MAINSTREAM ATTITUDES TOWARDS *BURAKUJŪMIN* (部落住民): A RANGE OF SOCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC AND HISTORICAL FACTORS CONTINUE TO EXCLUDE THESE DESCENDANTS OF THE TOKUGAWA OUTCASTS

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Japan's history of nationalism and ethnocentrism has nurtured a strong national identity. Many Japanese are still very keen to protect their perceived 'uniqueness', an attitude which includes the continued rejection of the nation's three million[2] *burakujūmin*. Anti-*buraku* prejudice remains emphatically as a psychological remnant of the rigid Tokugawa caste system,[3] although substantial government financial assistance and spectacular improvements to the *buraku* (部落) living environment, most notably in the Kansai region since

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[2] Activist groups claim this number, although the Japanese government officially works on a figure of approximately 1.6 million. (Buraku Kaihō Kenkyushō 1994:2). The discrepancy is a source of unresolved debate which began when the government called for all *buraku* areas which wanted to apply for help under the 1969 Special Measures legislation (SML). For a variety of reasons, not all *buraku* areas applied to become so-called 'liberated improvement areas' (*kaihō buraku chiku*), and since that time the government has not allowed additional *buraku* communities to put themselves forward as such. Furthermore, the government figures only include those people with proven *buraku* ancestry living in *buraku* areas, while the activist groups insist that *all buraku* community residents (including newly arrived, non-*burakujūmin*), plus those *burakujūmin* who have been able to 'pass' into mainstream society, are still at risk from discrimination and must therefore be included in the overall total. Both sides could be equally accused of using those statistics which best suit their own agenda.

[3] De Vos (1967) 272 and De Vos (1992).

the 1970s, exacerbated extant negative attitudes towards the *burakujūmin*.[4] However, anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice is not merely a psychological hangover, nor simply, the 1970s "notion of envy"[5] over *buraku* improvements, for both attitudes also require the necessary historical background and present social climate in order to survive. In other words, continued anti-*buraku* prejudice also reflects social conditioning, in particular how its various guises have left many Japanese people reluctant to accept those perceived as "non-Japanese". Because anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice embraces a combination of history, superstition, religious dogma, social conditioning[6] and modern-day envy and apprehension, finding a solution to the problem is a highly complicated process.[7] I begin this article by briefly explaining the historical background of

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[4] Upham (1993) 329. The *burakujūmin* are still widely referred to as *burakumin*, although the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Institute introduced the new title *burakujūmin* in 1998. During my fieldwork in Buraku X during 2001, most of the *buraku* residents I interviewed avoided both titles, preferring to refer to their *buraku* district as the *chiku* (the neighbourhood) and to themselves as *buraku shusshinsha* (residents of the *buraku*). A number of my interviewees explained that they were comfortable with my usage of *burakumin* or *burakujūmin*, and while they accept (but do not like) the identification of their neighbourhood as a *buraku*, as ethnic Japanese, they object more strongly to being labeled by outsiders as *burakumin* or *burakujūmin*. Government and other official bodies avoid all such terms and refer exclusively to *dōwa* communities and *dōwa* residents. (See McLauchlan 2001 for further details).

[5] See Kitaguchi (1999).

[6] Others, such as Henshall (1999: 53) have described the phenomenon as " social-spiritual" . Buddhism and Shinto were clearly principal factors in creating the spiritual pollution of Japanese outcasts, and even during the 1970s and 1980s some temple graveyards were still identifying *buraku* graves with insignia such as "leather".

[7] There is almost no quantifiable way to establish exact levels of prejudice. Numbers of denunciation sessions by the BKD (Buraku Kaihoo Doomei: also known as the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute or BLHRRI) have dropped sharply since 1922, reflecting a reduction in the numbers of organizations who are prepared to publicly declare their disdain for *buraku* employees, but not necessarily a similar decline in the numbers who still feel the disdain but who practise it in a far more clandestine manner. Indeed, employment statistics (see McLauchlan 1999) suggest that many employment policies have changed very little. Furthermore, while numbers of Japanese who claim to hold no negative feelings towards *buraku* residents have also decreased, the report of some of my fieldwork in this paper, together with one of the article's key conclusions, strongly suggests that much of what might have once been overt discrimination has simply moved to a more socially 'safe' format of covert prejudice. In terms of geography, the problem remains intense in parts of Kansai, the area of my fieldwork and of most of the statistics produced by the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute. Other parts of Japan, notably, Shiga, Hyogo, Hiroshima and Nara also continue to witness serious levels of anti-*buraku* feeling (see McLauchlan 1999). Unfortunately, the only quantifiable level of anti-*buraku* feeling is 11.9%, a nationwide average figure (this issue is explained in detail later in the article). If we decant from the 11.9% those areas of Japan with very few or no *buraku* areas and with correspondingly low levels of *buraku* awareness and/or anti-*buraku* prejudice, we are left with a much higher figure for the Kansai region. While we cannot be so naïve as to

Japan's outcast communities, followed by a matrix of how Japanese ethnocentricity has influenced the way many Japanese feel towards other cultures and themselves. Thereafter, by introducing anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice into this mosaic, I suggest that the wider context of Japanese cultural tradition and social conditioning are irrefutable factors in continuing anti-*buraku* attitudes. I conclude that, in the supportive environment of historical and cultural in-group/out-group conditioning, prejudice remains extant and many Japanese people are still less than honest in answering questions about the *burakujūmin*.

What is the *Buraku* Issue?

"*Burakumin* maggots"
"Die *eta* and *hinin* filth"
"*Burakumin* cause the ICOL germs"
"Drop atomic bombs on *burakumin* neighbourhoods"

These examples of anti-*burakujūmin* graffiti are not from the 1970s or even the 1980s, but are typical of messages scribbled publicly around Japan during the final two or three years of the last millennium,[8] stark evidence that anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice remains extant in mainstream Japanese society. Southern Honshū, in particular the greater Kansai region, contains large numbers of *buraku* communities[9] and continues to witness numerous incidents of anti-*burakujūmin* attitudes and behaviour. More than 300 incidents of specific anti-*burakujūmin* discrimination are officially reported to the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute (BLHRRI) in Osaka City alone each year.[10]

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suggest that anti-*buraku* prejudice has simply continued unabated, nor can we measure to what extent opinions expressed in surveys dealing with sensitive social issues are *honne* (total honesty) or *tatemae* (avoiding the real issue). Also, clearly there are regional and educational differences which have an impact on the way people perceive, and express their opinions on, the issue.

[8] *Buraku Kaihō Shimbun* (March 1997).

[9] Only Okinawa and Hokkaidō have no *buraku* neighbourhoods. Refer to demographic map on introductory pages of Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996).

[10] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1994) 9. During the time of my fieldwork in *Buraku* X, local toilets were attacked by anti-*buraku* graffiti which referred to local *burakujūmin* as *eta* and *takohan* (half an octopus. i.e. four legs, a reference to the historical association with animal slaughter and leather tanning). I also got the impression from one of my interviewees that she regards any incident of anti-*buraku* prejudice (i.e. graffiti) as a personal experience. I do not know if this line of thinking is widespread, but to some extent, at least, it may mean that

The word *buraku* literally means small village,[11] but its pejorative use to describe segregated communities of social outcastes, as well as the term *burakumin* to describe residents of those communities, was arguably a Meiji (1868-1912) phenomenon,[12] and it is therefore inaccurate to talk about *burakumin* of the Tokugawa Period (1600-1868). The title *burakumin* has remained as a euphemistic, prescriptive label and in 1997, the then Buraku Liberation League abandoned the title *burakumin* in favour of *burakujūmin* (部落住民: *buraku* residents) and *buraku shusshinsha* (部落出身者: people of *buraku* origin). The thinking behind this change of nomenclature was to move away from the notion that the *burakujūmin* are inherently non-Japanese and to promote the concept that the *burakujūmin* are only different because social prejudice has forced them to remain in segregated communities.

In most cases, the forerunners of today's *burakujūmin* were the *eta* (穢多 lit. much filth) and *hinin* (非人 lit. non-human)[13] outcast groups of the Tokugawa Period, both ranked below the four levels of the formal and rigidly enforced Tokugawa social stratum (*mibun seido* 身分制度). Members of both outcast groups were directed to live in segregated, socially-despised communities away from the inner city, many of those locations subsequently becoming the *buraku* neighbourhoods which still exist in Japan today. The *hinin* were mainly vagrants, beggars, bamboo workers, entertainers, ex-prisoners, prostitutes etc,[14] despised for their *external* traits and attributes, although many were also forced to seek casual work as farm labourers due to their extreme poverty.[15] *Hinin* were historically regarded as less offensive than *eta*, the latter being spiritually and irretrievably polluted through their enforced engagement in occupations such as execution, burials, leather and butchery. *Hinin* could in fact expunge their lowly status by completing extra tasks of work or through financial penance,[16] although no such flexibility was available to the *internally* polluted *eta*. This debased status of the two groups of outcastes continued after the Meiji Restoration, with the spiritually and internally polluted *eta* retaining their lowly Tokugawa status as modern

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several of the "reported incidents' came from different people in relation to the same incident.

[11] For a detailed explanation of the etymology and development of official and informal nomenclature used to refer to *buraku* areas and residents since 1868, see McLauchlan (2001).

[12] Noguchi (1997) 41. Prior to the Meiji Restoration and the 1871 Emancipation Law, villages of the outcasts were generally referred to simply as *eta machi* (*eta* towns), and their residents as *eta* or *hinin*.

[13] Kitaguchi (1999) 78-82.

[14] Koyama (1992) 158-198.

[15] Kitaguchi (1999) Chapter Five.

[16] The expression *ashi o arau* (足を洗う: lit. to wash one's feet) is the equivalent of the English expression *to turn over a new leaf*, and originated during the Tokugawa Period (1600-1868) when washing one's feet was part of the process whereby *hinin* could expunge their lowly status and return to mainstream society.

