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Power struggles: the strategies and tactics of the anti-nuclear movement in contemporary Tokyo

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**UNIVERSITY OF
WOLLONGONG**



**School of Humanities and Social Inquiry
Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts**

**Power Struggles: The Strategies and Tactics of the Anti-nuclear Movement in
Contemporary Tokyo**

Alexander James Brown

**This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the degree**

Doctor of Philosophy

from the

University of Wollongong

2015

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I explore the strategies and tactics of the anti-nuclear movement in the Japanese capital Tokyo after the Fukushima nuclear disaster of March 2011. A little over a year later the anti-nuclear movement had grown to become the largest social movement in the archipelago in more than half a century. The compound effects of the earthquake and tsunami of 11 March 2011 and the nuclear accident at Fukushima intensified existing dissatisfaction not only with the nuclear industry but with the decaying institutions of Japan's capitalist developmental state. In this thesis I use autonomist Marxist perspectives to situate the disaster against the backdrop of the breakdown of capitalist developmentalism and the transition to a post-industrial society. The image of the smouldering nuclear reactors in Fukushima reminded Tokyo residents of the way urban life in the developmental state had come to depend on the exploitation of the rural periphery for resources such as the cheap electricity generated in the nuclear power plants. This thesis is distinctive in its focus on the role of urban space in the anti-nuclear protest movement in Japan after Fukushima. I draw on the field of critical urban studies to examine the nature of contentious politics in a post-industrial society through the lens of the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo. In five detailed case studies, I describe the way anti-nuclear activists staged their opposition to nuclear power in the streets of the metropolis. Activists held carnivalesque street protests to express their emotional responses to the nuclear disaster; developed an infrastructure of activist spaces to support their protests; strengthened their relationships with one another; and experimented with new forms of democratic politics. These interventions transformed the order of public space in the city and reclaimed it as a place where citizens could participate in politics. The protests in 2011 and 2012 took place in the context of global uprisings such as Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring. I place the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo within this context. I argue that the diverse tactical interventions staged by anti-nuclear activists in Tokyo suggest a wider strategic vision of the city as a space for creative self-expression, sustainable livelihoods, strong communities and grassroots democracy.

CERTIFICATION

I, Alexander James Brown, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Humanities and Social Inquiry, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Alexander James Brown
29 June 2015

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When I set out to write a doctoral dissertation in June 2010 I had little idea of just how much work would be involved. While I lay claim to the authorship of this dissertation and take responsibility for any errors it may contain, it could not have been written without the care and support of many people.

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The various reading groups I have taken part in during my candidacy in Wollongong contributed immeasurably to the development of the ideas in this thesis. I discussed Hardt and Negri, communism and the politics of love with Nick Southall, Michelle Collis, Claire Johnston, Shirin Demirdag, Mark Gawne, Ian Miles, John Rainford, Lindsay Hawkins, Justin Westgate, Nick Skilton and Melanie Barnes. Particular thanks go to Nick, Ian and John, who carefully read the manuscript and offered detailed comments. John also kindly proofread the final draft. It is hard to find words to describe the profound influence Nick Southall has had on my personal and intellectual growth. I thank him for his comradeship through 16 years of struggle both within and without the walls of academe.

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No-one deserves more thanks than the millions of people whose names I do not know but who have taken to the streets of Tokyo and cities around the world to try and make this world a better place in which to live. They are my inspiration and I have tried through this project to pay tribute to their example.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Anpo | Nippon koku to Amerika gasshūkoku to no aida no sōgo kyōryoku oyobi anzen hoshō jōyaku (Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan) |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| DPJ | Democratic Party of Japan |
| IAEA | International Atomic Energy Agency |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| Kantei | Shushō Kantei (Official Residence of the Prime Minister) |
| Keidanren | Nihon Keizai Dantai Rengōkai (Japan Business Federation) |
| KEPCO | Kansai Electric Power Company |
| LDP | Liberal Democratic Party |
| MCAN | Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes |
| METI | Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry |
| MITI | Ministry of International Trade and Industry |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| Seikyō | Nihon Seikatsu Kyōdō Kumiai Rengō Kai (Japan Consumers' Cooperative Union) |
| TEPCO | Tokyo Electric Power Company |
| UN | United Nations |

NOTES ON JAPANESE NAMES AND TERMINOLOGY

Japanese names appear in this thesis with the family name first and given name second as is typical in Japan. Exceptions to this occur when a Japanese author's English work is being cited or when a Japanese author has been published widely in English. Japanese terms are Romanised according to the revised Hepburn system. All Japanese terms appear in italics except for the names of organisations and places. Translations from the Japanese are my own, unless otherwise specified. I have done my utmost to ensure the accuracy of the translations and sought advice from supervisors and Japanese native speakers where I was unsure. Any remaining errors of translation or transliteration are my responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

At 14:46 on 11 March 2011 a magnitude 9 earthquake struck 90 kilometres off the north-east coast of Japan. Forty minutes later, an enormous tsunami triggered by the quake made landfall in the Tōhoku region of north-east Japan.¹ The earthquake and tsunami caused extensive damage to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, leading to a major nuclear accident.² This complex series of overlapping disasters has come to be known as ‘3.11’. It prompted an outpouring of anti-nuclear sentiment across the Japanese archipelago and around the world. By 29 June 2012 an estimated 200,000 people were protesting outside the prime minister’s official residence in Tokyo.³ This was the largest street demonstration to take place in the archipelago in more than fifty years. As Japan’s political, economic and cultural capital, Tokyo was at the centre of the new wave of anti-nuclear activism. This thesis describes and analyses the strategy and tactics of the anti-nuclear movement in the metropolis after 3.11.

Sociologist Oguma Eiji has argued that a widespread fear of radioactive contamination after 3.11 does not sufficiently explain the growth of the anti-nuclear movement. He suggests that the movement grew so rapidly and so widely because the costly and bureaucratic nuclear power industry came to symbolise the broader failures of ‘Japanese-style industrialising society’ (*Nihon gata kōgyōka shakai*).⁴ Japan’s rapid industrialisation in the post-Second World War period (referred to

¹ This account of the disaster is drawn from Tom Gill, Brigitte Steger, and David H. Slater, ‘The 3.11 Disasters’, in *Japan Copes with Calamity: Ethnographies of the Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disasters of March 2011* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), 3–7.

² The accident was eventually rated as a Level 7 incident on the International Atomic Energy Agency’s International Nuclear Event Scale. This is the highest possible rating on the scale and only the second nuclear accident in history to be given this rating. The only other nuclear accident to have been given a Level 7 rating was the 1986 Chernobyl disaster in the Soviet Ukraine.

³ The attendance figures given for demonstrations in this thesis are taken from a list compiled by political scientist Kinoshita Chigaya unless otherwise stated. See Kinoshita Chigaya, ‘2011 nen ikō no hangenpatsu demo risuto [List of Anti-nuclear Demonstrations Held Since 2011]’, in *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito: 3.11 kara kantaei mae made [People Who Stop Nuclear Power Plants: From 3.11 to the Prime Minister’s Residence]*, ed. Oguma Eiji (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2013), Appendix 1 – 38.

