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Abstract

On 7 Jul 2012, a concert was held at Makuhari Messe near Tokyo. The concert was part of a growing movement against nuclear power in the wake of the triple earthquake-tsunami-nuclear disaster in northeastern Japan on 11 March 2011. The headline performers were the Japanese band Yellow Magic Orchestra and the German band Kraftwerk. Since the earliest days of Yellow Magic Orchestra, band leader Sakamoto Ryuichi has forged an international career as a performer and composer, moving between Tokyo, New York and other global cities. In recent years, he has used his public profile to argue for environmental sustainability, so that it was unsurprising that he would become associated with the anti-nuclear movement. The concert was streamed live on the internet, and could be watched from anywhere (as long as one had an internet connection). Listeners thrilled to Sakamoto's techno reworking of the phrase 'Saikado Hantai' (opposing the resuming of operations, the chant from demonstrations against the restarting of the nuclear power plants which had been shut down since the earthquake-tsunami-nuclear crisis).

Keywords

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Reflections: The Rhythms of Internationalisation in Post-Disaster Japan

Vera Mackie

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On 7 July 2012, a concert was held in at Makuhari Messe near Tokyo.¹ The concert was part of a growing movement against nuclear power in the wake of the triple earthquake-tsunami-nuclear disaster in northeastern Japan on 11 March 2011. The headline performers were the Japanese band Yellow Magic Orchestra and the German band Kraftwerk. Since the earliest days of Yellow Magic Orchestra, band leader Sakamoto Ryūichi has forged an international career as a performer and composer, moving between Tokyo, New York and other global cities. In recent years, he has used his public profile to argue for environmental sustainability,² so that it was unsurprising that he would become associated with the anti-nuclear movement. The concert was streamed live on the internet, and could be watched from anywhere (as long as one had an internet connection). Listeners thrilled to Sakamoto's techno reworking of the phrase '*Saikadō Hantai*' (opposing the resuming of operations), the chant from demonstrations against the restarting of the nuclear power plants which had been shut down since the earthquake-tsunami-nuclear crisis.³

Disasters reveal the fault lines of a society in a particularly vivid and visceral way. This is true not only of the Fukushima Disaster of 2011, but also of earlier catastrophes. The Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 revealed the dark side of early twentieth century Japanese society. The aftermath of the earthquake revealed the bodies of young women who had burned to death because they had been locked away in brothels and unable to escape; the police were revealed to have murdered labour activists and anarchists; and unfounded rumours about looting and sabotage by Korean immigrants led to violent purges.⁴ At the same time, however, the Great Kantō Earthquake was a time for international connectedness, as humanitarian organisations like the Red Cross provided relief, while experts like Charles A. Beard (1874–1948) and Mary Beard (1876–1958) came to assist in reconstruction planning. The Awaji-Hanshin Earthquake of 1995 revealed the inadequacies of the centralised disaster response of the Japanese government, but this was also a turning point in the development of volunteering, culminating in the enactment of laws regulating non-profit organisations (NPOs), and the development of new welfare partnerships between the government and NPOs. Despite prompt offers of assistance from international organisations and other national governments, the Japanese government was slow to take up these offers in 1995. The government has learned from the policy failings of 1995, however, and responses to the Awaji-Hanshin earthquake paved the way for the handling of the Fukushima disaster (Avenell 2012: 53–77). Members of international and national relief organisations were on the scene relatively quickly in 2011, and US troops stationed in Japan embarked on 'Operation Tomodachi' (Operation Friend) to make their skills available for the relief effort (Robertson 2012).⁵

The compound disaster of 11 March 2011 was an intensely local and an intensely national experience. Attention was focused on the impoverished prefectures of northeastern Japan, an area which hosted nuclear power plants; a region with a disproportionate number of the nation's elderly and unemployed; and the locus of rural communities which had welcomed immigrant workers and international marriage partners. Tōhoku University in Sendai also

hosts a significant number of international students.⁶ The disaster also occasioned reflections on national character, national identity and national resilience. I would like to argue, however, that the disaster also revealed much about the internationalisation of Japan, which throws into relief many of the ideas canvassed in this volume. The response to the Fukushima Disaster has been a truly international one, as exemplified in the abovementioned ‘No Nukes’ concert.

