Understanding *buraku* inequality: Improvements and challenges*

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Abstract

Groups on the margins of society tend to find themselves in a tenuous position, often the first to bear the brunt of economic downturns and the last to reap the benefits of economic booms. This article explores inequalities faced by the burakumin, Japan's largest minority group and long on the margins of society, as seen in education, occupation, and living situations. The paper pays particular attention to buraku social movement organizations, governmental actions, and local experiences, both in an historical and contemporary context. It examines how, at the macro-level, social movement organizations have challenged discrimination broadly, encouraging governmental action to reduce inequality facing the burakumin. While these macro-level approaches are important, it is also essential to consider this diversity of perspectives "on the ground." Thus, based upon ethnographic study, the paper considers how two organizations in particular approach buraku issues at the local level in two different communities. The diversity of social movement perspectives is apparent within communities, but is easy to miss when viewed from the outside. Seeing these approaches at the community level, however, we still find inequality, in particular in the form of social and geographic isolation. Overall, this study shows how understanding the heterogeneity of the buraku experience and various challenges to their living situations enables an even deeper understanding of their lives as well as their approach to challenging inequality.

Keywords: burakumin; inequality; marginalization; social movements.

1. Introduction

In many societies throughout the world, those already on the margins of society are disproportionately affected by increasing inequalities (Hacker 2003; Shapiro 2003; Keister 2000). One such group long on the margins

of society has been the burakumin, Japan's largest minority group. There is little doubt that the burakumin have been discriminated against historically, and available data, discussed below, demonstrate that they continue to maintain a marginalized position in Japanese society. As the largest social movement group for the burakumin note in their newspaper, there is an intricate relationship between discrimination and poverty, and that we cannot consider one without considering the other (*Kaihō Shinbun* 26 May 2008).

Through social movement actions, burakumin have challenged many of the structural inequalities they face, leading to laws that helped to address some of these inequalities. These approaches brought about government changes through a series of laws designed, in part, to address inequalities between burakumin and the majority society. Some of the improvements in the structural conditions facing the burakumin are evident, with a closing of the gap in educational outcomes, but there remains a gap in employment and living conditions (Noguchi et al. 1998).

When considering issues of inequality, it is important to recognize that social isolation, such as the kind many burakumin face by living in specified districts, often compounds broader issues of inequality, from economic changes to educational outcomes, to access to labor markets. In his study of class in Ireland, Christopher Whelan (1996: 38) notes the connection between marginalization and the "severe problems in establishing a connection with the labor market." Whelan's point echoes the work of William Julius Wilson (1991: 9), who highlights the issue of "weak labor force attachment [which] refers to the marginal economic position of some people in the labor force because of structural constraints or limited opportunity" based in part on where they live. He continues to note that neighborhoods shape access to formal and informal networks, which can reinforce social inequality (Wilson 1991: 10).

The connection among social location and isolation and broader issues of inequality is complex. While national-level data on housing, education, and employment provide an understanding of the position of the burakumin as a whole, it is also important to consider how some local buraku communities have engaged with issues of marginalization as a necessary step to engage with broader issues of inequality.

2. Historical background

The construction of social boundaries between majority and minority populations are part of a negotiated process; they are not a historical constant and can change over time. This is not to suggest that change happens immediately, nor is it necessarily a smooth change, but simply indicates that the notions of majority and minority are contingent upon

socio-historical contexts. The term burakumin literally means people of the hamlet (a buraku being a hamlet), and refers to a group of people who have been marginalized and discriminated against both historically and in contemporary society. Historically, this marginalization and discrimination was based on occupation, in part on their position within the Tokugawa (1603–1867) era status hierarchy and being outside of the Samurai-Peasant-Artisan-Merchant categorization, and in part on religious and folk beliefs surrounding issues of purity and pollution (Uesugi 2000; Neary 1989; Nagahara 1979).¹ The marking of the burakumin in contemporary society is based on residence – living in what was a buraku district – or background, which could be traced through the family registry system (*koseki*). The boundary that defines who was and who was not from a buraku minority has shifted, yet discrimination, in the form of institutional inequality and individual experiences, remained. One approach to improve conditions for burakumin has been the establishment of social movement organizations.

