in the village as alien- finding the place with a repugnant smell, seeing hides hanging in the streets, and asking the rikshaw puller about the place- sets her apart from the people in the village and reconfirms her non-buraku identity, until the moment her buraku-ness is disclosed. Her confusion walking down the streets of the buraku neighborhood also proves the striking differences, crossing the marker between the majority and the Other.[159]

The way Okiyo's father raised her was also common among those burakumin who tried to escape discrimination and exclusion at the time, including those who did not completely identify with or were willing to engage with buraku activism. Concealing one's buraku identity, or that of their children, to pass in the majority society as a commoner meant living with the constant fear of exposure. As Imao and Okiyo's father anticipated, unpleasant comments about her body and behavior circulated when her identity was disclosed. In later decades, especially during the active years of the Suiheisha Movement in the 1920s and 30s, those who passed also had to deal with their complicated feelings regarding the mobilization calls and militaristic strategies of a movement that was supposed to represent them. While a mobilized and united front is generally the basis for an effective movement, the prerequisite for which is public identification as burakumin.[160] In this regard, Okiyo's lack of signs of buraku identity allows her to pass unaware, and her later choice of relocating to Hokkaido also suggests escapism. Though the publication of *Migrant Academy* predates those debates, Suiheisha's discontent with *The*

[159] Edward Fowler describes this as "the vague sense of intimidation emanating from this unfamiliar locale that marks it as Other and produces shock." See Edward Fowler, "The Buraku in Modern Japanese Literature: Texts and Contexts," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 26, no. 1 (2000): 1, https://doi.org/10.2307/133390, 9.

[160] For a more detailed discussion of the Suiheisha Movement and some burakumin's difficult feelings with its charismatic leadership, see the introduction and Chapter One of this dissertation. This is also not only a phenomenon of the past; Joseph Hankins has also rightfully pointed out that the difficulty to identify with buraku movement still exists in the post-war period. In Chapter "Ushimatsu Left for Texas" of his book *Working Skin: Making Leather, Making a Multicultural Japan*, he writes about how many have conflicting feelings about identifying as burakumin and being part of the Buraku Liberation League, the postwar successor of the Suiheisha Movement.

Broken Commandment's popularity suggested that the movement deemed such acts of escapism unacceptable, further complicating the question of subjectivity in passing. The movement later had a different relationship to buraku settlement in Manchuria due to its change of discourse from anti-imperialism to pro-imperialism by embracing the empire's agenda at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War.[161]

Shimizu's choice of Hokkaido as the ultimate place for redemption and liberty also speaks to the sentiment of that era. For Meiji leaders like Imao, the colonization of Hokkaido resonated with many humanitarian politicians and intellectuals who believed in civilization as an expansion of people's rights. The emphasis on their future devotion to education implicitly alludes to the Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Law passed five months before the publication of *Migrant Academy*. The law, enacted by the Imperial Diet, aimed to assimilate, civilize, and modernize the Ainu population, justifying the prevailing prejudice and oppression against them in the name of "education." Although Shimizu does not explicitly mention educating the Ainu, Imao and Okiyo's goal of establishing an academy for the burakumin children aligns with the expansionist and colonialist policy, resting the liberation of subjugated groups upon the aggression of the native Ainu population. Moreover, the new humanity they are about to embrace in Hokkaido via educating the children of burakumin parallels the process of purification for a group that has been historically labeled as contaminated. This savior narrative finds similarities with the empire's assimilation policies of the Ainu. By moving to Hokkaido, the couple looks forward to having Okiyo acquire a new identity for her to go through the status change from discriminated burakumin in the metropole to settlers of the Empire of Japan in the

[161] For discussion on Suiheisha's history during war mobilization and settler colonialism in Manchuria, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

colony. Shimizu refers to this as "together with the new land, we raise a new kind of people."[162] The utopian image of Hokkaido embraces the new humanity that rests upon burakumin's purification and assimilation of the Ainu people.

While Okiyo's buraku identity could explain the couple's desire to settle in Hokkaido, her role as a woman in Japanese expansionism is also interesting. As the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) boosted the confidence of Japanese imperialism, many Meiji intellectuals and leaders called for women's cooperation in the empire's oversea expansion. Iwamoto Yoshiharu, a prominent promoter of women's education, wrote a piece titled *New Territories and Women* (*Shin ryōchi to fujoshi*) in 1895, portraying colonies as a paradise for families.[163] He argued that successful settler colonization is closely dependent on the comfort of family, and if women were to join the colonization efforts the colonies would witness better development with happy families.[164] Specifically, he sees the important role women could play in the realm of education; for him, the task of changing the customs of the colonies and providing Japanese language education falls on women, let alone education within the household. Thus, he concludes "though the fact that Japanese girls and women become the wives of the people of the new territory may seem utterly despicable from the outside, but that would be the true result of 'Japanese Expansion' [*nihon kakuchō*.]"[165] For Iwamoto, if Japanese women married and educated people in the colonies for decades, it would greatly help speed up Japanization of the newly acquired territories. With women's participation in colonization efforts, what intellectuals like Iwamoto suggest signified that now women bear the same form of responsibility for the nation as men, being assigned different roles in the colonies. The role of buraku women in the colonies can be

[162] Shikin Shimizu, "Imin Gakuen," *Bungei Kurabu,* no. August Issue (1899).
[163] Yoshiharu Iwamoto, "Shin Ryōchi to Fujoshi," *Jogaku Zasshi* , no. 409 (1895), 27-28.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.

seen as a complex dynamic of both civilizing and being civilized, as their involvement in the colonies presented opportunities for them to participate in the process of Japanization. In that light, Okiyo settling in Hokkaido also signifies her transition from an under-attack subjugated buraku to a woman who is devoted to the empire's development- a righteous citizen.

The relationship between buraku liberation and imperial settler colonialist projects speaks to a question of long scholarly inquiry: are the settlers the abandoned people? Shimizu's writing allows us to reckon with the fact that for people like Okiyo and Imao, settlement in the colony offered a chance to escape the gloomy situation in the homeland due to exclusionary and discriminatory institutions and sociality and ignite new hopes of acceptance and inclusion into the nation-state. Both of them feel a sense of responsibility to the nation, and for Okiyo that comes with a desire for recognition as a righteous citizen that could contribute to her country's mission. The utopia Shimizu depicts opens the possibility of imagining somewhere other than here for those who are marginalized. As we see in the following decades, many buraku elites and rank-and-file members of buraku communities imagined, promoted, and explored the same possibility in other places around the world.

The Story of Ueda Seichi

Although the number of buraku settlers to Hokkaido is hard to estimate, some burakumin acted upon the aforementioned calls and moved to the northern island. The details of their historical experiences as settlers remain largely unknown, though the record at least tells how some of them were called "the Ainu that came from the mainland" and prohibited from group settlement since it would heighten their visibility and leave them vulnerable to discrimination. [166]

[166] See footnote 4 of this chapter.

Among those who moved was a man called Ueda Seiichi. Born in 1884, Ueda spent his childhood in a farming household in Tsukajo in Osaka Prefecture. He worked as a teacher at Tanaka Elementary School for more than a decade during which he also founded the Tanaka Night School in 1906 and engaged in the activities of the youth association in the local buraku neighborhood of Kyoto. In 1917, he led a group of six local households from Tanaka buraku village and several relatives' households to Ogeuchi in Tokachi District of Hokkaido. He kept the habit of writing diaries during his settlement there; however, from the diaries we could see that Ueda did not live in Hokkaido year-round. He travelled between Kyoto and Hokkaido and remained active in Kinki region, spending Hokkaido's winter season in Kyoto most years during 1917-1923.[167]

Japanese scholars Shiraishi Masaaki and Ōyabu Takeshi have discovered and written about Ueda's diaries during the time of his settlement.[168] In describing Ueda's earlier years before the settlement, both scholars have mentioned that he was devoted to *education of the poor* (*hinmin kyōiku*) of the buraku communities in urban areas. Instead of focusing on the specifics of the settlement years, which have been studied by both scholars, this section primarily concerns how the concept of education might have played a role in shaping his decision to emigrate to Hokkaido and how the historical experience of Ueda and the buraku emigrants he recruited embodied the concept of education in Hokkaido, while their settlement rested upon Ainu's land. Education, a theme that is essential to Shimizu's story *Migrant Academy*, appears again in the historical experiences of buraku emigrants. Okiyo and Imao's plan to educate the buraku

[167] Ōyabu Takeshi has pointed out that the between 1917 to 1923, the first six years after the settlement, Ueda spent every single winter season in Kyoto except for 1919. Takeshi Ōyabu, "Hokkaidō Ijū to Ueda Seiichi," *Osaka Jinken Hakubutsukan Kiyō* 10 (2007): 37–93.

[168] For their scholarship on Ueda's experience in Hokkaido and his involvement in buraku communities, see Ōyabu Takeshi, *Hokkaidō ijū to Ueda Seiichi* and Masaaki Shiraishi, "Tanaka Shin'yū Yoru Gakkō to Ueda Seiichi," *Osaka Jinken Hakubutsukan Kiyō* 9 (2006): 5–36.

children in Hokkaido and Ueda's plan to educate impoverished burakumin reflect both the promise of enlightenment through education and imperial aims to civilize the Ainu (and burakumin.) What education truly meant for Ueda is complicated; as an elementary school teacher and the founder of the Tanaka Night School, Ueda was certainly committed to preparing the children and the illiterate of the community for a better future. With help from The Imperial Way Society (*Teikoku kōdōkai*,) an organization created to build a liaison between the central and local governments to help improve the conditions of buraku communities, Ueda saw Hokkaido as the suitable environment for improving and educating the burakumin.[169] Education, as a means of self-assimilation in both Shimizu and Ueda's stories, speaks to the progression-oriented discourse of imperialism, from uncivilized to civilized, from uneducated to educated, and from feudalistic to modern. The movement also published a bulletin named *Kōdō* to raise public awareness of the buraku question, investigate the conditions of buraku communities across prefectures, and, very importantly, implement the plan of buraku emigration to Hokkaido. Ueda's willingness to work with the organization shows he was at least not against its agendas, which included 1) identifying with the Imperial State of Japan for the Meiji Emperor's generosity in liberating burakumin, 2) demanding sympathy from the general public for their past treatment and discrimination of burakumin, and 3) Improving the behaviors of the buraku communities so that they could be soon recognized as proper members of Japanese society.[170] A year before Suiheisha Movement was founded, buraku activists opposed the Imperial Way Society's

[169] *Teikoku kōdōkai* was founded in 1914 by Itagaki Taisuke, Hayashi Kaneaki and Ōe Taku. Ōe Taku played a role in the passage of the Emancipation Edict.
[170] Masaaki Shiraishi, "Tanaka Shin'yū Yoru Gakkō to Ueda Seiichi," 27.

"sympathy theory," arguing that demanding sympathy from the perpetrators of discrimination would be pathetic and true liberation would only come from burakumin's own actions.[171]

While it is obvious that Ueda could identify with the agenda of the Imperial Way Society in terms of buraku emigration plans, how he understood the relationship between education and emigration is worth exploring. The organization's "sympathy theory" did not refer to mere "sympathetic sentiments" from the state and the public. Instead, they wanted to utilize this sympathy to push for improvement measures that would allow burakumin to be recognized, which could also explain why it became a part of the Central Reconciliation Business Association (*Chūō yūwajigyō kyōkai*.) Seeking sympathy for integration, the organization counted on those in power, including government officials, intellectuals, and aristocrats, for buraku liberation. In this arrangement, the buraku were expected to rely on the favors of the very leaders responsible for their own discrimination. This also explains why the organization was interested in promoting buraku emigration to Hokkaido. On the other hand, Ueda inquired about the Imperial Way Society in Hokkaido as early as 1914, two years before he headed there with relatives and fellow burakumin. In a letter he sent to Akashi Tamizō, Ueda stated that he was interested in knowing more about the sale of government-owned land in Hokkaido to promote buraku youth activities. He also explained why education alone was not sufficient in changing the mentality and behavior of burakumin for them to have "enlightened minds." For Ueda, the problem lies in the old habits of the village, the feudalistic remnants that cannot be fully eradicated unless they move to a society with "vastness" (he used the word *hiroku banpan no shakai*.) He believed those old habits prevented burakumin from moving to other occupations or

[171] Several scholars have written about the differing stances between the later *yūwa* movement, which *teikoku kōdōkai* became a part of and the Suiheisha movement. See the aforementioned works of Asaji Takeshi and Kurokawa Midori, as well as Daniel V Botsman, *Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan* (Princeton University Press, 2013).

making progress in education, arresting any interest in self-development and self-improvement. In the letter, Ueda was mainly interested in information regarding the possibility of moving to Hokkaido and how feasible emigration would be in terms of financial costs and land costs. He also expressed hope to speak to government officials about the possibility of negotiation, as education alone was insufficient for buraku communities to reach enlightenment. Instead, he argued that we must walk with both legs: educating them within the community and seeking other chances outside of the community, including working away from home as settlers in the new colony.[172] With the letter, he was able to receive suggestions and financial support from the organization to carry out the plan. Ueda visited Hokkaido twice before the formal settlement after receiving help from the Imperial Way Society. In his diary entries, he wrote enthusiastically about his impending move.

On his first inspection trip to Hokkaido, Ueda arrived in Hakodate via boat and visited Otaru and Sapporo. In his diary, he expressed how impressed he was by the view in Hokkaido, describing it as a place "with vast wealth released in vain" for exploration, concluding that he would be willing to move here for the "infinite opportunities this place offers."[173] He evaluated the Japanese colonization of Hokkaido as a great success, pointing to the "loaded cargos" and the "busy ports like Kobe and Yokohama" to conclude that the production boom the empire brought to Hokkaido gave "energy and life" to the place.[174] Different from the first trip on which he submitted a formal land grant proposal, Ueda's impressions from the second trip were of a vastly different tone. A different season than the previous time, he visited the Ogeuchi village in Tokachi, where the settlement group was offered land amid Hokkaido's "frightening winter."

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[172] Cited in Ōyabu, 71. Original "Teikoku kōdōkai e hokkaidō ijū no ma awase" *Kyōtofu tanaka machi kaizen ni kansuru shorui*, housed at Osaka Human Rights Museum.
[173] Seiichi Ueda, *Tanaka Shin'yū Yoru Gakkō Nikki*, 1909.
[174] Ōyabu, 71.

Leaving him a contrasting impression from the excitement of the last visit, Ueda described the snowstorm as a violent shock unlike anything he had experienced in his lifetime. Frozen river, continuous snowfall, and the granted land surrounded by forests, all the things he saw while marching through the snow and climbing up the hills with a map to guide him to the future home, forecasting discouraging signals of the settlement future. The piece of land was about 4 kilometer stretching North to South and 0.5-1.5-kilometer East to West with 12 houses and an active volcano in sight.[175] Despite this experience, he did not waver from the emigration plan. He wrote, "now is the time to think about the future."[176]

This line expresses both hesitancy and determination. He did not entirely shy away from admitting to the potential hardships he and his fellow emigrants would face, from "outrageous coldness of minus twenty degrees Celsius," to "land situated in the middle of the wilderness." Though Ueda acknowledged these challenging conditions in his diary, he convinced himself that there would be more solutions than problems once the emigrant group grew large enough.[177] The testing environment only made Ueda more determined to carry out the emigration plan, which was further solidified and launched in 1917. Given the extreme difficulties ahead, why did Ueda go ahead with the plan? If the ultimate goals of emigration, according to the Imperial Way Society, are to improve buraku communities and gain recognition from the majority society, then the success of buraku laborers to occupy, clear, and cultivate the land, would demonstrate their value and compel the state to acknowledge their contribution. What Ueda envisioned for buraku improvement, educating them within the community and seeking other chances outside of the community, would have contained more value if they could overcome all the challenging

[175] Ibid., 73.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.

conditions of Hokkaido that Ueda saw on his second trip there. His insistence also spoke to the long-term desire of many buraku residents: cultivating one's own land and living in one's own house to feed the families.

Ueda's decision was not entirely incorrect, at least for the first few years after settlement. Buraku farmers managed to alleviate poverty by selling field crops, mainly beans for high prices in 1917 and 1918 amid a market boom.[178] However, the prosperity Ueda witnessed on his first trip to Hokkaido disappeared after World War I ended. The collapse of the war bubble led to world-wide recession. The buraku communities in other parts of Japan were hit hard as well; the rice riots of 1918 were responses to the deflation in rice, among many other essential commodities and crops. The settlement group's experience was not much different; the price of beans and other crops plummeted, with farmers having to look for other occupations to make ends meet. With the extreme unreliability and unpredictability of the weather in Hokkaido, many settlers sought to find occupations outside of agriculture to feed their families or applied to farm on lands of better conditions, while many others returned home with the decrease in settler population. According to Ōyabu, the conditions of the farmland and the lack of assistance on land improvement "buried [the farming settlers] in deep despair."[179] By the mid-1920s, most of Ueda's group have returned to the mainland, denoting the settlement a failed attempt.

Characterizing the historical experience of Ueda and his fellows as a failure does not capture the significance of burakumin's settler colonialism in Hokkaido. Ueda's identification with the Imperial Way Society's agenda and active participation in the settler colonial agenda of the empire both carry much historical significance; resting their hopes of liberation upon the colonization of the Ainu people, buraku leaders like Ueda not only saw the possibility of

[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid, 80.

liberation in the imperialist expansion of the nation but also the benevolence of the state in recruiting them as useful subjects. Ueda's settlement happened five years before the founding of the national Suiheisha movement, an era dominated by ideas of self-determination and socialist thought, propelled by both the Bolshevik revolution and the anti-colonialism movement that broke out after World War I. The debates over liberation within buraku communities also took up these ideas. Many intellectuals in the 1920s started writing about how Marxist class analysis and feudal remnants could explain the persisting buraku question in Japanese society. The Suiheisha movement also took the initiative in unifying the definition of buraku identity, striving to form massive mobilization for its activism. As a radical movement that was critical of imperialist oppression in Korea and other Japanese colonies, many Suiheisha leaders still supported the mobilization of burakumin as settler colonialists in Manchuria in the late 1930s and early 1940s.[180] The mass mobilization of the empire further opened its doors to the subjugated class, sending signals of potential recognition contingent upon one's participation.

Conclusion

While not much discussed, it is no secret among buraku studies scholars that burakumin's engagement in war mobilization efforts and colonization was supported by many buraku intellectuals and rank-and-file members. The nationalization policies were able to pacify many radical burakumin as an invitation for inclusion in the form of settler colonialism, war mobilization of buraku industries (leather industry in particular) and army recruitment. This even resulted in *Hyongpyongsa* putting an end to its transnational coalition with the Suiheisha

[180] Chapter Four of this dissertation discusses Suiheisha's conversion during the mass mobilization period and buraku emigrants to Manchuria.

Movement for the latter's support of Japanese aggression in Korea.[181] In postwar years, Zainichi writer Kim Jung-Mi has also written extensively about Suiheisha's history of war collaboration and participation, calling for a reevaluation of burakumin history.

What is discussed in this chapter provides an overview of what role burakumin played in the narratives of Hokkaido settler colonialism, how the Meiji leaders targeted them, and how some settlement efforts turned out. Common to almost all narratives mentioned, the ideas of "free land," "a world without discrimination," and "education for new humanity" frequently appeared to construct the image of Hokkaido as a utopia burakumin has longed for. It's not a coincidence that these phrases were used; the word "land" really pointed to the specific material needs of poverty-ridden buraku communities at the time. Education, as the catchphrase in the empire's Ainu assimilation policies, extends imperial and racial discourse of linear progression from the uncivilized to the civilized to burakumin. Both Shimizu and Ueda's emphasis on education outlines the idea that education, with civilization as its end goal, could allow burakumin to break away from the negative images associated with their villages at the time. The state's offerings sounded attractive to these burakumin, with subsidies offered and recognition granted in the new colonies, together, they constituted a welcome offer that would allow them to be "fully Japanese."

[181] Hyongpyongsa was founded in Korea by a group of activists who were concerned about the exclusionary treatment and social discrimination the paekjong group faced in Korea. Similar to burakumin, the paekjong group primarily consisted of people who engaged in industries such as butchering, leather making, and etc.

Chapter Three: The Search for Freedom

Suiheisha's Transpacific Journey and the Afro-Asian Intersection

> The boy could see that freedom depended on the possession of land; he was persuaded that, in one way or another, Negroes must achieve this possession.
>
> --James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

The 1924 Johnson-Reed Immigration Act was a federal law to prevent immigration from Asia and restrict immigration from the Eastern Hemisphere by establishing numerical limits based on racial categories. The act ended further immigration from Japan, which aroused considerable rage and prompted a surge of nationalism. Shortly after the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, a group of Suiheisha activists presented a petition to the United States ambassador to urge Americans to not betray their nation's longstanding commitment to liberty and human rights. The group cited examples such as the American Revolution and the emancipation of enslaved Africans as evidence of America's dedication to liberty. Whereas the Japanese public and state officials regarded the Act with a sense of national humiliation, Hirano and the other leaders of the burakumin outcast group believed Japan's complaints of becoming an outcast nation held little authority given the treatment of the burakumin at home. Hirano's words reflect Suiheisha's decades-long commitment to situating the continuing prejudice burakumin face in Japan based on the Tokugawa social status system within an international context. Beginning in the 1920s, informed by the Wilsonian idea of self-determination, they invoked the idea of liberation-by-their-own-hands to mobilize the buraku crowd and juxtapose their plight with the others around the globe, including the untouchable *paekjeong* group in Korea and Jews in Nazi Germany. Taking its name the Levelers of the English Civil War, the

Suiheisha movement emphasized equal natural rights for burakumin by calling attention to the contradiction between the international and domestic forms of discrimination- both Imperial Japan's aggression into the neighboring countries and the domestic treatment of burakumin.

The chapter explores how the Suiheisha activists looked at Black America to develop an internationalist framework to critique the domestic discrimination and identify with African American movements, allowing many buraku leaders to craft a different vision to imagine a "new world" grounded in what Fred Ho calls "the common and often overlapping diasporic experience."[182] Building their freedom dreams around what settler emigration could potentially offer, I argue that many buraku activists paid close attention to the social movements and minority struggles in the United States for articulations of their own struggles. Tahara Haruji, for example, wrote extensively about his experience of navigating the racialized spaces in the United States and his visit to Harlem to meet with Amy Jacques Garvey, the wife of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) founder, Marcus Garvey, and a leader in her own right. While buraku studies scholars have tried to compare the buraku historical experiences to many subjugated groups worldwide in recent decades, few consider the role of African American resistance and other minority struggles in the United States in shaping buraku activists in Japan and abroad. This chapter examines the experiences of diasporic buraku intellectuals and activists in the United States and Hawaii as a way of thinking through an internationalist paradigm that shares traditions of resistance to class and racial exploitation and oppression. Moreover, these buraku scholars maintained a separate identity from other Japanese American immigrants at the time. Focusing on their struggles of burakumin, many of them mentioned and struggled to

[182] Fred Ho and Bill Mullen, *Afro Asia Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans* (Durham Lonodon Duke University Press, 2008), 3.

integrate into the local communities, experiencing "a duality of discrimination."[183] Just as the Jim Crow regime followed the formal abolition of African slavery in the United States, the formal abolition of the social status system in Japan gave way to a new set of discriminatory policies and continuous segregation. Seeking economic opportunities and struggling for equal rights in the era of Japanese empire-building, the buraku communities coped with the changing narratives of the imperialist agenda to find their paths to freedom. While the other chapters in this dissertation focus on buraku communities' war collaboration efforts and emigration narratives, this chapter focuses on how the buraku intellectuals in the United States and Hawaii responded to, interacted with, and engaged in the minority struggle issues to make buraku problem not limited to the locality of Japan. Some of the buraku emigrants to the US traveled back to Japan to devote themselves to establishing migrant schools to train potential emigrants in farming skills and weather knowledge that are needed for settling into the destinations. Instead of phrasing buraku war collaboration as a sudden break from its previous histories, the longer historical trajectory shows us how many buraku intellectuals and rank-and-file members constantly sought the possibility of economic and political freedom via voluntary participation in conceptualizing, exploiting, and nationalizing the empire's frontier.

The narratives of buraku emigration are deeply intertwined with the expansion of the Japanese empire. The possession of land is a key term that comes up almost always in the narration of the dream of the deprived, displaced and discriminated. Found in many narratives on buraku emigration, both buraku leaders and government officials used the idea of having one's own land to persuade and convince potential buraku emigrants that emigration offers a free ticket

[183] This theorization comes from Tahara Haruji. He called the experience in the US as a buraku living a duality of discrimination, referring to discrimination from the white majority society and the discrimination from fellow Japanese American immigrants. This will be discussed later in chapter.

to this dream. As the later chapters in this dissertation discuss, those propaganda efforts had very sharp focus on land and material comfort to suggest emigration as a means for creating buraku's "new heaven" or "new homeland." The long list of places that have been on buraku emigration supporters' radar includes both Japan's newly acquired territories and the territories they aspire to include on the map of Japan, from Hokkaido, Manchuria, Taiwan to the Philippines. Coupled with the focus on material comfort and land the new territory could offer, those buraku intellectuals and the fellow buraku emigrants often framed their emigration in line with the imperialist discourses on education, women's liberation, and ethnic assimilation. Specifically, the discourses centered around what buraku emigrants' potential contribution centered around how their voluntary participation in settler colonialism is part of the Empire's agendas. Moreover, they also strived to include women into those agendas, suggesting women could contribute greatly to the emigration projects as good mothers and home caretakers, conforming to the ideal family values Imperial Japan upheld.[184] Altogether, these narratives did not suggest buraku emigration's contribution to the empire were in vague or abstract terms; rather, they provided a detailed explanation and suggested practical plans for buraku emigrants to participate or even shape the national agendas, defining what being a Japanese subject meant for burakumin. In other words, many of those burakumin found the path to real freedom foreclosed following legal emancipation in the diasporic experiences in the frontiers of the Japanese empire.