Japan's *burakujūmin*. While *hinin* did not fall so immediately into the Meiji category of *burakujūmin*, by and large their earlier impoverished socio-economic circumstances continued.[17]

Discrimination against the former Tokugawa outcasts was legally abolished by the new Meiji government's 1871 Emancipation Edict (*Eta Kaihō Rei*), but only since 1969 has the government injected serious financial assistance into the continuing problems of discrimination and *burakujūmin* socio-economic circumstances via its series of Laws on Special Measures for Dōwa Regions (SML: *Dōwa Taisaku Jigyō Tokubetsu Sōchihō*).[18] Together with Japan's spectacular postwar economic progress,[19] SML funding has helped improve the *burakujūmin's* physical environment and cash-flow significantly, and *buraku* activists openly and frequently acknowledge these improvements. However, separate from the visible improvements to the living conditions within *buraku* neighbourhoods (the 'soft'[20] side of prejudice), surveys and *burakujūmin* activist groups continue to expose significant statistical discrepancies, especially in education, social welfare, mainstream attitudes, employment and marriage (the 'hard' side of prejudice), as well as in many other areas of daily life.[21]

For example, *burakujūmin* adults are twice as likely as mainstream adults to work in the dangerous, insecure and dirty areas of demolition and construction, more than twice as likely to be unemployed, only half as likely to work for the 'better and bigger' companies with 300 or more employees on the payroll,[22] only half as likely to receive promotion, and almost forty per cent less likely to be earning above national average pay rates.[23] Also, *burakujūmin* children are twice as likely to arrive at school hungry, while *burakujūmin* teenagers are twice as likely to drop out of secondary school and

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[17] Watanabe (1993).

[18] First implemented in 1969, the Special Measures legislation (extended several times through to 1997) allocated billions of yen to improving the social and living environment within *buraku* neighbourhoods. In 1997, a further five years extension was approved until 2002. None of the series of Laws on Special Measures has ever ruled that anti-*burakujūmin* discrimination is actually illegal.

[19] McLauchlan (2000) 120-144.

[20] Anti-*burakujūmin* derogation can be generically divided into two categories. The 'soft' side is the tangible dimension of housing, roads, public facilities etc, while the 'hard' side refers to continued social and psychological prejudice, discrimination in association, marriage or employment against people of suspected *burakujūmin* ancestry. Kitaguchi (1999), McLauchlan (1999) and McLauchlan (2000) provide detailed explanations of the 'hard' and 'soft' sides of anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice.

[21] See McLauchlan (2000) 122-140.

[22] Upham (1993:332) suggests that the post-war company was Japan's "primary male group" and potentially a most valuable vehicle of social mobility for *burakujūmin*. However, their exclusion from most of the bigger companies (see McLauchlan 1999 and 2000) precluded them from any such social mobility.

[23] McLauchlan (2000) 122-140.

only half as likely to undertake a tertiary education.[24]   Social welfare rates[25] and government assisted housing levels among *burakujūmin* are consistently more than double mainstream levels, and over one quarter of all *burakujūmin* marriages today are still exclusively *burakujūmin/burakujūmin* unions,[26] a clear reflection of the fact that nationwide, almost 35 per cent of parents openly express their opposition – to some extent at least – to their child's intention to marry a *burakujūmin*.[27]

Today's continued anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice is problematic on a number of levels. Firstly, overwhelming proportions of mainstream Japanese claim that they either have no knowledge of the *burakujūmin*, or that they now hold no negative feelings towards those with *buraku* connections or ancestry.[28]   Secondly, Japanese people's belief in their own special qualities and homogeneity – supported by official denials of the existence of Japanese minority groups[29] – has meant that mainstream society has continued to embrace and rationalize the concept of a separate Japanese 'race' and its attendant in-group/out-group thinking. This style of thinking includes the rejection of the *burakujūmin* because of the predominance among many Japanese to equate ethnicity with race,[30] or in other words, people who do not fit the classic Japanese self-image can be rejected as non-Japanese. Thirdly, given Japan's rapidly decreasing birth-rate, aging population, increasing unemployment in lesser skilled jobs and the unresolved dilemma of illegal foreign workers,[31] unemployed *burakujūmin* should be valued as a necessary source of ethnic Japanese employees. Fourthly, in that Japan's long-standing declarations of *kokusaika* (internationalization) are in part measured against progress in domestic and social policies, the nation's leaders are becoming increasingly nervous about their image abroad. For example, recent

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[24] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1991) 89.

[25] Care is needed when dealing with social welfare rates figures. While many of those *buraku* residents receiving social welfare assistance do so because of impoverished circumstances, there are also very large numbers who receive tax relief and other assistance, simply because of their status and residence. This issue is explained later in this paper. Also see Upham (1980) for more details.

[26] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 137.

[27] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 139. Many of these statistics are national averages which include cities and prefectures where there are almost no *buraku* areas. Individual statistics for Kansai and Hyogo in particular return considerably higher levels of concern.

[28] Almost 88% of mainstream citizens *claim* they would " interact in a friendly manner" (*shitashiku tsukiau*) with *burakujūmin* families in their neighbourhood. (Sōmuchō:1996).

[29] See McLauchlan (2001) 178-201.

[30] Lie (2001) 47.

[31] *The Japan Times* (March 30, 2000:18). In what to many was an almost unimaginable declaration, the Japanese Ministry of Labour announced in 2000 that in the light of Japan's declining birth-rate, it is ready to find new ways to actively encourage foreign workers. This announcement constitutes an almost total about-turn after years of refusing to accommodate foreign worker outside its own narrowly defined "acceptable" categories.

[unsuccessful] initiatives to woo the International Olympic Committee to award the 2008 Olympic Games to Osaka included pleas from that city's authorities for citizens to stamp out discrimination in support of the Olympic bid.[32]   Fifthly, in the political arena, Japan is working hard to convince the world of her suitability for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, yet these claims are often undermined by continuing litigation over Japan's nationalist and militarist past and other issues which activist groups – including the *burakujūmin* – are quick to turn to their own advantage. Finally, *burakujūmin* activists working within international movements continue to further discredit Japan's human rights record, so that domestic fissures and sensitive social issues in Japanese society are now being exposed on global platforms such as the United Nations, the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism,[33] the Internet and the world media in general. Having poured billions of yen[34] into attempting to solve what is undoubtedly one of Japan's least discussed social issues, the government remains vexed that it is still not free of the *buraku* problem. Activists remain scathing over what they see as the government's retro-active/lip-service approach and at entrenched prejudice within Japanese society in general.[35]

In answer to his own question "Are Japanese Racists?", Lie concludes that "passive racists" is the more appropriate expression in that proponents of prejudice are merely embodying what they have seen and what social circumstances have always expected of them.[36] There are two essential social circumstances which must be present in order for prejudice to survive. The first is that the original criteria for ostracizing the out-group must either remain intact and valued, or they must be replaced by other, equally valued criteria, while the second is that the social climate must nurture, or at least accommodate, attitudes of prejudice.   Furthermore, while *burakujūmin* continue to endure the old criticisms of "dirty … dangerous … *eta* … in-bred … unhealthy…",[37] the introduction of enormous levels of government funding to improve *buraku* living conditions via the Special Measures Legislation since 1969 has also made *buraku* communities the targets of the "notion of envy" and claims of reverse discrimination (*gyaku sabestu*).[38] Complaints of reverse discrimination are based on mainstream claims that anti-*buraku* prejudice no longer exists and that the government is simply pandering to the greedy and

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[32] *The Japan Times* (14 November 1998).

[33] *Burakujūmin* leaders were among the founders of this international body which has speaking rights at some United Nations fora.

[34] Between 1969 (first year of the Special Measures legislation) and 1993, for example, the government spent 13.8 trillion yen on the buraku issue. (Sōmuchō, (1995:7).

[35] *nebukai* (deeply rooted = entrenched) is how 14 of my 20 respondents described society's attitude toward *buraku* people.

[36] Lie (2001) 174-175.

[37] See McLauchlan (2000) 120-144.

[38] McLauchlan (2001) 178-201.

overly aggressive *burakujūmin*.[39]   Such claims arose largely because the spectacular improvements to *buraku* housing and communal facilities since the 1970s have been so highly visible, thereby generating increased disdain towards *buraku* residents, especially among poorer Japanese, many of whom were desirous of similar assistance.[40]

Even some *buraku* residents were surprised[41] at the high levels of cash and tax-relief[42] they received under the SML measures. In *buraku* areas identified by the government as "needy", especially those where activist groups such as the then Buraku Liberation League were most active,[43] new housing was established and concentrations of facilities, almost unmatched in other areas, sprang up.[44]   These new facilities and annual cash handouts, regardless of the needs of individual families, resulted in extant anti-*buraku* prejudice based on historic disdain broadening to now also include resentment over the visibly improving *buraku* conditions.[45]   However, *buraku* residents continue to point out that as the facilities were built with public funds, they are therefore public property, and that mainstream Japanese are therefore most welcome to come and take advantage of the facilities themselves. That so few are willing to do so,[46] however, suggests that modern-day anti-*buraku* prejudice is not merely targeting the visible housing improvements as unfair and unequal, but rather, bears witness to the continued existence of the socially transmitted belief that there is something inherently "wrong" with *burakujūmin*, something with which many mainstream Japanese do not wish to associate themselves. In other words, mainstream envy over improved *buraku* facilities does not, on its own, adequately explain continued anti-*buraku*

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[39] See Kitaguchi (1999) Chapter Six.

[40] Upham (1993) 329.

[41] Three of my respondents commented that during the 1980s, they received enough tax relief, rent reduction and cash injection from the government to be able to afford to send their children to private schools and that many others received far more money than they even knew what to do with. Recalling their squalid conditions and what they see as continued discrimination, they felt no qualms about accepting the benefits, but were surprised about the sheer amounts to which they were suddenly entitled.