Throughout both the prewar and postwar periods, there have been a number of social movement organizations that have taken a variety of approaches to engaging with buraku discrimination. In the prewar era, these movements ranged from conservative, conciliatory approaches such as the *Yūwa Undō* [Harmony Movement] to the more radical *Sui-heisha* [Levelers Association] (Neary 1989). In the postwar period, there were similar divisions between buraku organizations: the *Zenkoku Dōwa Kai* [National Assimilation Association], the subsequent *Jiyū Dōwa Kai* [Liberal Assimilation Association], which maintained a close working relationship with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP); and the largest buraku social movement organization, the *Buraku Kaihō Dōmei* [Buraku Liberation League] (BLL), which took a more direct, challenging approach to the status quo in order to improve conditions for the burakumin.²

3. Social movement actions and governmental response

Government response to buraku issues came, in part, as a result of actions of these social movement organizations. There were a number of cases used by social movement organizations to challenge their social position and address the lack of serious attention from government, but two worth noting here were the “All Romance” incident and the “Nagahama Textbook Struggle.” In 1951, the pulp magazine, *Oru Romansu* [All Romance], published an inflammatory article entitled, “Tokubetsu buraku” [special hamlet], written by an employee of the Kyoto City Public Health Center. The story, which included greatly exaggerated sexual exploits of burakumin, made numerous references to the sub-standard

living conditions within buraku districts (Neary 2009: 69–70; Fowler 2000: 21–26; Yoshida 1990: 288–290).

The National Committee on Buraku Liberation (NCBL), the precursor to the BLL, demanded that the author of the story resign from his city position, and took this opportunity to challenge structural discrimination. The National Committee on Buraku Liberation presented a map of the city to the mayor asking him to indicate the areas with higher disease, lower education, fewer services, and other areas of concern. All of the indicators on the map were buraku areas (Neary 2009: 69–70; Fowler 2000: 21–26; Yoshida 1990: 288–290; De Vos and Wagatsuma 1972: 76–77). This provided a clear, visual representation of the conditions within these communities, as well as a sense of purpose that the NCBL could use to raise awareness, both socially and politically.

Another example of such movement actions to demand the government to take action to improve social conditions for the burakumin include the Nagahama Textbook Struggle in 1962. The change in the postwar education system, which made compulsory education through junior high school free, did not extend to textbooks. Families, largely mothers, from a buraku district in Kōchi Prefecture demanded that the government consider that the living conditions faced by the burakumin and others on the margins of society made it difficult, if not impossible, to buy new textbooks every year. By not being able to purchase new textbooks, buraku families and other marginalized populations were dependent on hand-me-downs, or sharing textbooks, placing them in a position where academic success was severely curtailed. The movement leaders argued that by not providing free textbooks as part of free compulsory education, the government was, in essence, intentionally placing barriers that disproportionately affected the burakumin and others in poverty. They argued that the effects operated as a continued division between burakumin and others in the field of education and subsequent opportunity (Kato et al. 1996).

Actions such as the response to the “All Romance” incident, the Nagahama Textbook Struggle, and others undertaken by various buraku social movement organizations, led to the establishment of the *Dōwa Taisaku Shingikai* [Deliberative Council for Buraku Assimilation] through the Prime Minister’s Office. The most important aspect of the Council’s report, issued in 1965, was that the government, for the first time, admitted that while the burakumin are racially Japanese, discrimination does exist. Further, the report recognized government culpability in perpetuating inequality and marginalization of burakumin and stipulated that the government should take actions to improve conditions for the burakumin. Based on the suggestions of the Council, the Special Measures Law for Dōwa Projects (*Dōwa taisaku jigyo tokubetsu sochi-hō*), known

as the SML, went into effect in 1969. This law, and those that followed, terminating in 2002, centered on improving living conditions in buraku districts, improving infrastructure, providing low-interest loans and school scholarships, among other components.

4. National data

One of the challenges in conducting research on inequality, stratification and education in Japan is the dearth of statistical material available to researchers in raw form (Brinton 2003; LeTendre et al. 1998). This is especially true with research on buraku issues, for there is a general lack of national-level data to support claims. Indeed, much of our data on the current situation facing those from buraku districts come from buraku social movement organizations. In addition, most of these data are not national, but rather local (prefectural or city) level information. As I discuss below, even at the local level, there are differences in conditions facing the burakumin. This fact poses a challenge to social scientists conducting research on buraku issues and reinforces the necessity of taking a historical and ethnographic approach. The following section examines the data that we have on buraku issues in contemporary Japan.