However, buraku's participation in the imperial debates was not only part of national history but was international from the very outset. Tracing the lives of these buraku emigrants from Japan to the United States of America, the diasporic bodies of these buraku emigrants constitute an essential part of the global circulation of labor, capital, and ideas. Burakumin's

[184] For a detailed discussion on the role women were assigned to in such discourses, see the chapter on Manchuria.

participation in colonial aggression and imperial territory settlements in the 1930s and onward has its historical roots in the early Meiji discussions of expansion. As early as the late Tokugawa period, some literary works have made explicit persuasion about the potentiality of buraku emigration as a means of imperial expansion.[185] However, the wave of emigration of Japan only started after the establishment of the Meiji government. Eiichiro Azuma's seminal book, *In Search of Our Frontier*, notes that starting in the late 1880s, the first generation of Japanese Americans (*Issei*) took the lead in discursive formation on Japanese imperial destiny for overseas expansion and settlement even before Japan acquired its overseas colonies. Situating the community of overseas Japanese in the "borderlands of the two competing settler-racial empires," Azuma articulates how this community forged links between US colonial practices and Japan's expansionism.[186] This "circulation and mobility of colonialist ideas," Azuma points out, is also echoed by the historical experiences of oversea buraku communities and the aspirations they have acquired from African American struggles. For buraku and African American communities alike, this idea of building a new homeland offered both a very liberating potential as well as a language to critique the racist states of the US and Japan. This chapter also explores the hidden history of how the buraku communities came to see settlements, and many times colonization, as political projects for self-determination and, therefore, a path to securing the freedom that eluded them after emancipation. Buraku intellectuals discussed in this chapter, especially Tahara Haruji, showed empathy toward the Black diaspora and UNIA's ambitions. Tahara's devotion to establishing migration schools, possibly formed partially by his own

[185] See chapter on Manchuria for details.
[186] Eiichiro Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier : Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Oakland, California: University Of California Press, 2019), 12.

diasporic experience, followed the suites of buraku emigration to Hokkaido in the earlier decades.

As Azuma points out, many Japanese immigrants brought frontier theory with them back to the United States. In a similar light, Tahara Haruji's interaction with and fascination with Garveyism's possibility of a new homeland through participation in the imperial project is worth highlighting. Though Tahara never explicitly confirmed that his later devotion to emigration schools was directly related to Garvey, those schools aimed toward this idea of a new homeland-desires to conquer and settle down in foreign lands, within and beyond the Japanese Empire proper, and ultimately becoming agents of imperialism. These historical experiences complicate our understanding of the formations of the Japanese American communities, the anti-racism/discrimination activism in both nations and the burakumin's conversion to later support the fascist government. Using racial capitalism as an interpretative framework and a historical method of analysis, this chapter also attempts to argue that racialization and differentiation had been under process in Tokugawa Japan before the nation's full-fledged westernization and industrialization, which parallels Cedric Robinson's argument that racialism had permeated European feudal societies before the advent of capitalism and chattel slavery. The Tokugawa social status system, via differentiation and classification based on occupation, had placed burakumin at the bottom of the social structure. With the imperial aggression into the neighboring countries, Japan tried to simultaneously distance itself from the primitive image of Asia to join ranks with the Western empires and include the colonial subjects for a unified Orient under the name of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Over debates on how to best incorporate the new territories into the nation, authorities have discussed the means to mobilize the labor of subaltern groups for the annexation of the new lands and assets. The 1920s and 30s

buraku emigration to Hokkaido and its role in Japan's various colonial territories and extraterritorial settlements, both self-mobilized and state promoted, were in accordance with the empire's effort to differentiate its subjects.[187] The emergence of buraku emigration, which existed in almost all of Japan's colonies and beyond, has political implications closely related to discourses of settler colonialism, imperialism, and industrialization that displaced millions of people worldwide. The so-called *buraku mondai* (the buraku question,) usually phrased as a national issue, can only be elucidated in the context of mass migrations, the global wave of self-determination movements, and racial capitalism. As Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley point out in their discussions on the African diaspora, "shifting the discussion from an African-centric approach to questions of black consciousness to the globality of the diaspora-in-making allows for a rethinking of how we view Africa and the world and opens up new avenues for writing a world history from below."[188] By looking at the diasporic bodies of buraku emigrant groups and trans-pacific/international dialogues they have facilitated, it is evident that buraku movements and their ideas of liberation were closely connected to other international movements; it is not a strictly Japanese problem, nor is Japan the only locus of the struggles.

While the theme of the black exodus had become central in African American studies, buraku emigration had been very much buried from public eyes for lack of historical evidence. Detachment, estrangement, and distinction had come to be seen as natural due to our habit of thinking along the demarcated lines of nation-states, the bounds of academic disciplines, and

[187] For a detailed discussion on governmentality and modes of differentiation during Imperial Japan, see Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient* (Univ of California Press, 1995). Paul D Barclay, *Outcasts of Empire : Japan's Rule on Taiwan's "Savage Border," 1874-1945* (Oakland, California: University Of California Press, 2018). Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire : Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley ; Los Angeles ; London: University Of California Press, 2013), among others.
[188] Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (April 2000): 11–45, https://doi.org/10.2307/524719, 26-27.

area studies rooted in Cold War politics that draws a fine line between "their" problems and "ours." Thus, the questions of race, gender, and class we see in Japanese society rarely travel beyond its borders, which too often results in an essentialist understanding of difference based on indigenous knowledge and nativist identity. The fact that history departments across the globe have their fields organized in terms of different geographical areas/countries tends to limit transnational or transcontinental interpretations of history. This organizational structure encourages historians to see nation-states as units of analysis that are self-confining, despite the fact that historical processes are almost never contained within national boundaries.[189] The recent surge in transcontinental and trans-imperial scholarship allows us to see the manifestations of these connections and entanglements, entailing overlapping and shared imperial histories of settler colonialism and racial capitalism between different empires. This new body of scholarship advances beyond a comparative framework that focuses on similarities, differences, and analogies. The joint struggle of the buraku and African American communities against state violence and discrimination culminates in a vision of emancipation founded on the land of themselves, a space where they could live freely with no masters. This narrative is not only forged on the similarities between their historical experiences; but, consciously hammered out while looking for a shared liberating future. Their commonalities--internationalism, dreams for new land as spaces of real freedom (in contrast to the legal freedom on paper granted by the state), and the liberatory possibilities of imperialism as a vehicle for a homeland–were born out of a forward-looking vision more than what lies in an idealized past.

The chapter also discusses the more well-known "Black-Japan alliance," one founded on the analogy of racial discrimination under white supremacy, to contrast it to the theorizations and

[189] Ibid., 29.

reflections on America's minority struggles by the buraku diaspora. The favorable attitude toward Japan among black people in the 1920s and 30s was characterized by W.E.B Du Bois as "a certain bond between the colored peoples because of worldwide prejudice."[190] Many black leaders regarded the rise of Japan as a positive signal for their ongoing struggle for justice and equality by crediting the Japanese for breaking and trespassing the color line. The survival of the Black-Japanese alliance depended on the adherence to the idea of race as the root cause of all forms of oppression by suggesting a binaristic division between the colored and white. This analogy was also conditional on many black leaders' intended dismissal or genuine ignorance of Japan's imperialist brutality in its colonies. In other words, the Black-Japanese alliance was a strategic stance taken in the sole demand of their own liberation while silently permitting the existence of injustice elsewhere. While burakumin are able to pass as Japanese outside of Japan, their ideas of liberation born out of the historical plight of the group allowed them to access a whole different realm of radicalism; while the Japanese at home and overseas mourn over the ostracization from the white nations, they not only know what they were against but what they were for.

The chapter is broken into three parts. The first part discusses the media attention Suiheisha received in the United States and the United Kingdom in the 1920s. Those preliminary reports mark the introduction of the movement to the rest of the world, assembling what the movement proudly terms as "Suiheisha's Globalization (*Suihei undō no sekai-ka*)." The second part of the chapter moves on to trace the footsteps of Tahara Haruji. Examining Tahara's experience as a buraku immigrant in the United States, this section discusses how his buraku identity allowed him to identify with the African American struggles, especially Garveyism, and theorize the

[190] W.E.B Du Bois, "Close Ranks," *Crisis*, no. 16 (1918).

buraku's liminality. This also illustrates how the "Japanese-Black Alliance," advocated by intellectuals like Du Bois, turned a blind eye on the subaltern groups in the Japanese Empire. The last part of the chapter considers the buraku activities in Hawaii for a more vivid picture of buraku immigrants' day-to-day interactions with the local Japanese American communities. As trans-pacific travelers, those buraku immigrants invoked the spirit of Suiheisha to respond to both the discrimination from their fellow countrymen and the unfair labor treatment in Hawaii's plantations.

Suiheisha's Early International Dialogues

The Nation, based in New York City, published a translation of the movement's declaration, penned by Yoneda Tomi, on September 5th,1923. The translated version The Nation used ended with the following statements,

> The time has come when we may be proud of being the Eta!
>
> We must not, therefore, insult our forefathers or defile humanity any longer by our cowardly deeds or words; but we, who know well enough how cold the world is and how useless charity is, should now aspire for the real light and heat of life.
>
> The Suihei-sha has come to exist thus.
>
> Let there be heat and light.[191]

Considered the earliest media coverage of the Suiehsiah Movement in the West, this publication appeared about one year after its founding. Though bearing many translation and spelling mistakes, the publication made it into the movement's history. At the sixty-year commemoration of the declaration in 1982, Yoneda spoke about the significance of the media attention on

[191] Gertrude Haessler, "Japan's Untouchables," *The Nation*, September 5, 1923.

Suiheisha as "the first 'declaration of human rights' of Japan appeared."[192] Along with the declaration, reporter Gertrude Haessler wrote about discrimination burakumin was subjected to in different realms of social life, including education, marriage, and occupation. For Haessler, the significance of the Suiheisha movement lay in their trust in the leaders of "domestic communists and anarchists" for being treated on equal footing as "normal people."[193] In introducing the declaration, Haessler calls this "a call to the comrades worldwide."[194]

A more detailed account of the movement did not appear in Western media until 1927, four years after its appearance in The Nation. On December 28th,1927, The Times in London published an article titled "The Honour of the 'Eta': A Class in Revolt" with an annotated title of "Outcasts in Japan."[195] The article started with an instance to illustrate how discrimination toward burakumin persists even within the Imperial Army during Japan's aggression into its neighboring countries:

> When the Emperor was reviewing the Army after the autumn maneuvers, an "Eta" soldier stepped from the Ranks and tried to present his Majesty with a petition, in which he accused his comrades of treating him as a pariah and his officers of failing to give him redress. The soldier was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, the statutory penalty for the crime of "direct appeal." The prosecutor admitted that he had had reason to complain; the War Minister issued an order enjoining the soldier to avoid discrimination; the captain was sentenced to 30 days' confinement to barracks and a fine and the major lieutenant colonel, and brigade commander were reprimanded.[196]

The article used this incident, in which the victim of prejudice received a harsher punishment than the perpetrator, to illustrate the historical and religious reasons behind such structural

[192] Tomi Yoneda, "Zenkoku Suiheisha Sōritsu Rokujushūnen Kinen Kōen." Tadayuki Komai, "Kaigai de Hōji Rareta Burakumondai to Suiheishaundō -- Eiyaku Sa Reta `Suiheishasengen' O Chūshin Ni," *Suiheishahakubutsukan Kenkyū Kiyō*, no. 10 (2008): 31−61.
[193] Gertrude Haessler, Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Anonymous, "The Honour of the 'Eta,'" *The Times*, December 28, 1928.The original article states that it was "from our Tokyo correspondent,' but it did not specify the name of the author.
[196] Ibid.

discrimination to its Western audience. As a Tokyo correspondent who witnesses those incidents firsthand, they write, "To-day, when members of this class [Eta and Hinin] pass, country people will derisively hold up four fingers to signify four-legged- "hinin," animal, not human. According to tradition, the "Eta" are descended from prisoners of war and criminals who were set aside for tasks which defiled the Japanese."[197] The article moves on to talk about the abolition of the *mibun* system by the Meiji Emperor brought the groups initial joy before they became frustrated with no follow-up measure to improve their conditions: "For 5 years the Eta submitted, but the standards of the whole population were rising, and the outcasts could not but share in the general movement, Universal education, conscription, the Press, and now manhood suffrage were combining to awaken discontent."[198] The article, despite the valuable information it provided to its non-Japanese audience, uses "awaken" to refer to the oppressed burakumin and the rise of their activism in a linear manner. The correspondent thus describes the denunciation sessions and other strategies Suiheisha employed to combat discrimination as the long overdue resistance, which discredits the creative ways of navigating and resisting from prior generations.[199] In describing the activities of Suiheisha, they writes:

> In a sense the association accentuates the friction between the outcasts and ordinary citizens, because quarrels break out between its branches and the somewhat truculent patriotic societies which flourish among the young men of Japan. The Suiheisha members are not nonresisters, and an account of some incidents in which they have taken part will show the nature of the prejudice against which they fight and the methods of retaliation they adopt. As a bride of the despised class was going to her wedding, a village lout raised his four fingers. The cruel insult bought the Suiheisha on the scene with demands for an apology. It was not forthcoming, and fights began between the Suiheisha and the local *koksuikai* [*kokusuikai*] (National Spirit Preservation Society, or, in brief, the Ku Klux Klan.) The outcasts summoned supporters from neighbouring villages. Rioting

[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Here I am mainly referring to the buraku emigration efforts to Hokkaido and the earlier smaller-scale buraku activism prior to the Suiheisha Movement.

> lasted for a couple of days. The police were helpless. Eventually a regiment of soldiers restored peace and the desired apology was tendered.[200]

The author continues to give many more examples of Suiheisha's resistance to illustrate how the movement stood up for discriminatory incidents and demanded apologies from perpetrators. What's particularly interesting in the paragraph above is the analogy they draw between the *kokusuikai* and the Ku Klux Klan: the two groups certainly bore similarities in their right-wing politics, violence toward minority groups, and nationalist sentiments. While the KKK has been known as a white supremacist hate group, the *kokusuikai*'s main targets were people involved in labor disputes, socialists, and burakumin. The analogy drawn here, intending to assist foreign readers with contextualization, also implicitly suggests a racial component to the buraku question. Although Suiheisha and other buraku activist groups have rejected a racial understanding of their struggles, only through the author's invocation of the KKK (racial terms) the Western audience could understand it. While praising the efforts and bravery of the Suiheisha activists, the author ended the article on a different tone,

> If the resolution had been given legal effect, it would have abolished the last distinction between non-noble subjects of the Empire and, in theory, would have merged the Eta in a general body of the nation. The Imperial proclamation of 1871 had already done that, so far as it can be done by legal fiat, and it does not seem that a new ordinance could make any material change. The fact that such a resolution can be passed is evidence of the alternation of public sentiment among the more enlightened members of the community, but the discrimination from which the Eta suffer is social, not legal… The hopes of the Eta would seem to rest on the growth of education. Meantime the example of the Premier, the order of the War Minister, and the punishment of the officers as well as of the offending private, the exhortations of the Press, and, most of the Suiheisha, are slowly creating that more enlightened and more tolerant public opinion which will recognize that there should be no outcasts in the national family.[201]

One thing that stands out from the paragraph is that the author calls the persisting discrimination a social problem rather than legal: what's implied behind this statement is that the legal changes

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201 Ibid.

by the "enlightened" authorities have completed their missions, and the rest is, by contrast, on the burakumin who are responsible for educating the un-enlightened masses. Shielding the authorities away from reasonability ignores the sets of policies introduced in the early Meiji years- land reform and *koseki* (house registration) system, among others- that have deprived not only many rural farmers of their land via enclosure movements but also introduced other ways to record burakumin's birthplace and residential addresses (which is used until present-day to identify burakumin.) While those two reports by Western media bear many factual mistakes, they have been fondly referred to as an achievement of the movement in the many decades to come for spreading the influence of the Suihei-spirit.[202] The dialogues Suiheisha sought were not one-sided; instead, calling this the "Suiheisha's Globalization," many of the movement leaders paid close attention to the racial question in the United States, where they found the experiences of the African Americans are relatable to their own struggles.

Tahara Haruji's Journey to the United States

Tahara Haruji's journey to the United States started in 1923, shortly after graduating from Waseda University. His departure to the United States came one year before the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 amid the heightening anti-Asian sentiments. Tahara crossed the sea on the coattails of his elder sister who had emigrated to the US earlier. Tahara studied journalism at Missouri State University while helping his sister with farming. Upon completion of his degree, he worked for the Colorado Shimbun company for several years as a contributor to the local Japanese newspaper. Emigrating to the United States from a buraku community in Fukuoka

[202] Komai Tadayuki has pointed out that many facts cited in those articles did not resemble the historical facts, including the numbers of attendees at the Suiheisha conferences. For detail, see Tadayuki Komai, "Kaigai de Hōji Rareta Burakumondai to Suiheishaundō -- Eiyaku Sa Reta `Suiheishasengen' O Chūshin Ni," *Suiheishahakubutsukan Kenkyū Kiyō*, no. 10 (2008): 31−61.

Prefecture, he witnessed the economic plight as well as the discrimination Japanese immigrant communities had to confront in their daily interactions in post-World War I America. After his return to Japan in 1928, Haruji was later elected to the National Diet of Japan and involved in unique activities straddling the anti-discrimination activism of Suiheisha and providing support for buraku emigrants. In the 1930s, he ran two emigration preparation schools in Tokyo and Fukuoka with the aim to set up a systematic program to equip those intending to travel with the necessary farming skills and knowledge about the local place for future success. Tahara's blueprint for buraku emigration included most continents, ranging from North and South America all the way to the Philippines, though he had always considered South America and the newly established Manchukuo as the most feasible destinations due to the available government subsidies. Portrayed mainly as a pioneer in buraku activism and fervent supporter of emigration within and beyond the Empire proper, what remains less known to the public is Haruji's earlier experiences in the United States and writings on the African American movements. The then-popular discourse of American-style "frontier development" inspired many Japanese to engage in overseas migration and agricultural settler colonialism inside and outside the formal empire under the slogan of "overseas development" (*kaigai hatten*.)[203] However, different from most promoters of the frontier development, Tahara and his buraku-targeting emigration schools present a narrative in which the overseas development is idealized as a practical method to achieve liberation for the discriminated buraku communities, finding a path that corresponded to Japan's imperialist ambitions.

Living through the 1920s United States, during which anti-Asian sentiments heightened and discriminatory immigration laws introduced, Tahara wrote about the African American

[203] For detail, see Azuma Eiichiro's book *In Search for Frontier*.

movements in the US and made efforts to connect them to his own struggles as a buraku in this foreign land. His various political commitments led him to make a separate visit to Harlem to meet with Amy Jacques Garvey. Her husband Marcus Garvey promoted a vision of global black freedom based on the redemption and reconstruction of a New Africa that embraced certain Western ideas and technologies but transformed them to suit black people's needs. The founder of UNIA and the publisher of the *Negro World*, his activism involved ideals in redeeming Africa for the children of the diaspora: an African empire waiting to be created. The UNIA, founded in 1914, transformed from a benevolent association into "a mass-based, global, black nationalist movement intent on redeeming Africa and establishing a homeland for the black world."[204] Tahara's strong interest in Garvey, rather than the other key figures in African American activism, was likely due to his commitment to forging connections with global independence movements, as Garvey often invited representatives from other countries to share the podium at his numerous conventions. These relationships served to solicit foreign support for the UNIA's various enterprises, most notably the Black Star Steamship Line. Japan, at the time, was also on the radar of many black activists, including Garvey; its victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 allowed them to see Japan's potential in ending white supremacy. Japan's push for a clause of racial equality at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference also won the hearts of many civil rights activists in the United States and furthered its image as a rising power against white dominance. As early as 1918, Garvey had expressed his interests in allying with Japan for a possible war

[204] Robin D G Kelley, *Freedom Dreams : The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 24. For detailed discussions on the history of UNIA, see Robert A Hill and Barbara Bair, *Marcus Garvey, Life and Lessons : A Centennial Companion to the Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1987). Adam Ewing, *The Age of Garvey : How a Jamaican Activist Created a Mass Movement and Changed Global Black Politics* (Editorial: Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). Keisha N Blain, *SET the WORLD on FIRE : Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom.* (S.L.: Univ Of Pennsylvania Pr, 2019). Ula Y Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey : The Life & Times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press, 2002), among others.

against the white: "the next war will be between the Negros and the whites unless our demands for justice are recognized…With Japan to fight with us, we can win such a war."[205] Something Garvey would never know himself is that the idea of New Africa also sparked interest among the Suiheisha members, such as Tahara, who later pushed for similar emigration for the former outcasts of Japan. The rise of Black Internationalism also coincided with Suiheisha's interests in expanding their movement beyond the empire. From the initial years of their activism, they reached out to the *paekjong* movement in Korea for regional collaboration against the persistent social structure from premodern times and the ongoing imperial encroachment on the Korean Peninsula. Around the same time, the leaders of Suiheisha also sought to forge alliances with independence and anti-discrimination movements elsewhere in order to expand their sphere of influence; they regularly included words in the official newspapers and alluded to the brutality of Nazi Germany and chattel slavery to plead the cause of oppressed groups. The following pages examine how Tahara found the Civil Rights struggles relatable to his lived experience as one burakumin in both Japan and the United States.

Shortly before his trip to Brazil to explore South America in the winter of 1926, Tahara headed to Harlem hoping to meet Garvey. For this visit, he wished to draw attention to the similar mechanisms of racial discrimination in American society, as ostracized Japanese immigrants and African American. He would later describe his objectives in a short piece titled *Seven Days in Harlem*:

> It had been one hundred and fifty years [since chattel slavery first appeared in America.] During this period, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* went into publication. In gratitude of Abraham Lincoln, Booker T. Washington had been chanting for freedom from religious

[205] "Negro Editor Preaches War for Equality," *New York Tribune,* December 2, 1918. Quoted in Reginald Kearney, "Afro-American Views of Japanese" (Dissertation, 1991) and Natalia Doan, "African-America and Japan," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, March 23, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.671, 12.

> perspective. A black-only school was founded in Tuskegee of Alabama. After Lincoln's victory in the Civil War, the legal emancipation of the former slaves was achieved, [but] the arrogant Americans [failed] awaken [to the injustices] within [their society]. They practiced lynching [and] social segregation to continue their discriminatory abuse. This led to the rise of many African American movements, including the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, the National Urban League led by Charles S. Johnson, and the Crisis founded by W.E.B Du Bois, as well as the socialist newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*."[206]

His take on the failure of the Emancipation Proclamation offers striking parallels to burakumin's historical plight. For buraku communities, liberation appeared on the horizon when the new Meiji government, three years after it seized power in 1868, issued an official promulgation of *Kaihōrei* (often translated as "Emancipation Edict,") which read that: "the abject names of eta and hinin should be abolished, and have the same *mibun* (status) and occupation as *heimin* (commoner.)"[207] It has been more than 150 years since the Japanese version of Emancipation Promulgation, scholarship of recent decades on buraku communities essentially concurs that this legal abolition of state-assigned abject social status did not succeed in fully emancipating these groups despite its claim of equality and promotion of individualism. For example, Anne McKnight provides a detailed discussion of the ways in which this legal shift served as both an opportunity and impediment for buraku liberation.[208] On one hand, the contours of burakumin have grown increasingly blurry over time due to various reasons, including the now restricted access to the *koseki* (house registration) system. Meanwhile, scholars have argued that while these abject classes were "liberated" from clothing restrictions and prohibited use of certain public spaces, they were simultaneously deprived of their tax-exempt status and economic

[206] Haruji Tahara, "Harlem No Nanokakan: Amerika Kokujin Undō No Chūshinchi Inshōki," *Yūwajigyō Kenkyū*, no. 4 (1929): 91–96.
[207] The Edict was originally called the *Senminhaishirei*, or "Edict to Abolish the Abject Classes." It was later popularly referred to as the *Kaihōrei*, or "Emancipation Edict."
[208] See Introduction and Chapter One of Anne McKnight, *Nakagami, Japan*, vol. Minneapolis (University of Minnesota, 2011).

security, which came with the strict designation of occupation during the Tokugawa Era. In this sense, this promotion to formal equality and abolition of the distinctions between them and the commoners was traded by an attendant loss of economic security. [209] This edict of liberation, in other words, transformed the geographically and occupationally locked subjects into landless free laborers who would soon be drawn into Japan's rapid industrialization in the decades to come.[210] The broad historical background of Japan's enclosure movement resulted in the ultimate proletarianization of these buraku tenant farmers and transformed the possession of one's own land into an ultimate symbol of self-sufficiency and economic freedom. This dream runs through both the state's propaganda for settler colonialism, the advertisements of immigration schools, as well as the testimonies of buraku emigrants, suggesting a weaponry more powerful and attractive than the floating idea of national pride for those subjected to centuries of discrimination.