[42] For details on this issue, see Upham (1980) 49.

[43] Upham (1980) is openly critical of the way in which the BKD took control over the way SML funding was distributed, largely to those who were, what he calls "toeing the BLL [BKD] line". I also found in my interviews that those who made the quickest progress in terms of obtaining new housing, were those who had wholeheartedly joined in the BKD activities in order to achieve their goals.

[44] The *buraku* where I lived during June and July 2001 featured a swimming pool, child care centre, elderly persons' home, library, outpatients' centre, youth facilities centre, human rights centre and so on. The BLHRRI are especially active in east Osaka.

[45] See Kitaguchi (1999) for a useful explanation on how the "notion of envy" and reverse discrimination" work.

[46] In a subsequent article, I intend to explain in detail how I observed the lengths people go to in order to avoid actually setting foot inside the *buraku*.

attitudes.[47]   Similar levels of on-going resentment have never been recorded against residents of government-provided non-*buraku* housing schemes in mainstream areas, and it would also be quite spurious to suggest, for example, that mainstream parents would not want their children to marry into a certain community, simply because the residents there are enjoying publicly-funded improvements in facilities and housing, tax relief and the like.

Resentment over the improvements is undeniable,[48] but it does not explain why some Japanese have terminated existing *buraku* friendships, shifted house or objected to having their child sit next to a *buraku* child at school.[49]   Furthermore, nor does it explain why employers have subscribed so prolifically to the *buraku* address lists when considering prospective employees,[50] nor why property values of houses and land bordering even those *buraku* communities with such improved facilities and of pleasant appearance are so lowly priced and still difficult to sell.[51]   Clearly there is still a strong feeling that there is something "not quite right" about having *buraku* ancestry.   Much of the criticism aimed at the *buraku* residents over their economic and environmental improvements is often nothing more than an attempt to quantify old-fashioned social and psychological prejudice, but in a 20th and 21st century guise which its practitioners feel they can better understand and defend.

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[47] In Buraku X, the only facility which was well patronized by mainstream Japanese living outside of the *buraku* was the pre-school facility.   Built as a uniquely *buraku* facility, the declining birth-rate in Buraku X (and in many other *buraku* communities) left the center in economic difficulty.   In order to remain viable, the center began accepting non-*buraku* children in 1993. Japan's continued emphasis on children's education and the fact that most mainstream neighbourhoods are not equipped with their own pre-school center are sufficiently important in the minds of parents so that almost 50% of the children now attending the Buraku X pre-school are from mainstream areas.   The Old People's Home in Buraku X, where I lodged during my fieldwork, remains exclusively for the use of *buraku* residents.

[48] Upham (1980) gives an excellent account of the funding process and how it generated cries of reverse discrimination but does not move away from the original thesis that prejudice is still driven by historical dogma and social conditioning.

[49] See McLauchlan (1999) and Kitaguchi (1999).

[50] My gatekeepers assured me that they continue to track down these lists and that of the tens of thousands published, many are still in existence.

[51] See Upham (1980:68).   During my own fieldwork, I interviewed a real estate agent in the vicinity of Buraku X who showed me by drawing concentric circles on a map how the prices of houses and land drops significantly in proportion to its proximity to a *buraku* community. This was quite compelling evidence because he invited me to select the residential area for his explanation.   I deliberately chose another part of Osaka away from Buraku X, and to demonstrate his point, the agent simply used an existing of listed properties for sale straight out of his file, without any attempt to select only those dwellings which might support either side of the case.

Although the Special Measures Legislation in 1969 promised legal action to address the "hard" side (i.e. the psychological and social side) of prejudice, no such legislation has ever appeared. In 2001 I identified the Japanese government's "five documents of promise" to the *burakujūmin*,[52] promises which were never fulfilled because the authorities were never seriously committed to either understanding or solving the social and psychological issue of anti-*buraku* prejudice. In spite of continued assurances from the government that Article 14 of the Constitution protects their interests and human rights, this has never been the case and to this day, *buraku* residents do not have legal redress against social prejudice and psychological discrimination. As a result, the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute continues to pursue its own quasi-legal process of denouncing transgressors, a despised and feared process known as *tettei kyjūdan*.[53] The government's strategies, on the other hand, have concentrated solely on physical, material and educational improvements for *buraku* residents over the last three decades, but have included very little serious commitment toward liberating the descendants of the former *eta* and *hinin* and to effect their social assimilation, a strategy which has essentially failed.[54] Ironically, repressive government policies and legislation since 1868 were directly aimed at assimilating the Ainu people, a group who desperately wanted to remain *unassimilated*, yet the *burakujūmin*, the very group in Japan which wanted nothing more than assimilation into mainstream Japanese society have achieved very little other than individual access to facilities, tax relief and improved housing.

The Japanese government's short-sighted policy of a "hand-out" rather than a "hand-up"[55] has meant that, even today, upward social mobility for *burakujūmin* individuals is often only achieved through the process of shifting house and "passing" *incognito* into mainstream society, while as a group, they

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[52] McLauchlan (2001) 178-201.

[53] See McLauchlan (2001) 178-201 for details on how Article 14 of the post-war Constitution came into being and how the denunciation sessions operate. Also see Kitaguchi (1999).

[54] See McLauchlan (2000) 120-144 for current statistics highlighting the differences between *buraku* and mainstream Japanese.

[55] Almost three quarters of the respondents in my field-work indicated that, given the choice, they would not want to live elsewhere, all enjoying the lifestyle, cheap rents etc available in *Buraku X*. Most also indicated the fear of discrimination on the "outside", but were happy to be living where they were because of the economic advantages. This again begs the question as to whether even the activist groups themselves have pursued the best policy in that they have created pockets of welfare-dependent citizens, financially encouraged into staying in the *buraku* area, many of them working for the BLHRRI, rather than seeking non-aligned independence, employment and self-improvement from their own efforts, difficult though that may be. Upham (1980) also makes this point and calls it "toeing the BLL [BKD] line".

remain frustrated by the difficulties they continue to face, most notably in marriage, employment and education. While the government has poured vast sums of money into *buraku* education and housing,[56] they have long since known and admitted that the bigger solution lies within the far more difficult and complex forces of "socially enforced barriers of prejudice and discrimination"[57] and individual personality and psychology.[58]   Post-war Japanese society, although bearing out Morris-Suzuki's model of changing trends within "rapidly industrializing Asian nations,"[59] has retained many of its complex forces of traditional values and social conditioning, and the in-group/out-group thinking which is part of that conditioning. These factors, together with the Japanese preference for in-group/out-group categorization,[60] provide fertile ground for old-fashioned values and prejudices to flourish.[61]

Traditional Values Sustain In-group/out-group Thinking in Japan

A society that displays a "…high degree of emphasis on tradition … a strong sense of ethnocentrism, highly traditional norms of modesty … [and] superstitions…" is most likely to resist social change.[62]   Many Japanese have long embraced an image of their nation as nurturing a plethora of 'unique'

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[56] The SML funding schemes will finally cease in April 2002. The BLHRRI did not oppose this move, and Suehiro Kitaguchi (Secretary general of the BLHRRI) assured me that there are sufficient alternative strategies in place to ensure that educational and social programmes can continue.

[57] De Vos and Wagatsuma (1967) 305.

[58] Allport (1958) 39. In its 1969 Deliberative Council Report, the Japanese government described anti-*buraku* prejudice as the nation's "most serious social problem" and promised specific legislation to combat it. In 1976, the Ministry of Justice defended its repeated refusal to introduce any such specific legislation by stating that "*Sabetsu wa hito no kokoro no fukai mondai de, hanzai to shite keibatsu de torishimaru to, kaette sabetsu wo naikō saseru …*" ("Prejudice is a problem entrenched in the minds of individuals. If we were to punish incidents of prejudice as crimes in the hope of resolving the issue, the effect would be quite the opposite and would likely even exacerbate the problem") *Kurushimi Kienu Shusshoku, Kekkon*, in *Asahi Shimbun*, 10 December 1976. In 1986, the same statement was again used to explain the government's refusal to entertain the BKD's own Fundamental Law on Buraku Liberation.

[59] Morris-Suzuki (1993) 760.

[60] One very tangible example of this is the difficulty I and many others constantly have in convincing Japanese acquaintances who are visiting my country that it may not be totally appropriate for them to describe us as *gaijin* (foreigners). In Japan, the term is quite understandable, but its continued use to describe native peoples in their own countries, rather than accepting that they themselves are the *gaijin* once outside Japan, reminds us of just how strong the image of 'Japanese' and 'non-Japanese' still is.

[61] Upham (1993) 325.

[62] Vago (1990) 275.

Japanese attitudes and attributes which recur in endless, historical cycles,[63] and given this background, one of the attitudes most likely to remain impermeable to the passage of time is in-group/out-group differentiation and its tangible connection to the Japanese people's long-standing preoccupation with who they are, and how they feel about others.[64]

While prejudice is ultimately an individual choice,[65] its ability to remain effective lies in the cohesive strength generated by clusters of similarly-minded people,[66] a phenomenon which makes prejudice an influential social attitude. Those seeking to defend their beliefs become increasingly resentful as the forces of change impinge upon "traditional values."[67] As the existing ideals and the new values jostle to become the *force majeure*, one side trying to effect acceptance of its innovation, the other determined to resist any such ideological incursion, the original ethos, regardless of how rational its ideology may or may not be, becomes increasingly valued. Its adherents seek support from others around them equally willing to defend the same concepts, especially as the new ideology now appears to challenge the social *status* of those who cherish the original mainstream beliefs.[68] In Japan, abandoning one's *uchi* (in-group) ideals to accommodate *soto* (out-group) who have historically never measured up is a daunting prospect. Therefore, traditional norms, beliefs, values and prejudices are likely to change only under utmost pressure,[69] and while Japanese attitudes and practices in some areas have changed beyond recognition, prejudice towards those historically rejected as *soto* has been much slower to abate.

