

Private Struggles, Public Supports: Renovating Japanese Minority Community, Buraku

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I . Brief history of Buraku liberation movement and assimilation (Dowa) projects

Japanese minority group of Buraku people, the former outcaste in the feudal Tokugawa Era, was residentially segregated. After the abolition of this status system by the Meiji Government, the living condition of this minority communities of Buraku was still poor due to unfair treatment as before in Tokugawa Era, with deprivation of guaranteed privilege of holding occupations. Capitalistic development of Japan pushed rural Buraku people into urban area and caused the expansion of their living space. Their communities were often called as slums or poor people quarters, which were stigmatized as the typical residential space for the urban and rural poor.

Historically, the first policy on this Buraku problem was realized following a series of social researches of poor people districts by the Ministry of Home Affairs from 1911. After executing successive researches of this kind, the Ministry herself implemented the experimental housing removal and reconstruction project in one physically deteriorated area in Tokyo in 1925. Metropolitan governments such as Osaka, Kobe, Nagoya and Tokyo also carried out this project taking after the method of Min. of Home Affairs, guided by the Law for Improvement of Poor Housing District of 1927. Not every reconstruction work was targeted at Buraku, therefore this ministry newly launched in 1924 a ten-years plan of project applying only for Buraku, rearranging and widening streets, sewage and small rivers. The second ten-years plan started in 1933. These projects were enforced under the name of the Project of Reconciliation (Yuwa) Measure for Buraku by the initiative of Min. of Home Affairs. These projects needed residents' responsibility in respective areas, therefore, some Yuwa associations were established to participate in this Yuwa project, while anti-governmental National Levelers Association (Suiheisha), which was founded in 1922 by the initiative of activists in Buraku, often criticized these Yuwa projects. Rather, Buraku people and Suiheisha struggled to liberate themselves by means of denunciation to the discriminating conducts.

After some years of break of this project due to W.W. II, in the post-war democratized society, Buraku people reconstructed Suiheisha under the title of the National Committee for Buraku Liberation in 1946. In the beginning of 1950s, this committee came up with new tactics to expand the struggle against the discriminative administration toward Buraku

district, taking opportunity of the All-Romance Case in 1951, which was the protest against the discriminatory novel on Buraku life written by a Kyoto city government clerk. Kyoto and Osaka city governments had already progressively restarted Assimilation (Dowa) Projects in 1946 such as the construction of public bathhouses, community halls and joint workshop spaces, etc (See Table 1). Learning the lesson of the All-Romance Case, both of the two governments worked out the exceptional measure to construct public housing for Buraku people, using the newly implemented Public Housing Law of 1951.

In 1951, prefecture and city governments mainly in Kansai and Chugoku regions decided to organize the National Council for Dowa Projects and to put pressure upon the central government to establish state-run Dowa projects. Among the ministries of the central government, Min. of Public Welfare at first added up the Dowa budget in 1953 (See Figure 1). Central government ran after local governments. There were also grass-root movements of Buraku residents in Hiroshima and Osaka who required public housing for compensating the removal of their houses in face of river conservation and street widening. These movements were the well-organized with the support of activists belonging to the Council for Buraku Liberation (renamed in 1955 to Buraku Liberation League [BLL] mainly supported by the Social Democratic Party of Japan [SDP]), and in result successfully accomplished their request.

By the beginning of 1960s, there appeared four factors which were to define Dowa issues. 1: BLL's pressure toward central and local governments, 2: local governments' pressure toward central government, 3: the opposition SDP's pressure toward the ruling LDP, and 4: coalition by BLL, local governments and SDP. These factors led to a very important event: the enforcement of the Law to Establish a Deliberative Council for Buraku Assimilation in 1960 (and the Law for Housing Districts Improvement in the same year). This new stage of Dowa issues is thought to be owing to the coordination of local governments and BLL. It is also important with this regard to point out the leadership of ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) which for the first time gave a certain administrative priority to the Dowa problem among the political agendas of the central government. At the same time, LDP set up the All Japan Dowa Association, and making use of this association, LDP government started the Exemplary Dowa Projects. LDP selected several Buraku for this project where LDP was influential (See Figure 2).

In 1965, this Deliberative Council issued a report titled "Fundamental Measures for the Solution of Social and Economic Problems of Buraku Areas." This report, publicly admitting the Buraku discrimination by the central government, is still regarded as a landmark document in the history of government involvement in Buraku problem. Then the Council for Buraku Assimilation was established in the Prime Minister's Office, which afterward in 1967 submitted the advisory opinion to set up the long-term plan for Dowa Projects. At the same time, BLL founded and organized the national movement for

