The Alienation of the *Burakumin*: A Discussion of Ideas Concerning Their Origins

by

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本稿は，今後，発表予定のいくつかの論文の一番手となるもので，日本とアメリカにおいて疎外され，差別されてきたグループの比較分析を試み，彼らがそれぞれの社会のなかでどのように平等視されるようになったかについて考察するものである。本稿では，被差別民の起源についてのいろいろな仮説を検討し，また差別のはじまった奈良時代より差別から解放された明治時代に至るまでの歴史的要素についても考察したい。さらに，死や血や殺しなどを穢れと見なす神道や仏教の考え方によって，社会のなかのあるグループがのちに被差別民と考えられるようになった可能性にも検討を加えたい。また被差別民と社会の関係が，どのようにして規制や習慣によって形づくられていったかについても考えたい。これらの規制や習慣は，封建制度のなかに組み込まれて行き，こうしたなかで政治的権力に対して一定の義務を負う世襲的な被差別身分がつくられていった。

Suffering which falls to our lot in the course of nature, or by chance, or fate, does not seem so painful as suffering which is inflicted on us by the arbitrary will of another.

SCHOPENHAUER

Alienation has been defined as the "withdrawing or separation of a person or his affection from an object or position of former attachment, the state of being alienated or diverted from normal function."[1] This seems to describe the historic development of the *Burakumin* as a hereditary outcast group within Japanese society, for the most reliable evidence indicates that this group is racially indistinguishable from other Japanese, and has been segregated from the rest of society due to several historical factors. The *Burakumin* can thus be seen then, as a group formed by members of main-stream Japanese society who became estranged from the main body because they became associated with work which the general population came to regard as dirty or impure and below their station. In short, this was work from which the majority population themselves had become alienated and from which they wished to remain alienated. The *Burakumin* as a group was to become locked into its position in society by rules and regulations that would distinguish its members from the general population.

The origins of the *Burakumin*, or *eta*[2] as they were called in earlier times, is still often

debated. There have been various theories that claim them to be of non-Japanese origins. One of these claims them to be descendants of the Orochon branch of the Tungus, remnants of which can still be found on Sakhalin. Another more imaginative theory presented by Taku Oe, suggests that they were descendants of a lost tribe of Israel because of the similarities between the names of people and places in Japanese history, and the Japanese pronunciation of Hebrew names and places.[3]

A more logical thesis, albeit, apparently just as erroneous as the others, is that the *eta* were descendants of captured groups of Chinese and Koreans who had been brought back to Japan and forced to do the dirty or objectionable tasks that their captors disdained. This myth has been so strongly held that even the famous christian leader and missionary Toyohiko Kagawa[4] could write that the outcasts ""living in the Nagata district of Kobe speak with a Chinese accent. The special people of Harima still preserve in their language Korean nouns. . .it is clear from these facts. . .that. . .the *eta* are a special race apart."[5] There is no other reliable evidence to support this theory and it appears that Mr. Kagawa may not have been objective in his interpretation of any observed accent or vocabulary differences that may have existed. Instead of attributing any perceived linguistic differences to the long period of segregation of the *Burakumin* from the majority society and/or the unequal educational opportunities of the *Burakumin*, he interpreted them as evidence supporting the generally held assumption that the *Burakumin* were an alien race rather than an alienated segment of the Japanese people.

However, even if they were descendants of Koreans, this should not have had the automatic effect of lowering their status in society, given the historically honored position of Koreans who had first brought Buddhism and other cultural gifts to Japan. In fact, there appears to have been some intermarriage between Korean and Japanese royal families. One source even states that about 30% of the Japanese nobility were of Chinese or Korean descent, and that Emperor Kammu(736-806), the founder of *Heian*(Kyoto), was himself the son of a naturalized Korean woman.[6] Whether Koreans were members of the court families or not, the various stories of their high status, and the respect given to the cultural ideas they brought with them would seem to cast doubts on theories that the *eta* were made outcasts because they were Korean or Chinese. There is the possibility, however, that some low class servants accompanied the higher class Koreans and Chinese as slaves or servants and that these may have intermarried with certain groups of Japanese and their descendants later became members of the *eta* class. Even if this were the case, it still would seem that there would have been very little difference between the rulers and the outcasts as far as racial make up was concerned.