A Japanese View of Prejudice

The Japanese attitude toward outsiders has remained conservative. In spite of increasingly frequent reports of deliberate anti-foreigner behaviour such as the well-documented Ana Bortz incident[70] and the blanket exclusion of foreigners at some Hokkaidō spa resorts,[71] less than a third of all Japanese feel that their

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[63] Kosaku (1992) 25. See also Dale (1985).
[64] Sugimoto (1997) 173.
[65] Brown (1995) 9-11.
[66] Brown (1995) 59.
[67] Defleur et al (1972) 203-5.
[68] Hamaguchi (1985) 289-321.
[69] Defleur (1972) 183.
[70] In 1999, Brazilian born Ana Bortz was refused permission to browse in a jewellery shop in Hamamatsu, Tokyo. Ms Bortz refused to leave the store and the Police were called. The store displayed distinctive posters banning all Brazilians, and the owner was subsequently convicted on several accounts.
[71] *The Japan Times* (24 June 2000) 3.

society infringes upon human rights.[72]   Almost 40 per cent of Japanese polled in Otaru threatened to boycott public bathhouses if foreigners were allowed entry,[73] and almost 70 per cent of mainstream Japanese do not regard a landlord's refusal to rent an apartment to a foreigner as discriminatory.[74]   In other words, very considerable percentages of Japanese people still believe that selecting customers on the basis of nationality is fair and equitable fifty years after the new Constitution and three years after Japan ratified the International Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.   In the only democracy in the world where foreigners with permanent residence do not enjoy the right to vote, the conservative element will feel encouraged by the strong opposition voiced by several major political parties to a proposed bill to combat anti-foreigner discrimination[75] and by the Kanagawa Police urging Japanese residents to ring the police emergency number if they heard groups of people "talking in Chinese".[76]   In parts of Ibaraki and Saitama Prefecture, security companies have distributed promotional leaflets which clearly identify Chinese gangs as responsible for burglaries and dishonesty. Similar anti-Asian sentiment was evident in a 2001 government poll when over 90 per cent of Japanese citizens wanted illegal foreign workers – mostly Korean, Taiwanese or Chinese – deported at once or repatriated.[77]

Physiologically-similar Asians are largely indiscernible in Japanese society and having breached the *soto* perimeter as 'marginals' rather than as ordinary outsiders, they are perilously close to how mainstream Japanese see themselves.   The threat they pose to the long-cherished ideals of Japanese homogeneity and uniqueness therefore becomes intolerable[78] and mainstream Japanese society's response to this threat emerges as "numerous forms of discrimination" against the marginal outsiders.[79]   Consequently, negative attitudes by Japanese towards neighbouring Asian countries have remained remarkably static, some levels of disdain having barely eased since the 1970s. Claims that this 'attitudinal inertia' reflects insufficient efforts by the Japanese government to promote its agenda of *kokusaika* (internationalization)[80] are matched by other commentators who see Japan's continued "unwillingness to integrate Asians … [and] to assume a more active role in the international community…" as stemming from Tokugawa *sakokuka* (isolationism) and the

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[72] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 147.
[73] *The Japan Times* (24 June 2000) 3.
[74] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 145.
[75] *The Japan Times* (24 June 2000) 3.
[76] This plan was quickly scrapped but 1000s of posters had been printed and some had already been posted around parts of the city.
[77] *The Japan Times,* (4 February 2001) 1.
[78] Ohnuki-Tierney (1987)146.
[79] Itoh (1998) 44.
[80] Itoh (1998) 44-45.

notion of *shimagunikonjo* (island nation's inferiority complex).[81] Whatever the reason, many Japanese people dislike their physically and culturally 'similar' Asian neighbours more than they dislike other nationalities. The continued protection of traditional Japanese values – including out-group prejudices – requires vigilant detection of potential intruders, not an easy task when the intruders are physiologically similar Asians or Japan's own ethnically identical *burakujūmin*.

Although 55.6 per cent[82] of all Japanese would resist (*teikō o kanjiru*) leasing a room in their own home to a Japanese-speaking Asian foreigner, only 45.9 per cent would be equally unwilling to lease the room to a Japanese-speaking Westerner.[83] Moreover, while those who are *unwilling* to rent a room to an Asian tenant represent one aspect of anti-Asian feelings, Japan's greater rejection of Asian foreigners is further reinforced by the numbers who would *not* actively "oppose" (*teikō o kanjinai*) renting the same room. Thirty-three per cent would not oppose renting a room in their home to an Asian lodger, but 42.8 per cent would not actively oppose renting it to a Japanese speaking Westerner.[84] This approximately 10 per cent differential in both scenarios is reminiscent of the 11.9 per cent of mainstream Japanese[85] who are explicitly unwilling to interact with *burakujūmin*, and while we can not conclude that they represent the same group, there is likely to be some measure of overlap between the two.

Numbers of Japanese who find China a "very friendly" nation have almost halved over the last fifteen years, while those who regard China as "not friendly at all" have more than doubled during the same period. Moreover, notwithstanding a very small increase of 1.4 per cent in numbers of Japanese who find South Korea a "very friendly" nation, those who find it "not friendly at all" have increased by almost 25 per cent since the 1980s.[86] We know that non-aggressive, stable interaction with out-groups can help break down psychological barriers,[87] so given the legacy of conflict between Japan, China and Korea, plus the fact that 62 per cent of all Japanese have never

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[81] Itoh (1998) 36-44.

[82] This figure is derived from the averages of separate statistics for China/Korea and South East Asia. (NHK: 1998, 32).

[83] NHK (1998) 32.

[84] NHK (1998) 32.

[85] There is no recent statistic as specific as "Do you like the *burakujūmin*?" The 11.9% figure comes from the BLHRRI's 1996 publication (refer reference list) based on the Government's own research. The figure emerges from respondent show answered *No* to the question "Would you continue an existing relationship if you discovered his/her *buraku* ancestry?" For the purposes of my research, I have taken the 11.9% figure as the closest available to representing anti-*burakujūmin* feelings.

[86] Seron Chōsa Gakō (Prime Minister's Office Public Opinion Poll) Vol 28, No 4 April 1996 p5-6.

[87] Stephen (1978) 795-804.

experienced personal contact with a foreigner and that over 12 per cent have only ever "exchanged greetings" with foreigners,[88] it is perhaps not surprising that many Japanese remain trapped between the "contradictory forces of narrow ethnocentrism and open internationalization".[89]

Thoroughly western America, on the other hand, is a far less threatening prospect to Japan's homogeneous ideals, with almost three quarters of Japanese people regarding America as "very friendly", a level of affirmation which has remained constantly positive since the early 1980s.[90] Not only does the media fuel Japan's "craze for Western things",[91] but Americans are a much more easily identifiable, non-threatening, geographically and ethnically discrete concept. In fact, the very obvious physical differences between Japanese and Caucasian people may even provide further, very welcome confirmation of the Japanese self, for in spite of wartime memories, re-surfacing trade friction and increasing opposition to America's military presence in Japan,[92] feelings towards Americans remain generally positive. This specific affection for America may actually be the antithesis of Japan's so-called Asian complex, for when listing foreign countries they most admire, the Japanese rank six Western nations ahead of seventh ranked China, with Korea not even mentioned in the top ten.[93]

Clearly, Japanese people still see themselves as separate from their Asian neighbours, whereas the more identifiable appearance of western nationalities are not perceived as such a threat to the Japanese national identity. As will be explained later, regarding today's *buraku* residents as non-Japanese foreigners is also justification for maintaining anti-*buraku* attitudes.

The Japanese Self-Image

The national self-confidence borne of nationalistic or ethnocentric ideals – and which frequently accompanies a nation's superlative economic performance – often generates resurgent levels of nationalism and an "inflated sense of

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[88] NHK (1998) 32.

[89] Sugimoto (1997) 170.

[90] NHK (1998) Appendix 31-32.

[91] Hane (1992) 408.

[92] Most opposition to USA military presence occurs in Okinawa, home to most of Japan's military presence in Japan. In 2000, and already in 2001, Japanese authorities are under pressure over serious assault charges and the molestation of a 14 year old girl, all incidents allegedly involving American servicemen. Many aspects of Japan's long history of homogeneity and in-group/out-group prejudices are equally applicable to mainstream/Okinawa relationships, so however serious the incidents against Okinawa residents, they are unlikely to engender interest or sympathy among mainstream Japanese.

[93] NHK (1998) Appendix 31.

chosen-ness".[94]   Japan's post-war meteoric rise is a well-documented phenomenon and we might, therefore, anticipate no small measure of national self-confidence and of ethnocentric-driven superiority over those on the outside (*soto*). We might also expect that Japanese people will not only feel diffident towards any perceived external threat from outsiders, but that they might also feel excessively good about themselves and their nation. And they do.[95]

Almost 96 per cent of all Japanese are 'very pleased to be Japanese', a figure which has remained consistently high since the early 1970s and which eclipses any other national group included in similar surveys.[96]   Those who feel that Japanese people have 'superior qualities' make up 57.1 per cent, a small decrease (3%) from the 1970s rate,[97] while those who believe that Japan is a 'great country' (*sugureta kuni*), stand at a fraction under 50 per cent, a figure which has continued to increase by small amounts since the 1970s.[98] Furthermore, over 90 per cent of all Japanese regard themselves as 'middle class'[99] and almost three quarters are fond enough of their country to wish to "be of some use" to the nation, a rate which places them fourth among twelve countries surveyed.[100]   Overall Japan is consistently well above the half-way mark in all available international comparisons of national pride and affection.[101]

In further keeping with Vago's model of social change, many Japanese have retained their fondness for traditional beliefs and for a charismatic leader. For example, over thirty per cent of Japanese would still avoid marriage during *hinoe uma*[102] and although numbers who revere (*sonkei*) the Emperor have dropped – especially since the death of Emperor Hirohito in 1989 – the

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[94] Hane (1992) 411.