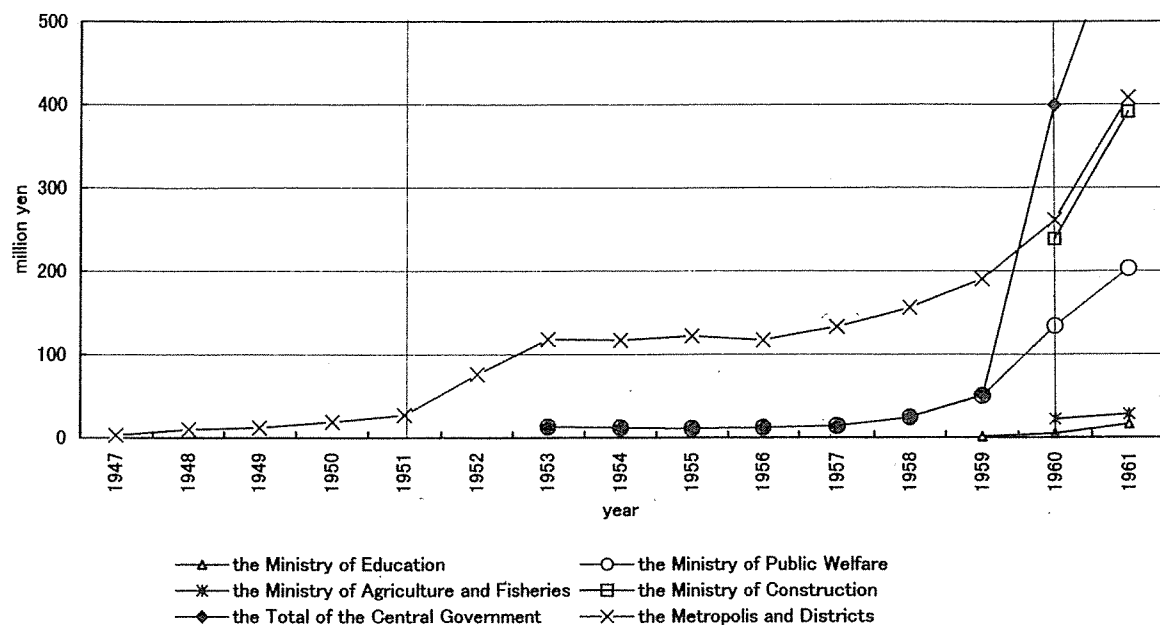


Figure 1. Budget for Dowa project (1947~1961)

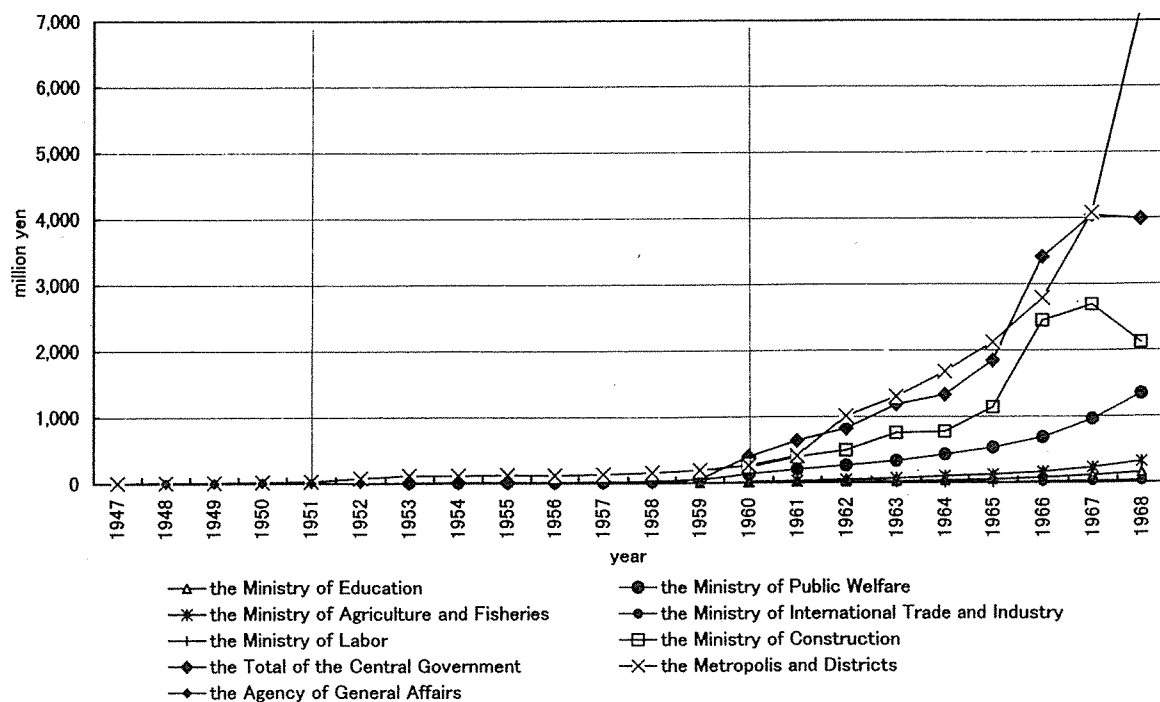


Figure 2. Budget for Dowa projects(1947~1968)

requiring a perfect implementation of the Council Report and the enactment of a law of special measures for Dowa Projects. At last, in 1969, LDP, SDP and other opposition parties except for Japanese Communist Party (JCP) agreed to enact the Law of Special Measures for Assimilation Projects which was valid for ten years.

In this paper, the author attempts to review these projects, especially focusing on the physical projects such as housing renewal and provision of infrastructure, in view of public-private coordination, and to demonstrate the following three observations. Firstly, the role of private agents, such as liberation movement associations, was decisively influential to the decision making process of this policy area, despite this kind of mechanism works very rarely among political arenas in Japan. Secondly, the expansion in these projects was so rapid and the budget for these projects became so huge that the private role in participation in these projects could not help becoming politicized and bureaucratic. This kind of transformation of private initiative by public forces often erodes the base of a sound public-private coordination and easily reminds us the discussions of Construction Company (Doken Kokka) Japan. Thirdly, practices of liberation movement associations also bears very practical solutions in renewing and rehabilitating residential space which are deeply related to urban renewal of Machizukuri movement.