The public reaction to the *Kaihōrei* varied from place to place; in some regions, commoners would come up with creative new names to replace the old notion for the continuation of discriminatory practices and markers of differences, such as *shin-heimin* (new commoners), or *kyū-eta* (former eta.) This difference persisted alongside a formal and legal principle of individual equality, seeding one of the foundational tensions of the liberal, modern nation-state of Japan. The resistance to the official order and Meiji reformation took forms in some local governments' vocal opposition and even total rejection, or the quotidian habits and

[209] Many scholars have argued early Meiji years to be crucial for the making of modern day burakumin as the groups lost their access to communal land, temples and other public spaces. Kurokawa Midori and Shiomi Sen'ichirō, among many others, looked into how this process of enclosure has deprived these groups with their stable income, tax-exemption privileges, as well as monopolies over the stigmatized industries. See Midori Kurokawa, *Ika to Dōka No Aida: Hisabetsu Buraku Ninshiki No Kiseki* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1999). and Sen'ichirō Shiomi, *Kaihō-Rei No Meijiishin Senshō Haishi O Megutte* (Kawada Shobo Shinsha, 2011)..

[210] It's important to highlight here that this experience is very different from that of African Americans. Although there are similarities on the surface in terms of slavery as a form of "economic security" and emancipation as a form of proletarianization which resulted in dependence on wages and precarity as workers, most African Americans were forced back onto the land as sharecroppers, which was a dependent, semi-slave status.

dispositions of the Tokugawa subjects. As Joseph Hankins argues, "the choice of a person of eta background not to wear identifying clothing or, worse, not to mark their speech with deference for people previously of other castes was a violation of the sensibilities of propriety that had existed under the previous order of things. And this affront then could serve as a provocation for unmarked Meiji subjects to act on their own to correct what they saw as impropriety, since the state no longer would."[211] This type of act, eventually interpreted by liberation movements as discrimination, directly spoke against the spreading ideology of equality among citizens. The emerging buraku activism also set its main goal to combat this form of discrimination.

The parallels Tahara identified in the same destinies shared by burakumin in Japan and African Americans in the United States allowed him to share the aspirations of these black leaders. Eiichiro Azuma considers the historical example of how American-style "frontier development" inspired many Japanese to engage in overseas migration and agricultural colonization (agricultural settler colonialism) inside and outside Japan's formal empire under the slogan of "overseas development." Tahara's participation in Suiheisha in 1930s and his promotion of settler colonialism contradicts what many imagined to be the fundamental beliefs of buraku activism, but in fact Japanese and American imperialism alike always possessed a liberating aspect. Since the 1920s, imperial authorities started encouraging buraku residents and colonial subjects in Korea to participate in its war machine to make a multi-ethnic Japan.[212]It was precisely in this liberating aspect that these despised and stigmatized populations, including war-supporting burakumin and Korean soldiers, saw the possibility for full membership of and

[211] Joseph Hankins, *Working Skin: Making Leather Making a Multicultural Japan*, 110.
[212] For narratives on the modern formation of Japanese identity and multiculturalism, see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Borderline Japan : Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Eiji Oguma, *A Genealogy of "Japanese" Self-Images* (Melbourne, Vic.: Trans Pacific Press, 2002). Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths* (Princeton University Press, 2021). Leo Ching, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation.* (Univ of California Press, 2001).

recognition from the empire- a change to be welcomed into its national community that had kept its door shut. Another piece Tahara wrote during his stay in America, in which he explains the two layers of discrimination burakumin encountered as overseas Japanese immigrants, addressed the correlation between the two empires and the two subjugated groups in a more direct fashion. The Japanese empire did not emerge in a geographical "vacuum" detached from other parts of the world; the trans-imperialist perspective is paramount in understanding how it was always entangled with other imperialisms. As Azuma notes, by doing so, we might rescue the study of colonialism and migration from the conventional single-empire perspective that looks only at the relations between the imperial metropole and its colonies. As a buraku immigrant in the United States, Tahara describes his experience as:

> I am considered a new commoner in Japan.
> Once I get to America, I am both a Jap and a new commoner.
> I am a person subjected to two layers of exclusion.
> …
> Here I tell the story of myself, a twofold victim rather than a dual citizen.[213]

The limited studies on discrimination toward burakumin within Japanese American communities have suggested that many buraku immigrants chose to hide their identities. Some even went further to stay away from the occupations historically linked to buraku identity after migration. The earliest documentation on the existence of burakumin within Japanese American communities could be traced to George DeVos and Hiroshi Wagamatsu's book published in 1966, *Japan's Invisible Race*, in which the phenomenon was discussed by one person under the

[213] Haruji Tahara, "Nijū Ni Haiseki Sareru Mure Yori," *Dōai,* no. 15 (1924): 8–10.

pseudonym Hiroshi Ito.[214] In the past years, Sekiguchi Hiroshi has taken up on the clues left in Hiroshi Ito's writing to conduct oral history research and collect data on the burakumin who lived in Florin, Sacramento Country of California.[215] In addition, Koji Lau-Ozawa's findings point to prevalent discrimination against burakumin in the Japanese American internment camps; based on the short stories published in newspapers, personal letters and anecdotes, Lau-Ozawa concludes that burakumin arise in contexts discussing marriage and intergenerational relationship, which points to "generational anxieties around nisei losing an awareness of their identities, and crucially the identities of people they will marry" among issei.[216] Those works point out the presence and continuation of buraku discrimination within Japanese American communities and illustrate the difficulty many, especially issei groups, faced in grappling with their community identity. Unlike the many burakumin who sought to hide their identities, Tahara did not shy away from publicly disclosing his family origin. The duality of discrimination he faced, as a burakumin within Japanese American communities and a racial minority in American society, enabled him to see through the hypocrisy of a multiethnic Japan and the Japanese public's anger at the Immigration Act of 1924.

The Immigration Act passed in 1924 (which is called the Japanese Exclusion Act in Japan) effectively ended almost all Japanese immigration until the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952. Naturalization laws only allowed "free white persons" and those of African

[214] Hiroshi Ito, "Japan's Outcastes in the United States," in *Japan's Invisible Race: Caste in Culture and Personality*, ed. George DeVos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1966), 200–221.
[215] Hiroshi Sekiguchi, "Burakumin Emigrants to America: Historical Experience of 'Racialization' and Solidarity across the Pacific," in *Race and Migration in the Transpacific* , ed. Yasuko Takezawa and Akio Tanabe (Routledge Taylor& Francis Group: London, 2022), 55–84..
[216] Issei are people who were born in Japan and moved to the United States, whereas nisei refers to issei's children, who are native-born citizens of America. I would like to express gratitude to Koji Lau-Ozawa for pointing out this phenomenon at a workshop. Here, I am quoting his presentation, "Searching for Silence Along the Archival Grain: Burakumin in WWI Incarceration Camps," presented on April 21st, 2023.

descent to become naturalized citizens, and state-level alien land laws prohibited those ineligible to become naturalized citizens from owning land. Moreover, numerous states also passed anti-miscegenation laws. As Marc Gallicchio notes, this Immigration Act should be understood as "the apotheosis of scientific racism in American life" as it resulted from the booming popularity of scientific racism theories among scientists and academics to provide intellectual justification for imperialism and racist practices.[217] Starting with the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, Adam McKeown argues that such immigration laws developed "an array of categories to define admissible immigrants and methods to those migrants."[218] On the other hand, among American proponents of such immigration laws, it is worth singling out Theodore Lothrop Stoddard. His book, *The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy*, published in 1920, pushed for the idea that global proportions could threaten Western civilizations if no action were taken. For him, restrictions on immigration could be a national solution. Assessing the Versailles settlements, Stoddard says: "Earth's worst war closed with an unconstructive peace which left old sores unhealed and even dealt fresh wounds. The white world to-day lies debilitated and uncured; the colored world views conditions which are a standing incitement to rash dreams and violent action."[219] The danger of gigantic race wars, he argues, could only be avoided if "we whites will have to abandon our tacit assumption of permanent domination over Asia, while Asiatics will have to forego their dreams of migration to white lands and penetration of Africa and Latin America."[220] At the time when African Americans and buraku activists, among many groups, sensed the urgency to form solidarity among colored peoples, Stoddard warned his

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[217] Marc Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan and China*, 35.
[218] Adam McKeown, "Adam McKeown on Immigration," 2011, https://cupblog.org/2011/07/01/adam-mckeown-on-immigration/. He further develops the argument in Adam Mckeown, *Melancholy Order : Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
[219] Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color against White World-Supremacy* (Scribner, 1920), 16.
[220] Ibid., 308.

fellows about the danger of such formation: he called the 1919 Pan-African Conference held in Paris "a growing sense of negro race-solidarity" and argued that the one thing that could stop Japan's expansionism into Latin America is "our veto."[221] Warning his white audience of the imminent danger the white world would have to encounter, Stoddard writes, "neither a Pan-colored nor a Colored- Bolshevist alliance is impossibilities, far-fetched though these terms may sound."[222]

While people like Stoddard saw the Immigration Act of 1924 as a solution to the threats posed by the rising Japan and its threats on the Anglo-Saxon civilization, the passage of this law was met with considerable anger from the Japanese public across the Pacific. Amidst the waves of protests that took place in Japan, both the Japanese ambassador to the U.S, Hanihara Masanao and the American ambassador to Japan, Cyrus E. Woods were forced to resign. In a letter Hanihara wrote to the U.S. secretary of labor, he argued that the passage of such discriminatory law would render the Japanese "unworthy and undesirable" and worried about the conditions of the Japanese in the United States.[223] In a news commentary titled "The Senate's Declaration of War," published on April 19th, 1924, *Japan Times and Mail* argued that such a law constitutes an "insult" to the Japanese people:

> The impression is not unnatural, therefore, on the Japanese side, that the American Senators took advantage of the adverse plight of Japan in developing and carrying into effect their scheme of making Japan and the Japanese victims of their political maneuvering. This is extremely unfortunate…We are most deeply aggrieved that the American Senate has made itself an object of distrust and suspicion in the Japanese mind through an act which is characterized as unnecessary and ill-judged by the American organs of public opinions themselves.[224]

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[221] Ibid., 99 and Ibid., 132.
[222] Ibid., 233.
[223] Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan : From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 177.
[224] Anonymous, "The Senate's Declaration of War," *Japan Times and Mail*, 1924.

Tahara could not quite share this sentiment with his fellow countryman. As a newly arrived foreign student in the United States, he soon realized this country was not the land of freedom as pictured. Disappointed, he wrote, "It is shallow and shameful to see America as a Christian country or a land of freedom. Marx definitely did not think of Japanese workers in the US or black workers when he said, 'Workers of the world. Unite!' His theory was all about the white man and limited to white people."[225] In addition to exposing the hypocrisy of America's freedom dream, Tahara also found the anger from the Japan side as double-standard and self-righteous. Reminding people back home about the centuries-long discrimination toward burakumin, he writes,

> The Immigration Act of 1924 has seemed to arouse much turmoil among people from the mainland. It appears to be meaningful, but it is indeed meaningless. Only the ignorant would naively believe in the existence of some ethics and morals in international politics. Sweeping those they don't like into the corner, isn't America doing the exact same thing they did? Isn't this something the powerful always do unconsciously or intentionally?[226]

Calling the Japanese anger toward the immigration law "meaningless," Tahara refers to the treatment burakumin are subjected to in Japan to argue that it is not much different from America's racism toward the Japanese. He rejects the existence of any ethics or morals in what he calls "international politics"; the following sentences suggest what this blanket term means: a power hierarchy that pushes the other into continuous liminality and unfair treatment. Simultaneously a burakumin and a Japanese immigrant, he was not moved by protests against a discriminatory law the people of Japan are subjected to, as the same people have been subjecting burakumin like himself to discrimination. However, he was sympathetic to the oversea Japanese

[225] This translation was Sekiguchi's. Haruji Tahara, "Nijū Ni Haiseki Sareru Mure Yori," *Dōai,* no. 15 (1924): 8–10. Quoted in Sekiguchi Hiroshi, "Burakumin Emigrants to America: Historical Experience of 'Racialization' and Solidarity across the Pacific,"in Yasuko Takezawa and Akio Tanabe eds*., Race and Migration in the Transpacific*, 72.
[226] Haruji Tahara, "Nijū Ni Haiseki Sareru Mure Yori," *Dōai,* no. 15 (1924): 8–10.

communities; as a former temporary emigrant, Tahar wanted to support those living in isolation overseas. [227] As Yamamoto Saeri notes, even after Tahara's return to Japan, he brought the proposal to the Diet many times with the aim of convincing the government to fund Japanese language education for second-generation and third-generation Japanese overseas. It could be easily imagined that Tahara's empathy stemmed from a sense of solidarity united through similar experiences of discrimination and homelessness. Despite its internal discrimination against burakumin, the Japanese expatriate communities themselves also constituted minority groups that were looked down upon as ignorant and uncivilized outsiders by white-centric American society. Thus, he connected the anti-discrimination social movements with the support for emigrants for a global framework of solidarity and found many similarities in the plight shared by African Americans and burakumin as both groups cope with the everyday violence from the majority society in their native countries.

However, the reception to the Immigration Act of 1924 among Black leaders varied. During his invited visit to Tokyo by Japanese officials in 1937, W.E.B Du Bois revisited the importance for African Americans to join the protests against the immigration act, an understanding based on the shared oppression in a white supremacist world. At an event at the Pan-Pacific Club, he said: "Negro prejudice in the United States was one cause of the anti-Japanese feeling."[228] For him, the cause that connected the two groups could be traced back how "the defeat of the anti-lynching bill in 1924 was brought from the West by the South at the price of Japanese exclusion."[229] The trip also included Manchuria in the designated route, which

[227] Saeri Yamamoto, *Sengo No Kokka to Nihongo Kyōiku* (Tokyo: Kuroshio shuppan, 2014), 39-44. Quoted in Sekiguchi, 72.
[228] *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 13, 1937. Quoted in Reginald Kearny, "The Pro-Japanese Utterances of W.E.B Du Bois," 208.
[229] Ibid.

allowed Du Bois to see first-hand Japanese imperialist operations. In his later reflection on the tour, he praised the smooth operation and management of the Southern Manchuria Railway Company, a state-established company that was instrumental in the economic exploitation of Manchuria. Preoccupied with a white versus colored bifurcation, Du Bois wrote: "A lynching in Manchukuo would be unthinkable…no nation should rule a colony whose people they cannot conceive as Equals."[230] Failing to see how Japanese imperialism was structured around the exploitation of the land of other ethnicities, Du Bois identified with and praised the imperialist control of the region alongside its modern infrastructures, which he surmised showed the benevolent characters of the Japanese. This further allowed him to justify the encroachment of Chinese soil, as he was now convinced "colonial enterprise by a colored nation need not imply the caste, exploitation and subjection which it has always implied in the case of white Europe."

Du Bois was not reluctant to share his appreciation and admiration for Japan on the trip; in the column written for the Pittsburg Courier upon his return, he differentiated the Japanese Empire from the Euro-American Empires as the former "was above all a country of colored people run by colored people for colored people" based on what he saw in the Japanese colony.[231] For him, the absence of white masters in colonized Manchuria felt like a breeze of fresh air as the Japanese he shared conversations with could identify with his struggles against the white world. He imagined Japan to be the leader of a world revolution. While Du Bois might have been the most vocal one to discuss the affinity felt with the Japanese, many other African Americans saw the potential in the rising Japanese empire as an ally they could stretch out hands of fellowship with. The warm welcome and reception he felt on this visit to Japan encouraged

[230] W.E.B Du Bois, "Japan and Ethiopia," *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 13, 1937.. Quoted in Reginald Kearny, "The Pro-Japanese Utterances of W.E.B Du Bois," 204.
[231] Ibid.

him to be a more fervent supporter of an empire that executed the same violence towards other ethnic and racial groups in the same way the American empire has, and Tahara's earlier-mentioned comment illustrated this.

What Reginald Kearney calls the "pro-Japan utterances of Du Bois" won many Japanese hearts but certainly deviated from the living experiences of many burakumin, including Tahara's.[232] Du Bois's support for Pan-Asianism, informed by his belief in collective action and solidarity among all people of color, enabled him to see a race-less and caste-less Asia. However, as Yuichiro Onishi rightfully points out, Du Bois's Pan-Asianist theory was not too different from the Pan-Asianism used by Japan's imperial leadership to justify colonial subjugation and expansion through racial construction.[233] With a sarcastic touch, Tahara classifies the mentality of pro-Japan foreigners into two groups. The first group referred to the calculated politicians, those he deemed to have personal political interests and ambitions in supporting Japan. The other group consisted of those he identified as "the hypocritical and superior ones yearning for self-satisfaction. He argued that one could only discern this mentality after arrival in America.[234] He was certainly critical of the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924. Still, he was never convinced by the mounting critics of the law from the Japanese public and even the pro-Japan Americans, even when they took his side. While the Japanese felt humiliated and irritated by passing an immigration law that targeted them, it worked squarely with the Japanese ultra-nationalists' commitment to make Japan the liberator of Asia's nonwhite peoples. Pan-Asianism, the idea that Japan, as a modern and powerful nation, would take the lead in promoting unity and

[232] Reginald Kearney, "The Pro-Japanese Utterances of W.E.B. Du Bois," *Contributions in Black Studies a Journal of African and Afro-American Studies* 13, no. 1 (January 1, 1995): 7.
[233] Yuichiro Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism : Afro-Asian Solidarity in Twentieth-Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 57.
[234] Tahara Haruji, "Nijū ni haiseki sareru mure yori," *Dōai*, 9.

cooperation among the peoples of Asia to counter the influence of Western powers, played hand in hand with Black-Japan solidarity. As Du Bois envisioned a world revolution led by Japan against the white world, Japanese leaders also believed they had a moral obligation to help uplift fellow Asians and protect them from Western domination.

The comradeship Tahara desired to form with the African American movements was essentially different from the one those in Tokyo looked for. As mentioned above, he dismissed his fellow countryman's anger toward the immigration law and urged them to reflect on their treatment of minority groups within the Japanese. About the conditions of Japanese Americans, he continues:

> Let's try to reflect on Japan's own situation. Now we are granted citizen's rights, [at least] purportedly, even without the Suiheisha activism. However, what about the real effect of that? How about the actual society-wide situation? How about the daily encounters with others? Aren't they clearly against hatred?
>
> It's the same thing happening here. Whether you have American citizenship or don't have it, you are always subjected to discrimination and humiliation in daily encounters.[235]

As a burakumin who had moved elsewhere and been subjected to two different racial structures, Tahara remained critical of both nations for the hypocrisy embedded in the liberal and progressive narratives. Alluding to the historical experience of freed burakumin alongside freed African Americans, Tahara had reached the conclusion that Japanese Americans, as racialized subjects in White America, would have fallen into the same situation even if the restrictions on citizenship were lifted. In short, he did not believe granting citizenship would impose any meaningful change to the status quo of the racial structure, nor did he see it as a defining feature of the liberties and rights burakumin and African Americans struggled for. Despite his sarcastic tone toward the angry Japanese public, Tahara also called for Black-Japanese solidarity. Before

[235] Haruji Tahara, "Nijū Ni Haiseki Sareru Mure Yori," *Dōai,* no. 15 (1924): 8–10.

his departure to South America, he traveled to Harlem hoping to meet Marcus Garvey in person. The conversation never took place, as Garvey was arrested for mail fraud in connection to the sale of stock in the Black Star Line. Although there were irregularities connected to the business, the prosecution, believed by many scholars, was politically motivated as Garvey's activists had attracted considerable government attention.[236] Garvey's engagement in under-grounded pro-Japanese movements, along with movements such as the Moorish Science Temple and the Pacific Movement of the Eastern World, among other Black-Japan movements, had a combined membership of about 15,000 people at the peak.[237] Despite Garvey's detention, Tahara was hosted by the UNIA members and invited to talk to the editors of the *Negro World*. The most interesting part of the Tahara's connection to Marcus Garvey is how the idea of emigration played a huge role in the two's activism and envision for freedom. While Marcus saw Africa as this lost hometown to redeem for the children of the diaspora, Tahara advocated buraku emigration to different places worldwide and ran two emigration schools better to prepare buraku emigrants upon his return to Japan.

It is worth noting that his imagination of Black-Japan solidarity was radically different from both the Japanese leaders and the American liberals, which explains his criticism and frustration over the latter groups. Further reflecting on the liminality of buraku emigrants overseas, his deeply entrenched disbelief in the liberal tradition let him conclude that only superficial ones would regard America as the country of liberty.[238] He writes, "Although Marx called for the solidarity of working-class laborers all over the world, the Japanese and black

[236] For detailed accounts of how Garvey's engagement in pro-Japanese movement was deemed threatening by the American authorities, see Gerald Horne, *Facing the Rising Sun* (New York: NYU Press, 2018).
[237] Gerald Horne, *Facing the Rising Sun*, 12.
[238] Tahara Haruji, "Nijū ni haiseki sareru mure yori," *Dōai*, 10.

laborers in America formed no unity. This is due to the existence of white supremacy."[239] The failure of any formed solidarity among minorities- an obstacle many generations of activists face- is due to structure; its core can be traced back to white supremacy. In addition to the pervasiveness of racial oppression for colored workers, Tahara pointed to the rigid nexus of power that protected and enforced the structure. This system, reserving the best for wealthy white Americans, engendered resentment and zero-sum thinking among everyone else of whatever was left. What Tahara wanted to form with Garvey was a shared goal to dismantle white supremacy by fueling the Black-Japan solidarity, drastically different from what the Japanese government sought in their alliance with African Americans. Japan's proposal to include a clause on racial equity at the Paris Conference had gained it many black allies. However, it has regarded white supremacy as the model of development and modernity and the competitor of power and territories. On the other hand, Tahara, when he addressed Garvey's fellow colleagues, was concerned with the fact that racism and white supremacy have created longstanding rifts between communities of color and stroked interracial conflicts.[240]

Though Tahara never proposed any concrete solution to ending white supremacy, he left traces and hints of what he imagined. In the same essay in which he discussed the duality of discrimination, he wrote, "It's good to have a war." [241] Instead of dismissing this as precipitous and ludicrous, he declared his willingness to resort to violence as final solution, although not many remember him as pro-war figure. "This scientific strategy America took to gain its victory, the confirmed proof [of our inferiority] is what we have to mount an attack toward," he

[239] Ibid.
[240] Haruji Tahara, "Harlem No Nanokakan: Amerika Kokujin Undō No Chūshinchi Inshōki," 94.
[241] Haruji Tahara, "Nijū ni haiseki sareru mure yori," *Dōai,* 10.

continued to write. [242] He differentiated himself from fellow Japanese immigrants who yearned to be model minorities and attributed this continuing racial violence inflicted on such communities to the continual silence and acceptance of the booming popularity of race science. As Mae Ngai points out, the prevalent image of "model minority" elides the existence of differences within Asian American communities and fails to acknowledge the lived experiences of working-class Asian Americans, illegal immigrants, and burakumin like Tahara.[243] Tahara's imagination of "a war" could be best described as a cleansing force with similar practical and psychological reasons as Fanon's definition of violence, one that "frees the native from his inferiority complex and his despair and inactions; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect." [244] This struggle with white supremacy, through a creative and cathartic evocation of violence, enables the subjugated to recreate themselves with self-determined existence by rejecting to act in conformity with universal moral norms. Here, Tahara's proposal of "a war" was derived his experience of being a racialized subject in the white supremacist United States; however, the anger he expressed in the paragraphs also suggested that he saw the need of resorting to violence as a cleansing force against both structures of hierarchy in Japan and the US.

Emigration, as both an idea and practice, offered Tahara and his fellow burakumin a way to imagine a self-ruled territory with no traces of discrimination and white supremacy. Tahara's time in the Americas played a significant role in shaping his political identity and ideas for reform. In a 1935 issue of *Fukuoka Kenji*, he penned a brief article titled "*Mianmi no ni senpai*,"

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[242] Ibid.
[243] See Mae M Ngai, *Impossible Subjects* (Princeton University Press, 2014).
[244] Frantz Fanon, Constance Farrington, and Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Wretched of the Earth. Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre. Translated by Constance Farrington.* (Pp. 255. Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1967), 94. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon also states that freeing oneself from colonialism through violence can be cathartic. In the context of the Algerians, violence was cathartic as it allowed them to restore the self which had been systematically destroyed by colonialism. Also see Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (S.L.: Penguin Books, 1952).

in which he recounted how a brief visit to South America during his study-abroad years introduced him to the appeal of colonial education. Soon after his return to Japan in late 1920s, Tahara started to allocate fund for his emigration school projects. By 1932, he was already in charge of three Suiheisha-related schools across the archipelago, including the Asakusa Proletarian Political School (*asakusa puroretaria seiji gakko*) in Tokyo, the Sakai Toshihiko Farmers' Work School (*nōmin rodō gakko*) in Fukuoka and the Yokohama Foreign Language School, a school closely related to colonization and settlement projects.[245]At all three schools, he took up the post of operation and, more importantly, conducted curriculum reforms. Not until 1934 had Tahara acquire the resources and opportunity to remodel the schools solely based on his political ambitions; the first place of the experiment was at the Sakai Toshihiko Farmers' Work School on Kyushu Island. Shortly after he ascended to the head of the school in 1934, he held lectures on the theme of continental colonization in May of the same year. This lecture series was unsuccessful; despite the initial goal of attracting an audience of about one hundred, only eight people showed up to express support and interest.[246] Whereas the specific content of Tahara's lecture is no longer accessible, the main theme declared at the lecture was clear: continental colonialism is the best way to break through the ongoing economic crisis in Japan's rural areas- which is in line with Japan's ambitious plan to send one million households to Manchuria in the 1930s.[247] Tahara deemed this the goal to accomplish through his reorganization of the academy. Two months after this initial failed attempt, the original proposal for establishing Kyushu Colonization School was submitted in July, with the goal of creating the only permanent

[245] Toshiyasu Koshōji, "Buraku Kaihō to Shakaishugi: Tahara Haruji Wo Chūshin Ni," in *Shakaishugi No Seiki*, ed. Haruhiko Hoshino and Naoki Kumano (Kyoto: Hōritsubunkasha, 2004), 102.
[246] Ibid., 103.
[247] For details on Japan's settler colonization of Manchuria and how burakumin partook in the plan, please see Chapter Four.

foreign migration institution in Kyushu. The founding committee leaders, represented by Tahara's signature on the proposal, pledged to establish a school that would provide short-term training to equip prospective migrants to Manchuria, South America, and Southeast Asia with the necessary skills.[248] The initial matriculation offered two courses, each accommodating twenty students, for those intending to migrate to Brazil and Manchuria The four-month programs required enrollment qualifications that included being an adventurous Japanese male (above 18 years old) with a specific level of academic and physical aptitude (equivalent to second-year junior high education,) and most importantly, a strong determination to relocate overseas. [249] The committee aimed to train "intrepid and pioneering young men with intellectual acumen and experience" through a curriculum comprising foreign language, colonization studies, history, overseas knowledge, agriculture, crafts, business, hygiene, and martial arts."[250] Examining the curriculum closely, one can infer that Tahara's vision of an exemplary colonizer embodied traits akin to Western modernity, especially the emphasis on hygiene.