[95] It may be that the Diet's 1999 decision to officially recognize the *Hinomaru* as the national flag and *Kimigayo* as the national anthem is part of this rekindling of the national spirit. In spite of both having a very direct WWII association, the Ministry of Education now reports huge increases right across Japan in the numbers of schools using the flag and the anthem, most prefectures well above 80% and many at 100% *(Japan Times* 1 June 2000, page 3). This is the very issue which led to the suicide of a Hiroshima school principal in 1999.

[96] NHK (1998) 25.

[97] NHK (1998) 25.

[98] NHK (1998) 25. Japan's economic progress is a likely major factor here. Repeated exposure to media reports of economic growth, foreign experts visiting to learn new techniques, and *Nihonjinron* literature extolling the virtues of Japan's growth, for example, are likely catalysts here.

[99] National Committee for Research on Social Stratification and Mobility, cited in Fukutake (1989) 156.

[100] NHK (1998) 114.

[101] NHK (1998)111-112.

[102] NHK (1998). (Note: The year of the horse: according to tradition, women born during this year were supposed go mad and eat their husbands).

decline has not translated into an increase in *negative* feeling towards Japan's Imperial Family, but into a very significant increase in those who feel no less than 'fondly' (*kōkan*) towards the Emperor. Numbers who actually 'oppose' (*hantai*) the Emperor actually *decreased* from 2.2 per cent in 1973 to 1.5 per cent in 1995,[103] suggesting a minimum benchmark of loyalty towards the traditional head of state, with the overwhelming majority still maintaining their support above that level.

In a society of traditional beliefs and strong in-group/out-group attitudes, De Vos warns that in its determination to exclude outsiders, marriage is perhaps *the* key area where prejudice will most likely be expressed.[104] Selecting a marriage partner of similar social background has historically been an "entrenched pattern" in Japan,[105] and in keeping with tradition and De Vos's prediction, only slightly more than half the population (53.5 per cent) think it is no longer reasonable to consider a prospective marriage partner's background, lineage or social standing. Furthermore, only 11.2 per cent state categorically that marriage partner selection is exclusively the domain of the two people concerned, the latter statistic having increased by only 1 per cent since the 1980s.[106] These conservative out-group attitudes are clearly reflected in *burakujūmin* marriage statistics as well, an issue which will be covered later.

So while many Japanese people admire and want to visit America and Europe, they are much less affirming towards their geographically and physically similar Asian neighbours. Moreover, in spite of the Japanese government's continued enthusiasm for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, most Japanese people remain reluctant over the suggestion that Japan should adopt a more global role in areas such as overseas peace-keeping etc.[107] They also remain confused on such issues as who they are and how they perceive others,[108] and further in keeping with Vago's model of social change in a strongly ethnocentric society, most remain committed to themselves, their history and culture. Such adherence to one's self-image is matched only by a determination to exclude others who are perceived as different.

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[103] NHK (1998) 26.

[104] De Vos (1992) 159

[105] Sugimoto (1997) 47.

[106] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 143. In the decision of a marriage partner, it should be noted however, that over 80% agreed that 'by and large' it was the business of the two partners concerned.

[107] Seron Chōsa Gaikō (Prime Minister's Office Public Opinion Poll. Vol 28, No 4 (April 1996) 5-6.

[108] Upham (1987) 84.

Burakujūmin as Non-Japanese Marginals Rather than Outsiders

One logical extension of a nation's self-awarded superiority complex is the perception that all out-groups are "objects of loathing … strangeness, evil and even danger."[109] In Japan, this includes foreigners and the *burakujūmin*, with only 36.1 per cent of Japanese concerned about *burakujūmin* rights[110] (see Fig 2). These low levels of concern see the *burakujūmin* confirmed in their traditional 'out-group' category along with Japan's Asian residents and neighbours. As ethnic Japanese, the *burakujūmin* are actually 'closer' than non-Japanese Asian marginals, and as a further 'threat' to mainstream self-image and ideals, they also receive high levels of tax relief and social welfare, have a higher per centage of home ownership than mainstream Japanese,[111] and enjoy exclusive access to funding via the government's Special Measures Legislation.[112] It is therefore not surprising that some elements in mainstream society are fiercely protective of the gap between themselves and the *burakujūmin* and have expressed similar levels of disdain towards them as they have towards Chinese and Koreans, especially those who speak natural Japanese and further blur the line between foreigner and marginal.

As part of their justification for continued derogation of the *burakujūmin*, one of the popular beliefs of many Japanese is that *buraku* residents are racially different,[113] and although the BLHRRI has worked hard to eradicate the racial theory from popular acceptance,[114] mainstream support for the notion has actually *increased* over the last twenty years.[115] The

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[109] Vander Zanden (1996) 212.

[110] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 149.

[111] This may appear contradictory, but the higher ownership rates among *burakujūmin* reflects the lower value of property within *buraku* areas, and the reduced interest rates on loans for such purchases.

[112] McLauchlan (1999) 1-39.

[113] See Kitaguchi (1999) 78-97 for a useful explanation of this debate.

[114] This is largely why the BLHRRI adopted the name change of *burakujūmin* (*buraku* resident) in 1997. The aim of the name change was to portray *burakujūmin* status as the result of residence in a certain neighbourhood, rather than as a separate group of people who congregate in a certain neighbourhood because of their origins.

[115] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 163. In the government's 1995 publication, the average *buraku* community contained around 50% of "original" *buraku* people. In Buraku X, the proportion of Japanese *burakujūmin* to foreign residents was about the same. As increasing numbers of Korean and Chinese families take up residence in *buraku* communities because of the cheaper accommodation and the ability to remain "hidden" in areas where mainstream are loathe to enter, their presence has had the effect of intensifying the "foreign" perception of *buraku* areas. So we now have two "foreigner" justifications for *buraku* disdain. The first is the traditional belief that the *buraku* people themselves are non-Japanese and therefore rejected as "marginals". The second justification is that because there are now many foreigners in the *buraku* areas, extant nationalistic or ethnocentric ideology, which may or

combined result of those who support the racial origins theory (that the *burakujūmin* are different by 'race') and of those who subscribe to the 'historical employment theory' (that *burakujūmin* are polluted because of their historical engagement in meat and leather) is that overall, almost one fifth of Japan's population[116] currently believe that there is something genetically or incorrigibly unacceptable about the *burakujūmin*.

To further ensure that a barrier is maintained so that *burakujūmin* remain as non-Japanese outsiders along with other marginal foreigners, many Japanese use the issue of separate *buraku* neighbourhoods to justify their prejudice. *Buraku* communities are a most complicated issue, with mainstream detractors frequently targeting them as evidence of the *burakujūmin*'s own understanding and acceptance of their 'non-Japanese' status, and as the self-generating, self-perpetuating *cause* of anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice.[117] *Burakujūmin* refute this assertion, arguing that political opportunism and social prejudice during the Tokugawa Period forced them into their enclaves and that the same political inactivity and mainstream prejudice which confine them there today.[118] We know that prejudice thrives where the visible profile of a derogated out-group helps maintain the group's presence in mainstream eyes,[119] and this matrix is no less applicable to many *buraku* communities today where either low-decile socio-economic conditions, government-funded housing programmes or high-profile propaganda[120] can be regarded as provocative. Both phenomena provide ready sources of burakujūmin' identification' and therefore further justification for excluding the residents as *soto*. So like the geographical proximity of Japan's Asian neighbours, *buraku* communities are a source of serious angst, with 37 per

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may not have also targeted original *burakujūmin*, at least targets the foreign element. Each adds perceived credibility to the other.

[116] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 163.

[117] See Kitaguchi (1997) Chapter 4.

[118] Kitaguchi (1999) 73-77.

[119] Simpson and Yinger (1954) 128.

[120] While I understand the cyclic nature of prejudice, I would suggest that the BLHHRI in Osaka is itself guilty of maintaining a deliberately provocative profile in some of its *buraku* areas. In *Buraku X*, literally every fence, wall, sign-post and notice-board was adorned with placards and banners denouncing prejudice, demanding justice from perpetrators and berating the government for its lack of action against social/psychological prejudice. I understand the point they are trying to make, but if outsiders simply avoid entering the community, or refuse to even think about the wider issue through fear of reaction by activists and their activities, one can't help but wonder if the banners etc might not be counter-productive. If the banners were removed, the public could move freely through the *buraku* without even knowing that they were physically in a *buraku* area at all. Allport explains how increased contact with the despised group quickly helps to break down the barriers, so the end result of such increased movement through the *buraku* by mainstream Japanese could well be the realization that there was nothing "dirty … dangerous … foreign... etc" about the community. However, the BLHHRI is totally opposed to this suggestion.

cent of all Japanese believing that the segregated *buraku* communities should be dismantled and that the *burakujūmin* should live elsewhere.[121]

Japan's current economic woes are inadvertently fuelling the racially different argument, for while many original *burakujūmin* have been able to shift away from their outcast communities in the past,[122] they have been replaced by poor non-*burakujūmin* residents, many of whom are Asian immigrant workers. The increasing presence of these non-Japanese Asian cultures in the *buraku* provides valuable linking 'evidence' for those seeking to perpetuate the theory that *burakujūmin* are non-Japanese.[123] Furthermore, apart from residing in their separate communities, many *burakujūmin* also work there doing low-paid, piecemeal work, subcontracted as part of Japan's pyramid employment system. More than 38 per cent of mainstream Japanese believe that *burakujūmin* must seek employment away from their communities and work in less traditional tasks.[124] However, given the huge difficulties faced by *burakujūmin* who do seek work outside of their communities,[125] this is a cynical statement indeed and represents an attitude of prejudice rather than a genuine attempt to offer solutions.