In fact, all of the myths of foreign origins seem to be attempts by the majority Japanese society to deny that the *Burakumin* were members of the same ethnic stock as they. It is as if the majority has had to look for a justification of their abuse of the outcasts, exaggerating the perceived differences between themselves and the object of their disgust, until they could not help but to conclude that the "outcasts are so different. .

that they must be a different race."[7] One can easily understand that it would be much easier to make another suffer under a different set of rules and restrictions, if one did not think of him as being from the same family, tribe or same level of humane development as oneself. Conversely, one can understand that as the society began to shun the outcasts, there may have developed many ideas to explain the differences of the people with whom no one really had any contact, and, therefore, no direct knowledge. It seems that the general population was content with their categorization of the *Burakumin*. This is totally human and natural, for often, as Allport observes, "we selectively admit new evidence to a category if it confirms us in our previous belief."[8] This selectivity allows any group, in this case the general Japanese population, to become more susceptible to any ideas or theories that would make a given outside group appear less like one's own group, perhaps less human, and, therefore, more deserving of their low status and of prejudicial treatment.

If the ideas of foreign origins are dispensed with as untrue, then one must conclude, as most scholars do, that the *Burakumin* are of the same racial stock as the majority Japanese. Moreover, one must conclude that this group has been incorporated into an outcast society, solely as a result of various historical developments and cultural or religious attitudes and beliefs unique to Japanese society. What were these and how did they act to estrange this group from the population at large?

One of the most important factors seems to be that of the *Sinto*[9] religion and its ideas of *imi*(taboo) and *kegare*(pollution). The idea of pollution in *Shinto* has been traditionally associated with blood, death and the handling of corpses. Rules such as not being able to enter a shrine during menstruation, or prohibiting entering a shrine or participating in the New Year festivities for one year after the death of one's father or mother have been commonly followed since before the *Nara* period(645-794). Even the capital would often be moved upon the death of an emperor to escape the pollution of death. In addition, one of the most important duties of the emperor became that of *Ohari*, or Great Purification, which was to ensure that the court and the country would escape the polluting effect of phenomena like death.[10]

Another development was the introduction of Buddhism and its idea of the sanctity of all life. Gradually, the Buddhist taboos against the taking of any life joined those of *Shinto*, and gave birth to the popular notion that contact with dead animals, their skins or even the eating of meat could cause one to become polluted. The first law that tried to stop the eating of domestic animals was promulgated in AD 676, but it appears to have been motivated as much by the practical concern of increasing the number of draft animals to help increase productivity, as for any purely *Shinto* or Buddhist religious ideas. Although Buddhist dietary laws seem never to have been too strictly enforced, from time to time edicts would ban people who had eaten meat from entering Buddhist temples. This banishment, however, had a certain time limit, after which one would be allowed in again.

Unfortunately, the sense of contamination associated with prolonged contact with the dead seems to have gradually become longer lasting, with people working in occupations that brought them into regular contact with dead animals or humans, e.g., butchers, leather workers, those who washed the bodies of the dead and cemetery workers, coming only from the lowest levels of society. The other villagers slowly developed a tradition of avoiding those who were occupied in these trades. In fact, these jobs were often given to people who may have actually come from other villages or areas of the country undergoing drought, or who perhaps had been thrown out of their home villages for offenses like not paying taxes or other insults against the Emperor. As a result, the newcomers were held in suspicion by the locals and given only the most demeaning work. One must remember how closed the village life of Japan was in those days and how difficult it must have been to be accepted as an equal in the rather marginal life of one's new village.[11]