The most recent available data on the conditions faced by the burakumin were collected in 1993, as part of a survey conducted by the Prime Minister's Office (the survey was on living conditions for burakumin and awareness of buraku issues) and there have not been any national-level surveys conducted since then. While there have been local and prefectural-level surveys done, this does not provide nearly as much information as national data provide. What the 1993 survey found was a continuing gap between burakumin and non-burakumin in a host of social markers, with the burakumin consistently below national averages for these markers. From housing to education to employment (including types of work), we see a remaining difference, despite over three decades of aid. For housing, burakumin are far more likely not to live in single family homes, with 13.7 percent living in row houses, while only 5.4 percent do for all Japanese (Noguchi et al. 1998: 45).

Education is often considered an important component to achieving a stable position in society, yet here too, numbers for burakumin are different than they are for majority Japanese. At the time of the 1993 survey, the high school matriculation rate was at 96.7 percent for all Japanese and 92.4 percent for those from buraku districts. This was a marked improvement from the rates in 1971, two years after the first Dowa law was implemented, when the rates were 85 percent and 73 percent respectively (Noguchi et al. 1998: 105). Further, the changes in continuation to college showed similar disparities and improvement, though

burakumin still remained behind. In 1980, the national matriculation rate was 37.4 percent, while for burakumin the number was 15.8 percent. This gap decreased by 1993, when the national rate was 36 percent, and for burakumin, 24.3 percent (Noguchi et al. 1998: 107). The issue of educational attainment is a particularly important one, as it helps to shape the labor market outcome.

Furthermore, the experience of burakumin in the labor market is different from non-burakumin. The employment rate was at 75.4 percent for all men, while for burakumin men it was 71.6 percent, though for women there was only a slight difference, with corresponding rates of 32.9 percent and 32 percent (Noguchi et al. 1998: 69). The type of work we find burakumin involved in also affects their socio-economic status. We find that burakumin tend to be highly concentrated in construction and public service, with burakumin men being nearly two times as likely to be in construction as non burakumin men, at 24.8 percent and 13.3 percent respectively (Noguchi et al. 1998: 71). Based on their comparatively lower levels of education, we also find that burakumin are less likely to be involved with white collar work, work which tends to provide greater economic stability (Noguchi et al. 1998: 73). These education and employment factors all act to reinforce the marginalized social and economic position of many burakumin. The desire to change conditions many burakumin have faced and continue to face has been part of the action of various groups for years.

While macro-level approaches do provide us with a broad picture of the inequalities facing the burakumin in contemporary Japan, we must, for a number of reasons, be cautious of relying only on such data. First and foremost, such data do not provide us with an understanding of the living conditions facing people in buraku districts. Second, they tend to treat the burakumin as one homogeneous group, rather than allowing for a broader understanding of the heterogeneity within that group. Third, such data do not examine issues of marginality that many of the burakumin face. In the following section, I outline two different buraku communities, highlighting the ways in which inequality and marginalization are intertwined.

5. Localized experiences

As noted above, there have been a variety of structural inequalities that the burakumin have faced. Part of the broader picture of inequality comes from the marginality many buraku communities face. Yet it is essential to recognize that buraku districts also have vastly differing approaches to challenging their peripheral position. Examining differing approaches of movements and communities, as well as the intersection

of the two, provides a more complete picture of the equality and inequality within the burakumin.

To explore conditions on a micro-level, I will now turn to two different communities, with two different social movement organizations with fundamentally different approaches towards their buraku populations.³ Kuromatsu, with a *Jiyū Dōwa Kai* presence, is a city of 60,000 and the population of its buraku district is approximately 2,000. The second community is the town of Takagawa, population 3,000, roughly half of which are from the buraku district and which has a strong BLL presence.⁴ Though their sizes are different, the differing social movement approaches is what sets them apart from each another, rather than their size. As noted above, there are considerable difficulties in gathering information on buraku districts. The city of Kuromatsu did not provide any data on its buraku district, though I was able to get some basic statistics on the district in Takagawa. According to Takagawa government officials, the number of households breaks down nearly evenly: 788 dwellings in the buraku district, 763 in the non-buraku, with 2.39 and 2.36 people per dwelling, respectively. This ratio for both is lower than the prefectural mean of 2.44 people for buraku districts, and the national mean of 2.99 for buraku districts. The national mean for all is 2.67 per household (Noguchi et al. 1998: 36–37). These lower numbers in Takagawa reflect several broad social changes, including the low birthrate and aging population, and the improvements made in the living conditions for burakumin there, as compared to other parts of the country.