⁴ Oguma Eiji, *Shakai o kaeru ni wa [To Change Society]* (Kōdansha, 2012), 55.

hereafter as ‘the post-war’),⁵ was based on the expansion of manufacturing industry. While strong economic growth facilitated a rapid increase in living standards for the majority of people, by the early 1990s the Japanese economy had run out of steam. Having recorded average annual growth of 10 per cent during the height of the post-war boom in the 1960s, growth rates slumped in the 1990s to an average of 1 per cent per annum.⁶ The proportion of the labour force employed in manufacturing peaked in 1992. Then, in 1994, the service sector surpassed manufacturing as the largest employer.⁷ This transformation reflected a broader global shift in the industrialised world from manufacturing to service sector-led economies. This transformation has been described in terms of a transition from an ‘industrial’ to a ‘post-industrial’ or ‘information’ society.⁸ In this thesis I situate the growth of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan after 3.11 in this context.

The process of post-industrialisation has led to an increase in insecure, casual, part-time and temporary forms of work.⁹ Young workers in Japan who do not have access to stable, full-time work are commonly referred to as ‘*furiitā*’ (usually anglicised as ‘freeters’). The term was coined in the late 1980s by the recruitment magazine *Furomu A* in advertisements for casual part-time employment. By prefixing the

⁵ In Japanese historiography, the post-Second World War period is generally regarded as a definite historical period designated as ‘*sengo*’ (‘post-war’). While the term has been criticised for its seemingly limitless elasticity it remains in general use and I adopt it here. For a critical perspective on the notion of the ‘post-war’ see Harry Harootunian’s essays, ‘Japan’s Long Postwar: The Trick of Memory and the Ruse of History’, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 99, no 4 (2000): 715–739; ‘The Execution of Tosaka Jun and Other Tales: Historical Amnesia, Memory, and the Question of Japan’s “Postwar”’, in *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory, and the Post-Cold War in Asia*, ed. Sheila Miyoshi Jager and Rana Mitter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 150–171.

⁶ Arthur J. Alexander, *The Arc of Japan’s Economic Development* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008).

⁷ Oguma, *Shakai o kaeru ni wa*, 15.

⁸ This is the designation favoured by Oguma in *Shakai o kaeru ni wa* and I adopt it throughout this thesis. The notion of a post-industrial society took on growing importance of knowledge as a source of profit prompted sociologists as diverse as Daniel Bell in the United States and Alain Touraine in France to propose the ‘post-industrial society’ thesis as early as the 1960s and 1970s. Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (London: Heinemann, 1974); Alain Touraine, *The Post-Industrial Society* (London: Wildwood House, 1974). The concept overlaps with more recent work on the ‘information society’. See for example, Manuel Castells, ‘Flows, Networks, Identities: A Critical Theory of the Informational Society’, in *Critical Information in the New Information Age* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999). For a consideration of the ‘information society’ thesis in the Japanese context see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Beyond Computopia: Information, Automation, and Democracy in Japan* (London: Kegan Paul, 1988).

⁹ As Vosko points out, most of the advanced economies within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have experienced an increase in at least one form of non-standard employment since the 1970s. See Leah F. Vosko, *Temporary Work: The Gendered Rise of a Precarious Employment Relationship* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 28.

German loan word ‘*arubaitā*’ (part-timer)¹⁰ with the English word ‘free’ *Furomu A* promoted the idea of a ‘free part-timer’. This casual relationship to work appealed to many young people during the boom years of the 1980s and it soon became an everyday term to describe a new type of casual employment.¹¹ After the economic crisis of the 1990s, however, the number of freeters increase dramatically and the positive associations of personal autonomy associated with the word gave way to new anxieties about the lack of security which casual work entails. In response to the crisis, new forms of ‘freeter activism’ emerged in Tokyo and other urban centres.¹² After 3.11, many freeter activists played a leading role in the anti-nuclear movement.¹³ In this thesis, I explain how the strategies and tactics of freeter activism in the 1990s and 2000s were taken up in the anti-nuclear movement.

The growing number of freeters in Japan is an example of the global tendency towards an increasingly precarious employment relationship. A recent report by the International Labour Organization found that, worldwide, just one in four workers is employed on a permanent contract.¹⁴ Gill and Pratt define as ‘precarious employment’, ‘all forms of insecure, contingent, flexible work—from illegalized, casualised and temporary employment, to homeworking, piecework and freelancing’.¹⁵ Precarious working conditions tend to produce an ‘interminable lack of certainty’ and a condition of ‘being unable to predict one’s fate or [have] some degree of stability on which to construct a life’.¹⁶ This instability is encapsulated in

¹⁰ *Arubaitaa* (part-time worker) and *arubaito* (part-time job) are derived from the German word *Arbeit* (work). The word *arubaito*, sometimes shortened to *baito*, refers to the kinds of part-time and seasonal work performed mainly by university students needing pocket money.

¹¹ Kosugi Reiko, *Escape from Work: Freelancing Work and the Challenge to Corporate Japan* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2008), 1.

¹² Carl Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan* (Leiden Boston: Global Oriental, 2014).

¹³ Akihiro Ogawa, ‘Young Precariat at the Forefront: Anti-Nuclear Rallies in Post-Fukushima Japan’, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 14, no 2 (March 2013): 317–326.

¹⁴ Katie Allen, ‘Most of the World’s Workers Have Insecure Jobs, ILO Report Reveals’, *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/may/19/most-of-the-worlds-workers-have-insecure-jobs-ilo-report-reveals>.

¹⁵ Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt, ‘In the Social Factory?: Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work’, *Theory, Culture and Society* 25, no 7–8 (2008): 3.

¹⁶ Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter, ‘From Precarity to Precariousness and Back Again’, *Fibreculture* no 5 (2005), <http://five.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-022-from-precarity-to-precariousness-and-back-again-labour-life-and-unstable-networks/>.

the term ‘precarity’ which has been coined to describe the general condition of insecurity attendant on precarious work.¹⁷ Some activists and scholars have proposed that the precarity of working life in the post-industrial economy has produced a new ‘precarious proletariat’ they term the ‘precariat’.¹⁸ In Japan, these notions of precarity and the precariat have been adopted by activists who are concerned with issues of homelessness, poverty, unemployment and insecure work.¹⁹

As an activist with a long-term interest in the issues of precarity and post-industrialisation, I approach the anti-nuclear movement in Japan as an engaged intellectual. I adopt a theoretical approach which is based in the heterodox Marxist current critical theorist David Eden refers to as the ‘perspective of autonomy’.²⁰ Autonomist thinkers such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have developed influential perspectives on the transformations associated with capitalist globalisation and the internationalisation of class struggle in post-industrial societies.²¹ As I will discuss further in Chapter One, autonomist perspectives have informed a number of activists and scholars who are involved in the precarity and anti-nuclear movements in Japan. Autonomist ideas have been interrogated by Marxist scholars as part of a revival of Marxist social thought in the post-industrial context. Although activists and social theorists in Asia have shown significant interest in these ideas, autonomists writing in English have largely neglected contemporary social movements in East Asia. This is a particularly glaring omission as the development of movements in East Asia has not been separate from the global trends which autonomists have theorised in other parts of the world. In this thesis I address this

¹⁷ Gill and Pratt, ‘In the Social Factory?: Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work’, 3

¹⁸ Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

¹⁹ See, for example, Amamiya Karin, Hangeki karuchā: purekariāto no yutaka na sekai [Cultural Counterattack: The Rich World of the Precariat] (Tokyo: Kadokawa gakugei shuppan, 2010).