Regarding Tahara's post-America experience, an inquiry arises regarding his involvement in Japan's colonial expansion and his perception of it as a possible source of liberation for the burakumin and other Japanese. This notion, coupled with his affiliation with African American movements, particularly Garvey's ideologies, brings forth the unsettling reality that Tahara placed his hopes for liberation in the colonization of other lands and peoples. Given Tahara's extensive writings on racism in the United States and his cognizance of discrimination in Japan, his reform of emigration schools suggests his conviction that emigration offers a liberating outlook for those seeking freedom. Regardless of the chosen emigration site, be it Manchuria or

[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid., 5.

any other destination, for buraku leaders and the rank-and-file members that moved, it represented a new prospect- the prospect of embarking on a life of self-sufficiency and collectivism.

Bringing Suiheisha to Hawaii

Eugene Miller Van Reed, an American merchant who resided in Japan, acted as the Hawaiian consul in Japan and assisted in the recruitment of the first batch of Japanese immigrants to Hawaii in 1868. This group, referred to as the "*gannen mono*" or "*people of the first year*," consisted of 142 men and 6 women. [251] Following Meiji Japan's lifting of restrictions on immigration to Hawaii in 1885, a large influx of Japanese laborers migrated to Hawaii. The timing of their arrival coincided with the Hawaiian sugar cane plantations' search for affordable laborers, which led to agent companies signing long-term contracts with young Japanese men to work in tasks like weeding and cutting sugar cane. This influx of Japanese laborers fundamentally transformed the demographic makeup of the islands. Although the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 halted Japanese immigration to the United States, including Hawaii, the Japanese immigrants who had arrived earlier were permitted to continue working on the sugar plantations, often enduring low pay and long hours.

While historical records do not provide precise data on the recruitment of laborers from buraku communities or the number of buraku immigrants to Hawaii, Okamura Mamoru, a burakumin himself, authored a pamphlet titled "*Aku inshū wo zetsumetsuseyo* (Eradicate the Evil Habits)" to address the continuing discrimination against burakumin in Japanese communities in

[251] Masayo Duus, *The Japanese Conspiracy* (Univ of California Press, 1999), 13.

Hawaii.[252] In this article published in 1930, Okamura called for a Suiheisha Movement in Hawaii to promote equity and liberation for burakumin. The preface to the pamphlet was written by Nakabayashi Kiyofumi, a decade-long friend of Okamura and a fellow Kauai resident. In the beginning paragraph of the preface, Nakabayashi wrote:

> The author of this book, Okamura, is a friend of mine for more than ten years when I resided in Kauai. The original manuscript arrived at my sickbed; with understanding, he asked me to help him write a preface. With this manuscript, he had the intention to seek to build Suiheisha Movement in Hawaii. Every word and sentence express the sorrow, anger and grievance he has felt over the years, those emotions that cannot be concealed. With appropriate restraint, he attempted to use enlightening language, with the aim of narrating [the situation] to the second generation of Japanese American- that was his intention.[253]

Nakabayashi proceeded to provide an overview of the history of discrimination against eta/hinin in order to contextualize Okamura's struggle for the audience, as some second-generation Japanese American may not be well-versed in the background of the buraku problem. Towards the end, he cried:

> When will they be able to free themselves from the shackles and handcuffs of such a society?... Let us put the matters of Japan aside. Here in Hawaii, people of buraku origin, like Okamura, proudly declare, 'I am not ashamed of being a burakumin.' This self-affirming attitude creates a more conducive environment for eradicating discrimination and customs in this destination of emigration.[254]

Okamura, the initiator of the Suiheisha movement in Hawaii, began his writing by explaining his genuine intention to address the second-generation Japanese Americans in Hawaii and hoped the readers would read it attentively with a calm and open mind.[255] He drew comparisons between the experience of burakumin and racism in order to help his audience better understand and

[252] Mamoru Okamura, "Aku Inshū Wo Zetsumetsuseyo," 1930. The original copy is in possession of the United Japanese Society of Hawaii. The copy I rely on was recovered by Tsurushima Setsurei. Tsurumshima included a copy of the document in her published paper, "Hawai nihonjin imin no buraku sabetsu to suihei undo," *buraku kaihō*, issue 269, pp 92-113.
[253] Ibid., 101.
[254] Ibid., 102.
[255] Ibid., 103.

sympathize with the plight of burakumin based on the shared experience of discrimination as Japanese in the United States, "In Hawaii, a place where people of diverse backgrounds coexist, it is not uncommon to be addressed by with derogatory terms like 'Jap' or 'Yarōberi' by arrogant and disrespectful people of other races. How does it make us feel when we are subjected to discrimination like this?"[256] In an era when Japanese workers toiled in appalling conditions and faced discrimination with unjustly low pay on Hawaiian plantations, Okamura endeavored to share with the struggles of his audience and help them recognize the similar hardships faced by burakumin, the most oppressed class within the Japanese American community. Similar to Tahara, he also brought in the plight of African American struggles to discuss why racial hatred would cause long-term harm, "We all know about the racism that tens of millions of Black Americans endure, which results in their deep resentment towards White Americans. In this world, the natural cycle of growth and decline is inevitable. With developing breeding, this deep-seated hatred among Black Americans poses a significant threat to White Americans without a doubt."[257] Okamura used racism towards Japanese American and Black Americans to implicitly suggest that buraku discrimination is a form of racism, which was a term that Suiheisha activists avoided and rejected due to the fear of a different racial identity that could prevent them from being recognized by Imperial Japan. Based on the two examples, he was able to drive his main point home: the second generation of Japanese Americans must break away from the first generation's reprehensible practices of condoning derogatory slurs and discrimination against burakumin, as such behavior may sow the seeds of future hatred. [258] Okamura also criticized such discrimination by calling it undemocratic:

[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid.

> In the United States, where people of Yellow, White, Brown, and Black races live together under the same flag, you have continued the evil tradition of the first-generation Japanese Americans without any thought of the pros and cons. You, the second-generation Japanese Americans, are slandering and excluding your fellow countrymen, allowing such evil tendencies to grow. This is a great shame for you, who have received democratic education.[259]

One aspect of Okamura's argument that stands out is his repetition of the fact that burakumin share Japanese ancestry, despite his earlier comparison between buraku discrimination and racism in America. Not only claiming that "this kind of unethical prejudice and discrimination must be eliminated for the Japanese race who claim to upload justice," he also asked, "Why should we, who have no difference in quality from ordinary Japanese people, should be despised?"[260] He also cited the theory of Kida Sadakichi, a famous historian and anthropologist, to show that there is no evidence to suggest that the blood of burakumin is any different, regardless of the reasons that people may imagine: "If there is anything that sets them apart from the general population, it is only that their ancestors became social outcasts for some reasons, and were excluded by the prevailing ideas and superstitions of the time."[261] Okamura firmly denied the notion that burakumin constituted a distinct race. Instead, he delved into a detailed discussion of how the Japanese race has been mixed throughout history to highlight that buraku discrimination arose from social and religious reasons. He praised the Meiji Emperor highly while turning a blind eye to Japan's imperial expansion and racism in its colonies, which is unsurprising given his sense of racial superiority and proud claim that burakumin are part of the Japanese race.

> After the Meiji Restoration, old customs were broken under the new spirit of the nation. With the far-sightedness of the benevolent Emperor Meiji, the caste names that insulted the personality of eta and hinin were abolished, and they became commoners equal to the rest of the people. However, to distinguish themselves from the former outcasts, these

[259] Ibid., 104.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid.

> ordinary people developed the name '*shin-heimin*' (new commoners), which contradicted the emperor's decree. They insulted their own blood and inherited evil customs only to satisfy their sense of superiority.[262]

Okamura's argument also captured the sentiments of many burakumin's- admiring the Meiji emperor as the one that freed them.[263] The emperor's 1871 Emancipation Edict, to many burakumin, was a sign of welcome and acceptance to end their centuries-long discrimination, enabling them to identify more with the nation and assert their Japanese authenticity. In the following decades, buraku activists repeatedly cited the edict as proof of their legitimacy and equal status within the population; they often frequently referred back to the decree during Suiheisha's denunciation sessions, where the offender is asked to apologize for their discriminatory behavior. Okamura then went on to talk about the rise of Suiheisha to his readers, calling it a movement that is "devoted to building a reasonable and respectful society."[264] Okamura penned this pamphlet to free burakumin from discrimination, but the meaning he ascribed to liberation warrants further examination. His insistence on burakumin sharing the same blood as the Japanese allowed him to refute the notion that they were impure in terms of blood lineage. Still, at the same time, it reinforces the idea that blood plays a critical role in invalidating discrimination. While well-intentioned in Okamura's case, this perspective fails to account for the myriad ways discrimination operates beyond blood ties. Okamura may have unintentionally perpetuated a narrow view of discrimination and limited the possibilities for true liberation and equality by focusing solely on blood lineage. His rationale for the liberation of burakumin is rooted in their authenticity as Japanese; the fixation on the concept of Japaneseness

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[262] Ibid.

[263] For a detailed discussion on burakumin's relationship with the Meiji emperor, please see Introduction and Chapter One. Ian Neary writes, "Most Japanese families have a kamidana- literally 'god shelf'- in their house on which will be placed some symbols from the local Shinto shrine and perhaps some photographs of deceased members of the family. Houses in Buraku communities well into the 1970s might also often place on their kamidana photographs of the Meiji emperor and Matsumoto Jiichirō." Ian Neary, *The Buraku Issue and Modern Japan*, 17.

[264] Tsurushima, 108.

aligns with the *kokutai* (national polity) narrative, which reinforces the notion that generic makeup determines a person's superiority or inferiority. In other words, his idea of liberation for burakumin centered around their acceptance and recognition as fully Japanese, assuming that there is a fixated set of traits, mainly the blood lineage, that define Japaneseness and that the Japanese are inherently superior. His exclusive focus on buraku discrimination also led him to disregard the gendered and racialized dimensions in those incidents described. Okamura provided six examples of discrimination that he either witnessed or heard about to illustrate the seriousness of discrimination in Japanese communities in Hawaii and to emphasize the need for a Suiheisha movement. This writing is crucial because it is not only the sole evidence of the existence of buraku discrimination in Hawaii, but it also allows us to see how the "evil customs" were able to travel and persist across the Pacific, shattering the emigration dreams of many burakumin. In contrast to *Hakai*'s ending, where Ushimatsu relocated to Texas for a fresh start, Okamura's account revealed the harsh truth that the new land they envisioned could not free many burakumin from the chains of discrimination. Despite avoiding historically associated burakumin occupations and going out of their way to conceal their buraku identities, the individuals depicted in those accounts are still subjected to rumors, hearsay, and background investigations in their daily encounters with other Japanese as well as during significant events such as marriage. Okamura's first example was about a couple that fell in love,

> On Kauai island, a kind-hearted girl turned twenty-one and fell in love with a young man. She became pregnant, and the young man initially wanted to marry her. However, those around him, including his parents and brothers, vehemently opposed the idea, saying, 'You cannot marry her because she is *chōrinbō*. [a derogatory term for burakumin]" The young man fled the situation and moved to Honolulu to hide himself. The girl, engulfed in despair, attempted suicide but was unsuccessful… She and her parents could only

> mourn and weep over the discrimination they faced, crying themselves to sleep with no recourse. The poor girl is now left to care for her infant.[265]

The situation described here highlights the discrimination faced by buraku emigrants to the United States when seeking marriage with other Japanese. The young man's cowardice in the face of his parents and brothers' blatant discrimination resulted in tragedy for the woman and her family. When considering the gender perspective, the woman's reproductive labor made her more vulnerable in such a situation. The fact that Okamura wrote and shared such a personal story suggests that it had become a scandal within the local community, involving a young unmarried single mother and public knowledge of her buraku identity. Each of the six instances Okamura documented in his writing sheds light on discrimination in romantic relationships, although the specific gender dynamics may vary. The second example depicts a buraku man's experience with a similar predicament,

> This incident also took place on the same island. A young woman and a man fell in love and revealed their relationship to the women's parents. However, the parents refused to approve of their relationship simply because the man was a burakumin, even though the couple begged them to reconsider. The woman was already pregnant at this point, and the couple decided to marry despite the parents' objections. In response, the parents were so furious that they severed all ties with their daughter. Although the man she married was fine, I later heard from a guy named XX that the girl's parents attempted to let their daughter marry someone who belonged to the category of intellectually disabled. This man was thrilled and immediately told his parents, but they were offended by the way the girl's parents treated him. It seems that the girl's parents, being blinded by the evil traditions, thought that an intellectually disabled man would be a better match for their daughter than a capable and impressive young man. Isn't this a pitiful and laughable tale? The couple who chose to marry freely are now leading a very harmounious family life, it appears that even the girl's stubborn parents have come to understand that a capable man is better than an intellectually disabled person, which can be seen from their increasingly close relationship over the past few years.[266]

Okamura did not categorize the story as a tragedy, likely because the couple were able to build a happy family life, and the girl's parents appeared to have overcome their prejudice against

[265] Ibid., 109.
[266] Ibid.

burakumin through their close interactions in recent years. Okamura uses the "intellectually disabled man" character in the story as a clear contrast to a "full-fledged" buraku young man. This comparison emphasizes the buraku man's discrimination, as the girl's parents laughably preferred an intellectually disabled person over him. Okamura's writing is charged with discrimination based on disabilities. Ironically, it is the presence of this third person that makes the buraku man an easily better choice and leads to a happy ending in the story. However, in some cases Okamura illustrated, it only takes rumors about romantic relationships to destroy someone's life,

> This is a tragic tale of a well-educated young man who worked as a clerk in a company for many years and was highly respected by the manager. A couple died of lung disease at the same workplace, leaving their five children behind. The eldest son and daughter took on jobs in a nearby factory to support their three younger siblings, but tragedy continued to strike the family. Due to illness, the eldest son had to leave for Honolulu, leaving the family without their main breadwinner. Soon after, the second daughter fell ill with lung disease and was sent to a sanatorium.
>
> The kind-hearted young man was deeply moved by the family's plight and generously gave most of his salary to them. He even arranged for the eldest daughter (A)'s brother to attend high school However, due to his unrelenting kindness, rumors spread that he was romantically involved with A. Jealous young men sneered and said, 'That A is falling in love with that *chōrinbō*.'
>
> As time passed, the kind young man also fell ill with lung disease and was admitted to the same sanatorium where the second daughter was being treated. Some young men from the neighborhood taunted A, saying, 'Why don't you go visit your husband?'
>
> However, when A went to visit her sister, where the young man was hospitalized as well, she deliberately ignored the young man who had selflessly helped her family for several years. In fact, she even went as far as to say, 'I would never fall in love with such a *chōrinbō*.' It's difficult to imagine the pain and suffering the young man must have felt when he heard such heartless and pitiful words. With the constant implicit and explicit use of '*chōrinbō*' by ignorant people around him, he eventually developed a mental illness and was subsequently admitted to a psychiatric hospital. This tragic outcome directly resulted from 'returning kindness with enmity' based on unjust and unreasonable discrimination.[267]

[267] Ibid.

The story stands out from the previous ones as it does not actually involve any confirmed romantic relationship; rather, it was the rumors and derision from others that led to the tragic outcome. A, who owed many favors to the buraku young man and was treated with great kindness and generosity, ignored his illness and used a derogatory term to refer to him. Feeling ashamed by the comments of others and wishing to create a distinction between herself and the man, she ultimately contributed to the tragic events that followed. The young men's jealousy comment not only judged the relationship between the buraku man and A based on his idetntity but also sought to shame her as a woman who was involved with a buraku man. The derision and sneering were clearly gendered, as evidenced by those young men's comment, "Why don't you visit your husband?"[268] Their intention was not to suggest a romantic relationship but rather an erotic and physical one. Although Okamura described A's behavior as "returning kindness with enmity," he fails to acknowledge that A was also a victim of discrimination and shaming resulting from prejudice against burakumin. The following case is particularly noteworthy, as '*chōrinbō,*' as a symbol of impurity, was used to draw a comparison to mixed-race children.

> Once, I witnessed a fight between a mixed-race little girl, born to Portuguese and Japanese parents (of course, the mother is Japanese), and a boy born to Japanese parents. During the fight, the girl called the boy a '*chōrinbō.*' The boy clenched his fist and jumped toward the girl when he heard it. Seeing this, I intervened to stop the boy and asked the girl, 'Why did you use the word *chōrinbō*? Do you know what it means?' The girl replied, 'I don't know the word, but mama uses it from time to time.' I then said, 'Well then, how would you feel if this boy yells '*happa*' [a derogatory term for mixed-children] at you? Go home and ask your mother. A person with a child of a different race is dirtier than a *chōrinbō*.' The girl went home.[269]

The story is particularly intriguing because it is unclear if anyone involved in the incident is of buraku descent- the term "*chōrinbō*" is used more as a curse than a label for anyone's identity. The girl's account suggests that her mother taught her the term as a curse word, and the boy's

[268] Ibid.
[269] Ibid., 110.

strong reaction to wanting to beat her up indicates his understanding of how derogatory the term is. The children's familiarity with the term further suggests that discussion of burakumin in personal spaces such as households perpetuates prejudices that are whispered from ear to ear in both personal and public spaces. However, what is more troubling in the story is Okamura's remark, "Of course, the mother is Japanese." His tone implies that it is more common and expected for Japanese women to engage in romantic relationships with people of other races than Japanese men, with a condescending undertone. When Okakmura confronted the girl, he made a highly derogatory comment, explicitly stating, "A person with a child of a different race is dirtier than a *chōrinbō*." By using the term "*happa*" to refer to mixed-race children and stating, "A person with a child of a different race is dirtier than a *chōrinbō*," Okamura's comments suggest that he considered mixed-race children to be impure when compared to those of the burakumin community. Ironically, his attitude, which is based on the concept of Japanese blood purity, operates on the same flawed logic as the prejudice against the buraku communities. Okamura's criticism of the Japanese woman who married a Portuguese man and had a mixed-race child is consistent with his previous insistence that burakumin share the same blood as the Japanese. However, his obsession with blood lineage and his comparison of the burakumin community's situation to racialized communities in the United States reveals both the contradictions and his own racial thinking. Curiously, in the subsequent story recounted, Okamura tried to persuade the readers that he thinks race does not matter in marriages,

> This is one of the comedies. A young woman and a young man fell in loved and wanted to get married, but her parents strongly opposed the relationship and said the man was a *chōrinbō.* Despite the opposition, some of her relatives supported their union, stating that the stupid social class should no longer be a determining factor for marriage, especially since the man was well-educated and serious. Unfortunately, their agreement was in vain, and the woman's parents remained adamantly against the marriage.

> Other young men considered her undesirable as a potential spouse because she was no longer a virgin. However, the women's blood was burning in her body. She eventually fell in love with a Filipino man, and they got married freely. It may be half in desperation, but they are now a family with a child. I am not saying her husband is bad because he is Filipino. Whether he is Filipino, Polkis, or Negros, it does not matter what race he is. However, this Filipino man is a rogue that gambles. With a kid born, the woman is now struggling, and her parents are filled with regrets. This is a good theme for tragicomedy, resulting from the foolish prejudices held by the first-generation parents.[270]

There are several noteworthy aspects of this story. First, Okamura initially referred to the story as a comedy but ultimately described it as a tragicomedy, implying that he finds solace in the fact that those (the woman's parents) who discriminated against burakumin faced the consequences. However, this characterization overlooks the fact that the woman pursued a romantic relationship with the buraku young man of her own volition. In addition to disregarding the woman's perspective in his narrative, Okamura found comfort in the fact that her marriage to a Filipino man was unhappy and that her parents regretted their previous opposition to her relationship with the young buraku man. This raises important questions about the kind of justice that Okamura is pursuing, as discrimination based on others' misery is highly problematic. Furthermore, Okamura explicitly stated that his negative opinion of the woman's current spouse was not because he is Filipino but rather because he is a rogue that gambles. He even listed various races to support his argument that race did not play a role. When comparing this story to the previous one, in which he referred to a woman with a mixed-race kid as dirtier, the self-contradiction in his views becomes apparent; any romantic relationship between a woman and a man of a different race carries the stigma of impurity. Due to his preoccupation with blood purity, Okamura remained entrenched in a blood-centric way of thinking. In other words, he believed that the burakumin community should be treated equally to other Japanese people not because liberation is justice but because burakumin share the same bloodline. Okamura's laser focus on

[270] Ibid., 110-111.

seeking justice for the buraku communities caused him to disregard the suffering of those, especially non-burakumin- who were also impacted by this prejudice. Ironically, his pursuit of liberation justified his invalidation of others' misery. The final story that Okamura shared, which served as the impetus for him to write the pamphlet and establish a Suiheisha movement in Hawaii, provides further insights into his thinking,

> I have witnessed a tragedy that occurred several years ago. I was returning home by car from the farmland, where I was working late that night. While passing by a place halfway, it was almost midnight, and the surrounding was eerily quiet, which made me feel lonely. Although it was a place where I had grown accustomed to being at both day and night, on that particular day while driving, I could not help but think to myself, 'I feel lonely tonight.' While driving along the road, I noticed a white object in the woods, illuminated by the car's headlights. Despite my urge to speed up, I felt uneasy and decided to stop the car to investigate. Upon shining a flashlight on the object, I discovered a rope hanging from a tree branch and a young girl crying beneath it. 'She was going to hang herself,' I said to myself. I said to her, 'Do not do anything reckless.' Then, the girl lifted her head and turned her face towards me. Ah, the misery on her face when she turned! 'Aren't you XX?' I asked. She clung to me and cried bitterly. She was the daughter of an acquaintance of mine. I tried to persuade her in various ways to find out why she had attempted suicide. Even though he had decided to die, she tearfully revealed the reason why.
>
> 'A white family currently employs me, and a young man from the western region who had to relocate to this area for work made advances toward me. At first, I declined, thinking that I should not hurt him, but eventually, I succumbed to the young man's passion and allowed him to embrace me lovingly. He even said he would give up his life for me. However, after about two months, I began to feel that something was wrong with my body. So, I told him the situation and pressured him to marry me. He appeared a bit puzzled, but since he had made promises to me, he disclosed the situation to his parents and asked for their permission to marry me. However, his parents refused to let him marry me, citing my parents' status as new commoners. Moreover, he married someone else directly. I am weeping bitterly, but no tears are coming out because I have been treated badly. I have resolved to die before people begin to look at me suspiciously and question whose child I am pregnant with… Okamura-san, what exactly is *chōrinbō*? How are we different from other Japanese? I asked my father. He explained that our ancestors were involved in the slaughtering of cows. But why should the profession of slaughtering cows, and especially the fact that one's ancestors killed them, be so demeaned forever? In Hawaii, the Cowboys and others slaughter and skin cows and pigs. Why are they not particularly despised? I do not understand. However, being treated with such cruelty and curses in this world, I'd better die.'

> I provided explanations, tried to console and motivate her, escorted her to her parents, and devised a plan of action. Eventually, feeling disheartened, I went to bed in tears, realizing that I had no other option but to let go.
>
> I have never come across such a heartbreaking incident in my entire life. Despite being in the twentieth century, acts of savagery like this can still be found all over Hawaii. This tragic incident sparked my motivation to start the Suiheisha movement in Hawaii, which aims to eliminate discrimination and free the outcast classes.[271]

In the story, Okamura recounts an encounter he had with the daughter of an acquittance. Upon stumbling upon her attempt to end her life, Okamura was deeply disturbed by the extent to which persistent discrimination had wreaked havoc on the lives of many buraku youths, especially regarding marriage. As the girl cried and asked one question after another, struggling to make sense of the discrimination that caused her so much pain, she managed to cut straight to the heart of the matter. She drew a comparison between the cowboys in Hawaii, who perform similar occupations, and the burakumin, highlighting the root cause of discrimination- the stigmatization and impurity associated with the traditional occupation of burakumin. At the conclusion of his story, Okamura revealed his objective in founding the Suiheisha movement- to eradicate discrimination and secure freedom for the previously marginalized buraku community. Nonetheless, it begs the question of how such liberation can be attained when his perspective is so entrenched in blood-based thinking, just like the perpetrators of discrimination.