5.1. Kuromatsu

The approach taken in Kuromatsu is shaped by the perspective of the *Jiyū Dōwa Kai*. The silent approach of the *Jiyū Dōwa Kai* is also embraced by the district and the broader community outside the district. Maintaining silence about one's background takes considerable effort, for all members of the community have to be aware of this approach and engage with it. For if one part of the equation, be it movement or community leadership or members, were to make the decision not to engage with silence, the entire culture of silence would collapse. Such an approach over time requires an institutionalized movement that is able to control the dialogue over buraku issues.

From the outside there is very little to mark the area as a buraku district. The only symbolic reminder that differentiates the buraku district, Nakata-chō, from neighboring areas are the flowerpots lining the roads that mark the boundaries of the community. Interestingly, a teacher in the school that serves the buraku district in Kuromatsu com-

mented, "You know, it's really nice that they do that. This is not something you see in any other community around here. They [those in the buraku district] have made a concentrated effort to work together." The flowers, though nice, are a symbolic reminder of the boundaries between the district and the surrounding areas and for the residents who live there.

Once inside the district, we see very little to mark it as dramatically different from other rural areas in Japan. Individual houses, some large, some small, line the roads of the district. Small overgrown parks with rusty equipment also dot the roadside. A community center stands in the center of the district. Neighborhood association community centers are common throughout the country (Bestor 1989), and Nakata-chō is no different in this respect. In addition to the community center, however, are facilities that mark Nakata-chō as slightly different. Nakata-chō has a Board of Education branch office, as well as a preschool and elderly day care center (*Rōjin no ikoi no ie*). While not unique, such facilities are not necessarily common. These were all built with Dōwa funds. The district did, at one point, have a small grocery store, but over roughly the past 10 years, the building has sat empty, its green awning in tatters. The timing of the changes can be traced to two changes, one national the other local. In 2002, the Dōwa laws ended, removing national funding for programs in many buraku districts. In addition, around 2000, a new, large supermarket and shopping center opened up a few kilometers away, drawing many of the local consumers. On the outskirts of the district, however, a number of old, dirt colored, seemingly abandoned one-story block apartments line the street. These buildings, left alone with broken windows, missing doors, and overgrown entryways were, I was told, also built with Dōwa funds, but now sit unused.

As noted above, one way of considering inequality is through issues of marginalization. In Kuromatsu, a community that was geographically and symbolically removed from the rest of the city, leaders attempted to change their social position (though not their geographic) through actions that attempted to minimize the sense of marginalization. One such approach was through a number of community-wide events throughout the year. These localized events include sport competitions, featuring races among community members of all ages, a cleaning campaign, whereby people will gather in small groups and clean out area gutters, pick up trash, cut the grass in the local parks, and other activities that visibly make their community a nicer place to live, and seemingly no different from the rest of the city.

Activities such as these are not limited to Nakata-cho. Other areas in Kuromatsu also engage in such activities, as a part of a broad campaign

known as *machi zukuri* [city revitalization]. *Machi zukuri* is a national movement, under the guidance of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (Sorensen and Funck 2009). In the words of one Kuromatsu city official, *machi zukuri* is about “developing cultural understanding, making communities more attractive and building pride in local communities.” He says, “We want people to be happy about living where they are, seeing that there is something unique or attractive that people can be proud of.” This *machi zukuri* takes place at both the neighborhood and city level. The city of Kuromatsu uses this approach to (re)claim part of its history, to mark it as unique. Indeed, this reclamation of its history plays a large part in how the city of Kuromatsu markets itself as a minor tourist locale.

By using *machi zukuri* as a method for building pride in one’s own community, working through established governmental programs, the residents of Nakata-chō, those involved with the *Jiyū Dōwa Kai* and those who are not, are able to create a sense of worth in being from an area, but without having to openly acknowledge the connection of the district to its being a buraku district.

Community leadership, which includes members of the local *Jiyū Dōwa Kai*, tries to build a group identity. Even without taking an active part in this building of community identity through *machi zukuri*, the *Jiyū Dōwa Kai* is able to reap the benefits. Without specifically engaging with buraku issues, *machi zukuri* in Nakata-chō has the result of minimizing, though not eliminating, the marginalization the burakumin there face.