Another development that occurred during the Nara Period(645-794) was the appearance of a class society and the accompanying development of a sense of lower and/or superior people, those close to the emperor were called *ryomin* and, of course, considered superior. Those on the lower rungs of society were called *senmin* and considered more base in nature. The former group was made up of not just the aristocracy, but also included most of the peasantry. The later group was composed of the marginal elements of society, e.g., slaves, itinerant laborers and criminals, who were engaged in such activities as grave digging, tomb guarding and street construction and repair. Although there seems to have been periods of mobility between the two classes, e.g., the *Heian* period(AD 794-1185), the distinction between the two groups was retained and laws enacted forbiding intermarriage.[12]

It was during the *Heian* Period that the first outcast villages are reported to have been created at *Kojima* and *Sai-no-Sato*. They were reported to have been populated by cattle herders and disposers of the dead and by former employees of the Department of Falconry which had been abolished in AD 860 by a court under pressure to conform to the Buddhist tradition of respect for all life. These former employees had been called *etori* because it was their job to gather and prepare *essa* or food for the falcons and the dogs of the noblemen. It is widely accepted that the word *eta* developed from *etori*. In fact, the first known written reference of *eta* appeared in the document *Chiri-Bukuro* in the middle of the thirteenth century, and the author of the document states very clearly that there “”.. can be no doubt but that *eta* is derived from *etori* and thus it is used as a term for the *kiyome*.”[13]

Although this theory is hard to dispute, one finds it hard to accept that court workers could have been involved in defiling or polluting activities, given the purification duties of the Emperor, and the *ryomin* status of those who served him and the court. In addition, there does not appear to be enough historic or linguistic evidence to support the claim. Still, it remains a popular theory, and must be given due respect because of its ancient origins.[14] Also, one cannot deny the possibility that the court might have used

the *etori* as scapegoats, in that by disowning them and their service which had become recognized as polluting, the court would in a sense cleanse itself.

However, the use of the term *eta* did not become standard for many years because there was no complete nationwide agreement on what was a polluting occupation and what was not. It seems that there were many local traditions which formulated ideas of what was and was not polluting work. Likewise, many regional names developed for outcasts. For example *kiyome* were said to be engaged in making and repairing roads, digging wells and working in crafts controlled by the Buddhist temples. In some regions, people called those who made leather tools like saddles, *kawata*, and they were separated from the *eta* who did the skinning and the tanning of the leather. In other areas, all these groups were called *kawaramono* because they often had to settle on land near a river or *kawa* in Japanese.[15]

Although there is much evidence that the *eta* originated around the old capitals in Nara, the fact that communities of outcasts can be found throughout the Inland Sea area seems to suggest that local traditions may have been responsible for simultaneous development of numerous outcast communities which were then further justified as the culture of the capital area expanded throughout the country.

Another prejudicial word, *hinin*(non-human), was used to refer to criminal elements and other undesirables, i.e., traveling minstrels, beggars, etc., was often used interchangeably with *eta* and *kawaramono*, at least in some areas. The *hinin* of Kyoto were also called *inu-jinin*(literally dog people) to show the contempt in which they were held by the population at large. Apparently they were engaged in polluting work, i.e., cleaning the temple grounds, making bowstrings. They also are reported to have been used in religious functions called *shinji*, rituals which pertained to the gods and were shunned by other people. In short, many of these people were engaged in work which was very important to the community and had to be done by someone, but which brought the worker only social ostracism rather than social acceptance.

Two more important developments regarding the duties of the *hinin* seem to have appeared first in Kyoto. The first was their use in carrying out severe punishment, i.e., burning of houses and executions. The *ryomin*, perhaps, did not wish to involve themselves in these activities because of the fear of reprisals, or perhaps the authorities felt that they would be punishing the offenders more by having them be punished by people they considered beneath them. The other development was their use as a fighting force for several of the great temples of Kyoto. It seems that they were used for both defensive and offensive purposes as proven by the 1368 request of Enryakuji to a branch temple to gather "inu-jinin of the provinces in the Kinai because the Enryakuji was planning to attack the Nanzenji"[16] using them. It seemed that their use in this manner stemmed from a desire to use a reliable, trustworthy force, which because of their dependence on the temples for their livelihoods they were, as well as to degrade the enemy they fought against. On the other hand, it might just indicate the general loosening of the class lines

that had already occurred by the 14th century. In either case, it was a precedent that was to be followed in subsequent periods.

