



Let's try some puzzles!

Fill in the missing letters to complete the words.
You can make a word by combining letters fitting in ●.

(The answers are at the bottom of the page.)

Clues

1 H●te sp○○●h

Discriminatory practice against certain races and nationalities not only generates feelings of anxiety and disgust, but also impairs human dignity and can cause discrimination to become prevalent in society. In recent years, such discriminatory practices have been reported in various parts of Japan, attracting increasing attention from the public and are becoming a serious social problem.

2 Di○○●○sity

This is a way of thinking that respects differences in values, cultural backgrounds and various other individual attributes such as gender, age, nationality, disability, place of residence, and family structure. Respecting the dignity of each person is critical for a human-rights-oriented society.

3 ●ow●r
h○○○ssment

This refers to any kind of behavior in which a person causes a coworker physical pain or emotional distress, or deteriorates a work environment by taking advantage of their superiority in a position or a relationship by exercising power beyond the extent permitted in the workplace. If such a situation is left unattended, the affected person can become less motivated to work, lose confidence in themselves, and, in the worst case scenario, may eventually develop a mental or physical illness, which could be life-threatening.

Never discriminate against others
and never allow anyone else to discriminate against others

- Building a Human-Rights-Oriented Society -

The Constitution of Japan defines fundamental human rights as “eternal and inviolate rights” in Article 11, calls for respect of the “right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” in Article 13, and declares that “all of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin” in Article 14.

In April 2015, Sakai City Crematorium director received a malicious letter that defamed residents in *dowa* discriminated communities and people in certain occupations using offensive language. A subsequent investigation revealed that similar letters had also been sent to public facilities in Yao City, Higashi-Osaka City and Osaka City. As of the end of May 2015, thirty-four similar cases had been reported: twenty-seven in

Osaka Prefecture and seven in Hyogo Prefecture.

We should never permit such discrimination. Also, we must be firmly determined not to engage in any form of discrimination ourselves, and not to allow such contemptible behavior from others. We must recognize the importance of having respect for others.

If you witness any act of discrimination, please do not look the other way. Instead, face up to what is actually happening as if it is your own problem. By doing so, you can contribute to creating a society free of discrimination.

Let each of us have the correct knowledge and understanding of human rights, and take action for this cause to build a society where the human rights of all people are respected.

Answers to the human rights puzzles

Answers Peace 1. Hate speech 2. Diversity 3. Power harassment

Let a culture of human rights
bloom from Sakai City!