In the crudest physical sense, this was a disaster of international dimensions. Although the earthquake largely focused on the northeast of Japan and surrounding seas, the effects of the tsunami were experienced in Hawaii, the Philippines, Pacific island nations, and the Pacific coast of the Americas, resulting in damage to ports and coastal settlements. Over a year later, we were still seeing reports of debris washed up on the other side of the Pacific Ocean (‘Japan tsunami victim’s soccer ball found in Alaska’ 2012; ‘Workers cut up tsunami dock on Oregon beach’ 2012). Traces of lethal plutonium were detected on the other side of the Pacific, too (Fujioka 2011). The effects of the nuclear meltdowns, explosions and the leakage of contaminated water cannot, then, be contained within the notional boundaries of the Japanese nation-state or its coastal waters. The movements of air and water are unpredictable, and the winds and sea currents take radioactive contamination well beyond Japan’s national borders. This contamination also finds its way into the food chain, making it difficult to ensure the safety of seafood, for we can never be certain which waters the sea creatures have traversed, and which animals further up the food chain have consumed contaminated seafood.

The crisis was international in the sense of being experienced (albeit at second-hand for many) through global media and social media. People around the globe saw the devastation wrought by the tsunami thanks to footage taken on mobile phones and disseminated through Facebook, Twitter and other social media, and re-broadcast on both conventional media and the internet. All over the world, people could watch the progress of events on the national broadcaster NHK on live stream through sites like Nico Nico Dōga. The US-based Cable News Network, CNN, immediately dispatched several journalists to Japan and provided continuous coverage. In the US, a survey revealed that close to 60 per cent of the American public were following the issue during March 2011 (Tkach-Kawasaki 2012: 110). This was also the occasion for a global outpouring of empathy, sympathy and solidarity. As Slater, Nishimura and Kinstrand (2012) note, with respect to the new social media which facilitated communication about the disaster, ‘what were once considered the personal, private, even intimate domains of micro-sociality became engaged in an alternative politics that reached others around the world’.

This emotional attachment was followed up by charity campaigns, through conventional charity organisations such as the Red Cross, overseas offices of such organisations as the Japan Foundation, overseas NGOs and links from the websites of news organisations like CNN. In the US, the Red Cross advertised during the Super Bowl (one of the major sporting events of the year with the highest television viewership) to solicit donations for the Tōhoku relief effort (Slater, Nishimura and Kinstrand 2012). In February 2012, the Japan Red Cross reported that it had transferred US\$4.5 billion to affected communities, of which US\$4 billion came from international donors (excluding sister Red Cross societies) (Robertson 2012).

The intertwining of the national and the international was brought into focus when the Japanese women’s soccer team, known as Nadeshiko Japan, beat the US team in the FIFA World Women’s Soccer championship in July 2011 (Kingston 2012a: 11). This was seen as a

boost to Japan's post-disaster recovery. It was interesting that it was the women's soccer team, with the quintessentially feminine name of 'Nadeshiko', who restored national pride and feelings of resilience.⁷ The existence of such a team is the fruit of recent decades of engagement with the international soccer system (Kelly, in this volume).

In addition to the international humanitarian focus, there was also a burgeoning international movement against nuclear power – building on over half a century of activism. As the movement against nuclear power developed, those of us who could not attend the various demonstrations watched from afar through links provided by social media. Demonstrations and commemorations in solidarity with our friends in Japan were held in various parts of the world, including New York, Paris and various Australian cities (Morris 2011b; *Japan: Fissures in the Planetary Apparatus* 2012; and see below). Activists in Japan increasingly addressed an international audience, such as the 'Mothers of Fukushima', who disseminated an English-language video on YouTube to express their concerns about the safety of their children ('Heartfelt appeal by Fukushima mothers' 2011; Horiuchi 2011; Slater 2011). The reference points for understanding were also international, with comparisons being made with the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the former Soviet Union, the Three Mile Island incident in the US, the Bhopal chemical pollution incident in India and Hurricane Katrina in the US. Japan's experience of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was also referenced (Stevens 2012): place names whose meaning is instantly recognised throughout the world as heralding the beginning of the nuclear age.⁸ The anti-nuclear movement took on the name 'hydrangea revolution' (*ajisai kakumei*), making links with the concurrent Arab Spring, the Occupy Movement and the 'jasmine revolution' in Tunisia (Yang 2012; Slater, Nishimura and Kinstrand 2012).

