

Kokoro-no-Hibiki

Let a culture of human rights bloom from Sakai City!

✿ vol.36

Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council Newsletter

“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.

Table of Contents

- 1 What is the Human Rights Education Promotion Council?
- 2 Escalating Cyberbullying – The Current Situation and the Role of Adults (Citizens' Forum for Human Rights Protection)
- 3 Current Situations of the Buraku Discrimination Issue– In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Dowa Issue Resolution Council Report (Comprehensive Workshop)
World Café in Sakai – Let's talk about human rights issues! (Comprehensive Workshop)
- 4 Human Rights of the Elderly (Community Human Rights Promotion Committee Workshop)
Fight against Hate Speech!
- 5 – 6 ... Residents' essays – Selected entries from the “My Human Rights Message” essay contest
- 7 Human rights quiz, etc.



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



Naohiro Kanamaru
Chairperson

Please get involved in our activities!

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.



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 Council



Street educational activities during Human Rights Week



Directors of the Council

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Chairperson | Naohiro Kanamaru (Business Members Committee of the Council) |
| Vice Chairperson | Teruo Kubo (Federation of Sakai City Residents' Associations) |
| Vice Chairperson | Noriko Yamaguchi (Sakai City Women's Association) |
| Vice Chairperson | Hitoshi Tanaka (Sakai City PTA Federation) |
| Vice Chairperson | Tadashi Shiramoto
(Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations) |
| Vice Chairperson | Masakatsu Ueda
(Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Schools) |
| Vice Chairperson | Takayuki Nakagawa
(Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League) |
| Vice Chairperson | Sachio Tani (Religious Groups Committee of the Council) |
| Treasurer | Atsuko Shibata
(Sakai City Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation) |
| Treasurer | Mitsuko Ogura
(District Committee of the Sakai City Human Rights Commissioners' Association) |



Educational activities in Ward Residents' Festivals



Comprehensive Workshop



Gathering of Residents to Protect Human Rights

Escalating Cyberbullying – The Current Situation and the Role of Adults

On December 3, 2014, the HREPC held the Citizens' Forum for Human Rights Protection, where Ms. Mayuko Watanabe, a media journalist, delivered a talk entitled "Escalating Cyberbullying – The Current Situation and the Role of Adults." She spoke in easily understandable terms, drawing on her wealth of reporting experience.

■ **How cell phones and smartphones have changed bullying**
Cyberbullying via cell phone and smartphone is characterized by anonymity, recording, storing, diffuseness and the absence of face-to-face contact.

With cell phones and smartphones, comments can be anonymously posted on the internet, sometimes becoming abusive because those involved cannot see each other. In addition, there is the hidden danger that anyone can become a target of bullying by not replying to messages and comments quickly enough.

■ **Methods of cyberbullying**
Cyberbullying using LINE (a predominantly smartphone-based free voice call and messaging application) includes the posting of slanderous messages, the whole group ignoring a particular group member's messages, and the removal of a specific person from a Line group by creating another group without telling the person about it.

Recent cases of cyberbullying have also involved the recording and posting on video-sharing sites of bullying victims being bullied. A more malicious method is sexual bullying, in which bullies take indecent pictures or videos of their targets and post them online along with targets' personal information. This can be enormously distressing to the victim and has in the past led to a victim's suicide.

■ **Measures to protect children**

It has become necessary to provide children with internet literacy education so that they can develop the ability to determine for themselves whether internet information is reliable or not, and use it properly without blindly believing it.

It is also important to teach them to take care not to post personal information online and to establish in-group rules. Cell phones and smartphones for children should be equipped with internet filtering software. Moreover, education on information ethics and lessons on the dangers of electronic communication is also important.

■ **Influence of the media**

Children are very easily influenced by the media. There is concern that some programs may encourage children to bully

others, describe bullying in a biased manner, or depict violence and sexual content that may have a bad influence on children. To respond to the influence of the media, adults too need to have media literacy. They need to judge whether information provided by the media is right or wrong, or reliable or not, before passing it on to children.

■ **What adults can do for children**

It is important to share information on internet crimes among schools and homes. We need to talk with children on a routine basis to share such information, and be proactive in telling them that we are interested in their use of the internet and that we want them to tell us immediately if they have any problems. It is important to make them feel they can easily talk with us.

In addition, adults often misunderstand the victims of bullying. There are three major misconceptions: 1) victims of bullying have problems; 2) victims of bullying are weak; and 3) victims should have taken the initiative in consulting someone before committing suicide due to bullying.