Kokoro-no-Hibiki

Sakai City Human Rights Education
Promotion Council Newsletter Vol. 37

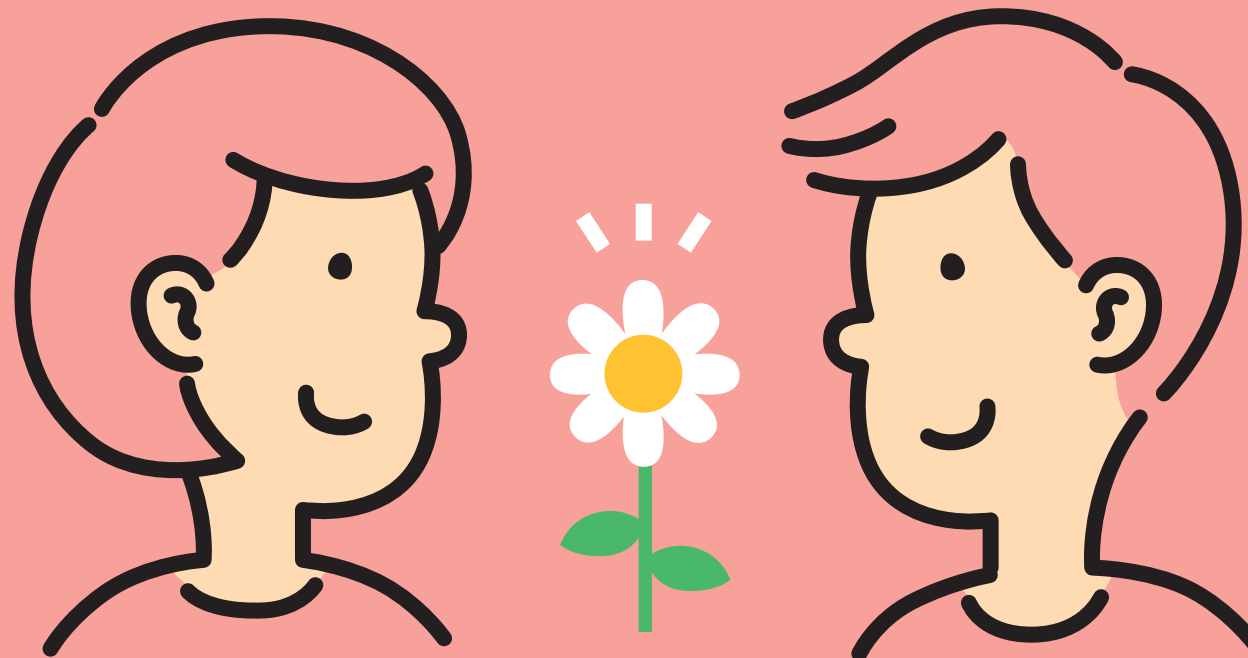


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“Kokoro-no-Hibiki” is issued annually by the Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council (HREPC), targeting all residents of Sakai City, to promote their understanding of human rights as part of the Council’s educational activities.



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What is the Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council (HREPC)?

The Human Rights Education Promotion Council is a civic organization that was established in July 1979 with the aim of creating a bright, comfortable society, free from all forms of discrimination, not least Buraku discrimination.

Through its educational activities, the HREPC drives a grass-roots human rights campaign aimed at building a peaceful and prosperous society where the human rights of all people are respected.

Please get involved in our activities!



Naohiro Kanamaru
Chair

Member organizations and groups

- International Youth Sakai
- Sakai City Education Association
- Sakai City Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation
- Sakai City Association for Sound Growth of Children
- Sakai City Support Group for Foreign Residents' Education
- Federation of Sakai City Residents' Association
- Sakai City Social Education Committee
- Sakai City Women's Association
- Sakai City Federation of Private Kindergartens
- NPO Sakai Federation of Disabled People's Organizations
- Sakai City Liaison Council of Instructors for Youth
- Sakai City Human Rights Education and Research Society
- Sakai City Agricultural Cooperative
- Sakai City PTA Federation
- Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations
- Sakai City Welfare Association for Single-Mother Families and Widows
- Sakai City Federation of Private Daycare Centers
- Sakai City Federation of Child Welfare Commissioners
- Sakai Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Schools
- Sakai City Federation of Senior Residents' Clubs
- District Committee of the Sakai City Human Rights Commissioners' Association
- Sakai District Committee of Administrative Counselors
- Sakai City Liaison Council of Probation Officers
- Sakai City Council of Social Welfare
- Osaka Prefectural Association of Vocational Schools
- Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Headquarters of Liberal Dowa Association
- Principals' Association of Osaka Prefectural Schools in 8 zones of the 4th School District
- Semboku Sumai Center, West Japan Branch, UR Community Inc.
- Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League
- Business Members Committee, Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council
- Religious Groups Committee, Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion

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- Vice Chair Teruo Kubo (Federation of Sakai City Residents' Associations)
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Citizens' Forum for Human Rights Protection



Educational activity in Ward Residents' Festival



Comprehensive Workshop



Street educational activities during Human Rights Week

Report on the activities of International Youth Sakai (IYS)



International Youth Sakai (IYS)

IYS has been promoting various projects under the leadership of young people to offer opportunities for project participants to interact and work with people of different backgrounds. The goal of IYS is to train young leaders to have awareness of the importance of protecting human rights and the ability to think and act globally so that they can contribute to building a society where peace and human rights are respected.

Mongolia – A Country That Is Not as Familiar as We Think

On December 8, 2015, the Citizens' Forum for Human Rights Protection was held, in which the participants of the IYS Study Tour to Mongolia reported what they had seen and learned in the country.