5.2. Takagawa

While actions have been taken similar to those in Kuromatsu, whereby residents engage in the creation of town-wide activities to diminish a sense of difference, much of the activities in Takagawa focus on placing buraku issues at the center; they are no different from members of the majority society. Reminders of the placement of buraku issues are seen in a variety of areas. At numerous community events, buraku concerns are addressed, even when those issues do not take center stage. For example, during my fieldwork, at the coming of age ceremony, the head of the local chamber of commerce gave a gift to the group of 22 young people in attendance, as did the head of the Buraku Liberation League (BLL) in Takagawa.

Symbols act to remind people about buraku issues and reinforce the connection between the burakumin and non-burakumin in the area as well. It is impossible to enter a public building in Takagawa without being reminded of buraku concerns. From the preschool through the

junior high, the visitor finds something highlighting the centrality of buraku issues: at the junior high school, a buraku proclamation at the entrance; at the elementary school, a stone carving with the final words of the *Suiheisha* Declaration; and at the preschool, framed calligraphy showing the *kanji* for “*kaihō*” [liberation]. Like the elementary school, the community center also features a stone monument with the final words of the *Suiheisha* Declaration, “Let there be warmth in society, let there be light in all people” and above the entrance stands a permanent sign: “This is a liberated town.” The town hall too, has such reminders: a sign over the entrance calls on citizens to “Eliminate buraku discrimination together!”

There are two facilities that were intentionally built in the buraku district to reduce the marginalization of the residents: the community center and the preschool. Prior to the building of the community center in 1978, and the preschool in 1984, there was no reason for any member of the non-buraku side of town to enter the buraku district, while those from the district had to leave in order to go shopping, to the bank, the hospital and the post office. The building of these two facilities helped to reduce the symbolic and literal marginalization faced by the burakumin of Takagawa. These facilities now mean that there is a reason and a space for exchange among all residents of Takagawa. The community center is the location for the town’s cultural festival, a number of health clinics, and an after school child care facility. The preschool is set up as the only one in the town of Takagawa, encouraging an interaction and exchange among all the children of the town, regardless of background. Having these social spaces for interaction encourages social exchange, reducing the inequality of marginalization faced by the burakumin of Takagawa. These are not, however, the only forms of interaction between burakumin and non-burakumin in the town.

Communal events, festivals in particular, are important ways in which members of the community interact. One of the three major festivals held throughout the year is the *Kaihō no Matsuri* or Festival of Liberation. This festival, held over a weekend in the summer, is designed to encourage direct engagement with buraku issues. The festival opens with the reading of the *Suiheisha* Declaration and closes with a reading of the BLL Declaration. In between, dances, songs and speeches all act to reinforce the connection of the burakumin experience in the community, with specific focus on the hardships they have had – and continue – to endure. The festival, at its core, is a festival about buraku issues, yet residents from the whole town, burakumin and non-burakumin alike, attend the festival.

While the community center and the *Kaihō no Matsuri* both encourage interaction with all members of the community, they remain firmly con-

nected to buraku issues. The location of the community center and the markers on the outside of the building reinforce this connection. The *Kaihō no Matsuri*, though an event that uses the language of the BLL, is something that encourages all members of the community to gather together, eat, drink and interact, reinforcing the idea that buraku issues could be engaged with while at the same time highlighting the connection between all in the town.

While there are differences in how buraku issues are approached and engaged in both districts, there remains a notable similarity, for both districts remain buraku districts, and as such, remain socially and symbolically marginalized from the broader community. In Kuromatsu, there is virtually no reason for anybody from outside the district to have to enter, and every reason for residents to leave. There are no stores, no bank branches, and no post offices, not even a small corner store to serve the residents. The social and geographic marginalization acts to further highlight the inequality faced by the burakumin. In Takagawa, there is a similar separation, for the hospital, the elementary and junior high schools, the banks, and stores are all in the non-buraku side of town. There is only one building that was located in the district that acts to serve the residents of the entire town, adults and children, namely the community center. The community center was built in 1978, using Dowa funds, thus placing it within the district. It was, at the time of its building, and remains today, the only setting where all the residents of Takagawa can gather year-round that is located within the district itself. In both Kuromatsu and Takagawa, relative geographic isolation contributes to social marginalization and inequality.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined how burakumin have faced and challenged inequality in three broad areas: social movement actions that were used to bring about government action to reduce structural inequality; the conditions that the burakumin faced when the government conducted its most recent national survey in 1993; and how two communities combat marginalization as a form of inequality.