Internationalisation within

The response to the disaster reflects two aspects of internationalisation, which I would like to refer to as 'internationalisation within' and 'internationalisation beyond borders'. While much of the official discourse on internationalisation refers to government policy and economic activities (Fukui and Steele; Goodman and Breaden; and Okano, in this volume), there are also various forms of grassroots internationalisation. Members of many Japanese families have had experience of living overseas for periods of their lives, on study-abroad programs, as exchange students or international students, as working-holiday makers (Kawashima 2010: 267–86; Kawashima, in this volume), as workers in transnational corporations (Mizukami 2007; Sedgwick 2008), as educators, academics and teachers of martial arts (Kobayashi 2006) and traditional arts (Steele, in this volume), as workers in the tourism and hospitality industries (Hamada and Stevens, in this volume), or as members of sporting teams which compete overseas (Kelly; Kawai and Nichol; Watts and Gilbert, in this volume). Members of such families are likely to have friendship networks which cross national borders, and their children may have international perspectives due to their experiences of education overseas (Goodman 2012: 30–53). Nevertheless, as pointed out by Kawashima in Chapter 6, the experience of internationalisation is unevenly distributed along class lines and regional lines, a situation she describes as 'uneven cosmopolitanism'.

It is no longer unusual to encounter individuals from other countries in daily life in Japan, for the country is a destination for international students, skilled workers, labour migrants, labour trainees and marriage migrants.⁹ Immigrant workers may be encountered working in convenience stores and restaurants, as cooks, cleaners and housekeepers in hotels, on construction sites and in factories, and as carers for the elderly and infirm. Banking, finance,

legal firms, transnational corporations and academia increasingly include international workers, while working holiday programs and exchange teacher programs bring in people from selected countries (Mackie 2010: 71–85). Companies such as Uniqlo, Lawson convenience stores, and Hitachi electronics have targeted international recruits in recent years, with a particular focus on those who have graduated from Japanese universities (Breaden and Goodman, in this volume).

The family itself is also increasingly the site of encounters with difference. In cases of international marriage, members of the one family may have different or multiple nationalities, cultures and languages, including children of mixed heritage. Such families mean that international connections and perspectives exist not only within the boundaries of the Japanese nation-state, but within the very home itself. In such families, the network of kin stretches beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, where the non-Japanese marriage partner has relatives in one or more other parts of the world. Even where the non-Japanese partner takes on Japanese nationality through naturalisation, these international cultural reference points, friendship networks and kinship networks remain. Some international marriages, of course, are entered into overseas, or involve domicile overseas, in the partner's country or a third country. The ubiquity of international marriage in contemporary Japan is reflected in the long-running 'Mixed Matches' series of articles in the *Japan Times*. Every fortnight since 2007, the English-language daily profiles an international couple, bringing home the notion that cosmopolitanism is being practised in households all over the country (*Japan Times* 2007–13). According to the Ministry of Health, about 5.1 per cent of all marriages, or 36,969 out of the 726,106 couples who wed in 2008, were international marriages, up from 25,626 mixed marriages in 1990 (Ito 2009). McNeill at al report that one in every 30 babies born in Japan has at least one non-Japanese parent (2009). Official statistics underestimate the diversity of the family, however, for they have no way of capturing those marriages where the non-Japanese partner has naturalised as Japanese. Census statistics focus on nationality rather than ethnic heritage, culture or identity.