Bullying is not attributable to its victims, but to bullies' understanding of it. Children who committed suicide have expressed such departing words as "I can't hit my friends. If I hit them, we can't be friends any longer." These children were not weak; they had true strength. Instead, it is the bullies themselves who are immature and mentally weak because they cannot control their desire to bully others. Children have pride. As long as adults have a negative image of bullying victims, children will not seek help from them, especially their parents, because more than anything they want their parents to think that they are ordinary children.

It is important for adults to correct their misconceptions about bullying victims and to talk with children about bullying on a routine basis. We need to make children understand that it is bullies, and not their victims, who are completely to blame; that victims of bullying are not weak, but that bullies are both weak and immature; and that victims of bullying should stand tall and feel confident that they can talk with adults about their problems.



Current Situation and Issues of Buraku Discrimination

Report from the Comprehensive Workshop

– In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Dowa Issue Resolution Council Report



What is the Dowa Issue Resolution Council Report?

In December 1961, the Prime Minister inquired of the Dowa Issue Resolution Council of the basic strategies required to resolve various social and economic issues related to Dowa areas. In response to the inquiry, the Council submitted the Report in August 1965. It consisted of a preamble, the first, second and third parts of the body, and a conclusion. In the preamble, the Report was declared that rapidly resolving the Dowa issue is the responsibility of the state and the task of the people.

In the Comprehensive Workshop held on August 28, 2014, Mr. Kenzo Tomonaga, Director Emeritus at the Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Research Institute, delivered a lecture entitled “Current Situation and Issues of Buraku Discrimination – In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Dowa Issue Resolution Council Report.”

The Dowa Issue Resolution Council Report, submitted in August 1965, was drawn up through discussions over a long period of time and was based on a thorough investigation of the actual situation. The Report was epoch-making in that it pointed out that the Buraku issue was not the fault of people in Buraku areas, and that resolution of the Buraku issue was the responsibility of the state as well as the task of the people, because it was the fault of those who discriminated against people in Buraku areas.

In the third part of the Report, it was indicated that comprehensive and well-planned efforts to improve living environments, promote social welfare, stabilize industry and employment, advance education, and protect human rights were necessary. Amongst these tasks, the implementation of measures for the protection of human rights is lagging behind the most. The insufficiency of legal regulations on discrimination leads to low public awareness of the actual state of discrimination and its impact on those suffering discrimination. Consequently, it is not sufficiently recognized that discrimination is a serious social evil.

To eliminate Buraku discrimination, the following basic strategies are important: 1) prohibiting discrimination by law; 2) bringing effective relief to those suffering discrimination; 3)

improving the deplorable state of discrimination by taking special measures; 4) dispelling discriminatory ideas through education and public awareness initiatives; 5) respecting the individuality of people in Buraku areas and living together with them; and 6) reviewing the customs and legal systems that make it difficult to eliminate discrimination and establish human rights.

The year 2015 is a major milestone for the Dowa issue, because it is the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Report as well as the 20th anniversary of Japan's joining the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the international treaty which most strongly relates to the Buraku issue. This year also marks the 70th anniversary of Japan's defeat in World War II, a time for Japan to reconsider how it should view and reflect upon the issues of war, especially World War II. The most important thing is to recognize that elimination of discrimination and protection of human rights will ensure lasting peace.

To build a true peace, we need to eliminate discrimination and completely protect human rights. If people understand the evil of discrimination and the importance of human rights, they will be unable to kill each other. This will lead to a true peace, lasting peace.

World Café in Sakai – Let's talk about human rights issues!

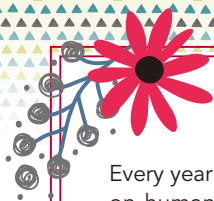
In the second part of the Comprehensive Workshop, entitled “World Café in Sakai – Let's talk about human rights issues!” attendees enjoyed discussions on human rights issues. In the World Café discussion format, participants are divided into small groups and repeatedly change seats to facilitate discussion.

First, the participants were provided an opportunity to introduce themselves and play simple games, so that they could easily communicate with each other. They then discussed the kinds of situations in which human rights violations occur, and what measures would be effective in eliminating those violations.

Feedback from participants included comments such as “We were able to engage in an honest discussion about human rights,” “By showing my real self I was able to understand both myself and other people better,” and “It was very helpful to listen to others' experiences.”

The workshop provided a good opportunity for participants to remember and share episodes of human rights violations and discrimination that they had experienced or felt and in so doing, better understand various human rights issues and reconsider what human rights really are.





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 of the Community Human Rights Promotion Committee and its members 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.



Personal Rights of the Elderly (Dementia)

On October 22, Dr. Hideki Yamamoto from the Osaka Branch, Alzheimer's Association Japan, delivered a lecture at the Sakai City Nishi Cultural Hall (Westy) entitled "Mild Cognitive Impairment and Early Dementia – What should we do when memory loss begins?"