Thus, one can see that by the late *Heian* period there had developed a tradition among some people of shunning or avoiding people working in occupations deemed polluting and even the development of derogatory terms with which to mark them as something other than normal members of society. In addition, there developed a tradition of using laws to keep classes separated. These traditions were not to merge into one until a later period.

After the *Heian* period, Japan witnessed a gradual decentralization of authority as local leaders, *daimyo*, gained control of large areas of land. The *Kamakura* period(1185-1333), a relatively stable period, gave way to a period of almost constant warfare which included the *Ashikaga* period and the *Sengoku Jidai*(The Warring States Period AD 1482-1558). The latter period was well named as it witnessed the violent struggle for the control of territory between the various *daimyo* of Japan. This period of war caused abundant social unrest, a blurring of class lines, the apparent rise of the former *senmin* and the fall of the aristocracy. The situation has been described as one where ""the aristocracy had all but disappeared, surviving only in improvised obscurity, and the distinction among the lower classes, between the 'good people' and the "low born' had disappeared entirely."[17] Though one may debate just how much of the class distinction disappeared, the persistent rumors of the relatively low birth of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, *the senmin* origins of Hachisuka Masakatsu, one of Toyotomi's generals, and the low birth of several other *daimyo*, e.g., Dozan Saito, lend support to this thesis.[18]

Another result of the long years of fighting was the increased demand for leather products used in war, i.e., armor and harnesses. The demand caused the various *daimyo* to aggressively compete for the services of the leather workers who had formerly been looked down upon. The competition got so fierce that the *daimyo* often offered incentives such as exemption from taxes, free housing, monopolies on their trades, and other special privileges to encourage the leather workers to settle in their realms. These incentives seem to have enticed *senmin* not formerly in the leather trade to take it up. It also seems logical that some groups of peasants would have been displaced from their villages, and may have chosen the leather trades as a good alternative to starving. Perhaps some of these people were even partly motivated by a sense of loyalty to the *daimyo*, or by hopes that the majority Japanese society would recognize their valuable service to society and reward them accordingly. Whatever the reason, there seems to have been an increase in the population of this group during the *Sengoku Jidai.*

Although it may seem strange that *ryomin* or even other *senmin* could lower themselves to work with leather, one must remember that many people still thought of defilement in finite terms. As one document from the period states:

To witness the death of a cow or horse and then to dispose of the carcasses

brings one day pollution. To skin the hide of the carcass brings five days pollution on oneself.[19]

In the light of this thinking, one can understand that some people may have joined the leather workers freely, thinking that they would only be bringing a limited period of pollution on themselves, and that it would not be placing their families in any long term pejorative position. Certainly, most of the people who joined in the leather work thought that they would be able to leave the stigma behind by stopping the work, or, at the worst, moving to a new community where their previous occupation was unknown.

There also appeared at this time, *ikki*, or revolts against both the *shugo* and *daimyo* system of rule.[20] These usually involved the joint cooperation of the *jizamurai*(local yeomen/soldier), *kaihatsu ryoshu*(actual soldier/tillers), *hyakusho*(peasants), and local merchants who had been pushed to their limits by heavy taxes or the general malaise of their overlords. Most of these *ikki* only resulted in the replacement of one overlord with a different one, often of a lower societal rank and with basically no real structural changes. The *Ikko Ikki*, however, was different. This revolt, or actually a series of revolts, was led by fanatical members of the True Pure Land(*Jodo Shinshu*) sect of Buddhism who became known as the *Ikko*(single-minded) sect for their devotion to their religion.