There is another sense in which the family in early twenty-first century Japan has become internationalised. The family is often thought of as exclusively made up of a group of individuals who are connected by kinship ties – in vernacular terms, by 'blood ties'. The nuclear family based on kinship is, however, an institution tied to specific times and places. Feudal households were generally made up not only of kin, but also of various servants, labourers and apprentices who contributed to the family economy. In Japanese society, where adoption is practised for various purposes, biological reproduction has always been supplemented by other ways of making families. In the early twenty-first century, however, other demographic forces are changing the family, so much so that many commentators are suggesting a return to the language of 'households' rather than 'families'. The concept of the 'global household' (and the phrase 'global householding') is increasingly being used to describe the complex webs of kinship and connectedness surrounding families composed through international marriages (Douglass 2011: 19; Piquero-Ballescas 2009: 77–99).

As members of Japanese families cope with the challenge of caring for their aging relatives, they are increasingly relying on the assistance of individuals from outside the nuclear family and kinship networks. Elderly people are being cared for by a combination of family members, volunteers, and paid carers. This may take place in a family home shared with kin, in a single-person household visited by kin, volunteers or paid carers, or in an institutional setting supported by kin, volunteers or paid carers. In some cases, expatriate family members may return to Japan from overseas at certain times of the year to assist with care for elderly

family members.

Until the 1990s, it seemed unimaginable that immigrant workers would be part of the solution for dealing with the crisis in elder care. In the twenty-first century, however, this has become a reality. As there are not enough Japanese workers willing or able to engage in caring labour, it has become necessary to bring in immigrant workers who are qualified as nurses or carers, or to facilitate their entry into the country in order to undertake training. The Japanese government has entered into bilateral agreements with the Philippines, Indonesia and, most recently, Vietnam, for the entry of small numbers of trainees who undertake training as carers (Mackie 2010: 80–81; ‘Japan to Accept Nurse Candidates from Vietnam’ 2012; Mackie 2013). The scale and forms of such immigration through official channels are being closely controlled and monitored, but there are also various unofficial channels, whereby families and NPOs are employing care workers from overseas (Piquero-Ballescás 2009: 127–38). Where the care of the elderly and infirm is carried out by immigrant carers with no kinship ties, then the family home itself has become the site for daily interactions between individuals of different nationalities, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. Care provision also takes on an international dimension when the elderly reside overseas, through long-term emigration or through moving offshore on retirement. Once overseas, as in Japan, care may be provided through a combination of family-based care, volunteer work and paid care – in homes or in institutions (Shiobara 2011: 406–8).

Behind these statistics is the reality of dealing with difference in everyday life. Power relationships are forged in daily encounters between partners in international marriages and their relatives, care workers and their clients, factory workers and their employers, construction workers and their bosses, night club singers and their customers. Sociologist Mica Nava has coined the term ‘visceral cosmopolitanism’ (2007: 8), which captures the insight that cosmopolitanism is not simply a matter of high culture and politics, but also involves the daily interactions between individuals of different cultural backgrounds. These interactions take place in the streets, shops, entertainment districts, service industries, sporting fields and the workplace. Such interactions also take place when individuals of different cultural backgrounds form friendships, romantic relationships, partnerships and marriages. Such encounters and relationships between individuals of different cultural backgrounds, ethnicities and racialised positioning are ‘cosmopolitan’ in that they are sites for the negotiation of cultural difference. This negotiation is ‘visceral’, according to Nava, because it takes place in quotidian, intimate, embodied interactions. It could be argued that contemporary Japan also provides a site for the experience of such ‘visceral cosmopolitanism’, through daily encounters with difference in the workplace and the streets. The family (or, perhaps, the household) is also increasingly becoming the site for encounters with difference, with potential for the forging of new forms of cosmopolitan consciousness.

Internationalisation beyond borders

Other families become international through relocation of family members overseas. In 2009 there were 1,131,607 Japanese people living overseas, of whom 373,559 were long-term overseas residents. Of those living overseas, 446,854 were in North America, 312,301 in Asia, 85,009 in South America, 48,764 in Europe, 46,724 in Oceania and 622 in Africa (Statistics Bureau of Japan 2012). In addition, the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad claims there are about 2.5 million people of Japanese descent living in their adopted countries. Communities all over the world are also linked to Japan through sister city (and

prefecture) programs. Australia alone has over 100 such relationships (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2012).