Since the number of elderly people with dementia is expected to increase due to Japan's rapidly aging society in recent years, it is increasingly important that we eliminate prejudice towards people with dementia and their families, and remedy the lack of understanding about the condition. He talked about how we as caretakers should communicate with people with dementia and what we should do to slow the progression of dementia, based on his own

experiences as a physician.

Do people in your family regard elderly people as a nuisance due to their physical disabilities, or act or speak in ways that might harm their self-esteem? Do you know of elderly people who are prevented from doing housework or helping out despite wanting to?

Even though their physical performance declines as they age, it is important to recognize elderly family members as an important part of the family and to respect their independence, placing importance on communication with them in their daily lives, in order to protect their dignity.

The number of elderly people living alone or in households in which everyone is old is increasing. Accordingly, we need to build a cooperative society in which the whole community provides support for the elderly, including exchanging greetings with them and helping out neighbors in need.



Fight against Hate Speech!

Recently, demonstrations have been held in which people call for the expulsion of specific national and ethnic groups, express contempt for them, or promote discrimination and foment hatred against them.

Such behavior is called hate speech. It results in a sense of anxiety or ill will in those who are targeted, deeply impairs their dignity, and inspires discriminatory feelings in others.

We need to recognize that hate speech infringes human rights and be strongly motivated to fight against it.

We should increase our understanding of human

rights, correct mistaken perceptions, see human rights issues as our own problems, and take action to build a society where hate speech is not tolerated.

It is important for us to work together to build a multicultural society where all can live a comfortable life, understanding and respecting one another's culture and customs, and to develop and promote a human rights culture from Sakai City.



The 35th Essay Contest

“My Human Rights Message” From selected entries

The Moon Moves Water

Adult (3rd-year student enrolled in a junior high school evening course)

Did you know that the moon moves the water? I did not know this before I learned it in a science class. When I first heard that the tides are caused by the moon's gravity, I thought ah, so that's the way it is. I make it a habit to walk my dog along the bank of the Yamatogawa River every evening. One day, seeing the water in the river flowing upstream, I automatically looked up at the moon. I then realized that was just what I had learned in class. I will never forget how surprised I was. Just as the water flowed back, I will look back on my life.

I was born to Korean parents in Osaka. Although I was vaguely aware, even as a child, that I was a Korean, I had never been told that by my parents. After entering elementary school, I was told by my classmates “Koreans go home”, and realized that yes, I was a Korean. Despite that, since some classmates took my side, telling those who bullied me not to say such things, I had a reasonably good time at elementary school. However, by the time I went into the 4th grade, my family was too poor even to pay for school meals. Since I hated the derision my lack of lunch money drew, I finally stopped going to school. Instead, wanting to support my mother financially, I found work behind the scenes at a pachinko parlor. I earned only around 200 yen a day for a whole day's work. I went to work every day, though, even if I had a fever, since I wanted to receive the perfect attendance award. I also did various other jobs, including collecting iron scraps and shaving bricks. Since others around me worked as I did, I did not think of it as all that bad. Considering that my mother came to Japan knowing no Japanese, I did not think of my circumstances as hard at all.

When I was 19 years old, I married my husband, who was 23 years old, after an arranged marriage meeting. My husband was young and sometimes he would spend too much on entertainment, and not bring any of his salary home. We were not blessed with a child at first and I was told by my mother-in-law that even if he had a baby with another woman, I had to raise it as my own. My first, long-awaited baby, died three days after his birth. I have never been sadder than when he died. A daughter was then born to us, and our family bonds became stronger. I was happy in some small way, living with a husband who doted on our daughter and a mother-in-law who cared about my physical condition. However, life did not get easier and I was always busy, juggling helping with the family business, doing housework, and raising our daughter. One day a tax official came to our store and told me to show him our books. Since I had not even completed elementary school, anything resembling records was only in my head. I was very distressed and told him that if he wanted to see our books, he would have to split my head in two. This was, of course, not acceptable to him.

After reaching the age of 60, I had fewer financial problems, and my daughter recommended I take an evening course at Tonobaba Junior High School. Since I was not sure if I could keep up with my studies at school, I did not make up my mind to try until I was 71 years old.

Now, I am enjoying my studies a great deal. Whenever I read a newspaper or listen to the news, I feel like I am connected to the world. I will go to school tonight as well, to study under the moonlight.



Delightful Relay Race

Second-year elementary school student

I have a friend named A-kun. He has a congenital leg disability. When we were in the senior grade at kindergarten, we had a chance to participate in a relay race. Our teacher explained about the race and said that A-kun would run a lap around the track. He and I were on the same team. When we began to practice for the race, our team lost the practice race by about two laps. No matter how many times we practiced, we always lost the practice races. Other team members then began to say, "It's A-kun's fault we always lose. He should move to another team." When I heard them say that, it seemed wrong and I spent some time thinking about it.