²⁰ For general overviews of autonomist Marxist thought see Nick Dyer-Witheford, *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High-Technology Capitalism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Harry Cleaver, *Reading Capital Politically* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2000); David Eden, *Autonomy: Capitalism, Class and Politics* (Ashgate Pub Co, 2012). For an historical study of the workerist and autonomist currents in Italian Marxist thought in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s which gave rise to contemporary autonomism see Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism* (London: Pluto, 2002).

²¹ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004); *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 2009).

gap in the literature through a close examination of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan.

In 2011, while anti-nuclear activists took to the streets of Tokyo, protests were erupting in cities across the globe. Commencing with the Arab Spring in North Africa in late 2010, the uprisings spread across Europe and North America, from Cairo's Tahrir Square to the Plaza del Sol in Madrid to New York's Zuccotti Park.²² While each of these protests arose within a specific local context, Hardt and Negri point out that they articulated a series of common desires for grassroots democracy and against the increasingly precarious conditions of life in post-industrial societies.²³ Recognising the powerful impact of these social movements on world politics, *Time* magazine took the unusual step of naming 'The Protester' as its 2011 'person of the year'.²⁴ Yet *Time* and the Anglophone media have tended to neglect the important role played by social movements in East Asia in the global uprising of 2011. In the Anglophone academic literature, too, studies of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan have tended to neglect the commonalities between the anti-nuclear movement and these global events.²⁵ Activists and thinkers in Japan, on the other hand, have identified these commonalities.²⁶ In this thesis I address this gap in the Anglophone literature by situating the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo within the globalised culture of precarity activism.

²² Ernesto Castañeda, 'The Indignados of Spain: A Precedent to Occupy Wall Street', *Social Movement Studies* 11, no 3–4 (1 August 2012): 309–319; Alesio Lunghi and Seth Wheeler, *Occupy Everything: Reflections on Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2012), internal-pdf://Lunghi & Wheeler OccupyEverything 2012-0084283136/Lunghi & Wheeler OccupyEverything 2012.pdf; 'From Arab Spring to Global Revolution', *The Guardian*, 5 February 2013, accessed 6 February 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/feb/05/arab-spring-global-revolution>.

²³ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, 'Arabs Are Democracy's New Pioneers', *Guardian.co.uk*, 2011, London, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/feb/24/arabs-democracy-latin-america>; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Declaration* (Argo-Navis, 2012).

²⁴ Kurt Andersen, 'Person of the Year 2011: The Protester', *Time*, 14 December 2011, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2101745_2102132,00.html.

²⁵ Koichi Hasegawa, 'Facing Nuclear Risks: Lessons from the Fukushima Nuclear Disaster', *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* 21, no 1 (2012): 84–91; Daniel P. Aldrich, 'Post-Crisis Japanese Nuclear Policy: From Top-Down Directives to Bottom-Up Activism', *AsiaPacific Issues* no 103 (January 2012): 1–11. There are exceptions to this, see for example Vera Mackie and Susumu Yamaizumi, 'Introduction', in *Japan and the High Treason Incident*, ed. Masako Gavin and Ben Middleton (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 1–14.

²⁶ Ikuo Gono, 'Demo' to wa nani ka: henbō suru chokusetsu minshushugi [What is a 'Demo'? The Metamorphosis of Direct Democracy] (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2012); Oguma Eiji, ed., *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito: 3.11 kara kantei mae made* [People Who Stop Nuclear Power Plants: From 3.11 to the Prime Minister's Residence] (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2013).

From the 1960s, there has been a growing appreciation among both activists and social theorists of the importance of urban space as a site of class struggle. Where the factory was posited by Marxist-Leninists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the primary locus of class struggle, the globally connected social movements of the late 1960s often took place not in factories but on university campuses and in the streets of large cities. Marxist sociologist Henri Lefebvre, inspired by the revolutionary events in Paris in May 1968, wrote extensively about the revolutionary potential of urban space.²⁷ His work led to a new wave of Marxist urban theory which was perhaps best represented in the work of his student Manuel Castells.²⁸ Sociologist Machimura Takashi was one of the first scholars to introduce this new Marxist urbanism to Japan in the 1980s.²⁹ Neil Brenner, in defining the discipline of critical urban theory, notes that social theory today must acknowledge our integration into an ever more tightly woven global urban fabric.³⁰ As the political, economic and cultural capital of Japan, Tokyo became the centre of the anti-nuclear movement after 3.11. In this thesis I draw on insights from Marxist urban theory to situate the anti-nuclear movement within urban space.

The social struggles of the 1960s prompted social theorists not only to decentre understandings of revolutionary social change from the factory to the city but also to rethink the temporality of revolution. In nineteenth and early twentieth century Marxist and socialist movements, revolution was often conceptualised as a discrete event located sometime in the future. This was a goal towards which activists should aspire, often at the expense of their present needs and desires. Rosi Braidotti

²⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. John Moore, vol. 1 (London: Verso, 1991); Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

²⁸ Manuel Castells, *City, Class and Power*, Sociology, Politics and Cities (London: Macmillan, 1978); Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (London: E. Arnold, 1983). Castells later rejected his earlier Marxism but arguably the perspectives he developed in his Marxist urbanism influenced the development of his later ideas of the 'networked society'.

²⁹ Machimura Takashi, 'Toshi shakaiundō ni okeru kōzō to shutai: shakai undō no romanchishizumu o koete [Structure and Subjectivity in Urban Social Movements: Beyond the Romanticism of Social Movements]', *Shisō [Thought]* no 737 (1985): 158.

³⁰ Neil Brenner, 'What Is Critical Urban Theory?', *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* 13, no 2–3 (2009): 198–207.

describes how the rejection of the separation of means and ends in the politics of 1968 gave rise to a ‘politics of radical immanence’.³¹ For Negri, immanence implies a rejection of transcendent notions of past, present and future. It is only in the living present that we can make the future through our action. The experiences of 1968 helped to popularise the idea that the time for revolution is now.³² This is a politics which emphasises ‘the embodied and embedded nature of the subject, which results in unlimited confidence in lived experience’. The politics of radical immanence is expressed through a focus on the ‘politics of everyday life’ and the revolutionary potentiality inherent in the present moment.³³

The politics of radical immanence involves a notion of revolution rooted in the lived experience of struggle. This creates a ‘prefigurative’ politics in which activism seeks to transform the lived experience of daily life with an emphasis on playfulness and self-expression rather than a stoic march towards a possible future revolutionary rupture. The politics of prefiguration seems particularly pertinent in the precarious times inhabited by freeter activists in Tokyo. Without the ability to plan for the future, many freeters concentrate instead on deriving satisfaction and meaning from their contemporary reality. I draw on these notions of immanence and prefiguration throughout this thesis in order to explain the strategies and tactics of the anti-nuclear movement.