When someone of Japanese nationality (or heritage, in the case where they take up citizenship elsewhere) resides overseas, their local connections are overlaid with cultural reference points, friendship networks and kinship networks which stretch back to Japan (Itoh 2010; Itoh 2012). They may also be embedded in Japanese diasporic communities in their host country. The Japanese government facilitates the establishment of overseas Japanese-language schools for the children of expatriates, and these schools are also supported by paid workers and volunteers from the overseas Japanese community (Mizukami 2007: 135–64). Diasporic Japanese communities are also involved in welfare activities, providing advice to international students and working-holiday-makers, facilitating the settling-in process for new immigrants, and providing care for the elderly in their communities (Shiobara 2011, 395–414; Hope Connection 2012).

The city of Melbourne in Australia provides one example of the kinds of organisations developed by overseas diasporic communities, a pattern which is repeated with variations in other places which host members of the Japanese diaspora around the world. Melbourne has a Japan Club (*Nihonjinkai*) which largely caters to sojourners who staff the local branch offices of Japanese companies. There is a Japan-Australia Society, which makes connections with the broader Australian community. Hope Connection is a volunteer organisation which provides information, telephone counselling and welfare services to the Japanese community (Mizukami 2007: 135–64; Shiobara 2011: 395–414; Hope Connection 2012). There are also numerous, more informal associations which bring together immigrant Japanese parents and their children (Hamano 2008). Another kind of community organisation – Japanese for Peace – was formed in 2005 (the sixtieth anniversary year of the end of the Second World War) by some members of the Melbourne expatriate Japanese community. They were concerned to go beyond the negative memories of the Second World War among some members of the Australian community (Japanese for Peace 2012a) in order to build new connections.

The ‘3/11’ compound disaster also galvanised expatriate Japanese communities. On 11 March 2012, I stood on the steps of the State Library of Victoria in Melbourne, my pulse quickening to the rhythm of taiko drums.¹⁰ Around me was a crowd of people who had gathered to commemorate the losses of the combined earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown. Children milled about, offering masks to the assembled crowd. The masks were yellow and black, a hybrid image of the sign denoting nuclear radiation and a face which mimicked Edvard Munch’s painting, ‘The Scream’.¹¹ I was not able to do a comprehensive survey of the crowd, but my impression is that there was a combination of long-term immigrants and residents of Japanese heritage, academics, students, working holiday-makers and tourists, Australians with a connection with Japan, Australians with a commitment to the anti-nuclear issue, and journalists. Several speakers noted Australia’s connections with the disaster, for uranium from Australian mines has fuelled nuclear power plants in northeastern Japan.¹²

In front of me on the library steps, a Japanese journalist practised his address to a video-camera. He was preparing his report for a television station back in Japan. Cameras, video-cameras and mobile phone cameras were ubiquitous on this occasion. People took photos and videos for their own records, to post on UStream, Facebook pages, blogs, or the websites of their organisations. The commemoration and demonstration was streamed live, so that anyone with an interest could tune in from around the world. A major sponsor of the

demonstration was the abovementioned Japanese for Peace, who co-operated with other local organisations devoted to pacifism, the anti-nuclear cause and the issue of Aboriginal self-determination (Japanese for Peace 2012b). New social media enabled a series of rhythmical feedback loops. People in Melbourne and other cities followed the progress of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan through social media, but also broadcast their own activities to their friends and comrades in Japan.

Other responses to the disaster build on earlier forms of international connectedness, once again with a cyclical character but with a longer timeframe. Roger Pulvers (2012) reports on plans for rice-growers in Australia to sell short grain rice 'back' to Japan, building on a local rice-growing industry in Southeastern Australia which had been established by Takasuka Isaburō, a Japanese immigrant to Australia in the early twentieth century.¹³ The World Tambo Project revealed plans to send displaced farmers from Fukushima to Australia to recuperate and participate in a project to grow Koshihikari rice in Queensland.