FY 2015 Study Tour to Mongolia

Dates August 10 (Mon.) to 20 (Thur.), 2015

Report

General information about Mongolia

Mongolia has a land area about four times as large as Japan, while its population is about one third of Osaka Prefecture's. The capital is Ulan Bator.

For many Japanese, Mongolia is associated with vast grasslands, nomads living with cattle, and *ger* (portable yurts). Nearly thirty years have passed since Mongolia renounced socialism, however, very little is known to us about the current realities of this country.

Mongolia today

Upon arrival at Ulan Bator, we, participants in the IYS Study Tour, were impressed at the sight of rows of high-rise buildings, European-style houses and modern condominiums. While traveling in the country, we frequently saw cars stuck in traffic jams, high-rise buildings under construction, and dense smog, which are all symbolic of rapid urban development. Only a short distance away from the urban area, however, we met people living traditional lives in a severe living environment.

Out of Mongolia's population of about 3 million, around 50% live in Ulan Bator. We learned that the rapid urban development has given rise to serious social problems, such as delays in infrastructure development, accelerated environmental destruction, and a widening economic disparity among citizens.

When travelling in the countryside, however, we saw vast expanses of grassland and people living traditional nomadic lives – the very image that most people imagine when they think of Mongolia. We were deeply impressed by the vitality of nomadic families who work together to survive in the harsh natural environment while preserving their traditional culture.

People we met in Ulan Bator

A Mongolian female artist we met looked back on her childhood and said that she had spent many lonely days

because her parents had been desperate to seek employment in the wake of Mongolia's shift to capitalism. She said painting pictures was her way of expressing her hope that no child would feel the loneliness she had felt.

We also visited Ulaanbaatar University where we interacted with students who were the same age as us. Many of them were born and grew up in Ulan Bator, after their parents abandoned their nomadic lives and settled in Ulan Bator. Therefore, they said they had never ridden a horse and had little idea about the nomadic way of life. We soon became friendly enough with each other to engage in arm wrestling and Mongolian wrestling, but the result was our complete defeat. They were so strong.

Nomadic people we met

We visited a rural village where we stayed in *gers* and the dormitory of an elementary school for children of nomadic families. The most striking experience we had there was witnessing the sheep being butchered. To welcome us, the nomad people butchered and cooked their sheep for us.

This experience taught us the solemn fact that we sustain our lives by taking the lives of other animals and plants. It was a very valuable lesson.

Many children, as well as their parents and teachers came to the elementary school to meet us, even though they were on summer vacation. We had a fun time together, flying kites and drawing pictures. We also made *chirashi-zushi* (sushi rice with toppings) with ingredients we brought in from Japan and helped repair the walls of the school building.

Many children said that the happiest time for them is when they are with their family members. These words indicate the strong family ties of nomadic people that have been fostered in the middle of Mother Nature of Mongolia.



My War Experience:

Report from the Comprehensive Workshop

Never Allow the Internment Experience in Siberia Be Forgotten



In the Comprehensive Workshop held on August 26, 2015, Mr. Masanori Araki, who has been telling people about his internment experience in Siberia, delivered a lecture titled "My War Experience: Never Allow the Internment Experience in Siberia Be Forgotten."

The workshop began with the viewing of a DVD about the internment of Japanese prisoners of war in Siberia, created by Mr. Araki himself, followed by him talking about the years he spent in Siberia. It was a privilege to hear about his experiences first-hand and a valuable opportunity for the audience to increase their awareness of the horrors of war and the importance of peace.

In the early hours of August 9, 1945, the Soviet Union suddenly invaded Manchuria. At that time, I was a student of Sekito Preliminary Military Academy. To fight back against the enemy, all the students were taken to Matoseki, the frontline for the Japanese troops. We were students and were not provided with any weapons. All we had were pieces of tent cloth filled with explosives and tied to grenades.

We ran toward the caterpillars of the tanks of the enemy while holding these "weapons" up at our chests. This suicide attack claimed 750 lives and was terrifying. Please remember the tragic fact that such a land suicide attack was carried out during the Soviet-Japanese War.