II. Present conditions of Buraku and the evaluation of Dowa projects

The ten years' temporal special measures law had been implemented from 1969 to 1981 with the extension for three years, followed by a five years' new temporal law titled Special Measures for Area Improvement Projects Law, which was in force from 1982 to 1986. A minor change of the law title followed in 1987, and this renamed Law for Special Fiscal Measures for Area Improvement Projects, starting with five years of validity, was once again extended by five years to 1996. As of 31 March, if the ongoing Dowa projects were not completed, at most another five years of financial support was guaranteed. Otherwise, many incentives, including high rate of investment subsidies, and preferential tax system, were ended. If they were needed, they had to be carried out according to ordinary laws of implementing projects.

During this twenty nine years' period of Dowa special laws, twelve ministries and agencies operated Dowa projects, and special task forces in many local governments exclusively dealing with Dowa issues also energetically carried out them (See Figure 3). In sum, thirteen trillion yen were invested into these projects, in which nearly 60 percent was spent for physical projects such as housing improvements (See Table 1 and 2). Total 840 Buraku were selected as these targets for this projects. 65,000 public housings were rebuilt after the demolition of physically bad conditioned houses, and 60,000 public housings were newly provided for Buraku people. There were 72,000 cases of loan extension for newly-owned houses, and 98,000 cases of loan extensions for repairing houses. To sum up all the

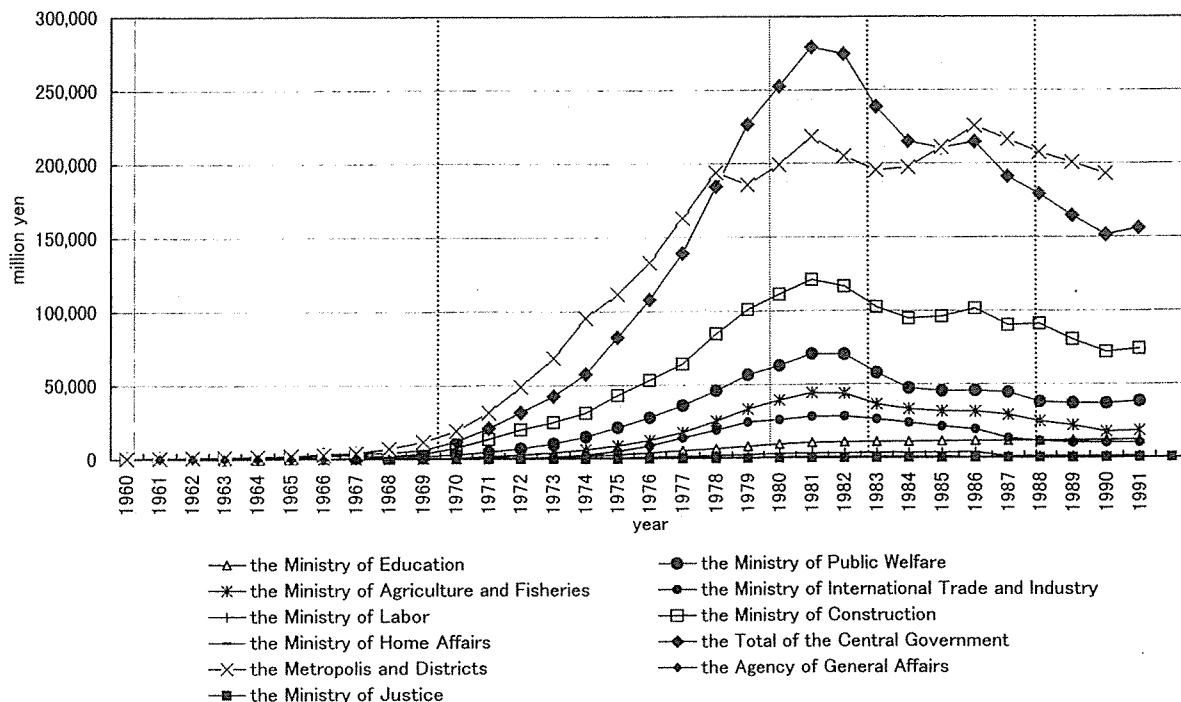


Figure 3. Budget for Dowa projects (1960-1991)

cases, 295,000 of households were obtained or rehabilitated, nearly equal to the number of the total Buraku people in Japan. Among the remaining problems, there still exist Buraku which refused or were not permitted to have Dowa projects, large scale urban Buraku where many works are still undergoing and taking more time to be completed, and too small Buraku which could not apply for projects of Dowa.