The overly simplistic racial, residential and employment solutions are more a reflection of the well-documented social conditioning among Japanese by which they tend to blame victims for their own misfortunes, part of a Japanese paradigm that outsiders and losers "have been given an equitable opportunity but simply could not make it".[126] Such accusations are aimed at deflecting the debate by insisting that prejudice is a uniquely *burakujūmin* problem by dint of origin which *burakujūmin* themselves are in control of, and which *burakujūmin* alone can solve. The approach ignores the failure of earlier government attempts to dismantle *buraku* communities,[127] the psychological difficulties of *burakujūmin* who have 'passed' or worked in mainstream society, graffiti campaigns, and the irrefutable statistical discrepancies in almost every area of *buraku* life.[128] It also ignores the dogged determination with which employers and parents continue to use the illegal *buraku* address lists (*buraku chimei sōkan*) in pre-employment and pre-marital

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[121] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 169.

[122] This process is referred to as 'passing'. It involves shifting far enough away from the *buraku* so that nobody knows one's background, and not revealing any aspect of the past to anybody. Obviously, there are no statistics for numbers who have successfully 'passed'.

[123] In Buraku X, almost 50% of the residents are Korean or Chinese. They are not *burakujūmin* but are immediately regarded as such from the outside.

[124] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 169. Clear (1991) provides good evidence of the greatly disproportionate numbers of *burakujūmin* (men and women) who are dependent on piecemeal work which they carry out within their own residential communities.

[125] McLauchlan (2000) 122-140.

[126] Sugimoto (1997) 255-256.

[127] See Kitaguchi (1999) Chapter Four.

[128] See McLauchlan (2000) and (1999).

checks for *burakujūmin* ancestry.[129] Insisting that *burakujūmin* are ethnically or genetically different or different through inherited pollution mystifies the issue and sustains a key argument for retaining the *burakujūmin* as *soto*. In other words, when rationalizing one's own anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice, for as long as the physical entity of *buraku* neighbourhoods and the image of residents as "non-Japanese" remain, it is easier to reconstruct the mental image of a *buraku* community as a place which embodies all that one despises and fears about outsiders.

Mainstream ostracism of the *burakujūmin* intensifies even further on the far more intimate plane of personal, physical or emotional contact with the group, with 11.9 per cent of Japanese adults willing to terminate an existing, harmonious relationship and avoid having anything further to do with (*dekiru dake sakeru*) a friend or neighbour whose *burakujūmin* ancestry had subsequently become revealed.[130] This level of disdain has declined by only 4.0 per cent since 1985, and because the willingness to terminate an existing harmonious relationship reflects a more intensive level of prejudice than simply an unwillingness to initiate such a friendship in the first place, is a significant statistic. On the other hand, numbers who claim they would continue to interact favourably with neighbours whom they subsequently discover to be *burakujūmin*[131] have also increased since the 1980s, although again, only by around 5 per cent to 87.8 per cent. In Nagoya, however, only 68.0 per cent would willingly continue the relationship, the lowest rate from among all the areas surveyed.[132] The most extreme, negative responses to continued interaction with *burakujūmin* locals ("I would reject them", "I would shift house" or "I would insist they leave the area") are very small percentages (0.6%), but have barely changed since 1985.[133]

While not originally intended as part of my fieldwork plans, I tried to engage mainstream residents, whose properties bordered on *Buraku X*, in conversation about my research. Overall I approached thirty-two locals as they cleaned their cars, watered their pot plants, watched their children play etc. All approaches were informal and on each occasion my approach was warmly welcomed, usually beginning with a brief chat about New Zealand, sheep, the All Blacks, the hot Osaka summer and the like, but once I introduced the nature of my research, the conversations stopped. What is

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[129] See McLauchlan (2001) and Kitaguchi (1999) for details on the Buraku Address Lists.

[130] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 171.

[131] The thrust of this question specifically targets existing friendly interaction with local people whom one subsequently discovers are *burakujūmin* (shitashiku tsukiatte irus tonari kinjo no hito ga buraku shusshin to wakatta toki…). It does not apply to willingly engaging in new friendships etc with someone whose *buraku* background is already known.

[132] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 171. The converse of this statistic is interesting. 32% of all adults in Nagoya would refuse any further interaction with existing friends whom they subsequently discovered were *burakujūmin*.

[133] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 171.

interesting here is that while nobody actually made derogatory remarks about the *buraku*,[134] at no stage did anybody make any comment which was remotely positive about my research. In other words, they made purely neutral responses such as "That's interesting"[135], "Oh are you?", "I don't know anything about it"[136] and while we can say on the one hand that this might reflect that they did not feel negatively disposed towards their neighbours in the *buraku*, simple discourse analysis more strongly suggests that the absence of affirmative responses indicates that they were in fact negatively inclined. If these people *did* feel supportive, they would have nothing to lose by saying so, but the open expression of anti-*buraku* sentiment, especially for those living right on the 'border' is a risky business and suggests that their neutral responses were far more likely to reflect a negative, rather than an affirmative, attitude.[137] Figure 1 summarizes those responses.

Figure 1

**Responses from Mainstream Neighbours
of *Buraku X* regarding my Research**

Locals Approached	Supportive response	Negative response	Neutral response
2 in chemist shop	nil	nil	2
5 in bathhouses	nil	nil	5
24 in the street	nil	nil	24
Total=31	nil	nil	31

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[134] See McLauchlan (2001) for possible reasons for the reluctance to comment negatively on the issue.

[135] The Japanese expression "*omoshiroi desu nee*" has a literal meaning of "that's interesting". However it also frequently appears as part of the Japanese practice of deliberately ambiguous euphemistic language, and just as often means "I don't like that". I strongly suspect the latter meaning here.

[136] I cannot accept this comment at face value. These were people whose homes were less than two meters away from *Buraku X*, and whose windows directly faced large, bright activist banners. It is simply not plausible that they "didn't know anything about it", so again, the response was more likely one of reluctance to make negative comment than of genuine ignorance.

[137] We cannot ignore the Japanese inclination to comment on sensitive issues in a neutral manner, nor their reluctance to discuss domestic fissures, especially with outsiders. However, there was no risk to any of those neighbouring residents I spoke to if they had simply said "good luck" or "is that still a problem?" or "I hope you enjoy your research" or similar.

Enforced endogamy as a means of protecting one's own genetic purity is a key strategy for the continued separation of outcast groups and many mainstream Japanese remain particularly uncomfortable about inter-marriage with *burakujūmin*. Only 19.1 per cent of all Japanese would be willing to blatantly disregard parental opposition outright and marry into a *burakujūmin* family, a figure which has only increased by 4.8 per cent since the early 1980s.[138] A similar level of increase is also noted among those who would first try to reason with their parents but who would in any case marry their chosen partner, that category now accounting for 62.2 per cent. However, while decreases of around 5 per cent since 1985 are noted among those who would accede to parental objections and abandon their *burakujūmin* marriage plans, as well as among those who simply would not marry a *burakujūmin* under any circumstances, both categories together still represent just a fraction under 19 per cent. This is a very similar statistic to the 19.1 per cent at the other end of the marriage-partner selection spectrum who are adamant that they will marry absolutely according to their own choice.[139]

From the parents' perspective, numbers of those who would respect their children's decision to marry according to individual choice increased significantly from 34.2 per cent in 1983 to 45.7 per cent in 1995. A further 41.0 per cent would 'simply have to accept it' (*yamu wo enai*) if their child was determined to marry a *burakujūmin*,[140] while 7.7 per cent would not approve if other family members had reservations and 5.0 per cent would absolutely refuse to approve the marriage at all (*zettai ni mitomenai*). While numbers of openly approving parents have increased, those levels of increase amount to only roughly one per centage point per year. Furthermore, most of those increases come from those who ten years ago reacted to the proposed marriage as "I would simply have to accept it", with far fewer respondents moving from open hostility to willing approval. The result is that in spite of 11.9 per cent of mainstream Japanese openly admitting to anti-*burakujūmin* attitudes, in excess of 50 per cent actually harbour sufficient prejudice which manifests itself in varying levels of angst regarding their children's decision to choose a *burakujūmin* marriage partner. Of perhaps an even more serious note is that in at least nine cities and prefectures, numbers of parents openly hostile towards a mixed marriage are only marginally above 30 per cent,[141] or in other words, almost one third of parents in most parts of Japan where there is a *buraku* profile, would actively oppose having a *burakujūmin* son-in-law or

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[138] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 143.
[139] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 171.
[140] It should be noted that this Japanese expression does not express a clear and willing approval, but is far more hesitant and means something more like "I might not like it, but well, there's nothing I can do about it". In any case, the expression does include some generic level of reluctance or concern about accepting the decision.
[141] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 171.

daughter-in-law. It is important to note that these statistics apply only to those marriages which *did* eventuate, and while no data is available, we know that many, many others did not eventuate because of family opposition.[142]

What appears to be increasing liberalization among Japanese youth in many areas needs a word of caution, for the more than 80 per cent of those who indicate some level of willingness to marry, or the acceptability of marrying a *burakujūmin*, need to be placed in the context of the larger picture of *burakujūmin* marriage circumstances. Even among Japan's two youngest 'marriage age' groups (25-29 years and 30-34 years of age), over 34 per cent of *burakujūmin* marriages are still celebrated today as exclusively *burakujūmin/burakujūmin* relationships.[143] Mainstream families are far more likely to disapprove than *burakujūmin* families of a mixed marriage,[144] and this high rate of exclusively *burakujūmin/burakujūmin* relationships clearly reflects the pressures of external prejudice forcing out-group members to 'comply' by seeking the relative psychological security of marriage partners from their own background.