We were interned to work in labor camps in Siberia for more than three years, suffering hunger, freezing in coldness, and forced to do hard labor.

Hunger was an especially serious problem, as evidenced by the fact that most of the deaths of internees were caused by

nutritional deficiency. In fact, I never ate a decent meal during those years.

The coldness was also unbearable. The lowest temperature I experienced in Siberia was minus 63 degrees Celsius. At this temperature, we had to constantly blink our eyes to prevent our upper and lower eyelids from freezing and sticking to each other.

Japanese internees were assigned the same volume of work as that assigned to Soviet prisoners and the labor was really hard.

What I would like to emphasize is that we, the internees in Siberia, are definitely war victims as we were offered as part of the war reparations in the form of labor provision. It seems that there is now an intention to make people forget about the internment in Siberia as soon as possible. I cannot die before the realities about the internment and the historical truth are fully known to the public. For this reason, despite my old age, I am here today.

Part 2: Sectional meetings

In the second part of the workshop, three sectional meetings were held, one discussing the Dowry issue, a second discussing the human rights of women, and a third discussing the human rights of children. The sectional meeting on the human rights of women was held in "World Café" style where participants engaged in a discussion under the theme "Honest Talk Between Women and Men: Let's Work Together for Gender Equality" in a friendly atmosphere. The sectional meetings on the Dowry issue and the human rights of children started with problems being raised, followed by heated discussions.



Sectional meeting on the Dowry issue



Sectional meeting on the human rights of women



Sectional meeting on the human rights of children

<Sectional meetings>

Community Human Rights Promotion Committee Workshop

Every year between October and November a workshop on human rights is held in each of Sakai City's seven wards. The workshops are attended by members of the Community Human Rights Promotion Committee as well as many members of the general public.

* Who are the members of the Community Human Rights Promotion Committee?
Representatives and members of the Community Human Rights Promotion Committee belong to the Human Rights Education Promotion Council. The members are recommended by community representatives of the Federation of Sakai City Residents' Association from among officials of community residents' joint associations, presidents of unit residents' associations, members of various organizations in school districts, and people who are enthusiastic about human rights education activities in individual school districts.

Human Rights of Women During an Emergency

Ms. Reiko Masai from a non-profit organization, Center for Supporting Women and Children: Women's Net Kobe, delivered a lecture titled "Human Rights of Women During an Emergency" at Naka Public Health Center on October 22, Nishi Cultural Hall on October 27, and the main building of Sakai City Hall on October 30.

She looked back on the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the Great East Japan Earthquake and discussed the basic needs of women in emergency situations from the perspectives of both earthquake victims and supporters of victims.

"Soon after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, our NPO started a telephone consultation service for women, and among those who contacted us, six were victims of domestic violence. They were scared, felt alone, and did not know where to seek help. The women who contacted us about violent husbands or boyfriends said that they felt it inappropriate to discuss their personal problems at the time of such an emergency. We were also contacted by women who blamed themselves for having abused their own children due to the pressure of having to raise children alone without cooperation from their husbands who spent much more time in the workplace than at home. In the aftermath of the earthquake, people were desperate to ensure their survival, and under these circumstances, no measures were taken for victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse.

This was also the case after the Great East Japan Earthquake. In shelters, specific needs for women were hardly addressed. For example, their privacy was not protected, there were no locks on toilet doors, and baby formula and other baby supplies were not sufficiently available. Families with infants were anxious that their children might be a nuisance to others, especially when

they cried at night. These problems were the result of not involving women in the operation of shelters.

The perspectives of women should be incorporated in the design of shelters to better cater to their specific needs, such as female-only toilets and rooms, space for taking care of babies, stockpiles of necessities for women, rooms for families with infants or the elderly with dementia, and toilets provided in proportion to the male-female international-standard ratio. Women should be involved in the decision-making process concerning disaster prevention and post-disaster reconstruction."



Act for Elimination of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities is Enacted.