Positively evaluating them, Dowa projects should be appraised with its volumes and quantities of the provision of housing renewals, the great transformation of former slums, in comparison with the fact that most existing built-up areas in Japan has been untouched with this kind of improvement programs except for redevelopment of prosperous quarters near railway stations or traffic intersections. In terms of urban renewal and rehabilitation (Machizukuri), Dowa projects are evaluated as most successful urban renewal and they accumulated a lot of knowledge and information for this field. These successes are mainly due to well-organized public-private coordination which was expressed as energetic participations of the associations for liberation movement, well-tuned and well-prepared administrative aids and worked-out plans, and incentives and subsidies of central and local governments. Therefore, in a physical aspect, Buraku, formerly discriminated as the special district, have been completely renewed and is now indistinguishable from ordinary non-Buraku districts (See Figure 4, 5 and Table 3).

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Table 2. Budgets for Dowa Projects in Municipalities and Prefectures**MUNICIPALITIES**

		Municipalities reported	Total expenditures spent for the projects	Share of physical projects	Share of non-physical projects	National funds	Prefectural funds	Municipal funds	Total expenditures of the municipalities	Share of expenditure spend for these projects
		number	in billions of Yen	%	%	%	%	%	in billions of Yen	%
Total	1969-93	1,094	10,318	58.4	41.6	22.6	10.8	66.6	255,523	4.0
	Kanto	156	332	70.8	29.2	27.6	14.0	58.4	30,948	1.1
	Chubu	149	717	67.1	32.9	27.0	13.1	59.9	34,368	2.1
	Kinki	234	5,349	53.5	46.5	18.7	9.6	71.7	95,968	5.6
	Chugoku	227	1,116	57.0	43.0	19.4	14.4	66.2	33,614	3.3
	Shikoku	147	1,272	70.3	29.7	35.4	9.8	54.8	17,611	7.2
	Kyushu	181	1,532	60.0	40.0	24.5	11.5	64.0	43,014	3.6
Total	1969-81	1,023	3,826	67.8	32.2	24.4	11.7	63.9	67,517	5.7
	1982-86	1,072	2,867	57.8	42.2	24.9	10.5	64.6	62,541	4.6
	1987-91	1,088	2,617	49.7	50.3	18.9	10.4	70.7	83,600	3.1
	1992-93	1,084	1,008	46.7	53.3	18.4	9.3	72.3	41,866	2.4

PREFECTURES

		Prefectures reported	Total expenditures spent for the projects	Share of physical projects	Share of non-physical projects	National funds	Prefectural funds	Total expenditures of the prefectures	Share of expenditure spend for these projects
		number	in billions of Yen	%	%	%	%	in billions of Yen	%
Total	1969-93	36	3,562	37.0	63.0	21.5	78.5	409,500	0.9
	Kanto	6	269	34.9	65.1	25.7	74.3	84,415	0.3
	Chubu	8	291	34.0	66.0	20.4	79.6	96,672	0.3
	Kinki	6	1,752	33.4	66.6	12.4	87.6	89,112	2.0
	Chugoku	5	399	44.9	55.1	35.0	65.0	43,703	0.9
	Shikoku	4	346	46.3	53.7	32.6	67.4	26,294	1.3
	Kyushu	7	505	39.8	60.2	33.7	66.3	69,304	0.7
Total	1969-81	36	1,328	45.9	54.1	19.0	81.0	111,359	1.2
	1982-86	36	1,009	34.4	65.6	23.0	77.0	100,038	1.0
	1987-91	36	888	29.4	70.6	23.6	76.4	133,218	0.7
	1992-93	36	337	29.8	70.2	21.8	78.2	64,882	0.5

Source: Somucho Chiiki Kaizen Taisakushitsu (1995)

At the same time, there can be pointed out many problems. In the renewed Buraku, share of public housing is extraordinarily high, and its rent is also incredibly low, as from one sixth to twentieth of the average public housing rent, vacant public housing has been seldom open to the non-Buraku people, and the selection process of housing tenants is not managed in a proper way. These problems are very serious at the moment when the fundamental revision of Public Housing Law in 1996 declared the future abolition of the preferential treatment for Dowa public housing under the new principles of provision of public housing in line with privatization: open to housing market mechanism, and truly-limited subsidized provisions only for the very poor, the handicapped, or the aged.