Critical to the development of this new politics was the feminist notion that ‘the personal is the political’.³⁴ This slogan highlighted the importance of individual action and experience in the development of revolutionary praxis. It is based on the understanding that everyday life is always already permeated by hierarchies of gender, race and class. Everyday life is thus seen as the site of limitless possibilities for resistance and rebellion. The slogan also signalled a growing understanding

³¹ Rosi Braidotti, ‘The Politics of Radical Immanence: May 1968 as an Event’, *New Formations* 65 (2008): 24–25.

³² Antonio Negri, *Time for Revolution*, trans. Matteo Mandarini (London: Continuum, 2003), 228–229.

³³ I have explored this idea in depth in, Alexander Brown, ‘Precarious Times: The Revolutionary Potentiality of the Present’, in *Movements in Time: Revolution, Social Justice and Times of Change*, eds. Cecile Lawrence and Natalie Churn (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 175–186.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

among activists and social theorists of the importance of the emotional or affective dimensions of political protest. While commentators disagree about the extent to which the anti-nuclear movement in Japan after 3.11 has impacted energy policy,³⁵ in this thesis I discuss the way anti-nuclear protest is rooted in the everyday lives of participants and in their relationship to space and time. Drawing on the politics of radical immanence I seek to understand how they enabled participants to express their affective responses to 3.11 and perform their utopian desires for a nuclear-free world.

My training in cultural history has made me particularly attentive to the way the past is woven into the contemporary anti-nuclear movement. Activists in Tokyo often conceived of their strategies and tactics as constituting a break from past modes of activism. I examine how their understandings of the past, while not always historically accurate, serve as an important reference point for articulating their politics today. Anti-nuclear activists make use of the history of activism in Japan and elsewhere to claim to a precedent for their own actions. Throughout this thesis I discuss the way the past lived in the contemporary movement through intellectual debate, film, protest tactics, images and songs.

A Contemporary ‘Workers’ Inquiry’

The roots of contemporary autonomism lie in the 1950s when a number of left-wing intellectuals associated with the Italian ‘workerist’ current questioned the official Marxism of the Italian Socialist and Communist parties. Their critique is particularly relevant to this thesis because they approached class struggles in relation to broader changes in the organisation of work. Raniero Panzieri, for example, was a member of the Italian Socialist Party who felt that ‘the growing moderation of the left parties and unions sprang first and foremost from their indifference to the changes wrought upon the working class by post-war economic development’.³⁶ Drawing on an original proposal by Marx, the workerists called on left intellectuals to conduct

³⁵ David Arase, for example, claims that the impact of 3.11 on energy policy has been relatively weak whereas Daniel Aldrich argues that anti-nuclear protest has had a significant impact on nuclear policy. David M. Arase, ‘The Impact of 3/11 on Japan’, *East Asia* 29, no 4 (1 December 2012): 313–336; Aldrich, ‘Post-Crisis Japanese Nuclear Policy.’

³⁶ Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*, 20–21.

‘workers’ inquiries’ to find out how workers were responding to new technological developments in the factories.³⁷ They melded new methods coming out of American industrial sociology with a revolutionary notion of intellectual engagement and carried out interviews with workers while also engaging in struggles on the factory floor.³⁸ The workerist Romano Alquati, who studied class struggles in the FIAT and Olivetti factories in the early 1960s, began to recognise the important role played by working class culture by ‘placing an increasing emphasis upon the coherence that the transmission and filtering of memory between successive generations of workers lent to the immediate experience of production’.³⁹

The workerists’ attempt to reframe traditional Marxist concepts and frameworks exemplifies a broader trend in the international communist movement from the late 1950s. The British historian E. P. Thompson, too, challenged Marxist-Leninist idea of class in his studies of the development of the working class in England. He rejected notions of class as a *structure* or *category* and described instead how class is *made*, through ‘an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning.’ For Thompson, class was ‘an historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness.’⁴⁰ For the workerist and autonomist currents of the Italian left, the purpose of a workers’ inquiry was to develop a communist strategy based on the practices and circumstances of the contemporary working class. Intellectuals associated with the perspective of autonomy today have extended the notion of a ‘workers’ inquiry’ to their investigations of the globally connected social movements such as the Mexican Zapatista uprising of the 1990s and recent social struggles in Argentina.⁴¹ Like the workerists, they have sought to develop strategies and tactics

³⁷ For Marx’s original essay see, Karl Marx, ‘A Workers’ Inquiry’, *La Revue Socialiste*, 1880, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/04/20.htm>.

³⁸ Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*, 22–29, 49–58.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁰ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963), 9.

⁴¹ The autonomist Marxist collective Midnight Notes produced one of the first such studies in their book on the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico. See Midnight Notes Collective, *Auroras of the Zapatistas: Local and Global Struggles of the Fourth World War* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2001). Colectivo Situaciones have looked at the protests in Argentina. See Colectivo Situaciones, *19 & 20: Notes for a New Social Protagonism* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2011).

for the struggle against capitalism by investigating the practices of contemporary social movements.⁴² Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that, while contemporary struggles are increasingly heterogeneous, they nevertheless produce common ideas, symbols and practices. They suggest that the post-industrial proletariat is best conceived not as a ‘working class’ but rather as ‘multitude’ made up of ‘singularities that act in common’.⁴³ The utility of the concept lies in the refusal to reduce singular social subjects to a unitary whole and its attempt to produce a common basis for political action.⁴⁴ Yet, as Dyer-Witheford points out, multitude remains a highly theoretical concept which needs to be investigated through research into contemporary political struggles.⁴⁵ In order to carry out such an investigation it is necessary to adopt a method which is ‘oriented toward the creation of new forms of collective organization, direct action, and anti-capitalist forms of life, a project grounded in inquiry into the ever-changing ‘composition’ of labour’.⁴⁶

Sociologist Alain Touraine examined the anti-nuclear movement in France in the 1970s because he recognised the way the movement had challenged the political and economic structures of a society which was going through post-industrialisation.⁴⁷ Anti-nuclear movements in the United State also had an important influence on the development of contemporary autonomism.⁴⁸ As the largest social movement to

⁴² Nick Southall, for example, has show how how the autonomist Marxism of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri is dependent upon their understanding of contemporary social struggles. See Nick Southall, ‘A Multitude of Possibilities: The Strategic Vision of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’ (doctoral dissertation, University of Wollongong, 2010).

⁴³ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 105.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 99-102.

⁴⁵ Nick Dyer-Witheford, ‘For a Compositional Analysis of the Multitude’, in *Subverting the Present, Imagining the Future* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2008), 258–260.

⁴⁶ Enda Brophy, ‘The Organizations of Immaterial Labour: Knowledge Worker Resistance in Post-Fordism’ (Queen’s University (Canada), 2008), 58.