Distancing oneself from contentious debate altogether has long been one of the mainstream approaches towards dealing with difficult social issues in Japan. Not only have overall numbers of those who wish to see a positive solution to the *buraku* issue increased by only 0.7 per cent since the early 1980s, but they still account for substantially less than half the population (43.8 per cent).[145] On the other hand, numbers who "don't even think about *buraku* issues" *have* increased and account for almost 20 per cent, while those who simply see the problem as none of their business, although a very small per centage, have also remained unchanged. Furthermore, those who see the issue as being a matter for somebody else to solve have increased from 11.3 per cent to 14.3 per cent since 1983. So overall, more people either do not care about anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice or see the issue as someone else's problem (combined total of 54.4 per cent), than actually wish to see the issue resolved.[146] Although non-aggressive by its passive expression, a non-involvement approach to the *buraku* problem must be regarded as nothing less than a statement of compliance and/or approval.

Openly expressing such extreme attitudes as "I would avoid or reject them" etc may cause serious conflict with the innermost desire to appear outwardly acceptable, and the reported almost twelve per cent who make up

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[142] Sixteen of the twenty residents of Buraku X whom I interviewed claimed personal experience of marriage opposition. While very few of them were under 30 years of age, the older interviewees reported recent mainstream opposition to their own child's marriage partner, or claimed to know that a background check had been carried out, or claimed to know a *buraku* friend whose child's marriage had been opposed.

[143] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 137.

[144] McLauchlan (2000) 120-144.

[145] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 167.

[146] Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) 167.

this extreme group are therefore likely to include some element of 'under-reporting',[147] further accentuated by the Japanese *honne/tatamae* approach towards expressing personal opinion. Furthermore, the survey figures are restricted to those over the age of twenty, and because prejudice can be transmitted in family and other circles,[148] we do not know to what extent the most serious anti-*burakujūmin* attitudes have been passed on to, and are now sustained by, others in the household/workplace/school yard. The truth of the matter is that an inter-category analysis of current statistics depicting mainstream attitudes towards the most intimate areas of personal interaction with *burakujūmin* reveals that much of what has been reported is in fact seriously understated, as we shall soon see.

In spite of the winds of change, many Japanese remain influenced by those traditional notions and values which will likely work together to impede social change, as posited by Vago in the opening paragraph of this paper. In the cauldron of what has arguably been Asia's most economically progressive nation, very high numbers of Japanese continue to feel that by dint of birth they are part of something very special, homogeneous, unique. In spite of - or possibly because of - the increasing presence of non-Japanese Asians in Japan, significant numbers of Japanese remain unwilling to accept their ethnically similar neighbours as equals and continue to see themselves as part of an exclusive club. All the while happy to admire and seek Japan's most different and glittering western treasure, the 'great American dream', many still feel sufficiently jealous and proud of their Japanese homogeneity and presumed special qualities, and sufficiently threatened by the prospect of having to share those perceptions with others, to have maintained their anti-Asian and anti-*burakujūmin* attitudes.

However, not only is anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice more likely to linger because Japanese society accommodates such historical attitudes within its wider embrace of traditional values and beliefs, but mainstream resolve against social integration of traditional out-groups is further hardened because of what we might call the 'what if?' factor. This is because letting go of one's established beliefs and allowing a new ideology to override long-held traditional values involves a psychological "fear of the new",[149] an anticipated and threatening concept which emerges as an ambivalent force among groups opposed to ideological social change. The 'what if?' factor – in this case, fear of what *might* happen to family and national lineage – is a key reason for maintaining outdated and unsubstantiated beliefs, and its presence is apparent in modern Japan's continued anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice, most notably in marriage. For many, this means that they simply ignore the issue of anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice and hope it will not 'touch' them, while for others, it

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[147] Moser and Kalton (1993) 310.
[148] Allport (1958) 72 and 302.
[149] Vago (1990) 264.

involves not only accepting the phenomenon, but seeing the *burakujūmin* as sufficiently threatening or abhorrent to warrant transmitting the attitude and behaving in a manner which will promote the phenomenon.[150]   Ironically, these same people are pragmatic enough to willingly purchase leather goods at specialty shops, well aware that such goods may have been made by – and/or sold by – Japanese citizens of *buraku* residence or *burakujūmin* ancestry.[151]

Conclusions

Social surveys are complicated instruments and in order to elicit the greatest number of honest replies, survey questions are compiled to avoid the respondent feeling 'trapped' or 'threatened', which brings us face to face with a most serious deficiency within the existing statistics for analyzing anti-*burakujūmin* attitudes.   In other words, when researching the *buraku* issue, specific questions concerning *why* people do not wish to interact with *burakujūmin*, or *why* they do not wish their child to attend a school with children from a *buraku* neighbourhood, or to marry into a *burakujūmin* family, are sedulously avoided.[152]   The study of social attitudes is fraught with all manner of such difficulties, especially the most commonly recurring problem of individuals unwilling to risk expressing their inner ideas against the pressures of society's expectations.[153]   This is particularly true in the light of Japanese people's determined propensity for avoiding giving difficult answers, in particular on that very sensitive matter of Japanese homogeneity and uniqueness.[154]

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[150] Of the 20 *Buraku X* residents whom I formally interviewed, 16 had personally experienced parental or family opposition to their marriage, and six knew of marriages which did not eventuate because of severe parental opposition.   The BLHRRI does its cause little good by continuing to talk about " numbers of young *burakujūmin* are driven to suicide because of parental opposition to their proposed marriage" (Buraku Kaiho Shimbun, May/July 2001 No 120).   Specific cases of marriage-related suicide have been documented over the years, and while parental opposition to one's marriage is distressing and remains a serious dimension of anti-*buraku* prejudice, no statistics or specific instances are provided to back up claims that this phenomenon still occurs, or that is has occurred even once in the last 10 years, for example.

[151] Well over 90% of Japanese leather goods are produced domestically. (See McLauchlan 2001).

[152] Personal acquaintances who have been willing to express their anti-*burakujūmin* feelings, usually begin with the 'non-Japanese' theories, and then move to such issues as " gara ga warui" (poor types), parasites of social welfare, tax dodgers, violent etc.   The literature does not contain recent research on the specific reasons behind anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice in Japan today.

[153] Moser and Kalton (1986) 246.

[154] Sugimoto (1997) 169.

Furthermore, the activist groups themselves are the producers of the overwhelming proportion of quantitative literature, and of the three main activist groups,[155] the BLHRRI is unquestionably the most prolific. Like the other liberation organisations, the BLHRRI has its own agenda and while care is therefore needed when dealing with their statistics, much of what the BLHHRI (for example) produces is actually published in conjunction with the Osaka Municipal Council and/or based on material from the Prime Minister's Office. They add to this their own material compiled from individual *buraku* communities in order to create regional and national comparisons and to highlight areas they regard as important but which are not covered in government surveys. Because the BLHRRI is an activist group, its statistics concentrate on areas of dissatisfaction and they are never slow to seek political gain from any opportunity. However, they are also frequently willing to acknowledge areas of improvement or areas where they at least regard

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[155] In 1922 the Levellers' Society (*Suiheisha*) became the first nationwide *buraku* activist group, formed largely under the efforts of Jiichiro Matsumoto (See McLauchlan 2001 for some interesting background on Matsumoto and his activities, such as his role in the formulation of Article 14 of the Constitution and his refusal to bow to the Emperor during the first post-war Diet session). During WWII, the Suiheisha all but disappeared, but re-emerged post-war as the All Japan Committee for Buraku Liberation (Buraku Kaihō Zenkoku Iinkai), becoming the Buraku Kaihō Dōmei [BKD] (Buraku Liberation League) in 1955. In 1971 a break-away group from the BKD formed the national Zenkoku Kaihō Rengō (abbr. Zenkairen). This splinter group was no longer prepared to accept the BKD's strategies of direct action as part of the liberation process, especially its *kyūdan* (denunciation sessions) and its *kodomo kai* (Buraku Children's Awareness Clubs), seeking instead, peaceful assimilation into mainstream society. The third key activist group is the Dōwa Kai (Assimilation Committee), who also oppose the BLHRRI's direct strategies and who see much of the solution as lying within *buraku* people's own ability to change themselves. Their ethos does not blame *buraku* people for their own misfortunes as such, but regards Japanese society and personal psychology as unable to make the necessary changes, leaving the only alternative solution in the hands of the victims themselves. Today, the Zenkairen and the BLHRRI remain totally at odds, even to the level of "public and bitter acrimony" (see Clear 1991:141). The BLHRRI are particularly critical of what they refer to as the Zenkairen's "*neta ko o okosu na*" (let sleeping dogs lie) policy which strategically avoids informing *buraku* children of their status. During my fieldwork, any attempts to discuss the Zenkairen were greeted with a dismissive wave of the hand and a change of conversation topic. My BLHRRI gate-keepers eventually, albeit very begrudgingly, acknowledged that all *buraku* activist groups are in search of the same goal, that it is a shame that they don't work together, but that because "their tactics are totally inappropriate" this could never happen (see Kitaguchi (1999) and McLauchlan (2001). The BKD became the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute [BLHRRI] in 1997. Political affiliations have also played a major role in the conflict, the BLHRRI regularly in conflict with the Japanese Communist Party, while the Zenkairen has traditionally operated under the umbrella of the Japan Communist Party. Political affiliation has cause several very high profile and extremely bitter disputes, involving kidnapping and physical violence, most notably the Yoka Incident and the Yalta Incident. (See Upham 1987).

appropriate effort is being invested, exclusively in regard to living conditions, education and associated facilities. In other words, while we must not lose sight of their activist agenda and approach, the credibility of their material is enhanced by cooperative publishing with government and council agencies and by their willingness to acknowledge improvements which have been achieved rather than try to gain further mileage out of those past the issues.

In 2001, the *burakujūmin* remain a dilemma for many mainstream Japanese and what the available statistics suggest is that anti- *burakujūmin* feelings actually operate on three 'tiers'. At one end of the spectrum is the first 'tier',[156] those who openly claim *no* prejudice, with most Japanese (87.8 per cent) placing themselves in this category.[157] At the other extreme of the opinion spectrum is the second 'tier', those who are totally unreceptive to any interaction at all with the *burakujūmin*, and just under 12 per cent of Japanese adults see themselves in this category.[158] The third 'tier', which I would call the 'shadow' tier, is a nebulous sub-group from within the almost 88 per cent who superficially deny feelings of prejudice. This 'shadow' tier only begins to emerge when the 'non-prejudiced' group are asked to respond to questions pertaining to direct *burakujūmin* intrusion into their nation's or their family's lineage.