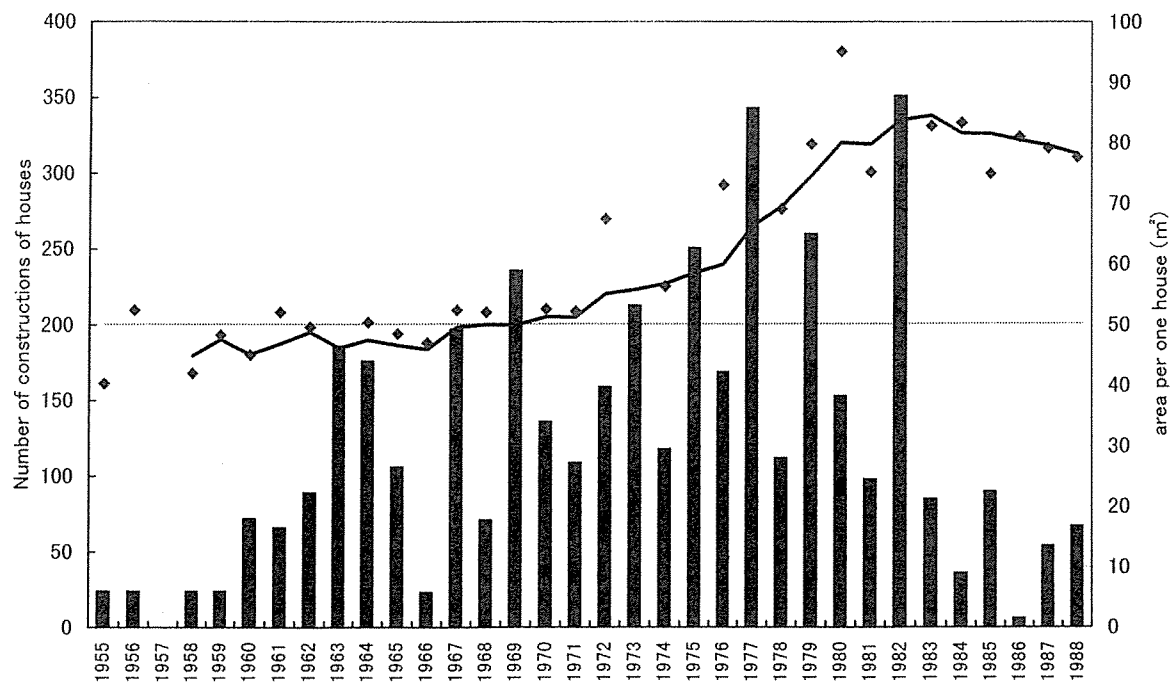
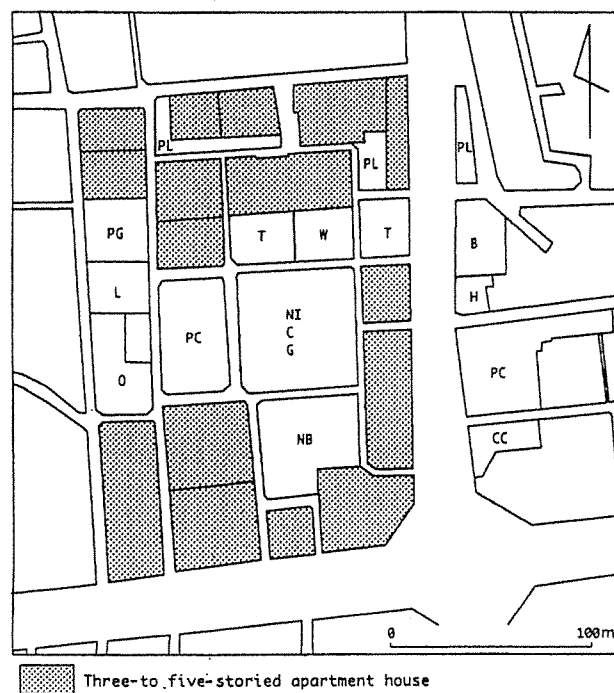


Figure 4. Number and average size of houses in case of Dowa renewal projects in one metropolis



- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| L : Learning center | PG : Play ground for aged people |
| C : Community hall | PL : Parking lot |
| G : Gymnasium | T : Temple |
| H : Public health center | PC : Park for children |
| W : Welfare center | NI : Day nursery for infants |
| B : Public bathhouse | NB : Day nursery for babies |
| O : Open space | CC : Community center for children |

Figure 5. Present conditions of land use in a certain renewed Buraku

Table 3. List of municipalities investing large expenditures for Dowa projects (1993)

Municipalities	Number of Dowa Districts	Number of Households	Number of Population	Total Expenditure spent for Dowa projects (1969-91)	Share of expenditure for Dowa projects	Expenditure for uncompleted works	Number of housing constructions	Share of owned housing	Share of public housing	Share of rented private housing
				in million Yen	(%)	in million Yen		(%)	(%)	(%)
Nagoya	3			54,830	0.5	7,787	1,387	20.0	73.5	5.6
Matsusaka	23	2,281	6,552	37,446	9.1	1,287	442			
Kuwana	1	1,102	3,371	31,248	10.9					
Otsu		1,045						43.9	53.1	1.1
Kyoto	12	4,971	16,581	186,414	2.5	62,000	2,885	23.1	63.2	9.5
Osaka	12	22,688	70,215					19.7	58.9	12.7
Sakai	1	1,289	3,751	123,688	4.3	14,913				
Higashi-Osaka	2	1,184	3,222	154,942	8.4	16,556	1,583	6.0	78.9	13.8
Takatsuki	3			64,623	5.4	2,443	252			
Yao	2	1,344	3,598	101,564	10.3	8,223	1,039	17.7	58.1	23.7
Izumi	1			114,181		3,423				
Izumisano	3	771	2,463	45,793	12.8	18,724	301			
Wakayama	17	4,332	13,485	144,216	7.2	25,735	2,381	57.9	35.8	6.4
Gobo	11	1,835	6,332	58,475	28.0	5,564				
Kobe	28	8,573		178,230	2.2		3,626	34.5	45.0	15.4
Amagasaki	6	2,295	6,915	119,840	5.2	5,692	1,985	46.0	49.4	3.3
Takarazuka	3	1,071	3,553	46,307	4.6	0	246	61.9	34.2	2.1
Kurashiki	18	1,429	5,022	31,992	1.8	1,403	878			
Tsuyama	25	2,211	8,005	53,436	15.3	670	344			
Hiroshima	39	2,273	5,568	33,814	0.7	3,507	391			
Fukuoka	39	5,565	19,356	159,809	2.5		1,554			
Kitakyushu		1,819					1,011	38.9	55.6	5.5
Tagawa	20	2,507	8,002	52,963	11.3	9,266	406			