⁴⁷ Alain Touraine, *Anti-Nuclear Protest: The Opposition to Nuclear Energy in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁴⁸ The first publications to appear under the name of the Midnight Notes Collective, a loose grouping of autonomist activists and intellectuals, were two issues of the irregularly published *Midnight Notes* journal on the anti-nuclear movement in the United States in the late 1970s. See *Midnight Notes*, nos 1–2, accessed 20 August 2012, <http://www.midnightnotes.org/mnpublic.html>. For an analysis of the politics of Midnight Notes see Eden, *Autonomy*, 125–191. Manuel Yang has written a reflective essay on Midnight Notes anti-nuclear work from the point of view of the post-3.11 situation. See, Manuel Yang, “‘Kimyō na shōri’ kara, ‘katasutorōfu’ no eien kakumei made [From “Strange Victories” to “Catastrophe”’s Permanent Revolution]’, *Gendai shisō [Contemporary Thought]* 39, no 7 (1 May 2011): 134–146.

sweep Japan in more than half a century, the contemporary anti-nuclear movement seems uniquely suitable for understanding how people challenge contemporary forms of capitalist and state power. By providing a focus for many of the frustrations and anxieties which people in Tokyo feel today, the movement has taken on the contours of a broader anti-systemic struggle which challenges the structures of political and economic power which have dominated Japan throughout the post-war period. Oguma Eiji, reflecting on the movement in 2011 and 2012 suggests that

people cried out ‘No Restarts’ as they were angry at what appeared to be a complete lack of an attitude of remorse on the part of the government, the bureaucracy or the electric power companies and the procedural decision to carry out restarts as if nothing had changed. In a sense, ‘No Restarts’ was an expression of the feeling of being unable to trust the government as it currently stands, of not wanting to be used at will by the electric power companies or the nuclear industry.⁴⁹

In this thesis, I follow the approach of contemporary autonomist thinkers by seeking to derive insights for left strategy by examining the practices of a contemporary social movement. I approach the anti-nuclear movement in Japan after 3.11 by asking,

what were the strategies and tactics freeter activists in Tokyo adopted during their struggle against the nuclear industry?

Methods and Scope

I address this question through an analysis of the cultural practices of the anti-nuclear movement. It is, of course, impossible to completely separate the field of culture from the political, economic and social fields. As Thomas Reed points out, it is only since the 1990s that social movement theorists have begun to pay close attention to culture. As they have turned their attention to ‘culture’, however, sociologists have struggled to define it.⁵⁰ For the purposes of this thesis I understand movement culture as a series of practices which include demonstration style, approaches to urban space,

⁴⁹ Oguma, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito*, 238. See also Oguma Eiji, ‘Kinyō no yoru, kanteimae de’, *Asahi shimbun*, 19 July 2012, Morning edition.

⁵⁰ T. V. Reed, *The Art of Protest: Culture and Activism from the Civil Rights Movement to the Streets of Seattle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 287, 290–300.

media production, music, visual art, street theatre and intellectual debate. The cultural turn in the sociology of social movements represents a significant correction when compared with the focus on instrumentality found in sociological theories of resource mobilisation and opportunity structure.⁵¹ It also reflects a turn to culture within social movements themselves. There is an increasing focus on culture in recent studies of freeter activism. In Japanese, Mōri Yoshitaka's work on cultural politics has attracted significant attention.⁵² In English, one of the first such studies was Hayashi and McKnight's⁵³ important essay on the cultural politics of the anti-Iraq war movement in Japan. Anthropologist Anne Allison and sociologist Carl Cassegård have subsequently published important monographs on contemporary youth movements in Japan.⁵⁴ This study extends the cultural sociology approach adopted in these works to the post-3.11 situation in Tokyo.

In post-industrial societies, urban space can be a place of work and play, of repression and resistance. One feature of the globalised social movements which captivated the world's attention in 2011 was their development of innovative protest tactics which made use of parks, plazas and other key locations in major urban centres. By occupying public squares and holding festive street demonstrations, activists challenged the existing order of the street and re-created it as a theatre of political participation, carnivalesque resistance and grassroots democracy. Freeters in Tokyo encounter the structural changes attendant on post-industrialisation as it affects their everyday lives as urban residents. When they resist these changes they do so in concrete times and places. In this thesis I focus on the way anti-nuclear activists have intervened in the production of urban space in Tokyo.

⁵¹ Steven M. Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements: Theories from the Classical Era to the Present* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2011).

⁵² Mōri Yoshitaka, *Bunka=seiji: gurōbarizēshonjidai no kūkan no hanran* [Culture = Politics: The Revolt of Space in the Age of Globalisation] (Tokyo: Getsuyōsha, 2003); *Sutorīto no shisō: tenkanki to shite no 1990 nendai* [Philosophy of the Streets: The 1990s as a Turning Point] (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2009). For an extract from Mōri's *Bunka=seiji* in English see 'Culture = Politics: The Emergence of New Cultural Forms of Protest in the Age of Freeter', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6, no 1 (2005): 17–29.

⁵³ Sharon Hayashi and Anne McKnight, 'Goodbye Kitty, Hello War: The Tactics of Spectacle and New Youth Movements in Urban Japan', *Positions* 13, no 1 (2005): 87–113.

⁵⁴ Anne Allison, *Precarious Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*.

In order to analyse the way anti-nuclear activism has unfolded in urban space I examine the specific spatial practices of the movement, primarily through the description and analysis of protest events. Peter Eckersall, in his survey of urban art and protest in the 1960s develops the idea that

social and cultural events are performative and have the capacity to mark moments of disruption and broker the possibility of change. They interrupt, insert, invade and have the potential to influence the daily application and maintenance of cultural production and power.⁵⁵

I draw on this approach in a series of detailed case studies of protests in Tokyo. Eckersall analyses events as ‘scenes’ in a ‘performative cityscape’ so as to uncover the way ‘embodied experiences connected to human desires, aspirations, and sometimes, utopian ideas about transforming the world’.⁵⁶ I discuss the way embodied protest enabled activists to express their desires for a nuclear power free world and at times to suggest alternatives to the existing order of space in the city.

In addition, I analyse images and symbols which appeared at anti-nuclear protest events and in the discourses and representations of urban space in anti-nuclear literature. Andrew Gordon, in his study of Imperial democracy in pre-war Japan, highlighted the ‘ways in which workers themselves envisioned the desirable future and perceived themselves as members of a factory work force and as participants in local and national communities’.⁵⁷ Gordon emphasises the need for historians to give voice to workers’ own perceptions of their struggles. He relied upon sources such as speech transcripts and leaflets in which workers’ expressed their own thoughts and feelings.⁵⁸ Since the late twentieth century, these privately printed media have been known in Japan as ‘*minikomi*’, a word derived from the English words ‘mini’ and ‘communications’. These *minikomi* can be contrasted with the mass media which are

⁵⁵ Peter Eckersall, *Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan: City, Body, Memory* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1. Yoshimi Shun’ya has also conducted analyses of popular culture in Tokyo which consider the city as a ‘stage’. See Yoshimi Shun’ya, *Toshi no dramaturugii: Tōkyō sakariba no shakaishi* [*Dramaturgy of the City: A Social History of Tokyo’s Entertainment Districts*] (Tōkyō: Kōbundō, 1987).