The religion united the *jizamurai*, *kaihatsu*, and *hyakusho* in a much stronger manner than the other *ikki*, and brought much more power to the peasants than did the previous revolts. The areas under the control of the *Ikko*, i.e., Sakai, Ise, Omi, often refused to pay taxes to the government. In one famous case, they killed the Kaga *Daimyo* in 1488 and ruled the province for a century by their own committee style government, the *So*. Although these revolts may not have a direct relationship to the discrimination against the outcasts, the fact that the *ikko* appealed to the lower classes, and ""in some cases, . . .the most despised of merchants and craftsmen,"[21] makes one believe that the outcasts did participate. Certainly, for the *Ikko* to have survived so long in a state of war, the skills of the *eta* had to have been present, and, too, the relatively egalitarian ideas of the *Ikko* may easily have attracted them. If the *eta* did join in rather large numbers it may account for some of the suspicion in which they were held by the rulers who eventually suppressed the revolts.

Unfortunately, the end of the *Sengoku Jidai* brought an end to the social mobility with which it was marked. The unifying of Japan which started under Oda Nobunaga(1534-1582) and was continued by Hideyoshi was to witness the development of rules and regulations which were to lock the population into several clearly defined classes. It seems that Hideyoshi and many of the other *daimyo* were tired of the constant social upheavals, and worried about their own positions and that of their heirs. As a result of this fear, Hideyoshi decided on a policy that might be called ''divide and keep them conquered' in which he tried to keep the farm villagers separated from the towns people, and the different classes separated from each other. This policy may have been motivated by the idea

that contact between the groups might result in the recognition of common problems or causes around which they could unite and seek to force the central government to change. So in an attempt to stabilized the country, and his own position, Hideyoshi introduced several measures designed to keep the masses estranged from each other and too weak to revolt.

One of these measures was the *katanagari*(1588) or the gathering of the swords from the *nomin*(farmers) so that they could no longer fight to change their own status. Some *sammurai*, i.e., *jizamurai*, *kaihatsu*, who also cultivated fields were given a choice of becoming hereditary retainers or keeping their land and giving up their swords. This measure was designed to reestablish a clear, functional distinction between the aristocrats who had the right to bear arms and commoners who did not.[22]

Additionally, he also introduced the *shi no ko sho eta:hinin* system which strictly divided society into five major classes; *bushi* or soldier, *nomin* or farmer, *komin* or craftsman or artisan, *shomin* or trader and *eta:hinin* the outcasts. These classes, in theory at least, were to be hereditary with no intermarriage between their members. In order to help enforce this division, Hideyoshi ordered that a *kenchi*(survey) be done so that the area of every farm and every village would be known and taxed accordingly. Once the survey was done, however, laws were passed that effectively tied the peasant farmers and their heirs to their lands and other classes to their villages or cities. Other laws also made it difficult to move around the country freely, even to visit relatives.[23]

Although these new laws made life more difficult for most of the society, the *eta:hinin* found themselves in the most disadvantageous position because they were now locked into a hereditary, socially despised, pariah class that was shunned by the other classes. Also, the new era of peace reduced the demand for their skills, producing severe economic problems for the outcast class, while the merchant class and farmers generally found that peace was favorable for their businesses.

The policy of separating the classes and establishing laws that spread discontent and distrust between them, begun under Hideyoshi, continued and expanded during the Tokugawa period, and enabled the Tokugawa family to remain in power for two hundred and fifty years. The *samurai* were of course on top of the society, the farmers occupied the second most important position, followed by the craftsmen, the merchants next and finally the *eta:hinin*. One of the differences was in the rules that the different classes were to obey, e.g., merchants could not wear fine clothes, although they could well afford them.

However, the *eta:hinin* were by far the most severely controlled, and they were often used as a reminder to the other classes as to how well off they were. Although they were allowed to keep their monopolies and retain most of the tax benefits that they had received during the *Sengoku* Period, the Tokugawa gradually placed new restrictions on their human rights, which Ninomiya summarized:

Eta were required to marry *eta*, and were not permitted to reside outside the *eta*

village; furthermore, they were forbidden to enter the service of commoners as servants. . .were not generally included in the census, and were counted with the numerals commonly used in counting animals. The privilege of dressing the hair in conventional manner and of wearing geta(wodden clogs) was denied to the members of this class. When approaching the home of a commoner, the *Eta* were required to take off their head gear and footwear before entering the courtyard; and they were not allowed to cross the threshold. Moreover the privilege of sitting, eating, smoking in company of commoners was denied them.[24]

If any of these rules were broken, the punishment would be severe. For example, if an outcast were found to have married a commoner the couple would be forced to divorce. Likewise, if an outcast forgot to follow the dress code or failed to follow the prescribed manner of social interaction they could be beaten, arrested, or both.