Source: Sugihara (1993, 1994)

Judging the physical environment, during the early stage of Dowa projects in the 1970s, designing of housing construction and scheme of housing estate was in most cases in a tentative, ad hoc manner, so that the physical environment with deserted asphalt streets and concrete block boxes of housing were not fit for a sound and humane residential life. High-rising blocks, which were thought to be a best solution for the density problem, did not suit for the aged people's living. Lack of a sophisticated sense of physical management of housing estate also damaged the Buraku industries of shoe making, and waste materials gathering. As a result, an open space in the housing estate became a workshop space for the latter use, otherwise, industries themselves disappeared. Hollowing out of industries from Buraku was underway, and younger generation people and highly or professionally educated people could not help but leave Buraku, partly due to these progress of Dowa projects. The management and control of the facilities for the daily services in Buraku became too bureaucratic to be handled flexibly. In fact, concentration of aged people and low income residents caused once again the reproduction of Buraku slums, since few considerations was paid for permanent residents.

III. Public-private coordination of Dowa projects

Considering these positive and negative aspects of the Buraku projects, it is important to analyze the mechanism of Dowa projects in view of public-private coordination; private struggles, public supports. In section I, the author already pointed out three observations, that is the great influence of the Buraku liberation movement toward this Dowa

administration, the transformation of the private character of this movement into bureaucratic manner as the projects became more gigantic both physically and budgetarily, and presentations of good example of residential renewal and community renovation activities in the process of carrying out Dowa projects. Based on these observations, the author considers the mechanism which worked in the progress of Dowa Projects.

The roles of private agents engaged in this huge volumes of Dowa projects are destined to be institutionalized and authorized, so that the relation between public and private agents was generally politicized, struggling each other to accomplish their demands and requests. On a political arena among the private agents of the liberation movement, it should be mentioned that there occurred a split of organizations. This split occurred in 1970 when JCP faction of BLL denounced the special law for Dowa projects of 1969, saying that it could not attack the capitalistic evils and contradictions, and that, it would rather weaken the class struggle if it depended only on protests against discriminative and anti-human rights conducts. This faction soon established the new association and in 1976 formally renamed to All Japan Federation of Buraku Liberation (JFBL), which deeply connected with JCP. Thus the mainstream of BLL had kept more intimate connection with SDP stance.

During the progress of Dowa projects, serious conflicts occurred between these two associations, since they had definitely different recognitions of the Buraku problems and Dowa projects. According to the BLL's viewpoint, promotion of Dowa projects was to be positively asserted and strengthened further to attain the involvement of general programs of development and rehabilitation policies. In addition, BLL demanded a future enforcement of a fundamental law for Buraku liberation. On the contrary, according to the JFBL, while it did not openly criticize the implementation of Dowa projects themselves, it denounced the inequality and unfairness in the implementation process of Dowa administration. JFBL strongly contested the BLL's initiative of introducing a fundamental law, and it aimed to abolish the existence of Buraku problem, advocating the assimilation of the Buraku people into the non-Buraku people and the liberation of Dowa projects into those of ordinary policies.

While this confrontation between BLL and JFBL existed, Dowa projects were progressing under the mechanism shown in Figure 5. It illustrates the established mechanism and operation of each agent engaged in Dowa Projects. The most conspicuous feature in this mechanism is the existence of local branches of the Buraku liberation movements of BLL and JFBL in each (not all but most) Buraku, where not a few professionals accumulated knowledge and information not only on Dowa projects but also on ordinary residential renewal and rehabilitation projects. It shows a clear contrast with an ordinary district of, for example, Machizukuri movement. In such a movement, they either lack this kind of associations or, even if there exist ones, they are not authorized but voluntary associations.

In Figure 6, five agents in the local private side are shown, BLL local branch, JFBL local