About the Act for Elimination of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

This new act establishes the basic rules for promoting measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability and also for preventing discrimination on the basis of disability by national and local governmental agencies and private businesses. The purpose of this act is to facilitate the process toward a society where all citizens live in harmony, whether with or without disability, with mutual respect for personality and individuality.

Under this act, "unjust discriminatory treatment" and "lack of reasonable accommodation" constitute as discrimination.

For example, if a person in a wheelchair cannot access a store, the person is considered to receive "unjust discriminatory treatment," unless the store has a good reason for this. "Reasonable accommodation" means accommodating the requirements of persons with disabilities for appropriate adjustments and modifications to help them when they are in trouble. Governmental agencies, companies and stores are all prohibited from engaging in any unjust discriminatory treatment. While government agencies have an obligation to exercise reasonable accommodation, companies and stores are also required to do their best to offer an environment that is accessible to persons with disabilities.

“My Human Rights Message”

– Award-winning entries –

What We Can Do to Create a Barrier-Free Society

Second-year elementary school student



My grandma has a serious illness and uses a wheelchair. When she was well, she went anywhere she liked on foot, but not now because of her illness.

Now, she spends a lot of time in a wheelchair and seldom goes out.

She says, “I want to walk by myself as I did before.” She cannot go anywhere alone, cannot go up or down steps and cannot enter a building if it doesn’t have an elevator. She says her life is very inconvenient.

One night, my father developed a high fever and went to the emergency department of a hospital. At the hospital, a nurse brought a wheelchair, but my father declined to use it saying he could walk on his own.

So I sat in the wheelchair instead, and found that wheelchairs are very inconvenient.

I tried to move the wheelchair forward with my hands but it didn’t move smoothly. Also, wheelchairs are big and heavy and cannot be carried around easily. I was in a hospital during the night when few people were around so I could

move the wheelchair. But what if I was in a town?

The other day, I went to Kids Plaza Osaka. In a section named “Barrier Town,” I sat in a wheelchair and moved around a mock-up train station, and found many inconveniences. There was a dangerous gap between the train and the platform, and the space between entrance gates was not wide enough for a wheelchair. This was when I realized how inconvenient it is to go out in a wheelchair, and understood why my grandma doesn’t like using it.

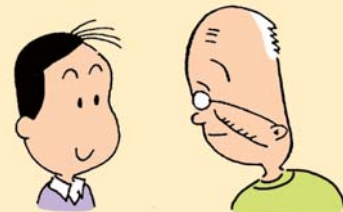
The inconveniences I experienced in the wheelchair are called “barriers” and a town is full of them. I think that we should create a society without barriers and all of us should work together to help people who use wheelchairs.

If all of us think about barriers, our society will become a much better place for people who use wheelchairs.

If such a society is created, I want to play a lot with people who use wheelchairs.

Valuable Time for My Grandfather and Me

Third-year junior high school student



My grandfather was diagnosed with kidney failure five years ago and has since been receiving dialysis treatment. I was a fourth-year elementary school student when he was diagnosed, and I could not understand the situation well. Still, I can recall in vivid detail how painful his arm looked after vascular surgery, which he underwent to prepare for dialysis treatment.

In those days, my grandfather had almost lost his will to live. The thought of having to endure painful treatment until his death made him despair and depressed. His agonized face broke my heart, but I continued to write him letters, which my grandmother gave to him in the hospital.

While hospitalized, my grandfather gradually overcame his

despair, supported by doctors and nurses, and encouraged by the other patients in his hospital room, who were seriously ill but were positive about receiving treatment. In the end, my grandfather came to feel deeply grateful that dialysis could save his life and he regained his will to live. Since leaving hospital, he receives dialysis treatment three times a week.

I always enjoy talking with my grandfather. He made me interested in Japanese history and answers every question I ask. Every day he spends hours reading every part of the newspaper and when I visit him, he smiles at me while sliding his reading glasses down on his nose. Now, I am a third-year junior high

school student and my grandfather has always been there for me over the years. However, during the past five years, he has developed a lumbar spinal canal stenosis and is unable to walk on his own. Also, the blood vessel used during dialysis has aged and he is no longer physically fit enough for an operation to reconstruct it.