Within these two outer parameters, Figure 2 shows how levels of approval for intimate association with *burakujūmin* (e.g. marriage) invariably fall short of the 87.8 per cent who would be happy to continue an existing relationship, but also exceed the approximately 11.9 per cent who openly admit to strong anti-*burakujūmin* feelings. The discrepancy between the two benchmarks produces the 'shadow third tier', non-quantifiable, but undeniable. While the discrepancy will likely also reflect a response technique based around the desire to *appear* socially correct, a more definitive explanation is the determination among many Japanese to protect their nation's and their own lineage, for it is on the issue of inter-marriage that the most intense levels of anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice become apparent.

It is possible that most of the 88 per cent who claim they *would* continue to interact with a recently discovered *burakujūmin* acquaintance are genuine, but because many of that group subsequently express concern over the possibility of their own or their child's marriage to a *burakujūmin*, and

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[156] See bar a in Figure 2.

[157] It is not strictly correct to describe this group as " claiming to have no anti-*burakujūmin* attitudes" . However, the limited information in the literature means that this is in fact the nearest we have to an absolute declaration of 'no anti-*burakujūmin* feelings'. Surveys do not ask " Do you have any anti-*burakujūmin* feelings?" and nor do they ask, how many people would willingly initiate a new relationship with known *burakujūmin* families, for example. Therefore, all we can do is extrapolate that those who state that they would not discontinue an existing relationship are in fact, declaring themselves to harbour no anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice.

[158] See bar r in Figure 2.

because only 36 per cent of Japanese consider prejudice an infringement of human rights, there must be some doubt about accepting their original responses at face value. What the 'shadow third tier' in fact tells us is that many Japanese people appear to approach the *buraku* issue on the basis of some sort of dual voting system. They use one 'vote' to express their understanding of what society expects of them and how they believe they *should* feel, and a second 'vote' to express their fear of the more threatening 'what if?' scenario, that most sensitive area of marriage and the threat posed to one's national and family lineage by the possibility of mixed blood. Current statistics do not provide us with sufficient age/opinion matches to suggest that anti-*burakujūmin* attitudes are now only extant within certain age groups, and that younger Japanese, for example, have rejected the issue of anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice. If indeed this *were* to be the case, we could be far closer to the solution than the statistics suggest, for it may be that once the 'psychological lag' of prejudice and discrimination has gone from the minds of the younger generations, it may be well on the way to disappearing completely.[159]

The evidence currently available is either too dated, non-age specific, too lacking in essential detail, or underpowered because it is often vicariously based on 'rehashing' other people's 'rehashed' information.[160] Because of the reluctance to ask the hard questions about anti-*burakujūmin* prejudice, the literature does not appear to contain evidence of inductive attempts to categorize mainstream opinion. In the meantime, most Japanese at least feel they *should not* harbour anti-*burakujūmin* feelings and answer the broader, more general 'comfort zone' questions accordingly.

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[159] Even in this scenario, renewed levels of anti-*burakujūmin* attitudes among adults will still likely have some flow-on effects among younger Japanese.
[160] See Kitaguchi (1999).

Figure 2: Mainstream Attitudes
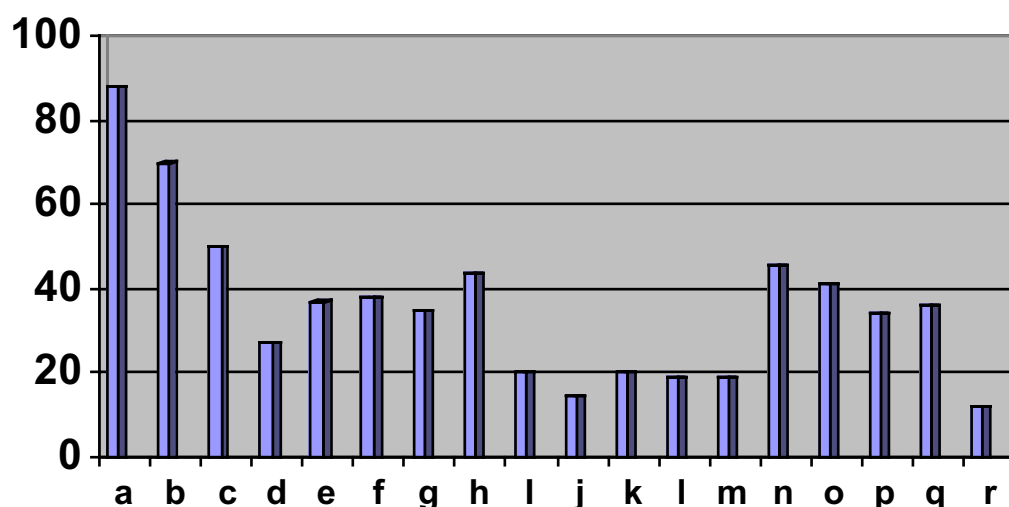
a	I would continue harmonious relationship after discovering buraku ancestry
b	Refusing to rent a room to a foreigner is not discriminatory
c	I support the principle of *dōwa* education
d	I vigorously support *dōwa* education
e	Segregated *burakujūmin* areas cause the prejudice – do away with them
f	*burakujūmin* should work at different occupations and locations
g	The problem will solve itself
h	I want to see positive solutions put forward
i	I don't even think about *buraku* issues
j	It's someone else's problem
k	*burakujūmin* are different because of race, work and poverty
l	I would totally ignore my parents' objections to a *burakujūmin* marriage partner
m	I would accept parents' objection + I would not marry a *burakujūmin* anyway
n	I would totally respect my child's decision to marry a partner of choice
o	I would just 'have to accept' my child's decision to marry a *burakujūmin*
p	Exclusively *burakujūmin*/*burakujūmin* marriages in 24-38 year age group
q	I think the buraku issue is a serious human rights matter
r	I would break off existing relationships and avoid *burakujūmin* completely

Source: Compiled by the author from information in Buraku Kaihō Kenkyūjo (1996) and NHK (1998). NHK figures claim nationwide application while BKK statistics refer specifically to the greater Kansai region, indisputably the area of Japan with the highest concentrations of *buraku* communities.

However, when the issue comes down to 'threatening' Japan's cherished beliefs of special qualities, homogeneity and family lineage, the previously invisible 'shadow third tier' begins to emerge. It comprises those who express their personal opinions by vacillating between the superficially socially acceptable paradigm and the more threatening domains of the personal level. The resulting discrepancy between the two statistical parameters demands more than just a passing suggestion of statistical mismatch, for there are clearly far greater numbers of Japanese who feel strongly anti-*burakujūmin* than the approximately 11.9 per cent willing to express those feelings openly.

Activist groups provide increasing amounts of literature and seminars on the origins and the continuing denigrated position of the *burakujūmin* within contemporary society, and to fund their programmes, they call upon the government's obligations under the Special Measures legislation. However, SML funding will finally end in April 2002, and with reduced government assistance it is difficult to see how the activist groups will be able to maintain their public profile and level of operations. Furthermore, just as the legislated change from the Tokugawa nomenclature *eta* (much filth) to the Meiji term *heimin* (commoner) has never had the desired effect of achieving full social acceptance of the former outcastes and their descendents, it is doubtful whether the latest attempt to deflect the racial origins theory by changing from *burakumin* (*buraku* people) to *burakujūmin* (*buraku* residents) will have a huge impact on public thinking. We can hope that in spite of the concerns over the changing nature of Japan's youth, one of the more positive outcomes of the process will be the laying to rest of anti-*burakujūmin* attitudes. However, given the cyclic nature and influence of prejudice, the reluctance of many Japanese people to let go of old-fashioned prejudices and beliefs, the government's refusal to tackle the 'hard' side of the problem and the resilience of many Japanese people towards those whom they perceive as "marginals", this may yet be a faint hope. One suspects that the 'critical mass' stage when anti-*burakujūmin* adherents become so few that their influence is lost and they abandon a way of thinking which is over two centuries old, logically unsound and clearly inappropriate, is not yet part of Japan's social fabric conditioning or psychology. My attempts to engage mainstream Japanese on the issue (see Figure. 1) support this somewhat pessimistic outlook. As globalisation and internationalization spell increasingly clearly the end of the 'nation state' ideology for every county, including Japan, Japanese people must become more willing to embrace a form of civic pluralism, a state where the 'symbols of belonging' to a smaller or sub-group do not automatically preclude acceptance into the majority group. Short of an unthinkable return to some form of Tokugawa isolationism, Japan has no choice but to look less inwardly, and to move towards a society where multiple civic identities are valued.

In the meantime, the Japanese government has played into the hands of the BLHRRI by its steadfast refusal to entertain the latter's own Fundamental Law, but most specifically, by refusing to draft any legislation of its own, in spite of repeated promises to do so. The government continues to rationalize its stance on the grounds that such legislation would be unworkable and could even worsen the situation, yet in reality, it is more likely that such a law would actually require active enforcement, something which the government has never displayed the willingness or commitment to do. Simply claiming that anti-prejudice legislation will not work is a rather implausible declaration from a government which feels that it is has done all that is necessary by throwing vast sums of money at the problem, a short-sighted solution which has often merely reinforced existing disdain and ostracism. In the unlegislated void which remains, prejudice continues and activist groups maintain their own unpopular methods of public banners, denunciation, cash handouts, tax relief and segregated communities. *Buraku* residents want to be finally rid of all of these entrapments, and at some stage, mainstream Japan and the Japanese government must surely also want to break the cycle of prejudice against the descendants of the Tokugawa outcasts.

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