Social movement actions, such as the Nagahama Textbook Struggle and the response to the "All Romance" incident, were based on the recognition by movement organizations that the government bore a degree of responsibility in creating and maintaining the inequality that was found in Japanese society. While beginning in a buraku area, the Nagahama Textbook Struggle was designed to improve educational access for all, challenging the structural inequalities inherent in a system whereby only those with enough money could purchase new textbooks

every year. Free compulsory education meant that all aspects should be free, including textbooks. Interestingly, the next large action that challenged inequalities centered specifically on buraku concerns. The “All Romance” incident brought about recognition of the role which local, prefectural and national governments had in continuing a pattern of stratification through their (in)action. This action highlighted the effects of marginalization on the burakumin in stark ways.

Large scale social movement actions helped to bring about an awareness of buraku inequalities, and helped lead to the development of the Dōwa laws. These laws were designed to combat structural inequalities and improve living conditions for buraku districts, and according to national-level data, had a large degree of success. Living conditions clearly improved for many burakumin as a result of these policies. However, these numbers do not tell us a complete picture. Many burakumin are still socially isolated from the majority society, either geographically or symbolically. The effects of this marginalization can be seen in the continued gap between burakumin and majority Japanese.

Marginalization is an underlying factor affecting inequality. How communities act to minimize their marginalization is part of how they are working to challenge inequalities they face. For Kuromatsu, this is done through community actions such as *machi zukuri*, demonstrating that the actions that take place in the district are no different from other areas of the city. Treating buraku issues with silence serves, in their eyes, to demonstrate that they are no different from anyone else. In short, removing symbolic differences as best they can will shape an outcome of diminishing inequality. Actions and approaches in Takagawa are also designed to reduce a sense of marginalization. Rather than ignoring buraku issues, however, Takagawa places them at the center of community actions, highlighting the “sameness” of the burakumin and non-burakumin. This approach acts to normalize the buraku experience, making it the same as any other experience.

Considering the connection between marginalization and inequality requires that we consider the effects of marginalization in two interrelated ways: structurally and conceptually. Structurally, being removed from the majority society, either geographically or symbolically, reduces one’s broader social networks, which affect one’s life chances. Reduced social networks act to restrict access to the labor market, to marriage partners, and can reinforce a negative (or positive) collective consciousness. Conceptually, being removed from majority society can also reinforce ideas about the burakumin (or any other marginalized group) by the majority society, leading to continued bias and discrimination in education and in hiring practices.

When we consider issues of burakumin inequality, we should examine national or prefectural data, but it is also necessary to consider other, less apparent forms of inequality. Marginality brings with it a host of social factors that act to reinforce and reproduce inequality. Until these underlying factors that are outcomes of marginalization are considered and remedied, the inequality that the burakumin face will likely continue.

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Notes

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- 1. The brevity of the discussion on the historical categorization is, by no means, to suggest a lack of importance. I leave it to the historians to continue this discussion, a discussion in which many have already engaged (see Hatanaka 2004; Kurokawa 2003; Uesugi 2000; Watanabe 1998; Ooms 1996; Neary 1989; Gluck 1987; Naga-hara 1979).
- 2. The information regarding the postwar movements, unless otherwise noted, comes from *Shinsha buraku mondai jiten* [Concise encyclopedia of buraku issues] (Akisada, Katsura and Marakoshi 2002).
- 3. It is important to note that these are examples of two broad approaches. This is not to suggest that these are the only approaches, nor should this discussion suggest that there are not alternative voices within each community. I am simply presenting these as the dominant voices within each community. The strength of each movement and its respective approach is powerful enough that gaining access or engaging with alternative voices was exceedingly difficult.
- 4. The names of both communities are pseudonyms. Kuromatsu is in the Kinki area, while Takagawa is in Shikoku. Gaining access to buraku communities is dependent on admission. The two communities were selected based on a snowball sample. I do not claim that they are representative of all buraku communities, simply that they demonstrate two differing approaches to buraku issues.

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