We were told by the doctor that he had about two years left to live. These words shocked me and my family members so badly that we remained deeply depressed for a long time. On the other hand, my grandfather seemed to calmly accept reality, unlike five years ago. When told that his days were limited, he probably made up his mind to face whatever confronted him.

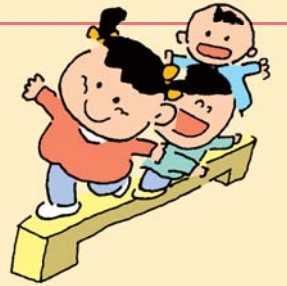
Though he might not live long, I am resolved to do whatever I can to help my grandfather enjoy life and look forward to tomorrow with a desire to live. I asked myself what I could do. The answer was simple. What I can do is to support

him by putting my arms around the shoulders on which he used to carry me when I was a child; hold the hand that I used to grip when arm wrestling with him; push his wheelchair while listening to him talk about his wartime experiences. We talk about many things together while walking and he very much enjoys the time he spends with me. His happy face fills my heart with pleasure and the warm feeling I get lasts for days.

I have seen how my grandfather has become in need of care first-hand, and this experience has made me aware that anyone can get an illness and that the support of family members and other people close to you is as important as medical treatment. I have also learned that encouraging words and smiles have the power to make people look forward to and have hope for tomorrow. With the elderly population increasing, I think it necessary for each of us to think what we can do to let kindness and warm-heartedness prevail around us.

Creating a Community Where the Human Rights of Children are Protected

Adult



Recently, we often hear stories in the news about parents abusing their children through violence or by abandoning their parental responsibilities, such as not feeding them. As a father of a small child myself, I could not understand how parents could be abusive to their children.

One day, I scolded my son for his bad manners while we were eating, but he didn’t listen to me despite my repeated warnings. Finally, I said angrily to him, “If you don’t listen to me, I will lock you out of the house!” and hit him on the head. My son got angry and shouted back, “Ouch! Don’t hit me!”

After eating, we saw a news story about child abuse on TV and my wife said, half-jokingly, “If you had been angrier, you may have made the news yourself.”

Her words made me aware that I was not teaching my son manners, but just yelling at him and letting out my emotions. Although my actions might not be seen as serious abuse, I felt both ashamed and afraid of myself for losing control of myself and then hitting my son.

In my mind, I know that we should scold children in a way that makes them understand why they are being scolded. However, it is difficult to keep our emotions under control all the time. Most of my friends and neighbors said they have similar experience of hitting their children driven by anger.

Once, I had an opportunity to speak with a kindergarten teacher, who said that she could tell how parents behave toward their children by observing their children’s behavior, especially when children are quarreling. Some children instantly use violence when they get angry, while other children try to explain why they are angry patiently. The different ways they behave are an exact reflection of the attitudes of their parents towards them.

While I don’t know about the life histories of parents who

abuse their children, it is said that childhood experiences can have a profound influence on adult life, for better or for worse.

Parents who have abused their children often justify their behavior by saying that what they did was discipline, not abuse. However, according to what I have learned, parents confuse this selfish act of venting their frustration and releasing their stress on to their children with discipline. Child abuse in the form of discipline can, in the worst case scenario, result in death of a child and thus it is dangerous to justify an abusive act by saying it was intended to discipline a child.

To prevent the tragedy of child abuse, there should be a surrounding environment conducive to protecting the human rights of both children and parents.

I myself, proactively participate in community and school activities because I believe that by deepening neighborhood ties, we can promote community-wide child protection efforts. Next, I am going to protect children in the community by joining the “Child 110” program. I believe that a community where the human rights of children are protected can appropriately address problems children face and provide them with mental care, if needed.

I am confident that such a community will help children grow to become compassionate toward others and interested in various social issues, such as peace and discrimination, as well as human rights. I hope that our children will someday become parents, who are active, if not globally, then at least locally in protecting the human rights of the next generation of children.