Conclusion

The historical accounts of buraku residents in Japanese American communities are scarce due to a general fear of exposing their identities and the potential discrimination that follows. However, Tahara Haurji and Okamura Mamoru, both buraku emigrants, were pioneers in

[271] Ibid., 111-112.

discussing the issue of buraku discrimination and advocating for buraku liberation in overseas Japanese communities. Their writings in the 1920s and 1930s were influenced by the racial minority struggles in the United States, coinciding with the expansion of the Japanese empire and the rise of race science in the midst of war. On one hand, Tahara and Okamura both drew on their experiences of racial discrimination in the US and Hawaii to further their analyses and activism, with Tahara seeking solidarity and cross-racial coalition by drawing parallels with black radicalism, while Okamura highlighted existing racism faced by Japanese Americans and Black Americans to call for an end to buraku discrimination within already racialized communities. On the other hand, the rise of a non-European power after Japan's victory in the 1905 Russo-Japanese War also created a moment of hope for many African American intellectuals, increasing their interest in Japan. From pre-WWI years to WWII, the three decades witnessed hopes in and debates over the Black-Japan alliance. What Du Bois' envisioned as "Pan-American Asian Solidarity" was central to his conception of racial struggle.[272] According to scholars who have studied the trans-pacific Black-Japan alliance, many African American radicals were focused on White Euro-American racism, which caused them to ignore Japan's aggression in various territories like Taiwan, Korea, Manchuria, and later the Philippines. These supposed anti-colonial radicals supported Japanese imperialism, which is an ironic twist. Meanwhile, Japanese authorities themselves criticized the treatment of racial minorities in the US and pushed for a clause of racial equity during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. These actions also won the admiration of African Americans, who at the time were grappling with Jim Crow.

[272] Michael T. Martin and Lamont H. Yeakey, "Pan-American Asian Solidarity: A Central Theme in DuBois' Conception of Racial Stratification and Struggle," *Phylon (1960-)* 43, no. 3 (1982): 202, https://doi.org/10.2307/274818.

Tahara's writings shed light on the complexity and moral dilemma of the historic Black-Japan alliance, revealing another layer of the struggle of racialized minorities. His criticism of Japan's hypocrisy in seeking alliances with African Americans is particularly striking, as he highlights the centuries-long discrimination toward burakumin and exposes Japan's false claims of promoting equity and liberation. At a time when the Japanese public was outraged and humiliated by the 1924 Immigration Act's passage, Tahara made implicit comments highlighting the parallels between the two empires. He suggested that both were attempting to rid themselves of undesirable subjects, underscoring that they had more similarities than differences. Furthermore, Tahara criticized pro-Japanese sympathizers, attributing their actions to their own political interests or performative motivations. Referring to his experience in the US as the "duality of discrimination," his identification with Marcus Garvey and other African American leaders is one that is not based on the shared principle of oppression but, more importantly, liberation.[273] Although Tahara never explicitly wrote about the connection between his visit to Harlem and his exchange with the editors of the *Negro World*, his later emphasis on emigration schools upon returning to Japan bore many similarities to Garvey's idea of a "New Africa." For Tahara, many buraku farmers, struggling with poverty and famine in the aftermath of the Great Depression and having no land, became the ideal emigrants for Brazil and Manchuria due to existing labor agreements and government subsidy programs offered by the Japanese government. Of course, this vision of buraku liberation depended on the settler colonization of Manchuria. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, Tahara's experience in foreign lands led him to support settler colonialism through his position in the administration of Suiheisha business. In 1938, Tahara and other buraku leaders formed the Socialist Mass Party Manchuria

[273] The phrases come from Robin D. G. Kelley, "From the River to the Sea to Every Mountain Top: Solidarity as Worldmaking," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 48, no. 4 (2019): 69–91, https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2019.48.4.69.

Migration Group to encourage fellow burakumin to emigrate, taking advantage of the open emigration policies. This reflected a tradition of mass migration and agricultural colonization that dated back to Japan's acquisition of Hokkaido. The freedom of movement brought about by the emergence of Japanese capitalism allowed peasants and burakumin to escape the restrictions of Tokugawa regulations and seek better opportunities. As a result, settler trainee programs and emigrant agencies were established throughout the empire. The unambitious dreams of having one's own land resulted in the displacement and subjugation of indigenous communities in Manchuria. The buraku intellectuals saw Manchuria or elsewhere outside of Japan as a new possibility to start a collective and self-sufficient life, free from discrimination, poverty and hierarchy. Sometimes it meant cooperating with the state that repressed them. The recourses and economic opportunities Manchuria offered procured the government to recruit enough settlers from the metropole to cultivate and exploit the vast land. As Mae Ngai notes, the free movement of labor and the encouraging state policies were often essential to economic development in the New World.[274] Manchukuo was Japan's new world. This buraku imagination was grounded in reality but surpassed it, reflecting a desire for a new start. The emigrant sentiment was not just state collaboration but a debate about national belonging within the buraku communities. For many burakumin, freedom meant leaving the status quo and finding a new home elsewhere, constituting a critique of the Japanese state that had long treated them as outcasts or subhumans.

Okamura's pamphlet calling for establishing a Suiheisha movement is significant in light of this discussion; the dream of emigration as rendered futile in achieving liberation. It is one of the few records documenting buraku discrimination in Hawaii's Japanese American communities. Okamura's writing not only confirms the prevalence of buraku discrimination

[274] Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 28.

among immigrant communities, but it also provides detailed accounts of how such discrimination manifested in daily interactions and influenced people's decisions regarding marriage and family life. Gender, race, and caste intersected in complex ways within the dynamic community of Japanese laborers in Hawaii; women who faced issues related to buraku identity in marriage often bore a greater burden of the consequences, and Okamura's comparison between mixed-race children and burakumin reflected the community's preoccupation with the idea of blood purity. All the tragedies depicted in the pamphlet propelled Okamura's call for a Suiheisha Movement in the foreign land, but it also allowed us to see what lives after emigration were like for burakumin. Discontent and powerless burakumin departed their homeland in search of a more favorable life and many opted to hide their identities to evade discrimination in the foreign land, but they ultimately experienced the tragic events portrayed by Okamura.

Chapter Four: Abandoned Settlers: Buraku Emigrants in Manchurian Settler Colonization

> The decolonial imaginary embodies the buried desires of the unconscious, living and breathing in between that which is colonialist and that which is colonized. Within that interstitial space, desire rubs against colonial repressions to construct resistant, oppositional, transformative, diasporic subjectivities that erupt and move into decolonial desires…To remain within the colonial imaginary is to remain the colonial object who cannot be subject until decolonized. The decolonial imaginary challenges power relations to decolonize notions of otherness to move into a liberatory terrain.
>
> --Emma Perez, The Decolonial Imaginary

Introduction

Today, the memorial tower of the Kutami *kaitakudan* (settlement group) stands in Yamaga City of Kumamoto Prefecture (Figure 1.) At a corner of the local plaza, the stone monument engraves the names and ages of 275 people who died as settlers in Japan's Manchukuo. Organized mainly by the residents of buraku communities in *Kamoto-gun* of Kumamoto Prefecture, the group found its settlement home in Manchuria in April of 1941. Their new home, located more than 150 kilometers away from Harbin, was called Wujia Station of Jilin Province in today's Northeastern China. On the evening of August 17th of 1945, two days after the emperor announced Japan's surrender to the Allied Powers, the group committed collective suicide by throwing themselves into a big fire after taking medicines.[275] The size of the settlement group went down from its peak, 82 households and 316 people, to 276 people by the time of the tragedy.[276] Men in their 20s and 30s have left the settlement community for military duty calls, which explains why the victims were mostly children, women and the elderly. Nearly half of the victims were children under the age of 15, including 27 of them aged 3 or 4 years old.[277] Only

[275] No source specifies the particular medicine the group took at the time.
[276] Yukiharu Takahashi, *Zetsubō No Imin-Shi- Manshū E Okura Reta "Hisabetsuburaku No Kiroku,"* (Mainichishinbunsha, 1995), 16-17.
[277] Ibid.

the messenger survived. Those tragic deaths of Japanese agrarian settlers in Manchuria, the frontier of the Japanese Empire, did not make the Kutaimi settlement group one of the most commemorated settlement groups in postwar years alone. What differentiates this group from others is the fact that Kutami was organized by the Central Reconciliation Business Association (*Chūō Yūwajigyō kyōkai*) in the name of liberating buraku communities in the Minamikoga area of Kumamoto Prefecture. Buraku leaders in the area, such as Matsuyama Masataro and Toyoda Ichiji, supported the emigration plan and promoted active participation in the local region. Of the total emigrants in the Kutami settlement group, about seventy percent were buraku residents.[278]



Figure 7: The Memorial Tower of Kutami Settlement Group.[279]

As one of the few buraku-centered emigration groups to Manchuria, the narratives surrounding the Kutami group have always been overtly political due to its relation to buraku communities' participation in war mobilization, the status of buraku activism in postwar years, and the

[278] Some non-buraku residents also joined the settlement group, comprising about thirty percent of the group. It's unknown the ratio of burakumin and non-burakumin among the 275 dead.
[279] Ōsaka jinken rekishi shiryōkan, *Manshū Imin to Hisabetsuburaku: Yūwa Seisaku No Gisei to Natta Kutami Kaitaku-Dan* (Ōsaka jinken rekishi shiryōkan, 1989), 18.

complicity of settler colonization in Manchuria. This chapter focuses on the historical debates over buraku emigration to Manchuria in the late 1930s and 1940s to join the scholarly effort to complicate the story of Japanese settlement in the area and rethink how Manchuria constituted a symbol of utopia for the buraku leaders and emigrants differently. Japan's Manchukuo has been the subject of scholarly inquiries since the 1960s, if not earlier. Most of the early scholarship in Japanese, Chinese, and English focused primarily on state-level policies and state-initiated migration programs from economic and agricultural perspectives, leaving the stories of non-state actors out. Extending the elitist and metropole-focused studies on Japanese colonial histories, historians have made efforts to excavate histories from below and from within, complicating the notion of "settler" and "colonizer." Louise Young's seminal work, *Japan's Total Empire*, provides us with a new storyline. Examining how the middle-scale farmers from the Association of Japanese Farmers (*Nihon nōmin kyōkai*) possess a different imagination of Manchuria from the country's industrial elites, Young reveals the differences and tensions among the people settled in Manchuria. Prasenjit Duara's works on Manchuria, especially *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, lays out a powerful history of Manchuria as a place both Japan and China relied upon for their claims, and sometimes, imaginations, of sovereignty via national authenticity. Moreover, Emer O'Dwyer's recent work, focusing on Southern Manchuria and the city of Dairen, further challenges the homogeneity of its Japanese settler community. Her examination of the Mantetsu employee journals reveals the voices of many rank-and-file workers who have fought for civilian self-rule, inviting us to rethink the notion of "total war" and "total empire."

This chapter shifts the focus to those buraku emigrants whose existence blurs the lines between victims and perpetrators and between minority and majority. Like Hokkaido and other possible destinations, they regarded Manchuria as a place of economic opportunities and the

"new world" that is free of discrimination. Coupled with the efforts to encourage buraku emigration to the empire's new territory from the Yūwa (reconciliation) movement, the historically more radical Suiheisha movement also turned in favor of embracing the mobilization goals after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in 1937. Efforts to promote Buraku emigration to Manchuria continued from 1937 until the end of the war, playing quite a significant role in the debates within buraku communities during the mobilization period when they were in the face of economic difficulties and mass unemployment. For the buraku leaders that promoted the idea and the buraku emigrants who moved their families, Manchukuo did not only stand for the middle-scale farmers' utopian alternative to the flawed modernity that capitalism had wrought, what Young suggested in the larger context of Japanese agrarian settlers. It was a project in which they saw the hope of inclusion, acceptance, and recognition from the homeland that had rejected them. The complicated politics of buraku activism in the era and Suiheisha's conversion further blur the ideological ground on which many buraku leaders and rank-and-file members stood at the time. Buraku emigration to Manchuria supplements our understanding of Japan's settler colonization of the region and challenges it; how do we understand the buraku settlers' choices to move to Manchuria? What did Manchuria offer them that was different from the agrarian settlers? As some buraku emigrants from the Kutami group acknowledged that the land they were granted was taken away from the locals, using the prevalent "deception theory" that they were deceived by the state to explain their tragic ending not only erases their subjectivities but also ignores the violent process of dispossession they were part of. The liberating perspective of becoming a settler colonizer in Japan's *shintenchi* (new world) was the buraku settlers' real lived experiences and the buraku leaders' hopeful visions.

The chapter excavates the history of buraku mobilization in the larger context of Japan's colonization of Manchuria. This chapter aims to achieve three objectives; 1) to further complicate the utopian image of Manchuria as a place to escape buraku discrimination, different from the other groups of settlers, 2) to examine the role Manchurian emigration played in relation to wartime buraku economy and politics and 3) to explore how the history of Kutami settlement group has been represented by the Buraku Liberation League in postwar years. Together, this chapter poses one over-arching question: Was buraku emigration to Manchuria meant to be a permanent solution to escape the dreary poverty and oppressiveness at home, or was it a liberation dream that buraku leaders and emigrants found potential in in being Japanese? The first part of the chapter briefly goes over the historiographical works on Japan's settler colonization in Manchuria to discuss how it became associated with the concept of utopia for many non-burakumin. The chapter then delves into the historical conditions of buraku communities during the period of war mobilization from economic and political perspectives to illustrate how buraku emigration as an idea and a practice came into being. In terms of the economic challenges due to the shortage of raw materials for traditional buraku industries and the subsequent high unemployment in buraku communities. On the other hand, these economic challenges, along with the state's crackdown on socialist movements and other factors, posed many challenges to buraku activism. Though the earlier chapter has discussed Suiheisha's conversion and its later participation in war mobilization, this chapter would focus more on how this wartime history of Suiheisha shaped the narratives on buraku emigrants in postwar decades. The chapter's last part focuses on the history and postwar representation of the Kutami settlement group. Based on the testimonies of the survivor and their descendants, this chapter attempts to understand the reasons behind their emigration and the power dynamics they had to navigate

during their settlement years. This chapter also problematizes the publications and commemoration activities on Kutami for portraying them only as abandoned victims of state policy in postwar years. Whether it's a short-lived realized dream or an abandonment by the Japanese state, Kutami group members' role in constructing a multi-ethnic Japan as discriminated burakumin remains significant. In other words, they had their own materialistic desires, definitions of freedom, and concerns for family members; reducing them to abandoned victims ironically erased their emotions and dreams.

Though the Suiheisha movement never established any direct connection to the Kutami settlement group, it's important to include Suiheisha in the picture to discuss the ways in which this history and wartime buraku activism is discussed today. As a movement that identified with anti-colonialism and anti-fascism ideals since its founding, Suiheisha re-established itself in the 1930s to align its mission with the goals of Imperial Japan, supporting the mobilization efforts and the colonial missions in the empire's project of the Great Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In advancing their mission to fight against discrimination toward burakumin, the Buraku Liberation League was renamed in 1946 to resume its activities without initially mentioning its wartime tactics and participation. Criticizing the heroic buraku figure Matsumoto Jiichirō, Zainichi Korean scholar King Jung-Mi points out the nationalist and imperialist characteristics in the movement's history to expose the deeply embedded hypocrisy in its narratives and principles. As a collective, organizational, and institutional social movement that accumulated much power and authority within buraku communities over decades, Suiheisha and BLL have become the dominant voice of the buraku communities, making a different interpretation and narrativization difficult. Challenging BLL and other buraku-related institutions' narratives on the Kutami settlement group, this chapter looks into the politics behind those existing narrativizations to seek

a different definition of buraku liberation that was been dreamt of. Takashi Fujitani's book *Race for Empires* discusses the transnational perspective on the "soldiers of color" in both the Japanese and American empires, highlighting the disavowal of racial discrimination and the shift toward an inclusionary form of racism in the multiethnic empires.[280] This chance of inclusion, enabled by the concept of multi-ethnicity, was welcome by the Korean soldiers of Japan and the African American soldiers of the United States for the possible evaluation of their racial statuses. For burakumin, the story is slightly different; both Yūwa and Suiheisha leaders have always rejected a separate racial identity, asserting that burakumin is ethnically Japanese and different from the other racialized groups of the empire. There also has been little to no assertion of a separate race in the history of buraku activism; most characterizations depended on categories of class, *mibun*, and caste.[281] In other words, both the integration approach of the Yūwa movement and the war collaboration of the Suiheisha movement sought inclusion into the pure Yamoto race rather than into the multiethnic empire. The buraku involvement in the Manchurian colonization complicates our understanding of war nationalism for its inclusive and emancipatory aspect- for their participation is as much about liberation as it is about Japanization.

Settler Colonization of Manchuria and Wartime Buraku Economy

After the victory in the Russo-Japanese War, the Treaty of Portsmouth allowed the emerging Japanese empire to reacquire the Kwangtung lease from Russia in 1905. Earlier that year, army minister Terauchi Masatake ordered to loosen the first restrictions on immigration to South Manchuria for sojourners and settlers.[282] Seeing this as the Japanese determination to

[280] Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II,* xii.
[281] Here I use mibun and caste differently as the former is related to the Tokugawa social status system while the latter refers to the postwar collaborations with the Dalit Movements.
[282] Emer O'Dwyer, *Significant Soil,* 3.

secure its holdings in the region, Emer D'Owyer characterizes the Tokyo support for early settler initiative as "aligning leasehold governance and society with metropolitan norms" in the expanding empire. [283] With the founding of Mantetsu in 1906, the company has been the governing authority in the Railway Zone, with all-encompassing power over all sectors of public life, from education to policing. The company witnessed continual expansion as Japan gained more resources and land, testifying to the empire's growing control of the region. By the 1931 Mukden Incident, the stationing troops of the Kwantung Army in the northeast had reached the number of 9,375.[284] These earlier efforts, revealing the empire's long-standing ambitions in the region, preceded Japan's speedy capture of Mukden and occupation of Manchuria in the 1930s. The earlier emigrants to Manchuria mostly consisted of government bureaucrats, army personnel, and people involved in commercial activities and Mantetsu railroad constructions, not farmers.

The Kutami settlement group was part of the empire's ambitious colonization plan to send a million farm households to the new colony of Manchukuo, starting in 1936. Before the end of the war, about 300,000 Japanese resettled in Manchuria.[285] The post-1931 colonization plans signified the change in the mission of emigration from "build the empire" to "save Japanese agriculture."[286] Characterizing the nature of this mass colonization, Young calls it "a social movement before it became a state initiative," which was made possible by popular support in rural Japan in the early 1930s.[287] Following the Mukden Incident, the Association of

[283] Ibid., 4.
[284] Ibid., 6.
[285] Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 307.
[286] Ibid., 318. Young further discusses how both groups of scholars and bureaucrats as well as agrarianism movements nudged the government toward larger-scale projects of Manchurian settlement. She provides a very compelling narrative on the trial emigration of 1932-1935 and its shift to "Millions to Manchuria" program that started in 1936, driven by the devastating economic situations in rural Japan.
[287] Ibid.

Japanese Farmers (*Nihon Nōmin Kyōkai*) organized a rally consisting of mostly middle-scale farmers in the Matsumoto City of Nagano Prefecture. They made two appeals to the imperial government. Firstly, they asked to "transform Manchuria, the 'life-line' of the Yamato Race,' into our eternal Utopia. Secondly, they reminded the government "to not give up the rights that we [the Japanese] finally obtained (from the Western imperial powers) to a handful of Japanese elite industrialists."[288] The frustration and resentment these farmers had toward the "elite industrialists" stemmed from the idea that the path of industrialization and modernization Japan took after the 1868 Meiji Restoration has privileged the urban sectors over the agrarian economy. The war boom brought about by World War I did not particularly benefit the rural economy much, and the Rice Riots of 1918 further exacerbated the hardship these farmers faced. The two demands they made were a response to the long-standing agrarian crisis as well as the rural population's cry for governmental support and financial backing.

The colonization project aimed to "cure the social ills of the Japanese farm village by exporting the rural poor to the empire" as explained by both Tanamoi and Young.[289] The social ills, referring to the economic depression, the fluctuating prices of rice, the drop in the price of silk cocoons, as well as crop failures in the early 1930s, have pushed a significant portion of the rural population into economic despair.[290] These facts have aggravated the rural economy, resulting in land-owning middle-scale farmers' efforts to evict their tenants from the land. In this light, the intense lobbying from the emigration promoters and, more importantly, the pressure from the farmers' associations brought two groups together to persuade the imperial government of the expansion of Manchurian colonization. The Japanese state thus launched a program called

[288] Mariko Asano Tamanoi, *Memory Map,* 25.
[289] Young, 307. Tamanoi, 26.
[290] Ibid.

"special villages for economic rehabilitation" (*Keizai kōsei-son,*) targeting villages that have suffered from economic devastation to recommend evicted and landless farmers to move to Manchuria with their families.[291] The Imperial Agricultural Association, in order to incentivize these farmers to participate in the program, offered economic and technical support to help these emigrants in the process. Subsidies were offered, as well as geographical and technical knowledge on the living and farming situation in Manchuria. For this large group of farmers who had lost both their land and their means of survival, Manchuria increasingly became an alternative that didn't seem to be much worse than the status quo at the time. Quoting Yokozeki Mitsue's autobiography, Mariko Tamanoi explains, "for Mitsue's father, Manchuria did not conjure up an image of a glorious empire. It was simply a place where he thought he could escape from his material misery."[292] Emigrants to Manchuria at the time recounted experiences of land being taken away by landlords or having no other option to feed themselves back in Japan. Manchuria had increasingly become the shelter for those poor farmers.

Similar to other Japanese agrarian settlers, the early debates over buraku emigration to Manchuria were also directly caused by economic devastation and inability of local buraku villages to become self-sustaining. Most existing scholarship on emigration to Manchuria point to how the grassroots association of farmers and labor-farmer alliances in the early 1930s persuaded the government to launch a full-fledged mobilization program for Manchurian colonization. These accounts for the reasons why middle-scale farmers, local elites, and government officials (including most emigration promoters at the time) perceived Manchuria emigration as a potential means for social reform, implementing both agrarian rehabilitation and imperial ambitions. For buraku emigration, the traditional buraku industries were also heavily hit

[291] Tamanoi., 27.
[292] Ibid., 26.

during the war. Those industries, the ones that marked their bodies filthy but also have economically sustained buraku communities, included leather industries (furs and hides, shoemaking, bamboo footwear,) bamboo and straw crafts, and butchering. Out of the list of industries, burakumin were involved, their ties to the leather and meat industries have been the strongest.[293]

After the start of the Sino-Japanese War, the industrial sectors found it increasingly difficult to import much needed raw materials from China. The chaos in China furthered the logistical difficulty in terms of shipping and importing restrictions. As a result, bamboo footwear manufacturing, an industry buraku communities heavily engaged in, was cut off from the stable supply of Chinese bamboo skin, an essential part of their production. This resulted in the loss of many jobs as well as the permanent closure of many stores, leaving many buraku residents unemployed. Specifically, the annual production of bamboo footwear was roughly five to six million around the time, making up a considerable revenue for many buraku families. The industry alone had about 100,000 workers and processors, of which most were from buraku communities, excluding those who engaged in related works.20 While some were able to find temporary jobs in other sectors, the labor market, coupled with the increasingly restrictive measures of the war mobilization, could not offer enough job vacancies for most of the unemployed. The mobilization of various kinds of materials introduced under the so-called Total War regime from the state government aggravated the economic situations of buraku population; unemployment continued to rise, small businesses had to either suspend or close, and people

[293] Works on Buraku issues during wartime can be found in Burakumondai kenkyūjo, *Suihei Undō-Shi No Kenkyū Dai 5-Kan Kenkyū-Hen*, vol. 5 (Burakumondai kenkyūjo shuppan-bu, 1972). Other than this, there are excellent scholarly work on wartime buraku activism and their historical experiences, see Toshio Fujitani, "Buraku Mondai Kara Mita Seinen No Kan Senjika No Suihei Undou," *Buraku* 23, no. 11 (1971): 27–38. Yoshikazu Akisada, "Senji-Ka No Buraku Kaihō Undō to `Tenkō' Mondai O Megutte," *Buraku Kaihō/ Kaihō Shubbansha-Hen* 399 (1996): 101–11. Fumiyoshi Yoshida, "Kōchi Ken Ni Okeru Buraku Kaihō No Ayumi: Buraku Kaizen Kara Senji-Ka Made," *Shiko Ku Buraku-Shi* 19 (2017): 13–17.

regularly changed jobs due to instability. With Republic of China's resistance against colonization, the Meiji state was in desperate need for military resources, among which footwear industries were taken into governmental control for military boots production. Buraku communities' dire economic situation were certainly not prioritized in face of Japan's expansion mission in China, making any proposal of resolution for buraku economy secondary in terms of urgency.

To prepare the empire for a possible protracted war, the Meiji government realized the necessity of economic control, especially those related to import and export as well as allocation of raw materials to war-related businesses and manufacturers. With this purpose in mind, the Cabinet introduced its "Materials Mobilization Plan" (*Shōwa jū san-nendo busshi dōin keikaku*) for two reasons to allocate certain raw materials (for example, coal and copper among others) to assure a steady supply from factories that were mobilized for war-related productions. Shortly afterwards, the government followed up with regulations on cotton with the "Cotton Yarn Distribution Control Regulations" (*Menshi haikyū tōseikisoku,*) to restrict the manufacture and sale of cotton products. More and more items were added to the list within the several-months duration until the restriction on leather hit the buraku communities in a devastating manner.

On June 23, 1938, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry enacted a set of rules to control the distribution of leather. The regulation reads, "As a result of import restrictions on leather, the supply and demand of the industry have not been smooth, hence in general, the distribution of leather will be controlled. Together, there will also be rules to limit the use of leather to prioritize military demand and promote exports."[294] The regulation also specified the different leathers and

[294] Reiki-rui chōsei-kyoku Shōwa 13-nen, "17 Hikaku Haikyū Tōseikisoku Seitei No Kudan," www.digital.archives.go.jp, 1938, https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/DAS/meta/listPhoto?LANG=default&BID=F0000000000000090331&ID=M0000000000000000418676&NO=&TYPE=PDF&DL_TYPE=pdf.

tanned hides that are now restricted, including almost every kind of buraku leather industries relied upon and some very obscure leather materials such as whale and shark leather. Figure 8 is the title page of the original documentation.