Also, the Tokugawa defined the *hinin* as slightly different than the *eta* in that at least some of them could *ashiarai*, or be able to cleanse themselves and return to *heimin* or normal society. The *hinin* were in charge of torturing, executions and arresting crooks, and they were allowed to carry spears or wooden staffs as weapons. The *hinin* also included the beggars and itinerant minstrels, and all these people were all placed under the control of the leader of the *eta* in the area where they wished to work. In Tokyo the head of the outcasts was Danzaemon, who was able to accumulate so much wealth that he was reported to have lived:

like a lord on three thousand *koku*.[25] The income of chiefs of *hinin*, such as Matsuemon Zenkichi are proportionate to his. In general, they are well-to-do, they live without restraints. The *Eta* people of Kyoto and vicinity became especially conceited.[26]

This quote seems to prove that at least some of the *Burakumin* were able to make a profit from their old monopolies and enjoy a rather rich life style. A more observant person, however, might sense that it reveals the prejudicial attitude of the other members of society, that the *eta* were a group that was not entitled to enjoy riches or even feel good about themselves and their position in life. One might even sense a similarity to the envy apparent in the attitude given expression by whites in the United States when they use the pejorative term ''uppitty nigger'.

In addition, the Tokugawa also gradually began to use the *eta:hinin* as a kind of paramilitary or police force to control peasant unrest. The location of many of the older villages near the main roads made them ideal for this duty, and it has been reported that in some areas of the country the outcast villages were called *yakunin mura* or official villages because they were given the duty of checking on travelers to see if they had permission to leave their lands or to carry a given merchandise. Of course, these duties added to the friction and increased animosity between the peasants and at least these particular groups of the outcasts. The tension between the two groups can be seen in the case of the *Endo Ikki*(1786) when the rebellion leaders admonished the government for their use

of outcasts declaring ""We are not pheasants or doves to be shot at with guns nor [are we] common criminals to be arrested by *eta*. . .how dare the *eta* draw swords on the honorable peasants"[27] Most sources say that these were probably *hinin* rather than *eta*, but whichever group it was, it still demonstrates how the outcasts were regarded and feared by the other classes. Also, it seems that when outcast villages themselves participated in riots they were punished more severely than ordinary peasant villages. This can be demonstrated by the case of the riot in Minami Oji(1783) when 90 people were punished from the outcast village while only a few were punished from others.[28] Perhaps the reason for this disparity in treatment was influenced by the official nature of the duties of the outcasts, but it is also clear that outcasts were used as scapegoats and made examples of to other villages if they considered rioting again. Of course, this further spread animosity and fear between the various groups.

As the Tokugawa Period progressed, the situation of the *eta:hinin* deteriorated and the use of abusive terms, e.g., *yotsu*(four or four legged), became popular to refer to them because they implied that outcasts were less than human. Also, many rumors of alleged physical difference were widely circulated in order to support this idea, e.g., the *eta* have one rib missing or their sex organs are larger. They were perceived as being something less than human. In one famous case, an *eta* youth was killed by a young commoner, but at the trial, reluctantly held at the insistence of Danzaemon(the *eta* leader), the judge declared that the life of an *eta* was only worth a seventh of a *heimin*, and that, in order to be executed, the commoner in question would have to kill six more *eta*.[29]

Interestingly enough, the increasing restrictions against the outcasts did not stop with the fall of the Tokugawa, but continued into the Meiji Period. In fact, Wakayama Prefecture passed one of the strictest set of rules for the *eta* only eight months before their official emancipation. The law stated:

> The morality of the *Eta* people is not good these years, and they very often act viciously. Therefore, order them to abide by the following regulations:
>
> 1. To walk at the edge of one side of the street and not to disturb passers-by, not only in the city, but also in their own community.
> 2. Not to loiter except from sunrise to sunset, either in the city or in the suburbs. And also in their own communities, they are not to loiter arbitrarily during the night. On the holiday of *Setsubun* (holiday of the change of seasons), they are allowed to walk until five in the evening, but not later than that. On the last day of the year, not later than nine o'clock.
> 3. They shall not eat or drink in the city.
> 4. They shall not use umbrellas or headgear except in rainy weather.
> 5. They shall not use any foot-gear, except sandals.[30]

This demonstrates that the social stigma regarding the outcasts did not end with the end of the feudal society of which it was so very much a functional part. They were to continue to suffer from the pejorative opinion of the majority society even after Japan had

begun to modernize.

The Meiji government finally officially freed the *Burakumin* in 1871 with the Emancipation Edict which declared:

> The titles of *eta* and *hinin* shall be abolished; and henceforth the people belonging to these classes shall be treated in the same manner both in occupation and social standing as common people.[31]

This act, however, actually made things worse for the *eta* as it took away their right to monopolies and their exclusion from paying taxes. It also allowed many of the former *samurai* and wealthy merchants to invest in the former outcast trades; some of them even took over the management of these trades due to the poverty of the *Burakumin*.

Of course, these people were now officially *heimin* but it was difficult for them to really participate as equals in society. The reason for this was that the former *eta's* villages were well known and it was easy to discover a person's origins by looking at his or her's *koseki*, or family register, which everyone had to keep available. Certain surnames might also cause suspicion of an outcast origin, especially if the family originally came from a given village or prefecture. Moreover, some government bureaucrats, reluctant to accept the outcast's new status, marked their *koseki*[32] with the term *shinheimin* or new commoner, which effectively identified the *eta*. In fact, *shinheimin* was to become the new word of abuse for the outcast. Once it became known that a person was a *shinheimin*, the general public would act in a discriminating fashion toward them, e.g., they would be excluded from bath houses, denied apartments or divorced by their commoner spouses.

In fact, a cynic may look at most of the changes of the Meiji Period and wonder just what kind of class changes occurred. Granted, the *daimyo* system had been done away with, but the new oligarchy granted them peerages called *kazoku*, while their *samurai* were given the classification of *shizoku*, and both of these groups received a government allowance to enable them to adjust to the new age. On the bottom of the society, however, were the *heimin* and the *shinheimin*, just as they were during the previous period.

In addition, the leaders of Meiji Japan continued to use elements of Confucian, Shinto and Buddhist idealogy to unify the country under the symbol of the Emperor. This caused a reemphasis on the idea of the *imi* of certain types of work and workers, and those previously held to be unclean even when actually engaged in other work, e.g., outcast farmers. This reemphasis on *imi* may be seen as the catalyst for several of the actions taken against the *shinheimin* during the period, e.g., the forced move of the residents of the *Burakumin* village of Hora because it was too close to ancient tombs of Emperors.[33] In short, it appears that not all of the officials of the government were happy with emancipating the *eta:hinin* and at least one official thought that '"if the government. . .had exterminated the *eta*, all this trouble would not have ensued."[34] An extreme position perhaps, but one which was voiced by some people of the time about this group they no longer regarded as equals, a group so estranged that they were feared by the society which had helped to create it and often benefitted from its presence.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the estrangement of the *Burakumin* had become so ingrained in social customs and traditions over the centuries that no emancipation proclamation could easily hope to erase it and allow these people to be accepted as equals by the majority Japanese society. Furthermore, the *Burakumin*, although not physically different from other Japanese, were to become reconizable because of their places of birth or that of their parents. Once recongized as a *Burakumin*, they were to continue to suffer from the prejudicial treatment, e.g., denied access to education, bared from better paying jobs. The story of their strugle for social equality over the last hundred years demands further research. In the future, I hope to contrast the various tactics of the *Burakumin* activists with those of civil rights activists in the United States. Perhaps by contrasting the tactics and ideas we will better understand the nature of alienation and acquire insight into solutions to this problem of human exsistance.