⁵⁶ Eckersall, *Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan: City, Body, Memory*, 3.

⁵⁷ Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

known as ‘*masukomi*’, a word which shares a similar derivation from the English words ‘mass’ and ‘communications’. As my study focuses on a contemporary movement I have had access to a great variety of texts produced by the actors themselves. These include personal blogs produced by movement participants, YouTube videos of demonstrations and speeches, fliers and zines (self-produced miniature magazines). Zines are one of the more important media used in contemporary youth sub-cultures and activist milieus and I use them as a source throughout this thesis.⁵⁹ These sources allow relatively direct access to the thoughts and opinions of activists. Mackie has observed that ‘the construction of new subjectivities in political movements is carried out through the use of metaphors which have shared meanings in a particular cultural context, and the creation of metaphors which attempt to transform those shared cultural meanings’.⁶⁰ I trace these metaphors through the written, visual and performative languages of the anti-nuclear movement.

Chapter Outline

My portrait of the anti-nuclear movement is developed through five detailed case studies of anti-nuclear protest culture. The use of a case study approach to examine broader trends has many precedents in the history and sociology of Japanese social movements.⁶¹ Each case study in this thesis focuses on the way the movement unfolded within a particular form of urban space. In Chapter One I further explore the theoretical perspectives of autonomist Marxism and critical urban theory which underpin the analysis in this thesis. I also present the necessary background information which connects the crisis of Japanese capitalism with the Fukushima nuclear disaster. I discuss the emergence of the freeters as a social layer in contemporary Tokyo and the increasing precarity of their lives and labours in preparation for the detailed discussions of freeter activism which follow.

⁵⁹ Mike Gunderloy, *The World of Zines: A Guide to the Independent Magazine Revolution* (New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 1992); Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture*, The Haymarket Series (New York: Verso, 1997); Alison Piepmeier, *Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

⁶⁰ Vera Mackie, ‘Picturing Political Space in 1920s and 1930s Japan’, in *Nation and Nationalism in Japan*, ed. Sandra Wilson (Abingdon: RoutledgeCurzon, 2009), 39

⁶¹ In history, for example, see Wesley Sasaki-Uemura, *Organizing the Spontaneous: Citizen Protest in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001).. For a recent sociological approach, see

In Chapter Two I focus on one of the first major demonstrations against nuclear power, which took place in the Tokyo district of Kōenji in April 2011, one month after 3.11. Kōenji is a youth sub-cultural hub located close to downtown Tokyo which is known for its artistic and cultural life and entertainment venues. The district is also home to an activist network known as Shirōto no Ran (Amateur Revolt) whose creative and irreverent protest style has challenged the growing inequality experienced by the urban poor in post-industrial Tokyo. In the wake of 3.11, a ‘mood of self-restraint’ (*jishū*) prevailed in the capital. The festive demonstrations organised by Shirōto no Ran helped to shift this mood, providing space for participants to express a spectrum of affective responses to the disaster. I show how this group’s critiques of precarious work and the inequities of neoliberal capitalism were articulated with their anti-nuclear activism. This chapter cements my claim that the anti-war and precarity movements which developed in Tokyo during the two ‘lost decades’ formed the basis of the anti-nuclear movement after 3.11.

In Chapter Three I continue to explore the relevance of the precarity movement to the anti-nuclear struggle. The bars and bookshops associated with an activist community known as the ‘Nantoka Neighbourhood’ provided a place of refuge for people trapped by the blackouts and the disruption of public transport caused by the 3.11 disaster. These places provided a space for anti-nuclear organising and for cementing the ties between activists which sustain political action. I explore the diverse print and electronic media which connected the physical spaces of the Neighbourhood to a community of which members can feel a part. I show how the development of self-managed spaces emerged in the context of the precarity movement as activists sought refuge the interstices of a city from which they often felt excluded. In turn, these spaces provided a kind of asylum in the uncertain context of a radioactive city.

Chapter Four is an examination of two protests which took place in Shinjuku in June and September of 2011. In both of these protests anti-nuclear activists staged occupations of the space outside the eastern exit to Shinjuku station which they renamed ‘No Nukes Plaza’. I show how activists utilised the notion of a *hiroba*

(plaza) to redefine public space as a place for democratic practice and debate. No Nukes Plaza evoked the history of struggles for public space in Tokyo and these struggles in turn raised questions about the limits of democratic participation. I analyse the debates on democracy which occurred in and through the *hiroba* as it was connected to a global network of squares and public places. Despite the desire of organisers to create a *hiroba* open to anyone, the question of whether right-wing anti-nuclear activists could speak at the demonstration provoked a dispute over the limits of the *hiroba*. Further limitations to the use of public space for grassroots protest when the Tokyo Metropolitan Police arrested a number of participants in September 2011. Responding to these arrests, activists and intellectuals clarified their understanding of the democratic potential of the *hiroba*. I conclude this chapter by suggesting that, despite its limitations, No Nukes Plaza constituted an experimental space for democratic decision-making.

In Chapter Five I move from the inner-city to Tokyo's western Tama district where I was privileged to spend 18 months as a research student affiliated to Hitotsubashi University. The local demonstrations in Kunitachi had much in common with the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations discussed in Chapter Two. They exemplify the way the movement spread across the metropolis over the course of 2011–2012. In this chapter I focus on the role of music, film and performance in the anti-nuclear movement in Kunitachi. These cultural forms served to transmit radical ideas by enabling dialogue with the cultural legacy of past movements. Music and film created a sense of the contemporary anti-nuclear movement's location in history. Activists' use of street theatre and art objects served to create a sense of community among participants.

Finally, in Chapter Six, I chart the rise of the Kantei Mae (in front of the prime minister's official residence) demonstrations in the government districts of Nagatachō and Kasumigaseki. Beginning in March 2012, activists gathered outside the Kantei every Friday evening from six until eight o'clock. to protest nuclear power. The protests swelled to include tens and then hundreds of thousands of participants in the summer of 2012. Located in the midst of the key institutions of the Japanese state, they continue to pose an enduring challenge to its power. By

protesting outside the buildings which house the institutions of the government the Kantei Mae protests highlighted two different visions of politics: one centred on the formalised representative democratic structures of the state and the other on the grassroots participatory democracy of the demonstrations. Yet, unlike the Genpatsu Yamero protests I discuss in Chapter Two and Four their staging acknowledged the continuing centrality of representative institutions to contemporary politics. Organisers and participants acknowledged the necessity of engaging with the existing institutions of state power to achieve their instrumental goals of the nuclear power industry.

At the December 2012 general elections the Democratic Party of Japan, whose government had overseen the response to the disaster for nearly two years, was swept aside and the Liberal Democratic Party government led by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō came to power. This election marked a major shift in the political landscape in Japan and as such I have chosen to restrict my analysis of the anti-nuclear movement to the period between March 2011 and the December 2012 election.