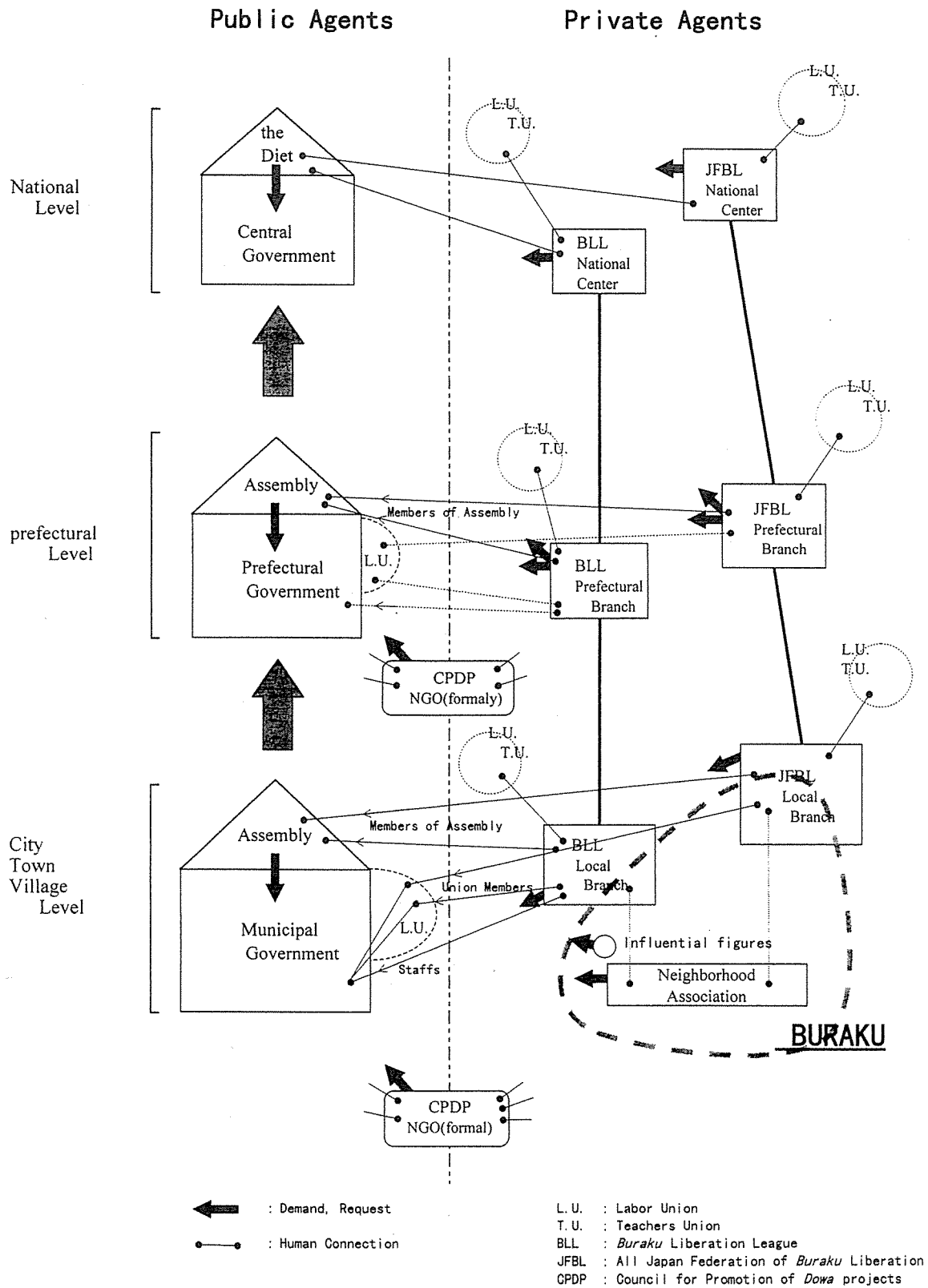


Figure 6. Mechanism and operation of each agent engaged in *Dowa* projects

branch, neighborhood association, influential figures, and the non-government association such as Council for the Promotion of Dowa Projects (in most cases, local branch of BLL). Each agent usually has opportunities to negotiate together with respective government staff in order to fulfill their demand and to request on behalf of each Buraku for projects and funds. The impact of this negotiation often depends on the political power of each agent: whether he has a connection with the assembly member and government staff union or not. In many cases, members of BLL and JFBL are also those of either the assembly, trade union or staff of the respective government. Therefore, decision-making process of Dowa projects and their priority often depends on the extent of the political involvement of each agent, especially by BLL and JFBL. This politicized involved mechanism also works in the arenas of prefectural and national level.

In 1970s, during the early stage of Dowa projects just after the enforcement of the Special Measures Law, this mechanism was being established and various requests were attaining their purposes step by step. Energetic and hopeful public-private partnership did exist in this stage and realizations of requests directly led to the intensification of the liberation movement and residents' solidarity. But this situation soon changed at the outset of 1980s. Since the projects were routinely institutionalized in accordance with certain manual and format, grass-root request by Buraku people became weaker. The more they acquired, the less they required, in other word ot directly apply this assertion to the respective project, and still had an opportunity to negotiate with government staff for acquiring and keeping projects and funds. This opportunity actually ensured to keep the ties of the local organization of JFBL. Thus, the assertion of national center and requirement of local branches seems to be inconsistent. Rather, in this scene of the negotiation, JFBL used to take more time to denounce the improper use of facilities in Buraku and the process of determining the eligible person who could be provided with services. In fact, BLL exclusively administered this process, which was called "one window policy," and consequently, it had a power to administer government-funded programs in Buraku. Unclear process of construction of buildings and facilities in the name of Dowa projects was also a target for JFBL criticism. Although BLL formally denied JFBL criticism, BLL partly admitted the existence of unfair aspect found in Dowa projects such as bribery, blackmail, abuse of power and incorrect use of funds.

IV. One example of Dowa projects

In order to demonstrate these fact-findings in a more concrete manner, the author prepared Table 4. It shows who dominates Dowa projects in each municipalities of a certain prefecture. For instance, in "c city" where Buraku geographically surrounds city office, everyone calls his city office as a branch of BLL. It means that BLL is delegated the authority to determine a person's eligibility for government subsidies or other assistances.