Recent events in Japan illustrate many of the themes which have been explored in this book, reflecting elements of internationalisation, globalisation and transnational politics. The commemorations and demonstrations described above exemplify the themes of hybridity, translation and glocalisation – different modes of dealing with the complexity of our increasingly interconnected world under conditions of globalisation (Stevens and Breaden; Hamada and Stevens, in this volume). The aftermath of what has come to be known as '3/11' has also brought home the importance of emotion and affect in the processes of internationalisation, globalisation and transnational connectedness, as new social media have facilitated communication across borders and the expression of solidarity and empathy across borders.

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Endnotes

¹ The *Japan Times* reported that, as of 8 July 2012, there had been a cumulative total of more than 216,000 online viewers for the live feed on UStream ('Slideshow: Kraftwerk, YMO sing the No Nukes Rally Cry' 2012; Manabe 2012).

² See the forum 'Conscious Inspiration: Juxtaposing Nature and Art Form', with Sakamoto Ryūichi, architect Ban Shigeru and artist Mori Mariko at the Japan Society of New York, 23 March 2010. Sakamoto and Mori are exemplars of artists who operate in an increasingly global context. Their increasingly international profile builds on such artists as Yoko Ono and Kusama Yayoi, whose work has never been contained within the boundaries of one nation-state (Japan Society of New York 2010; Yoshimoto 2005; Holland 2010).

³ For a short time, all of Japan's nuclear power stations were shut down. The largest demonstrations were occasioned by government plans to restart the Ōi reactor, and these demonstrations have continued to the present.

⁴ After the Fukushima disaster, too, there were postings on the infamous '2channeru' ('2channel', or '2ch') bulletin board, making racist comments about Chinese and Koreans (Slater, Nishimura and Kinstrand 2012).

⁵ For official US military reporting on Operation Tomodachi, see United States Forces Japan (2012) and United States Air Force (2012).

⁶ See John Morris's comments on some Pakistani residents in Sendai who cooked Pakistani food for residents of a refuge, and were hailed as valued members of the local community, and on Chinese and Philippine women contributing to relief efforts in their local communities (Morris 2011a and 2011b; see also Kamiya 2011a, 2011b and 2011c). On the destinations of international marriage partners in Japan, see Liaw, Ochiai and Ichikawa (2010: 49–86). On the gendered dimensions of the March 2011 crisis, see Kano and Mackie (2012: 28–9). Tōhoku University hosted 1497 international students in 2011 (Breaden and Goodman, in this volume).

⁷ *Nadeshiko* refers to the pink Dianthus flower (Caryophyllaceae), which is said to symbolise Japanese femininity.

⁸ To be more precise, the nuclear age started with the Manhattan Project and nuclear testing in the Nevada desert, but it is the names of 'Hiroshima' and 'Nagasaki' which have instant recognition. Oda Makoto, in his novel *Hiroshima* (1981), translated as *The Bomb* (1990), has explored the global dimensions of the nuclear age, including nuclear testing in the Pacific and outback Australia.

⁹ In 2011, there were 138,075 international students in Japan. At 3.5 per cent of all higher education students, this is below the OECD average (Breaden and Goodman, in this volume).

¹⁰ There are numerous troupes of taiko drummers in Australia, and they often perform at community events involving the Japanese community, or at events celebrating multiculturalism and diversity. This could be seen as an example of 'glocalisation', where cultural practices from Japan are adapted and embedded in local communities.

¹¹ Graphic variations on the black-and-yellow sign for radiation were also a feature of demonstrations in Japan and other countries.

¹² While beyond the scope of this essay, the establishment of the nuclear power industry in post-war Japan was also an international affair, involving advice from such US corporations as General Electric (Tanaka and Kuznick 2011; Nelson 2011; Brasor 2011). More recently the Japanese nuclear power industry has been involved in the international promotion of the nuclear industry in third world countries.

¹³ On the history of Japanese communities in Australia, see Jones and Mackie (2001).