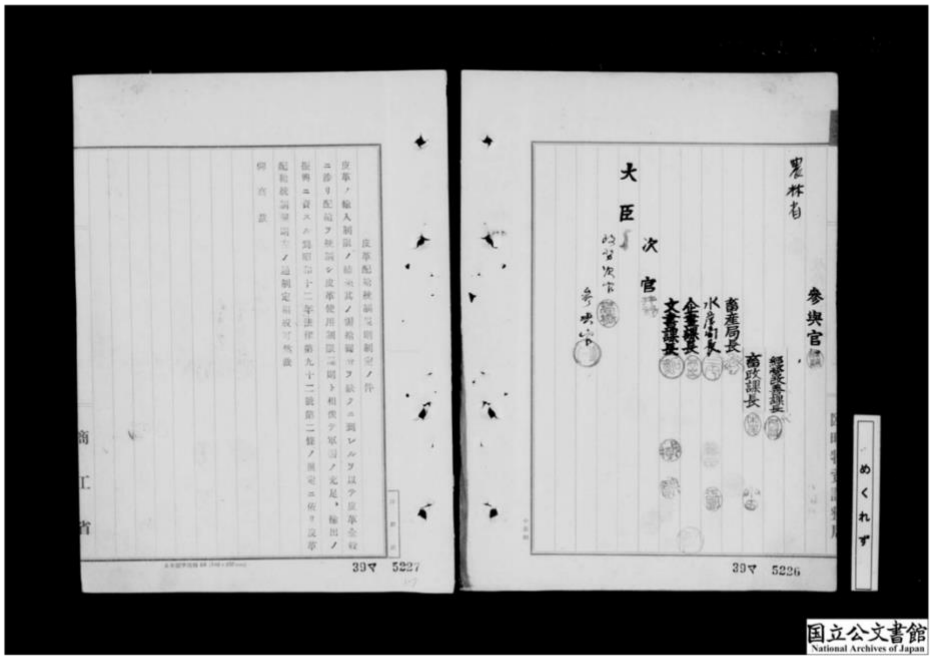


Figure 8: Enactment of Leather Distribution Control Rules[295]

Triggered by the series of restrictions on raw materials and subsequent closure of businesses, let alone the increasing instability of the economy in general, buraku economy was devastated, further aggravating the already poverty-ridden communities. A survey (Figure 3.) conducted by the Chūō Business Association, representing different buraku-related industries, shows which industries were particularly hit harder than others and more accurate numbers of

[295] Ibid.

un(employment.)[296] The survey calculated the number of people in buraku communities that have lost their jobs, taken short or permanent leaves, and were forced to change their occupations to make a living. About 10.7 percent of the households lost their jobs in the industrial sectors, and about 20.9 percent of the households suffered the same situation in miscellaneous businesses (footwear repair businesses, including both leather and non-leather products,) not to mention 6.1 percent of the households lost their day-laborer jobs, pushing the already marginalized burakumin into further poverty. Other statistics from the time reveal a similar predicament; 36.2 percent of people in buraku communities in Kagawa Prefecture were unemployed or absent from work, followed by Osaka, Fukui, Nagasaki, Chiba, Yamanashi, and Gifu prefectures, all with numbers between 20-30% with little regional differences.[297]

戦時下の部落問題

第1表　失・休業者ならびに要転業職者状況

項別 / 産業別	従業戸数			従業者数			失業又は休業 戸数			失業又は休業 人数		
	主業	副業	計	主業	副業	計	主業	副業	計	主業	副業	計
1. 農・漁業	33,748	11,311	45,059	80,971	22,959	103,930	508 (1.5)	246 (2.2)	754 (1.7)	566 (0.7)	94 (0.4)	660 (0.6)
2. 工業	10,050	11,279	21,329	21,512	19,713	41,225	737 (7.3)	977 (8.7)	1,714 (8.0)	1,422 (6.6)	1,681 (8.5)	3,103 (7.5)
3. 商業	13,162	5,568	18,730	18,619	8,322	26,941	1,408 (10.7)	471 (8.5)	1,879 (10.0)	1,883 (10.1)	556 (6.7)	2,439 (9.1)
4. 日雇業	13,559	8,374	21,933	20,476	12,537	33,013	824 (6.1)	303 (3.6)	1,127 (5.1)	1,057 (5.2)	429 (3.4)	1,486 (4.5)
5. 雑業	5,728	1,554	7,282	6,978	1,996	8,974	1,198 (20.9)	140 (9.0)	1,338 (18.4)	1,252 (17.9)	430 (21.5)	1,682 (18.7)
6. その他	5,698	1,099	6,797	7,878	1,386	9,264	173 (3.0)	38 (3.5)	211 (3.1)	148 (1.9)	37 (2.7)	185 (2.0)
総計	81,945	39,185	121,130	156,436 *156,434	66,913	223,349 *223,347	4,848 (5.9)	2,175 (5.6)	7,023 (5.8)	6,328 (4.0)	3,227 (4.8)	9,555 (4.3)

（註）　三一書房刊『部落問題・水平運動資料集成』第3巻により作成。＊印訂正数。

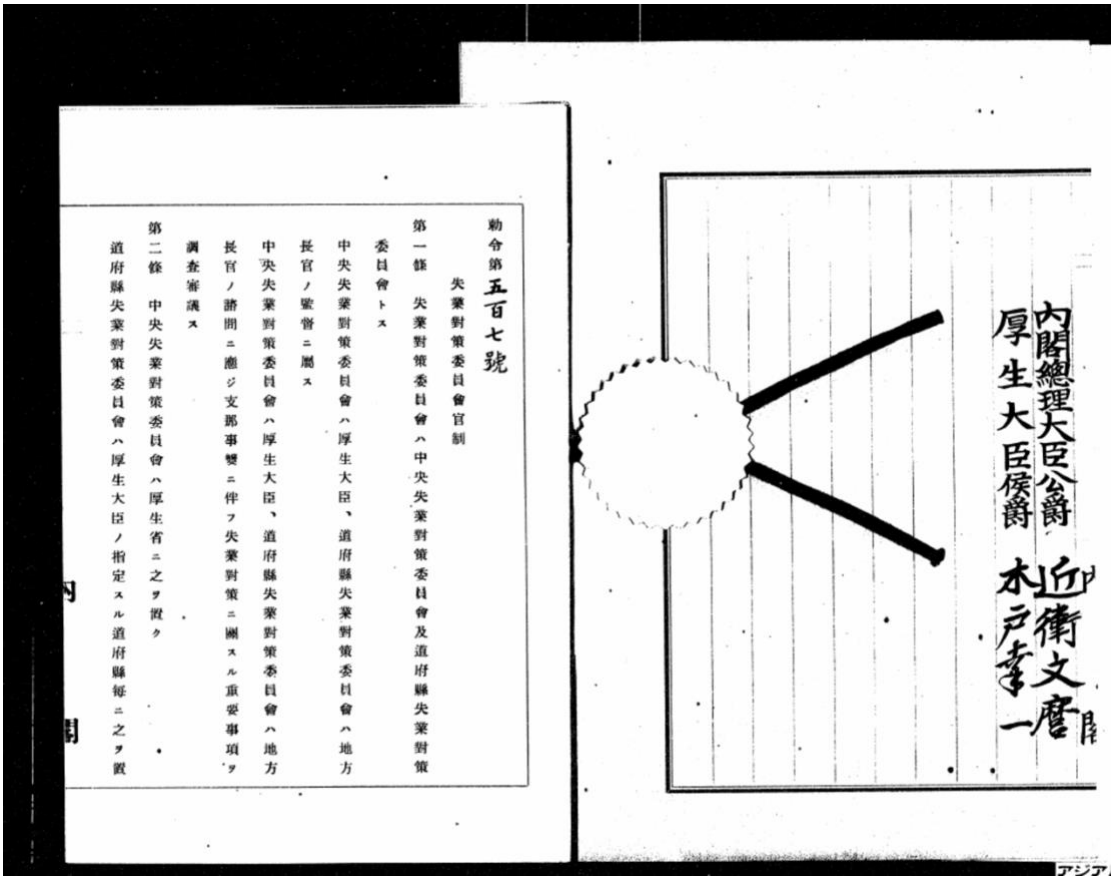
Figure 9: Survey conducted by conducted by the Chūō Business Association [298]

[296] The numbers in the survey were originally recorded in Toru Watanabe and Yoshikazu Akisada, eds., *Burakumondai Suihei Undō Shiryō Shūsei Dai 3-Kan (1933 (Shōwa 8) - 1944 (Shōwa 19)-Nen)*, vol. 3 (San'ichishobō, 1972), 53-54. The table here was summarized and published in Takahisa Aoki, "Senji-Ka No Burakumondai," *Journal of Nagano Prefectural College* 37 (1982): 21–30, 23.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.

The worsening situation suggested the necessity of government response for resolution. There were attempts to address the unemployment issue and find ways to find burakumin other livelihood, of course these issues were not only particular to buraku communities as the mobilization calls also affected non-buraku communities' economies. The first attempts included the establishment of Unployment Countermeasures Committee (*shitsugyō taisaku iinkai*) on national (and later, prefectural levels in July 5th,1938. The Emperor Hirohito's ordinance (Figure 4.) reads:

> "To investigate and deliberate on important matters related to unemployment countermeasures arise from the China Incident. The Central Unemployment Countermeasures Committee shall be established in the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The Commission should be composed of a chairman and members. The chairman of the Central Commission for Unemployment Countermeasures shall be the Minister of Health and Welfare, and the chairman of the Prefectural Commissions for Unemployment Countermeasures shall be the ministers of local governments."[299]

[299] Shitsugyō taisaku iinkai kansei, "Goshomeigenpon Shōwa Jū San-Nen Chokurei Dai Go Rei Nana-Gō," www.digital.archives.go.jp, 1938, https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/DAS/meta/listPhoto?LANG=default&BID=F0000000000000036199&ID=&TYPE=.



勅令第五百七號

失業對策委員會官制

第一條　失業對策委員會ハ中央失業對策委員會及道府縣失業對策委員會トス

中央失業對策委員會ハ厚生大臣、道府縣失業對策委員會ハ地方長官ノ監督ニ屬ス

中央失業對策委員會ハ厚生大臣、道府縣失業對策委員會ハ地方長官ノ諮問ニ應ジ支那事變ニ伴フ失業對策ニ關スル重要事項ヲ調査審議ス

第二條　中央失業對策委員會ハ厚生省ニ之ヲ置ク

道府縣失業對策委員會ハ厚生大臣ノ指定スル道府縣毎ニ之ヲ置

内閣總理大臣公爵 近衛文麿
厚生大臣侯爵 木戸幸一

Figure 10: Unemployment Countermeasures Committee, Imperial Ordinance, Imperial Ordinance No. 507[300]

The imperial ordinance kept the wording very vague for which specific directions the Unemployment Countermeasure Committee would take to address the ongoing issues until a short notice came a few weeks after. On August 1st of the same year, the committee sent out a notice which states, "In light of the purpose of mobilizing the national spirit, we urge those involved in currently prosperous industries to exercise self-restraint and actively cooperate in preventing unemployment. In response to this, we should encourage them to preserve in self-reliance and give them guidance to overcome the difficulties in the time of national unity."[301]

[300] Ibid.
[301] Kichihei Himuro, *Senji Rōdōmondai Kaisetsu* (Ikuseihora, 1939), 71-73.

While the Showa government also acknowledged the difficulties many faced, especially for those who were in the industries affected by the mobilization of raw materials, the only effective measure up their sleeves was to encourage those to change jobs despite the scarcity of jobs everywhere. "We must be prepared that current level of control over wartime supplies will continue for many years to come, or that control might be strengthened even more than it is now, so at this time those in the business should take the plunge and change jobs."[302] Though phrases such as "take all to remedy the situation" or "take all possible measures" kept coming up in the committee's issued notices and documents, they lacked legal measures to keep up with the promises.

Two months after issuing the report, the government briefly addressed the economic devastation faced by the buraku communities. Pressured by the many petitions submitted by the Chūō Business Association, the Ministry of Health and Welfare issued a notice of "*Chihō* Improvement Emergency Policies" to provide supportive measures to both individuals and businesses: 1) In order to support those burakumin who are seeking a career change, there will be career-change loans available. 2) For businesses that are trying to become subcontractors in the military industries, there will be funds available through prefectural organizations. 3) As an emergency relief for the unemployed, for those who are unable to find employment in the industrial sector due to their age or physical capabilities, we will subsidize the living cost for 1 yen per day on average with a total budget of 38,000 yen. 4) We will subsidize short-term preparatory training to help buraku residents to find employment in the munitions industries.[303] The relief measures were explained in the manner to show good intentions to help buraku

[302] Anonymous, "Chūshō Shukōgyō-Sha Ten Shitsugyōmondai ," *Yomiurishinbun*, September 4, 1938.
[303] Kichihei Himuro, *Senji Rōdōmondai Kaisetsu* (Ikuseihora, 1939), 128-149. Cited in Takahisa Aoki, "Senji-Ka No Burakumondai," *Journal of Nagano Prefectural College* 37 (1982): 21–30.

residents with their current economic despair via encouraging them to participate in war production, while there was a constant reminder in wording to ensure they are aware of the urgency of wartime situation and their responsibility to aid the nation. Responding to the relief measures, the Chuo Yūwa Business Association acknowledged the necessity of such aid programs and the state's efforts in addressing them. They wrote,

> We cannot thank the military authorities enough for their exceptional support for the relief of the unemployed due to the control of supplies. Due to these factors, 20,000 people (current number) in the buraku area related to the Reconciliation Project, those who have been exclusively engaged in the production of private demand, are desperately unemployed. It is difficult to imagine that if we leave this situation unattended, it will cause unforeseen disasters. In addition, we will consult with the relevant authorities and work hard to take countermeasures, but in this case, if we do not have the tremendous sympathy and support of the military authorities, we will be easily defeated.[304]

Along with the gratitude expressed in the letter, the association still made several more requests to the Ministry of War, urging them to purchase suitable goods from civilian inventories, sell non-military goods to the public for civilian demand, and consider designating contractors for the manufacture of military shoes and munitions (even if they hold disdain for the buraku communities.) They also asked the Ministry of Health and Welfare to pressure prefectural governors to consider unemployment relief and countermeasures for those involved in the leather industry and requested the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to direct specific fund to those look for job changes as the Ministry of War promised. At the gathering of more than 60 leather industry-related personnel from the seven prefectures of the Kinki region on July 29, many business operators shared how they had to suspend operations due to the increasing difficulties of obtaining raw materials, which posed serious threats to their livelihoods.[305] The Chūō Yuwa

[304] Chūō yūwajigyō kyōkai, *Yūwajigyō Kenkyū* 51 (1938), 70. Cited in Takahisa Aoki, "Senji-Ka No Burakumondai," *Journal of Nagano Prefectural College* 37 (1982): 21–30, 12.
[305] Ibid., 73.

Business Association distributed a leaflet titled “To all leather-related businesses," in which they argued that the general mobilization of the national spirit and material controls over leather-related businesses were carried out “in order to carry out the purpose of the Holy War.”[306] The spirits to support the war were wide spread in buraku neighborhoods the *Yūwa* movement had influence in; they even urged the hard-hit businesses and its workers to endure it as a form of sacrifice one ought to make for the larger goals of the nation.

What “sacrifice” meant had a different meaning here; the leaflet pointed to Manchuria as a possible long-term solution for buraku communities. Recognizing that the temporary measures taken by the state would support the businesses and individuals in the short run, the association realized the urgency to come up with more long-term resolutions. They explicitly asked people to consider one of the following five possibilities: 1) find a new job in the munitions industry, 2) seek export-related jobs, 3) find jobs that are more promising in general, 4) maintain their current jobs by finding substitutes and lastly 5) emigration to Manchuria under the guidance of *Yūwa* organizations.[307] On June 14th and 15th of 1938, at the Conference of the National *Yūwa* Project, representatives from different prefectures discussed the possible solutions to the growing financial hardships of buraku villages.[308] The meeting made appeals to buraku villages across the country to make effots to engage in other industries that were less influenced, signaling it might be a good chance to get out of the traditionally discriminated occupations. More importantly, the meeting settled on a consensus that emigration to Manchuria was an ideal option for burakumin population that was struggling with poverty and job loss. Instead of asking the state to be accountable for the economic loss due to war mobilization and imperial expansion, the *yūwa*

[306]Burakukaihōkenkyūsho, *Yūwajigyō Nenkan Shōwa 14-Nenban* (Burakukaihōkenkyūsho, 1970), 44. Cited in Takahisa Aoki, “Senji-Ka No Burakumondai.”
[307] Ibid., 44-45.
[308] Ibid., 54.

movement and its supporters saw the hardship as temporary by phrasing it as a period of time they had to cope with for better future.

The same sentiments could be found within the Suiheisha movement. If the support from *Yūwa* as a state-sponsored project was not particularly surprising, the response Suiheisha had toward the situation was definitely more controversial. Since the founding of Suiheisha in 1922, the movement has launched a very confrontational, and sometimes even militaristic, approach to combating discrimination toward burakumin in Japanese society. Consistently critical of the integrationist approach the *Yūwa* movement, Suiheisha, and its founding members called for the buraku mass to derive pride from their buraku identities with the aim of organizing a united front based on a shared identity.[309] In Suiheisha's early years, it openly took a anti-imperialist and anti-fascist stance despite the often inconsistencies between its narrative and actions; prior to the 1930s, the movement sought collaboration with many movements worldwide, including the African American movement, the *Paekchang* movement in Korea, and the Jewish population under Nazi Germany.[310] While there were many changes in their discourses in terms of self-definition and the nature of buraku activism, including the internal debates over categories such as "feudal remnants," "class," and "occupation-based discrimination," Suiheisha remained critical of the imperial state and branded itself as representing the suffering mass throughout most of its early years. A turn to total identification with the nationalist discourse took place in 1937 after the Marco Bridge Incident on July 7th; on September 7th, the leadership of Suiheisha, for the first time, expressed explicit support for the Sino-Japanese War and their determination to

[309] For details on how this idea of "burakuness" was mobilized, please Joseph Hankins' works.
[310] For the inconsistencies between Suiheisha's anti-imperialist narratives and its relationship with Hyongpysongsa, see Epilogue.

support the nation during this unusual time of emergency.[311] Using the word "*hijōji* (emergency)," Suiheisha leadership phrased the war as an unfortunate circumstance of expanded conflict in which both sides should have sought a more peaceful solution in the ideal situation, ignoring the fact that the Sino-Japanese war was essentially a war of aggression under Japanese imperialism. This was in accordance with the then narrative of the Japanese state, which emphasized their expectation of a non-expanded rapid war against the weakening China.

The Suiheisha leadership, with no mention of the imperialist nature of Japan's imperial aggression on its neighboring country, characterized the expansion of the war as "unfortunate" for the peace of East Asia and the coexistence and co-prosperity of the Japanese and Chinese ethnicities. Suiheisha's demand and desire for peace between the two ethnicities, given the historical conditions, were explicit statements of their support for war and the total absence of any critique of imperialism. The expansion of the war zones, conditioned upon strong resistance of the Chinese civilians and militaries, was a result of China's anti-imperialist struggles, which was characterized as an "unfortunate" situation by the Suiheisha leadership. Instead, the movement found its obligation at the time of "emergency" to participate in national unity (*kyokoku ichi.*) "Given that the situation has developed [referring to the expansion of the Sino-Japanese War, we have to correctly assess the urgent situation as Japanese nationals [*kokumin*]."[312] Not only did Suiheisha not question the legitimacy of Japan's war, but they also called for burakumin's participation in the war. In a statement issued by the Zenkoku Suiheisha Central Committee in the same year, the movement's leadership pointed to the discrimination

[311] Most scholars in buraku studies have identified the Marco Bridge incident as the moment that Suiheisha started its war time efforts more vocally, see Takeshi Asaji, "Senji-Ki No Burakumondai to Suihei Undo (Buraku Problem and the Movement of Suiheisha against Discrimination during the World War II)," *Tenridaigaku Jinkenmondai Kenkyūshitsu Kōkai Kenyūkai Kōen* 2011-nendo, no. 15 (2012): 53–65. Jung-Mi Kim, *Suihei Undōshi Kenkyū:Minzoku Sabetsu Hihan* (Tokyo: Gendai Kikaku-shitsu, 1994).
[312] Burakumondai kenkyūjo, "Hijōji Ni Okeru Undō Hōshin," (Collection at National Diet Library,) 1965. The document was originally issued in 1938.

toward burakumin that existed in the military to phrase buraku discrimination as a hindrance to national unity. Discrimination "based on pre-Meiji social status," they argued, should no longer be tolerated as it poses a big threat to a united nation during wartime as it legitimizes a rivalry-inviting hierarchical way of organizing people. In a way, the Suiheisha leaders saw "national unity" as an egalitarian concept and a potential solution to the antagonism between buraku and non-buraku, pressuring the state to address the *buraku mondai* in a more concrete manner. Based on this logic, they clarified the current agenda of the movement,

> For this reason, we must thoroughly eliminate discriminatory concepts and phenomena and make true "national unity" possible. Therefore, we must make every effort to organize and improve the impoverished buraku economies, which form the basis of discrimination, and thereby overcome the hardships of the urgent economic situations. If we do this, the lives of the buraku masses will be protected, the mobilized soldiers will be relieved of their worries, and a solution to the *yūwa mondai* could be facilitated. We are convinced that this is the current mission of the Suiheisha.[313]

The call for national unity under the war regime allowed many Suiheisha leaders and rank-and-file members to see the hope of integration, an approach the movement was critical of, ironically. Many reported cases of discriminated buraku military soldiers to resemble the stories Takeshi Fujitani recounts among Korean soldiers in the Japanese Army and African American soldiers in the American Army. Japan's move to make a multiethnic nation with what Fujitani calls "polite racism" ignited hopes of inclusion via self-sacrifice and efforts among the racialized and marginalized.[314] Suiheisha even went further to emphasize their loyalty to the nation,

> It goes without saying that the nationwide Suiheisha movement has always been carried out from the perspective of the nation. In particular, under the current wartime regime, we are ready to be martyred at a time of national peril. On the other hand, the Suiheisha movement

[313] Ibid.
[314] While the buraku mass and the movements have generally rejected the idea of race in characterizing themselves, the trend to seek recognition via self-sacrifice and the tendency to seek legitimate reasoning for equality is very similar to the groups Fujitani wrote about in his *Race for Empire*.

> will be more active in pushing forward the plans made by the Central Committee last September and will be proceeding along the lines of national policy.[315]

The announcement started out to claim Suiheisha's longtime loyalty to the state; this determination to follow national policies in the movement was unprecedented in Suiheisha's history, given its long rivalry with the Yūwa movement in the previous decades and its efforts to seek collaboration with the *Paekjeong* movement in colonial Korea. Many historians have characterized this moment in Suiheisha's history as a sharp turn, signifying Suiheisha's conversion (*tenkō*) to Japanese imperialism. Although this statement was among the most explicit in terms of Suiheisha's expression of support for Imperial Japan, phrasing this as a "sharp turn" in the history of buraku activism ignores the earlier emigration of burakumin to Hokkaido as well as Suiheisha members and related-personnel's efforts to establish Colonization Schools (*Imin Gakko*) throughout the 1930s.[316] Though Suiheisha had called itself part of the anti-imperialist forces in the 1920s and early 1930s, the movement's relative silence on Japan's colonization of Hokkaido, Taiwan, and Korea and participation in the settler emigration programs had shown otherwise. Overall, despite its consistencies in narratives, Suiheisha's participation in the state projects of settler colonization and imperialist expansion did not start with these statements released after the escalation of the Sino-Japanese War, nor does the Sino-Japanese War resemble a historical periodization for a sharp turn in Suiheisha's ideologies. Admittedly, the post-1937 Suiheisha did turn to a more nationalist discourse, rendering its earlier critique of the Yūwa integrationist approach hypocritical and erasing the critical differences between the two movements that used to be rivalries.

[315] Burakumondai kenkyūjo, "Hijōji Ni Okeru Undō Hōshin," (Collection at National Diet Library,) 1965. The document was originally issued in 1938.
[316] See discussion on Tahara Haruji and his Sakai Toshihiko Farmers' Work School in Chapter Three.

Buraku Emigration to Manchuria

At the National Yūwa Business Council (*yūwajigyō zenkoku kyōgikai*) organized by the Chūō Yūwa Business Association on September 12th and 13th of 1932, the council passed the Guidelines for Buraku Economic Rehabilitation Movement (*buraku keizai kōsei undo ni kansuru yōkō.*) While the name suggests the movement's primary aim ought to be focused on relief measures for the wrecked buraku economies, the first aim listed by the document states, "cooperate with each other and push forward to overcome the difficulties in achieving national unity in accordance with the founding causes of the nation."[317] While it moves on to discuss how the buraku masses have been trapped in this duality between poverty and discrimination that reproduces each other structurally, the *yūwa* leaders still placed the responsibility for improvement on the burakumin; "on the path to economic rehabilitation…there should be created a spirit of self-reliance to foster a positive and forward-looking climate…"[318] Stemmed from the theory of "internal awareness (*naibu jikaku-ron*)" the *yūwa* movement had pushed for since its establishment, the Economic Rehabilitation program discourages burakumin to rely on other forces, namely the state institutions, to elevate their economic status.[319] The implication embedded in this idea of "self-reliance" is that the burakumin should be responsible for their own discrimination due to the poverty of their communities and the filthy industries they engage in, and had to rely on themselves for improvement. It eschews the discussion of the state's responsibility and fails to acknowledge structural solutions as necessities.