Table 4. Degree of the political influence of liberation movement in *Dowa* projects in case of one prefecture

Area Unit	Municipalities	Number of <i>Buraku</i>	Number of households of <i>Buraku</i>	Degree of the political influence of BLL	Degree of the political influence of JFBL	Degree of the political influence of Other Agents
I	A city	17	4,332	◎	○	◎
II	B city	4	259	◎		
	C town	1	19			
III	D town	4	397	○		
	F town	3	97	○		
	G town	1	88	(○)		
	H town	3	407	○		
IV	I city	4	813	◎	△	
	J town	6	1,774	△		○
	K town	2	473	△	○	
V	L city	5	311	◎		
	M town	4	458	◎	○	○
	N town	1	453	○		◎
	O town	6	370		◎	
VI	P city	11	1,614	△	△	○
	Q town	3	140			
	R town	3	236		○	
	S village	1	13			
	T town	1	285		◎	
	U town	2	306		○	
VII	V city	3	478	○	◎	
	W town	1	85		◎	
	X town	1	10		◎	
	Y town	1	344		○	○
	Z town	3	284		◎	
	a town	2	74		◎	○
	b town	1	95		◎	
VIII	c city	7	291	◎	△	
	d town	1	82			○
	e town	1	207		○	
	f town	1	70		○	

BLL: *Buraku* Liberation LeagueJFBL: All Japan Federation of *Buraku* LiberationSource: Interview to the local government staff in charge of *Dowa* Projects

In human connections, a few activists of BLL are, at the same time, staff of city office and members of workers union in the city office, and city government maintains friendly relationship sharing the principle of movement with that of BLL. Construction and building companies in charge of *Dowa* projects also keep close contacts with BLL.

The largest "A city" has seventeen *Buraku*. On the whole, influence of BLL dominates all *Buraku* except for the largest one. Over two third of *Dowa* expenditure is spent for this

largest Buraku, where the local branch of BLL, at the beginning of 1980s, was split into two due to the struggle for who acquired more funds and who ruled this Buraku politically at the face of the election of member for the prefectural assembly. The former Chairman of this local branch was expelled from this branch in this incidence, and afterward, making use of his former fame, money and power, he set up a council for improvement measures for this district in opposition to the BLL branch. He successfully invited both prefecture and city government staffs to his established council, and showed his ability to manage Dowa projects taking full advantage of this semi-governmental characteristics of this council. The influence of JFBL in this city is not so small. Even in this largest Buraku, JFBL manages a medical clinic and a coop shop, but, it tends to criticize this council for its monopolistic and unfair manner in using the community hall, joint workshop floor, and sports facilities. Similar case is also found in "M town" where BLL and JFBL are competing each other. Specific characteristics of JFBL of this prefecture is also worthy to note. Powerful activists of JFBL are usually, at the same time, teachers and the members of teachers union, therefore, their viewpoints do not always stand on and come out from their daily life and labor experience in Buraku.

Before the split of BLL, influential figures of BLL of this prefecture were predominantly the JCP sympathizers, and were often selected as the members of the prefectural and municipal assemblies. This local support area for these assembly members often matched the area where the influence of JFBL was stronger in such regions as "VII" and "V." In managing annual negotiations with local governments for acquiring Dowa projects and funds, these JCP assembly members acted as intermediaries between local government and JFBL. Of course, in according with the principle of JFBL national center, "O town", "T town" and "W town", where JFBL's influences perfectly dominated and sent the leading JCP members to prefectural assembly, have already declared to put to an end to several Dowa projects. In "O town", Buraku were geographically erased by adopting the method of disperse resettlement in the renewal project in concordance with the JFBL principal of fusing into the non-Buraku. The "VI" and "VII" regions have been traditionally predominated by JFBL. There, the branch of JFBL are restrained by the national center's principle of the future declaration of the end of Dowa projects, so that it cannot dare to acquire funds and subsidy, even if it could acquire them. In "Y town" and "a town", in order to maintain the loyalty to the Buraku organization and to solve this dilemma, new factions were established after the split of JFBL branches.

"P city" presents one specific case. One fourth of its population are Buraku people, but, both BLL and JFBL cannot exercise their influences. Instead, local leading figures and one influential prefectural assembly member control a considerable part of the negotiations about Dowa projects and act as agents, with little contact with either BLL or JFBL. Frequent experiences of calamities of floods in 1950, 1953, 1961 and big fire in 1964,

damaged Buraku, its surroundings and temporal barracks quarters for the people who suffered these calamities. In these calamities, the city government and the member of prefectural assembly took great initiative in these rehabilitation works making use of Dowa projects. Unfortunately, these renewal housing estates now once again need to be removed and rehabilitated, due to the excessive concentration of poverty, occupancies by gangs of Yakuza, and careless and loose management of housing. In "N town", union of neighborhood quarters controls Dowa projects without any connections with BLL nor JFBL, and this can be observed in "M town" and "J town" as well.

V. Prospect

Although, within the academic circle of Buraku and Dowa studies, these observations that the author has clarified seem nothing new, they give many lessons to us in considering the construction projects which are consuming great amount of funds in Japan. I am, as a geographer, keenly recognizing the lack of both academic and practical contributions from geography in these issues. Geographers should highlight and struggle with not only the social-spatial influence of these public construction projects but also the politicized aspects in these urban and housing developments in Buraku districts. It is a very attractive theme for geographers to examine these issues as the public politics of place or private struggle for place.

Acknowledgement: The original version of this paper was presented as the proceedings of "Sustainability as an Approach for National, Regional and Local Development in Japan and Germany" to the 8th Japanese-German Geographical Conference, Hachioji, March 1998.

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