CHAPTER ONE – FUKUSHIMA

A nuclear power plant has exploded. The deception and madness of late capitalism rises to the surface and revolution begins.

Waizumi Akira, 2011⁶²



Figure 1 Hydrogen explosion in the No 3 reactor at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, March 2011.⁶³

The compound earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster of March 2011 occurred in the midst of a broader political, economic and social crisis. In the early 1990s, the

⁶² Waizumi Akira, 'Shikarubeku genshiro to ketsubetsu suru tame ni [For a Timely Farewell to the Nuclear Reactor]', *Shukusai [Festival]*, 11 June 2011.

⁶³ 'Experts Warn of Dangers in Fukushima Nuclear Reactor Fuel Rods Clean-Up', *NewsCom.Au*, <http://www.news.com.au/world/experts-warn-of-dangers-in-fukushima-nuclear-reactor-fuel-rods-cleanup/story-fndir2ev-1226750342733>.

collapse of an asset-price bubble in stock and real estate markets triggered a period of economic stagnation from which the Japanese economy has never fully recovered. The ten years of stagnant economic growth which followed the collapse of the bubble have come to be known as the ‘lost decade’.⁶⁴ More recently, as the Japanese economy remained mired in debt, deflation and stagnant growth, commentators have begun to speak of a ‘lost twenty years’. The economic crisis of the 1990s coincided with a growing political crisis. Since 1955 the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) had maintained hegemony within the National Diet, Japan’s bicameral legislature. The party’s political hegemony became known as the ‘1955-system’.⁶⁵ In April 1989, however, LDP Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru (1924–2000) resigned following the introduction of an unpopular consumption tax. His successor Uno Sōsuke (1922–1998) lasted only a few months in office. In fixed-term upper house elections held in July that year the LDP lost more than half of the seats which were up for election. As only half the seats in the House of Councillors are vacated in fixed-term elections the party managed to maintain a majority but retained only three of the 24 seats it had previously held in single-member constituencies. Following this abysmal performance Uno resigned to be replaced by the third prime minister that year, Kaifu Toshiki. It was a sign of things to come.⁶⁶

In 1993 the LDP lost control of the lower house signalling the beginning of the end of the 1955-system. For the first time in nearly fifty years a non-LDP government was elected in the form of a coalition led by Hosokawa Morihiro. Instability has continued to affect the political system ever since. Japan had a total of nine Prime Ministers between 1989 and 2001 as the LDP entered into a number of coalitions with other parties.⁶⁷ Tomiko Yoda has described how ‘the recession of Japan in the 1990s acquired an epochal status as it became increasingly identified with the

⁶⁴ Mark Driscoll, ‘Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan: On the Two Freeters’, *Cultural Critique* 65 (2007): 168. In 1999, the term ‘lost decade’ appeared in a popular economics book to describe the decade since the economic crisis of the early 1990s *Zemināru nihon keizai gaku nyūmon* [*Seminar: An Introduction to the Japanese Economy*] (Tokyo: Nihon keizai shimbun shuppansha, 1999).

⁶⁵ The term was first proposed in 1964 by political scientist Masumi Junnosuke. See Masumi Junnosuke, ‘1955 nen no seiji taisei [The 1955 Political System]’, *Shisō* [*Thought*] no 480 (June 1964).

⁶⁶ J. A. A. Stockwin, *Governing Japan: Divided Politics in a Resurgent Economy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2008), 74–75.

⁶⁷

breakdown of the 1955-system: the growth machine supported by the so-called “iron triangle” (industry, bureaucracy, and single-party politics) as well as by the ethos of harmony and formidable work ethic of a homogeneous and highly disciplined population’.⁶⁸ As J. Arthur Stockwin observes ‘the political economy of Japan has experienced more extensive change since the early 1990s than at any period since the American-led Occupation between 1945 and 1952’.⁶⁹

Chalmers Johnson coined the term ‘capitalist developmental state’ to describe the way elite networks which spanned both government and private sectors in Japan favoured an industrial policy based on collaboration rather than competition.⁷⁰ Developmentalism produced high economic growth and delivered rising living standards for the majority of people in Japan during the post-war period. The political structures of the iron triangle and the developmentalist policies of harnessing technical knowledge in the pursuit of economic growth were critical to the development of Japan’s nuclear industry. As Low, Nakayama and Yoshioka observe, the nuclear power industry exemplifies how ‘Japan’s rapid post-war development was, more than anything else, due to the close collaboration between organised business, government and the scientific establishment’.⁷¹

When the 3.11 disaster led to a major nuclear accident at Fukushima Daiichi, many people pointed to the way the structures of the iron triangle had penetrated the nuclear industry. Anti-nuclear activists described the network of relationships and interests which unite the utility companies which operate nuclear power plants with nuclear regulators, local and national politicians, the bureaucracy and those scientists and academics who support nuclear power as the ‘nuclear village’.⁷² A 2012 report

⁶⁸ Tomiko Yoda, ‘A Roadmap to Millennial Japan’, in *Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 17.

⁶⁹ Stockwin, ‘From Koizumi to Abe: Same Bed, Different Dreams?’, 223.

⁷⁰ Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1986); Japan: *Who Governs? The Rise of the Developmental State* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995).

⁷¹ Morris Low, Shigeru Nakayama, and Hitoshi Yoshioka, *Science, Technology and Society in Contemporary Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 69–70.

⁷² Jeff Kingston, ‘Japan’s Nuclear Village’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10, no 37.1 (10 September 2012), <http://japanfocus.org/-Jeff-Kingston/3822>.

by the Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission of the National Diet of Japan found that the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant was ‘the result of collusion between the government, the regulators and TEPCO, and the lack of governance by said parties’.⁷³ The Commission’s report confirmed the suspicions of anti-nuclear activists that the collusive nature of the relationship between members of the nuclear village had undermined nuclear safety standards.

While the proximate cause of the accident at Fukushima was a natural disaster, behind this lay a series of political decisions which allowed the nuclear power plant to be built in such a seismically unstable location. Right up until his resignation in June 2012, Katsumata Tsunehiko, who was president of the Tokyo Electric Power Company at the time of the 3.11 disaster, maintained that the size of the earthquake and tsunami which triggered the accident at Fukushima Daiichi ‘was outside/beyond what could have been anticipated’ (*sōteigai*).⁷⁴ As physicist Tsuchida Atsushi explained to the progressive weekly *Shūkan Kinyōbi* (Weekly Friday), however,

in a country subject to frequent earthquakes like Japan, had the possibility of such events been considered from the start, nuclear reactors would have cost too much to build and they never would have been built. Therefore, TEPCO made vague assumptions and claimed to be building reactors ‘safely’.⁷⁵

Ogura Toshimaru suggests that it was the pursuit of profit, rather than a natural disaster, was the real cause of the nuclear accident. ‘Without the greedy desire for energy necessitated by a faith in economic growth and productivity there would never have been such a disaster’, he argues.⁷⁶ Feminist scholar Ulrike Wöhr points out that the disaster not only prompted concerns about nuclear power technologies but sparked new enquiries into the political and societal circumstances of Japan’s

⁷³ National Diet of Japan, *The Official Report of the Fukushima Nuclear Accident Investigation Commission* (Tokyo, 2012), 16, Tokyo, <http://warp.da.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/3856371/naic.go.jp/en/report/>.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Soeda Takashi, “‘Tsunami wa sōteigai da’ no ōuso [The Big Lie that “The Tsunami Could Not Have Been Anticipated”], *AERA*, 16 July 2012, 20.