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[317] Chūō yūwajigyō kyōkai, *buraku keizai kōsei undo ni kansuru yōkō, September 12-13, 1932.* In Toru Watanabe and Yoshikazu Akisada, eds., *Burakumondai Suihei Undō Shiryō Shūsei Dai 3-Kan (1933 (Shōwa 8) - 1944 (Shōwa 19)-Nen)*, vol. 3 (San'ichishobō, 1972).

[318] Ibid.

[319] The theory of internal awareness (*naibu jikaku-ron*) mainly argues that instead of counting on or depending on governmental forces to save them economically and socially, burakumin should be more active in integrating themselves in the society to demonstrate they are better than being discriminated. It focuses on this concept of self-awareness to ask burakumin to discipline their behaviors and grow out of the "old and ugly" habits which formed the discrimination.

One key figure that played a huge role in combing the concept of national unity with the Economic Rehabilitation Movement, especially among the buraku youth, was Shimomura Harunosuke. In later years, he also wrote a famous piece to discuss why Manchuria is an ideal place for buraku emigration for its relative lack of social organization and hierarchical society, the perfect soil for the discrimination-wrecked burakumin to start afresh. During the early years of the movement, Shimomura pushed forward the Economic Rehabilitation Movement as a solution to the *yukizumari* (literally translated as "deadlock") the *yūwa* movement had faced on two levels; first, he sees how with the identification with the larger imperial agenda the *yūwa* movement could break the deadlock of the Suiheisha, and secondly, how the mobilization of the buraku youth would be able to further move the *yūwa* movement forward in different localities. Although he was not one of the fervent supporters of the "internal awareness theory," he had collaborated with them, including the predominant *yūwa* leader, Yamamoto Masao. Shimomura, later taking a leading role in the theoretical initiative, pushed for a concept of "*jikaku kōsei shisetsu* (self-awareness rehabilitation facilities)" to emphasize the role of facilities in improving the appearances of buraku communities. What's controversial in Shimomura's theory is that though he stressed that only the awareness of the buraku people could be the driving force behind any economic and cultural development, he remained skeptical of their intellectual capability, calling them "the financially disadvantaged and intellectually weak."[320] Instead, according to Shimomura, the ideal way to achieve self-reliance is to have city or county-level *yūwa* organizations oversee the operation of kōsei facilities to guide the local communities and residents. In other words, the idea of "self-reliance," very much similar to the colonial argument

[320] Shimomura, *Shichōson yūwajigyō no un'ei n tsuite*, 93. In Makoto Ichimori, "930-Nendai Yūwaundō No Shisō-Shi-Teki Kōsatsu -- `Naibu Jikaku'-Ron O Chūshin Ni," *Tottoridaigaku Kyōiku Chiiki Kagaku-Bu Kiyō* 3, no. 2 (2002): 49–61, 56.

of self-governance for the fitted, will only be applied to burakumin when they prove their fitness. In other words, for *yūwa* leaders like Shimomura, the idea of self-reliance is not a path for burakumin to achieve equality but only reconciliation. The following quote makes it clear,

> However, if the facilities were to develop, the power of the buraku people would increase, their social status would rise, and they would become confident enough to compete against the general public. If the subsequent guidance is wrong, the collective emotions [of the buraku communities] would be stimulated because of the facilities. The antagonistic relations might become more entangled and accompanied by more dangers.[321]

The two words that the *yūwa* movement emphasized, self-awareness and self-reliance, both point to burakumin as the people primarily responsible for their continual sufferings and dispossession and their ultimate reconciliation. In the quote above, Shimomura thus drew a clear difference between reconciliation and equality, as the latter might enable the buraku people to be in a position to resist and challenge the public order. To his fear, possible antagonism between the two groups would be triggered if "they would become confident enough to compete against the general public."[322] Differentiating his concept of *jikaku kōsei shisetsu* from "internal awareness,' Shimomura claimed that the old theory only carried out reconciliation projects for the sake of reconciliation projects, while his new theory (referring to the new guidelines he edited after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1939) further demonstrates how "such achievements [from the reconciliation projects] show the true appearances of Imperial Japan."[323] Thus, "self-awareness," the key term in Shimomura's theorization of reconciliation, does not only refer to the awareness that burakumin needs to have as discriminated subjects who ought to earn respect as humans but also awareness as an imperial subject.

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[321] Harunosuke Shimomura, "'Sonraku Taisaku Shisetsu' to Sono Shikkō Kikan Toshite No 'Shichōson Yūwajigyō' Nitsuite," *Yūwajigyō Kenkyū*, no. 39 (1936). In Ibid.,55.
[322] Ibid.
[323] Harunosuke Shimomura, "Shin Yūwajigyō Gaistsu (Ue)- Kaitei 'Yuwajigyō No Sōgō-Teki Shinten Ni Kansuru Yōkō," *Yūwajigyō Kenkyū*, no. 65 (1939), 44. In Ibid., 59.

This is in line with Shimomura's promotion of emigration for burakumin. He was among the *yūwa* leaders that worked with the state to promote the "Resource Adjustment Project (*shigen chōsei jigyō*)" with the aim of recruiting settlers for relocation to Manchuria. Those leaders understood that the biggest fear potential buraku emigrants might have is that discrimination might continue to exist in Manchuria; thus, they employed different theories to promote emigration as a way to escape the centuries-long discrimination and prejudice in the metropole, arguing that although discrimination would be slight at first, it would soon disappear in the new land. For example, in the issue of *Kōsei* (a periodical of the *yūwa* movement) published in June 1941, there was an article titled "If You Live in Manchuria, the Discrimination Will Disappear" from Shimomura in which he acknowledged the fear that many burakumin have about discrimination in Manchuria and provided reasoning for why this is an unnecessary worry:

> Originally, the idea of discrimination is the consciousness of the group society to which an individual belongs, and it arises and persists on social grounds. If the concept of discrimination is an individual consciousness, then it will be impossible to get rid of it even after living in Manchuria, by working together with individuals from beginning to end and following them wherever they are. However, because this is social consciousness, once an individual leaves the old society, the discriminatory idea quickly leaves the individual's mind. In other words, the discriminatory conception has the property of naturally disappearing once you start living in another society, Manchuria.[324]

Shimonomura reassured his buraku audience that even though a handful of incidents of discrimination might occur due to the social concepts carried to Manchuria by emigrants at first, it would be temporary and the idea of discrimination would gradually disappear within a few years. [325] Comparing the land to a plain white cloth, he expected Manchuria would be the place where ideal Japanese villages emerged. In addition, Shimomura explains the reason for the elimination of discrimination, stating that there is no social foundation, such as the Tokugawa

[324] Harunosuke Shimomura, "Manshū Ni Sumeba Sabetsu Wa Kaishō Suru," *Kōsei,* no. 21 (1941), 32.
[325] Ibid., 34.

mibun system in the Manchurian settlement, that would cause discrimination. Emphasizing the subsidies provided to each immigrant in Hokkaido, He further went on to praise the great nature of the continent and its capability of bringing people together within the settler communities, and the cooperative lifestyle the empire promoted enabled a sense of affection within the settlers' communities. The settler colonialist notion of "terra nullius," as discussed in the case of Hokkaido, again denotes a legal concept and allows Japanese settlers and policymakers to take control of "empty" territory that none of the other imperialist powers have claimed. He also stressed the importance of Manchuria emigration to achieving buraku liberation,

> It is important to address the issue of discrimination and find solutions for the betterment of society. Emigration to Manchuria has been proposed as a potential way to resolve the national Dōwa question, as it may offer opportunities that are not easily available on the mainland. Despite facing challenges, the buraku people should potentially contribute to the happiness of future generations, regardless of their own personal circumstances. The migration to Manchuria is considered a significant national policy of the prefecture, aligned with the establishment of the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The state has requested the dispatch of a large number of pioneers to support this endeavor. It is believed that complying with the state's demands is an act of loyalty and a responsibility of imperial subjects. Rejecting to emigrate to Manchuria based on the fear of potential discrimination would be seen as a failure to cooperate with national policies and not in line with the expected behavior of a subject. Living in Manchuria may offer an opportunity to escape discrimination. The buraku people, by responding to national policies and fulfilling their duties to the best of their abilities, have the potential to address the Dōwa problem and contribute to its resolution. [326]

Shimomura's conclusion emphasized two potential advantages of Buraku participation in the emigration to Manchuria. Firstly, he believed that this migration could serve as a means to address the longstanding issue of discrimination faced by the Buraku community. Secondly, the notion was expressed that through their participation in this emigration, buraku individuals could strive to become qualified imperial subjects. This implied that by actively engaging in the process of emigration and by demonstrating their loyalty, dedication, and value to the empire, the

[326] Ibid., 47.

buraku people could potentially improve their social standing and be more readily accepted on equal terms. The underlying message here was that the burden of proof and the responsibility for societal acceptance fell upon the discriminated population themselves. Certainly, Shimomura also ignored the fact that the Manchurian emigrants justified the invasion of China and ethnic discrimination toward local Manchus, Han, and Koreans, pushing for a questionable definition of liberation. Nevertheless, the legal path to migration as an agent of imperialism offered intellectuals such as Shimomura a chance to see a solution to the centuries-long discrimination against burakumin, signaling the possibility of inclusion into the Japanese empire. These intellectuals tried to sell a policy of population transfer to rank-and-file community members as an honorable duty to serve as settlers for the imperial state. In short, liberation as inclusion by way of settler colonialism. Shimomura was not alone in seeking a bright future of what he believed to be reconciliation in Japan's newly acquired Manchuria.

The *yūwa* movement's *Kōsei* periodicals started a full-fledged promotion of emigration to Manchuria in 1938.[327] According to Aoki Takahisa's estimate, in 1939 alone, the periodical published a total of 23 articles on Manchuria emigration-related articles, documents, and reports of inspection in the colony. This included the works of many government officials, demonstrating a joint effort to promote Manchuria emigration among the buraku audience. For example, an article by Endo Saburo, the then Ministery Secretariat of State Planning Division, was titled District Rehabilitation and Plan of Village Separation (*Chiku kōsei to bunson keikaku*) in *Kōsei*. Like Shimomura, the writings of *yūwa* leaders and government officials formed

[327] Although the news and materials on emigration to Manchuria have been published since the first issue, Aoki Takahisa concludes that the full-fledged propaganda on emigration started with issue 21, published in June 1938. For detail, see Takahisa Aoki, "Senji-Ka No Burakumondai."

narratives in which reconciliation via emigration to Manchuria is a solution to buraku discrimination and the state project's fulfillment.

Oyama Saburo, the Managing Director of the Chūō Yūwa Business Association, emphasized the significance of emigration to the newly established Manchukuo in an article titled "Relocation to Manchuria (*Manshū ijū*,)" [328] In the article, he merged the goal of the nation with that of the *yūwa* movement, arguing that the harmony among the five races would be beneficial to buraku's reconciliation. Specifically, the guiding concepts of "Five Races Under One Union (*Gozokukyōwa*)" and "Roayl Paradise (*Ōdō rakudo*)" in the management of Manchuria, to Oyama, could offer the rare of chance for burakumin to participate in forming and working for the goals of the empire: defend Japan's interests in Manchukuo and the peace in the East. While it brings no surprise that the *yūwa* leaders like Oyama and Shimomura referred to Japan's relationship with Manchuria as friendly and called for peace within the East Asia while Japan was the aggressor, it is interesting how they visioned the role reconciliation of buraku would work in the larger context. Oyama encouraged burakumin's participation in building Japan's "*shin tenchi* (new world)" to build their self-awareness- as both a discriminated subject that has to earn recognition and as a loyal imperial subject. Different from Shimomura, Oyama did not invest too much hope into the delusion of Manchuria as a place with "no soil for discrimination"; he acknowledged the possible existence of hierarchy even under the "Five Races Under One Union" ideal and cautioned against burakumin to look down onto the four races. Oyama's worries reside in burakumin's sense of superiority over the other residents in Manchukuo would replicate the same hierarchical issues they have faced in the metropole. This fear of Oyama speaks to the greatest irony in the decades-long buraku emigration theory, regardless of the

[328] Sanburo Oyama, "Manshū Ijū," *Kōsei* 21 (1941).

specific circumstances of the destinations: burakumin could only acquire their Japaneseness via moving out of the metropole, where they are seen as the lesser subjects that require reconciliation of the majority society. Only by physically relocating to the colonized and being in contact with the colonized could they enjoy the benefits of being more Japanese than the others. Japaneseness, gained through loyal participation in the imperial projects of settler colonization in the case of Hokkaido and Manchuria, has become a spectrum of competition. Both Shimomura and Oyama, among other yūwa and Suiheisha leaders, envisioned a more Japanized buraku population in the emigration projects.

How to Tell the Story of the Kutami Settlment Group?

On August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union ignored the Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact and launched an invasion of Manchuria. The Kwantung Army soon abandoned its defense of Manchuria and relocated its headquarters. In May of the same year, the Imperial Army abandoned three-fourths of Manchukuo, and the military headquarters was forced to a location near the Korean border. With Hirohiro's radio announcement of Japan's surrender on August 15th, the remaining Japanese settlers in Manchuria found themselves in shattered dreams of settlement in Japan's "new world," struggling to find a path to Japan. By Japan's surrender, the mandatory conscription of male civilians left most settlement groups with only the elderly, women, and children.[329] With unresponded requests for help and the mounting attacks from the locals, the Kutami settlement group found themselves in the same despair as many others.

[329] For a detailed discussion of the repatriation and the last days of Manchukuo, see Lori Watt, *When Empire Comes Home Repatriation and Reintegration in Postwar Japan* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2009). Akiko Hashimoto, "Japanese Narratives of Decolonization and Repatriation from Manchuria," in *the Cultural Trauma of Decolonization*, ed. Ron Eyerman and Giuseppo Sciortino (Springer, 2020). Mariko Asano Tamanoi, "Victims of Colonialism? Japanese Agrarian Settlers in Manchukuo and Their Repatriation," *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 7, no. 6 (2009), among others.

Wujiazhan, where their settlement was located, was further away from the borderlines and the railways on which the Japanese Imperial Army sent settler refuges to Mukden and Harbin. After days of waiting, the settlement group, committed collective suicide on August 18th, three days after Japan's surrender.

The rosy promises of the Manchuria emigration were called into question long before those final moments of despair. Tanigawa Takeyuki, one of the former members of the pioneer settlement for the Kutami settlement, traveled to Manchuria in May of 1941 after a year of military service, despite his parents' strong opposition. The initial days in Manchuria, according to Tanigawa, made him happy about the decision to emigrate; his home was "a splendid house with thick mud walls" shared among three people, including him, and the work was "five families in one team" to walk around "about thirty-chō of land" to cultivate "sorghum, soybeans, millet, potatoes, and corn."[330] In addition, the settlers were able to purchase pigs, horses, and sheep in the following years and find chances to go fishing. During the winters, when the river surfaces are frozen, they would dig a hole five to ten centimeters deep into the ice to find fish.[331]

[330] Tanigawa Takeyuki, "Kutami kaitakudan ni omou- senkentai no hitori toshite," in Ōsaka jinken rekishi shiryōkan, *Manshū Imin to Hisabetsuburaku: Yūwa Seisaku No Gisei to Natta Kutami Kaitaku-Dan* (Ōsaka jinken rekishi shiryōkan, 1989). 28.
[331] Ibid.



Figure 11: Group Photo of the Pioneer Settlement of Kutami, 1941.[332]

However, Tanigawa did not only experience the joys of materialist sufficiency living as a colonizer in Manchuria. He also wrote about what he phrased as the "heartbreaking settlement policies,"

> Initially, the plan was to cultivate and settle in the wilderness. Once we came, we saw that all the land and houses were bought by the Kwantung Army. Everything was purchased, from agricultural land to residential homes; I was surprised to be a settler like this. The most difficult part was that the current residents of the residential home had to move out for relocation after the deal was made. That was really difficult. Those residents are driven out by the prefecture, with the backing of the Kwuantung Army. There was a lot of resistance [from the local residents,] but they still had to leave. People from the Settlement Branch of the prefecture are responsible for such purchases [of land.] Two or three of them from the prefecture would come to inform the town police, and the town police would come quickly and say 'Get out fast, hurry up" to force them out…when they come out, there are tears….[333]

[332] Tanigawa Takeyuki, 10. This is a group photo of the pioneer settlement of Kutami, taken in the summer of 1941.
[333] Ibid., 29.

Moving forward, he explained that behind the rushed colonization of local farmlands was the acute demand for crops to feed soldiers on the battlefields. Given how short the time window was, a fast settlement would increase the yields of crops, and "the result is to forcibly buy the farmland and residential homes of the current residents to allow us to settle in."[334] The moment these settlers arrived in Manchuria, Imperial Japan's entire narrative of emigration to the "new world" fell apart. The wilderness described by the emigration projects, in addition to the material comfort promised, all rested upon the dispossession of the locals. As Japanese colonizers in Manchuria, the Kutami settlement group lived the experiences of a racially superior group not through recognition from other Japanese settlers but through their occupancy of locals' farmlands and houses. Though Tanigawa expressed sympathetic feelings toward the dispossessed locals, a lack of reflection on the role of settlers like himself is also evident; "I think using doing things this way is not quite right, as for settlement policies. The buying probably was part of the reasons to account for the grudge from the local people later."[335]

Instead of settling in "no man's land" as advertised, Tanigawa and other members of the Kutami group settled in already cultivated land, as most of the paddy fields were already cultivated by Han Chinese, Manchus, and Koreans living in Manchuria. Coercing local farmers into selling houses and cultivating land by pointing a bayonet at them was fairly common; from the very outset of their settlement, these buraku settlers have become agents of imperialism. "We cultivated the land in cooperation with local Chinese farmers and carried out the so-called *Five Races Under One Reunion* actuality…and because it was a group of people who sought human equality, it would have been possible to collaborate with Chinese farmers."[336] These buraku

[334] Ibid.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Toshio Nonobiki, *Chōshū-Han Buraku Kaihōshi Kenkyū* (San -ichi-Shobo, 1980), 73.

settlers, seeking improvements for their own lives and having zero qualms about oppressing others in the process, raise the question of whether improvement in the standing of a discriminated group at the expense of others is socially desirable or justifiable. As part of the settler colonialism and imperialism mechanism, these buraku settlers have been complicit as Japanese colonizers in the name of liberation and escaping poverty and discrimination at home. Our usual binaristic understanding of colonial structure, colonizer versus the colonized, no longer functions here for us to understand the buraku experience: when the imperial agenda has offered an opportunity within the system for inclusion and elevation of status for the marginalized communities, the narrative of freedom dreams for these burakumin clashes with their formerly anti-colonialist and anti-fascist stances, allowing us to see how colonialism's "benign" side.

Since the Great Depression and Japan's imperial aggression into China, the situation of the buraku communities has changed rapidly due to the unilateral policies of the government administration, from emergency projects for regional improvement to the buraku economic rehabilitation movement and immigration to Manchuria. Rather than each one taking root and improving to stablize the life of the buraku community, we can see a situation in which discrimination and poverty are preserved, and the abandonment of buraku communities comes through the form of relocation via policy and lack of action at the time of Japan's surrender. While *yūwa* activists believed that emigration to Manchuria would eliminate discrimination, lift buraku communities out of poverty and realize the imperial ideal of "harmony of the five races," they advertised emigration with the illusion that it would fulfill the liberation dreams of decades of burakumin. Although the emigration projects did not progress as much as planned, instead of dismissing their ideals as overlooking the contradictions between fantasy and reality, it's more

important to acknowledge the potentialities they saw in Manchuria- a project that would allow them to be part of the imperial community, be fully Japanese for the first time after decades of struggling, and a legal path to earning their own land. Tanigawa's praise of the material life in Manchuria was vivid; the rich soil of Manchuria gave settlers like him the first time to enjoy material comfort and racial superiority.

Suiheisha's wartime conversion also makes stories like Kutami's hard to redress in postwar years; many of the present-day institutions that work on and hold events on the commemoration of the Kutami's legacy are either organizationally related to or sharing many exchanges with the Buraku Liberation League, the postwar successor of the Suiheisha Movement. There have been several publications and events held in the past decades on Kutami's story, either denoting a sense of absolute victimhood by the state without much mention of their participation in settler colonization of Manchuria or explicitly putting forward the "deception" theory to picture all Kutami settlers as deceived settlers with no awareness of the historical situation. This not only erases the subjectivity of these settlers who made conscious choices of moving there, but also ignores the historical fact that several of these settlers clearly wrote about how they were aware of their existence in Manchuria was contingent upon the removal of locals from land.

In 1989, Osaka Human Rights History Museum (*Ōsaka jinken rekishi shiryōkan*) published a book titled *Manchurian Immigrants and Discriminated Buraku*, with the subtitled "the Sacrificed Kutami Settlement Under Yūwa Policies" (*Manshū imin to hisabetsuburaku: Yūwa seisaku no gisei to natta kutami kaitaku-dan*.) The book was a collection included historical documents, testimonies and articles on the historical experiences of the Kutami settlement group for commemoration and remembrance. What is noteworthy about the historical

depiction of the Kutami group lies in these settlers' relationship to the imperialist agenda and how it is remembered today by the postwar Buraku Liberation League. In the Greetings section of the book, the head of the Osaka Human Rights History Museum, Fujiwara Megumi, writes:

> Kutami settlement group was one of this kind of Manchuria settlement groups. Their particular features lie in the fact that they were sent as a result of the Yūwa policies that aimed to "solve" the buraku mondai, as well the tragic ending that they committed collective suicide on immediately after the war, on August 17th, with only one survivor…This book…centers on the introduction of the Kutami settlement group to consider the role immigration to Manchuria played in Japan's aggression on China, the connection between Yūwa policies and Manchuria migration, as well as the truth behind Kutami settlement group's collective suicide.[337]

Both the title of the book and Fujiwara point to the Yūwa policies as the main reason behind Kutami's tragedy. However, though the Suiheisha Movement, with its idea of self-determination, differed dramatically from the Yūwa Movement's ideologies in terms of the definition of liberation and the means to achieve it. The late 1930s and onward witnessed the overlap, intersection or even collaboration between the two movements, with the beginning of Suiheisha's participation in War Mobilization.[338] Though the Yūwa Movement's reconciliation policies, especially regarding its seeking for integration and assimilation from the majority non-burakumin population, has been the target of much criticism in buraku studies, the Suiheisha Movement's war collaboration efforts have not received the same level of systematic scrutiny. Interestingly, the publication of this book was a result of collaboration between the Osaka Human Right History Museum and the Buraku Liberation League (BLL,) commonly considered Suiheisha's postwar successor. The second short article following Fujiwara's comes from Murakami Ryōji, the branch head of BLL's Kumamoto Prefecture Conference Kashima Branch. Murakami, in a similar light, describes Kutami's ending as "tragic" and characterizes the reason

[337] Ōsaka jinken rekishi shiryōkan, *Manshū Imin to Hisabetsuburaku: Yūwa Seisaku No Gisei to Natta Kutami Kaitaku-Dan* (Ōsaka jinken rekishi shiryōkan, 1989), 2.
[338] For a detailed discussion on Suiheisha's wartime conversation and change of discourse, see Introduction.

behind the emigration as "due to the national policy of Manchuria migration and and Yūwa movement." Again, with no single mentioning of Suiheisha's war collaboration efforts during the Sino-Japanese War, it implicitly fails to acknowledge the historical intersection between the two movements. For Murakami, the biggest villain in the story is the state, both during the wartime and postwar.

> As a buraku community, they participated in Japan's military aggression in China's mainland, worked for the sake of 'the country.' [okuni] The war ended, the country first abandoned its responsibilities, ran away first, and offered no salvation in Kutami settlement's danger…However, the administration side does not admit to the existence of buraku discrimination until now, let alone taking responsibility for it.[339]

Murakami moves on to cite the discriminatory comment made by a welfare commissioner (with no name specified,) "the victims of Kutami settlement group are those burakumin with different blood, they can kill their parents and children."[340] He ends the article with a wish to collect the remains of the Kutami settlers as symbol of peace to achieve the "complete liberation of buraku" and "real friendship between China and Japan"; for him, the war does not end until that day comes. Sino-Japan friendship also made appearances in the later parts of the collection; for example, the representative of Kuta group descendants, Yoshioka Nobuyuki, also argues that the remembrance of this tragedy is essential for maintaining peace and friendship between the two nations. Yoshioka, upon seeing the exhibition on the settlement group, makes the comment that: "it shows how the pioneers devoted themselves to the liberation of burakumin and fight the powerful of that time, and how the people of the buraku communities lived their daily lives under oppression" while the exhibition was essentially on the settler colonization of Manchuria that those buraku settlers took part in.[341]

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[339] Ibid, 3.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Ibid., 4.

The moral dilemma Kutami's story presents us is three-folds. Firstly, the relationship between liberation and settler colonialism in buraku's liberation discourses is worth exploring. As the chapter on Hokkaido suggests, if the idea of liberation depicted requires the dispossession of others, the complicity of Kutami settlers' in Japan's imperial expansion and atrocities in Manchuria and their tragic deaths become a utopian dream turned into dystopia. Secondly, though Suiheisha never participated in the emigration project behind Kutami, that does not mean the movement had its hands clean in terms of buraku emigration and collaboration in war mobilization and Japan's colonization of Manchuria. Thirdly, the victimization of the Kutami settlers via reducing them to people deceived by the state erases their agency in making choices and invalidates the dispossessions of the Manchus, Chinese, Koreans and other locals in Manchuria. Kutami's story is as much about deception as it is about navigating and seeking an ideal place to live with your families and raise your kids without discrimination. It is about finding an alternative means to enduring the poverty, discrimination, unemployment and landlessness at home. By moving their bodies, these Kutami settlers had their free minds to imagine the future they longed for.