I also wanted to win the race. However, A-kun was unable to run as fast as other members, no matter how hard he tried. I thought about it for many days, and came up with the idea that I would run much faster to compensate for

him. I practiced running every evening so that I could run much faster for him. Then, our team members talked together about the race and decided that



A-kun would run half as far as the other members.

On the relay race day, A-kun ran as fast as he could. When it was my turn, I ran at full speed. Our team finished second. Although we always finished fourth during practices, we were able to finish second on the day because everyone did their best. Everyone on the team was really happy. A-kun and I were also delighted. My mother cried her eyes out. All team members including A-kun ran with all their might in the race. I can still remember it now.

Bullying

First-year junior high school student

I have experienced being bullied.

I was very quiet and couldn't join any of the groups of kids at school, and was subjected to a torrent of abuse by boys during breaks between classes. Although I put up with the bullying at first, I finally reached my limit and began skipping school. I did not talk to my parents because I did not want to worry them. I cried every day and was filled with anxiety. However, no matter how hard I cried, nobody helped me. It hurt a lot.

One day, when I was reading a comic book as usual after coming home from school, I realized that the heroine of the comic book was exactly like me. Although she was also bullied, she was filled with a sense of justice and eventually stood up to the bullies and made them stop.

I realized that if I was always absent from school to escape from the bullying it would never stop, and that I had to tell them not to bully me if I did not want to be bullied.

The following day, when I went to school, I was teased by the boys again. Honestly speaking, I was filled with anxiety. However, I mustered up the courage to shout at them, "Stop

it! I can't stand this any longer!" With that, my heart felt a little lighter.

When I went to school the following day, the boys who had teased me apologized to me. I was delighted. I realized that all it takes for people to change is a bit of courage and hope.

I gradually became more actively involved in everything and started talking to classmates. Through that, I started making friends too.

Since I have been bullied, I will never tolerate bullying. I believe that there is never any excuse to bully another. To me, those who see bullying but turn a blind eye to it are the same as the bullies. When I see someone being bullied, I will reach out to him or her. I would like to break the bullying cycle, which seems to continue forever.



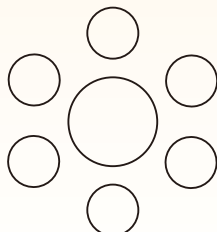
Human Rights Quiz

Give it a go! How do these shapes look?

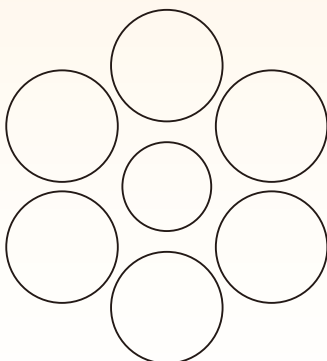
(The answers are at the bottom of the page.)

Q1. Which center circle is larger?

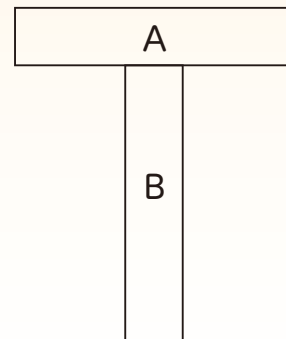
A



B



Q2. Which rectangle is longer, A or B?



Never Allow Discrimination!

The Constitution of Japan stipulates 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.”

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Dowa Issue Resolution Council Report. During the past 50 years, various actions have been taken to quickly resolve the Dowa issue, and the harsh living environment in Dowa areas has improved to some extent. However, discriminatory incidents that infringe human rights are still happening all around us.

As a recent example, a ward office received a phone call in which a person asked whether there were any Dowa areas in that ward. He wanted to know because he planned to move to the ward and his parents wanted him to avoid Dowa areas. In another case, the city government received a document stating that Sakai City should cut off the Dowa areas from the rest of city. These incidents show that some people want to avoid Dowa areas based on a deep-rooted sense of discrimination. This must not be

tolerated in our society.

It is important for all of us to obtain a basic knowledge and concept of human rights and see human rights issues as our own problems, and then show our intention to respect human rights by fighting against discrimination through our attitude and our actions.



Human Rights Quiz

Answers

- Q1.** The center circles A and B are exactly the same size.
Q2. The rectangles A and B are exactly the same size.

How did you do? In **Q1**, the circle A appears to be much larger, doesn't it? In **Q2**, the rectangle B appears to be much longer, doesn't it?

The shapes teach us how important it is for us to look at things from more than one angle. We always need to think about how we perceive, recognize and judge things in our interactions with others, and consider whether or not we are making a wrong assumption or being prejudiced.