NOTES

1. *Webster's Third New International dictionary of the English Language*, 1981 ed.
2. *eta* can be translated as full of filth or filth in abundance, since today it is considered an extremely discriminatory word, similar to niger or wop, I will use it only for historic accuracy and/or in quotes from sources which use the term.
3. George DeVos and Hiroshi Wagtsuma, *Japan's Invisible Race* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 12-13.
4. Kagawa was a missionary who tried to bring the word of Christ to the outcasts. He lived in their communities and wrote about his experiences and opinions of the outcasts. Unfortunately, it seems that he was unable to rid himself of all the prejudices of the society in which he was raised, and much of his writing reflects a condescending view of the *burakumin*. However, his writings are still valuable because of what they tell us about the perceptions of the *Burakumin* held by sympathetic members of the majority society.
5. DeVos, 94.
6. I. Roger Yoshino and Sueo Murokoshi, *The Invisible Visible Minority: Japan's Burakumin*(Osaka, Japan: Buraku Kaiho Kenkyusho, 1977), 27.
7. DeVos, 8.
8. Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), 23.
9. The native religion of Japan which includes elements of nature worship, animism and the worship of the Emperor as a direct descendent of the sun gooddess *ama-terasu no Oho kami*.
10. Ian Neary, *Political Protest and Social Control In Pre-War Japan: The origins of Buraku Liberation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 13.
11. Ibid., 13.
12. Ibid. 13-14.
13. Harada, Tomohiko, *Hisabetsu Buraku no Reikishi* [The History of the discriminated vil-

lages] (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Books, 1990), 32. kiyome was another disrespectful name for the outcasts.

14. Neary, 27.
15. James L. McClain, *Kanazawa A Seventh-Century Japanese Castle Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 45-46.
16. Keiji Nagahara, "The Medieval Origins of The Eta-Hinin," *Journal of Japanese Studies* Vol.5 No.2 (Summer 1979): 393.
17. Edwin O. Reishauer and John K. Fairbank, *East Asia The Great Tradition* Vol.1 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1960), 574.
18. *Hideyoshi*(1536-1598) who finished unifying Japan after *Oda*, his mentor, was killed is reported to be of low birth(Reischauer, Fairbanks 585); *Masakatsu*, a general who served both *Hideyoshi* and *Oda*, is reputed to have been born into a *Kawaramono*(river thing) the name of one *senmin group*(Neary 18): *Dozan* was the powerful *daimyo* of present day Gifu in central Japan(Harada, 81).
19. Neary, 14.
20. *Shugo* or military governor was a product of the Kamakura Period from which the *daimyo* developed as the Ashikaga Shogunate deteriorated into the Waring States Period. For further information see, John W. Hall, Maurice B. Jansen, ed., *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Vol. 3, *Medieval Japan*, 200.
21. Hall, 340.
22. Reischauer, Fairbanks, 588.
23. Harada, 76-77.
24. Ninomiya, S, ""An Inquiry Concerning the Origin, Development, and Present Situation of the Eta In Relation to the History of Social Classes in Japan," in *Transations of the Asiatic Society of Japan* No.10, 1933: 97.
25. koku is a measurement of rice, equal to about 47.6 bushels, used as a unit by which *samurai* measured their income, since all pay was in terms of a quantity of rice.
26. Tadao Kawamura, "*Social Significance of The Horizontal Movement(Suiheisha-Undo)* in Japan" (MA Thesis, University of Chicago, 1924) 26.
27. Anne Whitehall, *Social Protest and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 197.
28. Ibid., 154.
29. DeVos, 24.
30. Kawamura, 22-23.
31. I. Roger Yoshino, *The Invisible Visible Minority Japan's Burakumin* (Osaka: Buraku Kaiho Kenkyusho, 1977), 46.
32. The *koseki* is the official family record, and it records all the marriages, births, and places of origins for generations of family members.
33. This village, located in Nara prefecture, was forced to move in 1917 because its presence

was deemed an insult to the Imperial family. The fact that these people may have been decedents from Imperial tomb guards and should thus have been honored did not occur to the government or the common people who lived near by.

34. Neary, 3.

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