Conclusion

The *yūwa* leaders examined in this chapter, Shimomura Harunosuke and Oayama Saburo, saw a possible success of reconciliation of the *buraku mondai* in emigration to Manchuria. Shimomura ended his article "If You Live in Manchuria, the Discrimination Will Disappear" by calling the emigration to Manchuria a test for loyal subjects to the empire; "Whether you accept or reject to emigrant to Manchuria decides whether you accept or reject to contribute and

collaborate with the national policy."[342] On top of the state mobilization projects that called for civilian sacrifices, the irony in buraku participation in war is two-fold. Firstly, in terms of sacrifice, the buraku residents were further impoverished by the mobilization of war-related materials, particularly bamboo shoots and silk cocoons needed for the traditional industries. Secondly, it was precisely through the emigration projects that leaders like Shimomura and Oyama, among many others, saw an ultimate possibility of reconciliation. For them, reconciliation did not stand for being equal but for earning recognition through self-awareness and demonstrating buraku's improvement. These leaders did not, subsequently, present emigration to Manchuria as a sacrifice, instead, they promoted it as a path to material comfort, self-sufficiency, and recognition from Japan.

They were not entirely wrong. Tanigawa's writings as a former member of the Kutami settlement group showed how comfortable life in Manchuria was (at least before the final days of despair); big splendid houses to only share with two others, the rich soil that was almost suitable to grow anything, the joy of finding ways to fish even during the winter. The only discomfort he discussed was the discomfort of seeing how the local township police and Kwantung Army kicked local residents out of their homes and off their farmland in the name of "purchasing the land." No matter how short-lived the dream was, those buraku emigrants of the Kutami settlement group enjoyed the lives of Japanese colonizers in Manchuria while their liberation was dependent upon the oppression of the locals. The dramatic and tragic ending of their story- the deaths of the entire group but one messenger- not only tells us how quickly the Japanese state abandoned them, along with many other Japanese settlers, but also invites us to reckon with their shattered dreams and unfinished liberation.

[342] Harunosuke Shimomura, "Manshū Ni Sumeba Sabetsu Wa Kaishō Suru," *Kōsei*, no. 21 (1941), 40.

The “deception theory” is not enough to recount the visions of yūwa leaders and the group of settlers. People like Tanigawa were not deceived into the utopia image of Manchuria; instead, he fought his parents’ opposition and chose Manchuria as a suitable destination for his economic situation. The theory, evident in many publications and public discourses related to the Buraku Liberation League today, erases their agencies in making the conscious decisions to become settlers and eschews the question of war responsibility of the buraku communities. Furthermore, it prohibits us from seeing the unambitious dreams these buraku settlers had-having your own land, being able to feed your families, being a member of society without being discriminated and escaping segregation. These unspectacular dreams, consisting of things human beings should be entitled to, pushed them to be settlers and to dispossess others of land. They participated in a project where they saw hopes of inclusion, acceptance, recognition, and, perhaps, racial superiority at a time the home country that has rejected them for so long finally had open arms to welcome them and, more importantly, needed them.

Epilogue: Zainichi Koreans in Buraku Liberation

The preceding chapters have delineated the progression of narratives surrounding the liberation of the buraku communities, spanning from the latter part of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century. These narratives intricately interweave the pivotal themes of migration and gender, thereby proffering alternative perspectives on buraku liberation that deviated from Suiheisha's preceding notions of self-determination and brotherhood. The epilogue redirects its focus toward the historical dynamics of collaboration and tension between Suiheisha and the postwar Buraku Liberation League in relation to the Hyongpyongsa movement of paekjong groups in Colonial Korea. It also sheds light on the obstacles Zainichi Korean writer Kim-Jung-Mi faced as she delved into the subject, highlighting the resistance she encountered in initiating conversations over Suiheisha's war responsibilities. Finally, the epilogue concludes by offering a few remarks on the relationship between buraku liberation and the issue of ethnic discrimination, particularly concerning the plight of Zainichi Koreans and the (un)redressability of voices done in the name of liberation.

The term paekjong denotes a marginalized cohort within traditional Korean society, often excluded by official registries during the Choson period (1390-1910), thereby reinforcing their outcast status.[343] In terms of estimating the size of the paekjong population, Ian Neary noted that during the initial registration in 1894, there were recorded to be approximately 5,000 individuals.[344] In response to the discrimination faced by the group, four activists (among which two were not paekjong themselves) founded the Hyongpyongsa movement in 1923, taking

[343] Ian Neary, "The Paekjong and the Hyongpyongsa: The Untouchables of Korea and Their Struggle for Liberation," *Immigrants & Minorities* 6, no. 2 (July 1987): 117–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/02619288.1987.9974654, 131-132.
[344] Ibid.

inspiration from the Suiheisha movement that was founded one year earlier.[345] The founding documents of the Hyongpyongsa exhibited a remarkable convergence of the ideals and objectives with Suiheisha's Declaration, advocating for the eradication of pejorative labels associated with the paekjoing and the restoration of their humanity. Today's Suiheisha Historical Museum houses a collection titled "Suiheisha and Hyongpyongsa [different romanization]- the records of cross-border solidarity between the minorities who had been discrimination against," in which earlier exchanges of correspondence were exhibited. The collection is introduced as,

> "*Hiya* was published by the Oshima Suiheisha in 1929 in Oshima, Gojo Town, Nara Prefecture, which is the birthplace of Yoneda Tomi as well. Minor changes were made to the original version of the object of the Hyeongpyengsa when it was published on the bulletin as the Prospectus of the Hyeongpyengsa. Tagawa Seiichi, the editor of the first issue of *Hiya* noted 'from the standpoint of love for humanity' that 'namely, the movement of the Korean Hyeongpyengsa, aiming at the liberation of 440,000 Baegjeong [different romanization] in Korea, occurred in April 1923 by way of echoing the Suihe movement'. The fact that the Object of the Hyeongpyengsa was published on the bulletin of a local Suiheisha in Nara Prefecture six years after the creation of the organization can be seen as an indication of the determination for solidarity with the Korean movement on the part of the Suihei movement."[346]

The bulletin included a Japanese translation of the Prospectus of Hyongpyongsa (shown in Figure 1,) which further demonstrated the two movement's early correspondences and support for each other during civil unrest and anti-discrimination campaigns. In 1925, a year prior to the release of Hiya, an incident unfolded during the commemoration of the second anniversary of a regional Hyongpyongsa establishment in South Kyongsang province. A tumultuous clash erupted between approximately three hundred villagers and representatives affiliated with the movement,

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[345] Many scholarships have suggested that the establishment of Hyongpysongsa was influenced by the Suiheisha movement, including Joong-Seop Kim, "The Role of Leadership: The Case of Paekjong in Korea," in *, " International Workshop and Symposium of Young Scholars Working* (Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute, 2008 Joong-Seop Kim, *The Korean Paekjong under Japanese Rule* (Routledge, 2013). Ian Neary, "The Paekjong and the Hyongpyongsa: The Untouchables of Korea and Their Struggle for Liberation," *Immigrants & Minorities* 6, no. 2 (July 1987): 117–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/02619288.1987.9974654.

[346] Suiheisha Historical Museum, "Suiheisha and Hyeongpengsa- the Records of Cross-Border Solidarity between the Two Minorities Who Had Been Discriminated Against," www1.mahoroba.ne.jp, accessed May 16, 2023, http://www1.mahoroba.ne.jp/~suihei/mowcap/list4.html.

subsequently instigating further physical confrontations between the two factions within the vicinity. The resultant civil unrest led to the apprehension of involved individuals and the expulsion of visiting leaders from the Hyongpyongsa. Upon receiving news of this episode, the Osaka branch of Suiheisha was apprised of the situation and extended a letter of support to the Hyongpyongsa, expressing solidarity with their cause.[347]

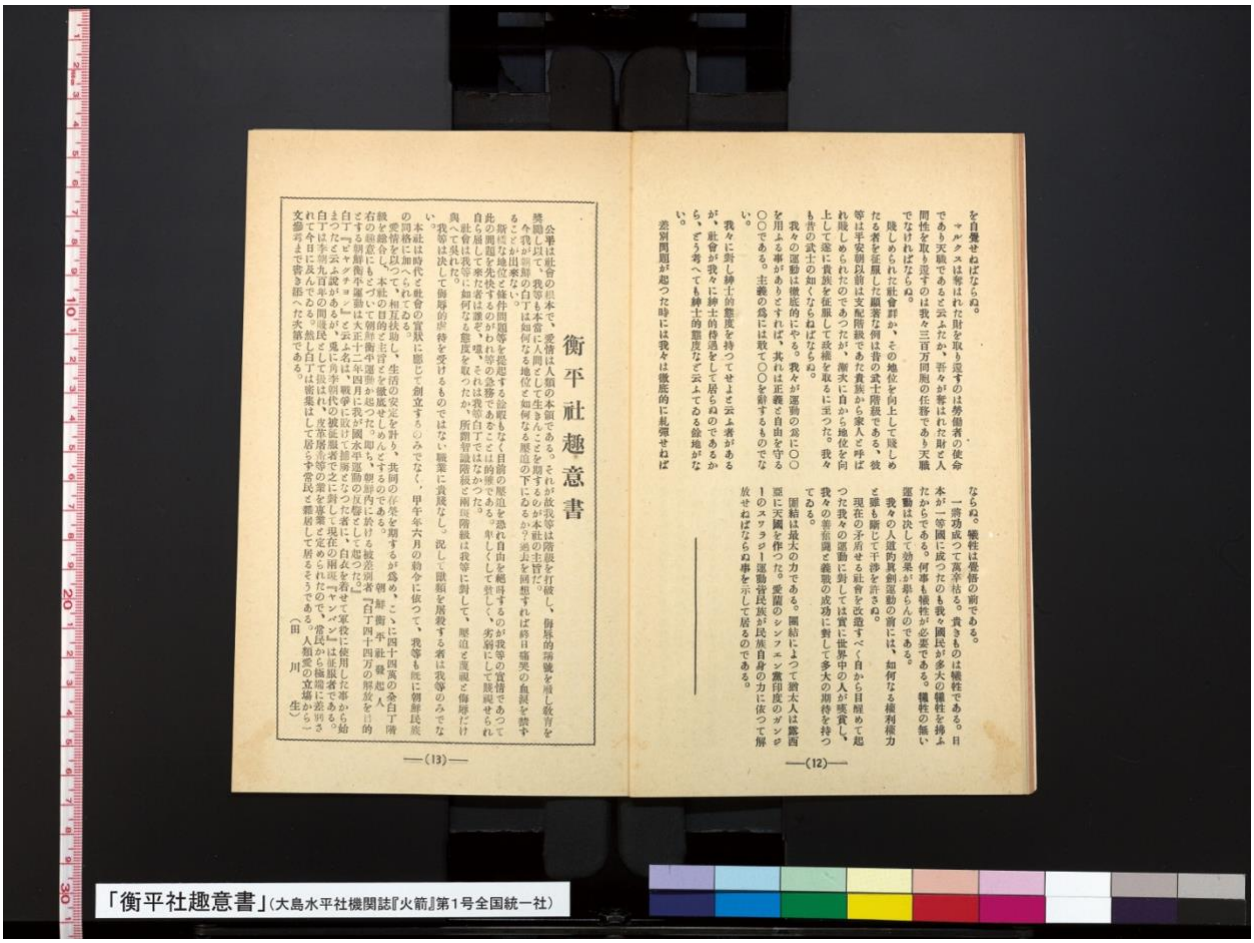

Figure 12: Prospectus of Hyongpyongsa-10 (Published in *Hiya*, 1929) [348]

[347] Ian Neary, "The Paekjong and the Hyongpyongsa: The Untouchables of Korea and Their Struggle for Liberation," 134-5.

[348] "Prospectus of Hyongpyongsa (kōheisha shui-sho)- 10" in Suiheisha and Hyeongpengsa- The Records of Cross-Border Solidarity between the two minorities who had been discriminated against, *Suiheisha Historical Museum*, Gose, Nara.

The divergence between the two movements occurred in the 1930s, as Suiheisha became increasingly involved in Japan's imperial expansion and aggressive actions in its colonies. In contrast, the Hyongpyongsa began to align themselves more closely with socialist movements, seeking to radicalize their approach amidst the tightening grip of Japanese governance in Colonial Korea to advocate for workers' and women's rights. Furthermore, the influx of new members into the group brought about a broadening of their concerns beyond the emancipation of the paekjong alone. Their interests shifted towards the comprehensive restructuring of Korean society, encompassing a deep engagement with anti-imperialist and anti-colonial ideologies as the central aim of their movement, to address the broader issue of liberation and the dismantling of imperial structures.[349] In light of these intensifying anti-imperialist sentiments within the movement, a significant number of members came to the realization that the leaders of the Suiheisha were not inclined to engage in their anti-imperialist endeavors wholeheartedly and became resistant to collaborating with the Japanese movement. As Kim Jung-Mi explains, Hyongpysongsa emphasized to Suiheisha that the question of Korean Independence constituted a fundamental aspect of building solidarity between the two groups, transcending mere anti-discrimination struggles and encompassing the pursuit of colonial independence and the prevention of Japanese aggression in Asia. However, many burakumin lacked a proper understanding of the concept and debates over Korea's independence and were unable to establish solidarity with the colonized Koreans.[350]

However, in the postwar era, there has been a resurgence of discussions over the two movement's past collaboration, as evidenced by the organization of commemorative events and

[349] Joong-Seop Kim, "Social Equity and Collective Action" (Dissertation, University of Hull, 1989), 318.
[350] Jung-Mi Kim, "Chōsen Dokuritsu Han Sabetsu Han Ten'nōsei -- Kōheisha to Suihei-Sha No Rentai No Kijiku Wa Nanika," *Shisō*, no. 786 (1989): 86−124.

activities. It is notable, however, that these collaborations often overlook the war responsibilities of Suiheisha. The exhibition mentioned at the Suiheisha Historical Museum, which has received recognition from the United Nations Education, Scientific and Culture Organization (UNESCO) as part of the Memory of the World Regional Register for Asia/Pacific, has become an integral part of the glorified historical legacy of the Suiheisha movement. As evidence of their solidarity with the paekjong movement, it is not incorporated into the narrative and representation of the movement's history, serving as a symbol of their achievements and contributions. Furthermore, a book titled *Chōsen's Social Status Liberation Movement* (*Chōsen no 'mibun' kaihō undo*), celebrating the 70th anniversary of Hyongpysongsa in 1993, was published in Japanese with the support of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute. In the book's preface, the chair of the commemoration committee, Kim Jung-Ha, first acknowledged the spirits of the Hyongpyongsa, stating,

> "The Hyongpyongsa movement was rooted in the belief of the establishing a society where all individuals are granted equal rights and can lead lives of equality. It represents a genuine pursuit of the fundamental conditions necessary for human existence and a concerted effort to restore human dignity, which is of utmost important…our predecessors who organized and engaged in the Hyongpyong movement in the past exemplified the noble spirit of 'respect and equality for all humans,' a sentiment that resonates deeply with our yearning and longing today."[351]

With no mentioning of the anti-imperialist tradition of the movement, Kim Jung-Ha continued to thank all the participants and organizations that supported the events, "I would like to thank the delegation of Japan's Buraku Liberation Research Institute, led by President Murakoshi Sueo, for their great interest and support. I think their high level of interest is a great opportunity for us to compare and understand the pasts of Japan and Korea."[352] Omitting any reference to Suiheisha's

[351] Jung Ha Kim, "Kōhei Undō Zai-Ninshiki Nihongō-Han Ni Yosete," in *Chōsen No "Mibun" Kaihō Undo* (Burakukaihōkenkyūsho, 1994), vi.
[352] Ibid., vi-vii.

wartime crimes, this narrative not only perpetuates a historical blind spot but also undermines the potential for a direct reckoning with Suiheisha's past transgressions. The failure to acknowledge the anti-imperialist endeavors undertaken by the Hyongpyongsa further compounds this evasion; it shields Suiheisha and the postwar buraku activism from redressing the historical violence, allowing the maintenance of a sanitized and unchallenged version of its history. The president of the Buraku Liberation Research Institute delegation, the late Murakoshi Sueo, wrote a note on the visit in which Japanese imperialism was mentioned,

> "However, the Japanese people have not been adequately educated about the horrific history of the Japanese invasion of Korea. There remains a pervasive lack of awareness regarding the advanced nature of Korean culture and its profound influence on ancient Japanese culture. Furthermore, the discriminatory practices that persisted during colonial rule still left a lasting impact. In light of these circumstances, it becomes even more crucial to recognize the historical significance of the exchanges and solidarity between the Suiheisha movement and the Hyongpyongsa movement as they serve as a shining testament to the pursuit of equality and human rights."[353]

In his remarks, Murakoshi urged for introspection regarding Japan's aggression in Korea and the enduring discrimination that persists to this day in order to claim the significance of the two movements' historical collaborations as it exemplified a cross-border endeavor dedicated to the pursuit of equality and human rights. The complete omission of any mention of Suiheisha's involvement in imperial wars is even more ironic in this context; Murakoshi, in a sense, argues that exploring the spirit embraced by the Suiheisha movement, despite its association with war crimes and responsibilities, can provide invaluable insights in addressing continuing discrimination toward Korea. A similar narrative could be found in Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute's report on the event,

> "Before the war, the National Suiheisha sought to establish exchanges with Hyongpyongsa, a liberation movement organization for the discriminated people in Korea known as 'Baekjong'. However, this pursuit was not deepened during the wartime

[353] Sueo Murakoshi, "Kōheisha Sōritsu 70 Shūnenkinen Hōkan Ryakki," *Dōwamondai Kenkyū: Ōsakashiritsudaigaku Dōwamondai Kenkyūshitsu Kiyō* 16 (1993): 1–12, 9.

> regime. In April 1993, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Hyongpyongsa, a commemorative event was held in Jinju, South Korea, the birthplace of Hyongpyongsa, with the participation of a delegation of 30 representatives from various fields, including the Buraku Liberation Research Institute (at the time). Subsequently, the exchanges continued, including support for the construction of the Hyongpyongsa Memorial Tower, a plan for participation in the 80th-anniversary commemorative event, and the translation and publication of relevant literature."[354]

Despite its constant emphasis on addressing discrimination and advocating for equality, postwar buraku activism has largely avoided scrutiny and accountability over its promotion of settler migration projects, mobilization of leather industries, and vocal support for imperial missions in the late 1930s. A notable critique of the Suiheisha movement emerged from Zainichi Korean writer Kim Jung-Mi during the 1990s. Kim delved extensively into the issue of war responsibility of the Suiheisha movement. From her unique perspective as a Korean residing in Japanese society, she vehemently criticized the movement's support for Imperial Japan's aggressive expansion in East Asia, their allegiance to the emperor system, and the ethnic discrimination toward Koreans within the buraku communities. Particularly, she directed her criticism toward the founders of the Suiheisha Movement and Matsumoto Jiichiro, who had been regarded as the "Father of Buraku Liberation" for hiding behind the façade of anti-discrimination and perpetuating ethnic discrimination against Koreans. For example, Kim pointed out that one of the leading activists, Hirano Shōken, had characterized the 1920s as "the golden age for ethnic self-determination" while showing partial agreements with the validity of the emperor system and colonial domination overseas.[355]

Kim's scholarly work placed her in a complex and contradictory relationship with the Buraku Liberation League that self-honors for inheriting Suiheisha's illustrious legacy, and her

[354] Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute, *Shashin de Miru Sengo 60-Nen — Buraku Kaihō Undō No Ayumi*, 2009.
[355] Kim Jung-Mi, *Suihei undōshi kenkyū,* 54.

experience of being silenced could offer a glimpse of BBL's attitude on the topic of Suiheisha's wartime activities. Kim became the target of harsh criticism from many buraku activists who accused her of betraying minority struggles and standing as an adversary to their liberation mission. Furthermore, being caught between the internal politics between the Buraku Liberation League and the National United Front of the Buraku Liberation League (founded in 1991 primarily by members of the Aramoto Branch who were expelled from the Osaka BLL Branch due to internal conflicts in the 1980s), Kim's article was rejected by the latter as she had published with the latter.[356] Kim was not exempted from buraku liberation's inner politics but was targeted with my freedom of speech constantly threatened. She highlighted the presence of nationalistic tendencies embedded within the Suiheisha movement, and the subsequent buraku movements raised discontent among buraku activists. In the afterward of the book, Kim recounted how she was invited to speak at a gathering of the Buraku Liberation Yada Branch in September 1992. However, when she submitted the summary of the speech, titled "The National Suiheisha Movement and War Aggression," which contained the same content as this book, they were obstructed and told her that such content could not be shared with the general public.[357]

The All-Romance Incident in the immediate postwar year offer a glimpse into buraku activism's continuing neglect over discrimination against Koreans; moreover, they utilize negotiations with the administration to address the overlapping issue of discrimination against Koreans and burakumin as a fight to combat discriminatory policies and improve the buraku communities, while also perpetuating discrimination based on ethnicity. In 1951, a temporary employee at the Kyoto City Health Department named Sugiyama Seiichi published a novel titled "Tokushu Buraku" in a magazine called All Romance. The fiction centers around the love story

[356] Ibid., 761-762.
[357] Ibid., 763.

between a doctor named Koichi Katakami, who has a Korean father and a Japanese mother, and a Zainichi Korean named Junko. While it is a pure love novel that does not feature the daily lives of the inhabitants of buraku communities, it instead creates a fictional "special buraku neighborhood" where the residents are called burakumin.[358] This incited a series of protests and investigations initiated by the Buraku Liberation members, resulting in Sugiyama being fired and writing a personal apology. However, the Buraku Liberation League Central Committee further pursued the issue and brought it to the Kyoto City Hall, where Sugiyama was employed, expressing deep regret over the novel and pledging the work toward expanding the budget for buraku communities' reconciliation policies. As a result, in the fiscal year of 1952, Kyoto City allocated a budget that was almost six times higher than the previous year to improve education, economy and housing of buraku communities.[359]

While the strategy the Buraku Liberation Central committee became an essential part of their anti-discrimination campaign over time given its success in the All-Romance Incident, Kim rightfully pointed out the underlying issue of this incident was the overlapping discrimination faced by both Zainichi Koreans and burakumin. However, the benefits derived from the struggles were monopolized by the buraku communities, while Zainichi Koreans were completely excluded.[360] Kim asserted that the utilization of discrimination against Koreans by the Suiheisha and the postwar BLL occurred selectively, solely for the sake of their own self-interest and gains. This can be observed in the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of Hyongpyongsa, where historical interactions were cherry-picked by the BLL to reinforce its narrative of self-importance

[358] This was reprinted by Shiryo hohen Kyoto Burakushi Kenkyujo , *Kyoto No Burakushi*, vol. 9 (Kyoto: Kyoto Burakushi Kenkyujo, 1997), 559–81.
[359] Edward Fowler, "The Buraku in Modern Japanese Literature: Texts and Contexts," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 26, no. 1 (2000): 1, https://doi.org/10.2307/133390, 24.
[360] Kim Jung-Mi, *Suihei undōshi kenkyū,* 545.

and transnational solidarity, conveniently disregarding their own unsavory history of involvement in wartime mobilization and participation.

Since Kim's groundbreaking work, there has been a considerable body of scholarly research dedicated to, or at least do not shy away from, unraveling Suiheisha's war responsibilities. Nevertheless, the inquiry aligns with the compelling questions posed by Lisa Yoneyama during her examination of redress efforts in the post-1990s era: "Why so late? Why after almost half a century? Why failure?"[361] The BLL's demand for monetary reparations for the past and continuing discrimination and the need for redress regarding the rights of Zainichi Koreans/Koreans bring us back to the fundamental question of justice, raising the issue of how to compensate for the justice that was denied and find a path forward. The majority of reparations sought by the BLL, such as those related to the All-Romance Incident, were primarily intended to stimulate the buraku economy, improve education, facilitate construction work, and address housing issues. However, does the result of the All-Romance Incident constitute a redress that assembles justice? Apologies and monetary reparation do not make up for the discrimination formerly and by the buraku communities, nor does it attend to the structural discrimination that continues. Nonetheless, there remains a significant disparity between the intended beneficiaries and the actual recipients of these reparations; instead of reaching the residents and rank-and-file members, those resources often ended up being controlled by buraku leaders and administration authorities, not to mention the Korean communities. The continuing invocations of Koreans to demand reparations for buraku communities is not only a result of ethnic discrimination of buraku leaders but intricately intertwined with the redress culture Yoneyama describes, but also a

[361] Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins : Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), i.

product of the neoliberal discourses of human rights and multiculturalism that is inherently ani-decolonial.

This dissertation has examined numerous historical endeavors undertaken in the pursuit of justice and liberation, only to reveal that some of these very actions have perpetuated acts of historical injustice. What does it mean to rest one's hope of liberation on the dispossession of someone else? The competing narratives of buraku liberation, as attempts to find their own spaces within imperialism, settler colonialism, racial capitalism, and nationalism, did not only arise from the historical injustices burakumin faced but their imaginings of different futures. With the current emerging scholarly attempt to attend to these historical injustices done in the name of liberation, a reassessment of this culture of redress is critical: How should we define buraku liberation in this world dominated by neoliberal thinking? By delving into the expressions of yearning for love by Takahashi Haruko and the hopeful aspirations embedded in Tahara Haruji and many others' migration, it aims to offer fresh perspectives for thinking about liberation, this dissertation endeavors to explore the potential of alternative visions in order to forge a new trajectory for contemplating the liberation of the buraku communities.

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