⁷⁵ Tsuchida Atsushi, “‘Sōteigai’ to iu iiwake wa tsūyō shinai [The Excuse That it ‘Could Not Have Been Anticipated’ Does Not Wash],” *Shūkan Kinyōbi* [Weekly Friday], 25 March 2011, 24.

⁷⁶ Ogura Toshimaru, “Sekiyu kara genshiryoku e: kiki no ten’i to gurōbaru shihon shugi no “shukumei” ni aragatte [From Oil to Nuclear Energy: Against the Metastasis of the Crisis and “Predestiny” of Capitalism], *Inpakuson* [Impaction] no 193 (2014): 18.

adopting and promoting this extremely risky business'.⁷⁷ Miyadai Shinji, a sociologist and anti-nuclear activist, argues that the real challenge for the anti-nuclear movement is not 'what to do with nuclear power', but 'what to do with a society that cannot stop nuclear power'.⁷⁸ For anti-capitalists like Waizumi Akira, quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, by exposing the existing contradictions of Japanese capitalism the disaster has the potential to provoke revolutionary change in the political-economic structure of the archipelago.⁷⁹

In this chapter I present the theoretical and historical background to the case studies in Chapters Two through Six. I begin by outlining some of the theoretical ideas, derived from the perspective of autonomy, which I refer to in this thesis. In the next section I further develop my theoretical framework with ideas taken from the discipline of critical urban studies. I then apply these perspectives to the contested history of nuclear power in Japan. I describe how the construction of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant reflected the politics of the capitalist developmental state and how the decline of developmentalism led to the fragmentation of the nuclear village. Finally I discuss how the shift to a post-industrial economy has produced an ever more precarious political, social and economic environment to which freeter activists have tried to respond to both before and after 3.11.

The Perspective of Autonomy

Political philosopher Antonio Negri made his first visit to Japan in April 2013 to participate in a symposium on 'Multitude and Power: The World After 3.11'.⁸⁰ He spoke alongside leading Japanese scholars including feminist sociologist Ueno Chizuko, political theorist Kang Sang-jung, philosopher Ichida Yoshihiko, and

⁷⁷ Ulrike Wöhr, 'Gender and Citizenship in the Anti-Nuclear Power Movement in 1970s Japan', in *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan*, ed. Andrea Germer, Vera Mackie, and Ulrike Wöhr (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), 230.

⁷⁸ Shinji Miyadai, 'Pitfalls of the "Nuclear Power Reduction" Movement', *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* no 21 (March 2012): 101.

⁷⁹ Waizumi Akira, 'Asu no shinwa [Myth of Tomorrow]', *Sabaku*, August 2011. For further anti-capitalist perspectives on the disaster see Gendai riron kenkyūkai [Research Group on Contemporary Theory], ed., *Hibaku shakai nenpō 2012–2013 [Annual Report on Radioactive Society 2012–2013]* (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 2013).

⁸⁰ Itō Mamoru, 'Antonio Neguri no genzai [Antonio Negri Today]', in *Neguri, Nihon to mukiau [Negri Facing Japan]* (Tokyo: NHK shuppan, 2014), 9.

cultural sociologists Mōri Yoshitaka and Itō Mamoru. As Ueno explained in her address to the symposium, the 2014 visit was only possible after extensive negotiations between leading scholars and government officials.⁸¹ In 2008, Japanese intellectuals had tried to organise a similar symposium in the lead up to the Group of Eight (G8) summit which was to be held in Japan that year.⁸² The 2008 visit, however, had been cancelled at the last minute when organisers had difficulty obtaining an entry visa for Negri.⁸³ Despite having received assurances that Negri would not require any special visa to visit Japan, three days prior to the symposium organisers were told that he would be required to apply for a visa due to past convictions associated with the assassination of Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro by Red Brigade terrorists in 1978. Negri was arrested in 1978 alongside 1500 leading intellectuals and activists as part of a crackdown by the Italian state against political dissidents. No connection was ever established between Negri and the Red Brigades. Nevertheless, he spent seventeen years in prison for ‘crimes of association’ and many years in exile in France.⁸⁴

Antonio Negri is probably the best known intellectual within the ‘perspective of autonomy’, otherwise known as autonomist Marxism.⁸⁵ The various streams of ‘autonomist’ thought have two principles in common. The first is the so-called

⁸¹ Ueno Chizuko, ‘Nihon no maruchichūdo [Japan’s Multitude]’, in *Neguri, Nihon to mukiau [Negri Facing Japan]* (Tokyo: NHK shuppan, 2014), 120–121.

⁸² The G8 is an annual gathering of the leaders of eight of the world’s largest industrialised economies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.

⁸³ “‘Effective Refusal of Entry’ to Italy’s Negri Upsets Academics”, *The Japan Times*, 25 March 2008, online edition, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2008/03/25/national/effective-refusal-of-entry-to-italys-negri-upsets-academics/#.VVQEfZNK9cg>. This was not the first time Negri’s political He was scheduled to appear at a conference organised by the University of Sydney in 2005 but the university withdrew funding for the event following a series of attacks on Negri by right-wing newspaper columnists. Brett Neilson and Angela Mitropoulos, ‘Polemos, Universitas’ 4, no 1 (2005), http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol4no1_2005/neilsonmitropoulos_polemos.htm; Miranda Devine, ‘More like a Leaking Reactor than a Liberal Arts Faculty’, *Sun Herald*, 30 January 2005, Sydney; Keith Windschuttle, ‘Tutorials in Terrorism’, *The Australian*, 16 March 2005. The organisers of the 2008 event went ahead with the symposium without Negri, the results of which were published in a special issue of the journal *Gendai shisō* (*Contemporary Thought*). See “Tokushū: Antonio Neguri [Special Issue: Antonio Negri]”, *Gendai Shisō* 36, no 5 (May 2008): 51–221.

⁸⁴ For a detailed overview of these events see Southall, ‘A Multitude of Possibilities’, 16–23.

⁸⁵ Eden, *Autonomy*.

‘Copernican inversion’ first proposed by Mario Tronti in 1964.⁸⁶ In his critique of the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy of the large Italian Communist and Socialist parties he argued that,

we too have worked with a concept that puts capitalist development first and workers second. This is a mistake. And now we have to turn the problem on its head, reverse the polarity, and start again from the beginning: and the beginning is the class struggle of the working class.⁸⁷

The Copernican inversion challenged revolutionary intellectuals to shift the primary focus of their analysis from the mechanics of the capitalist system to labour’s resistance to capitalist rule. This inversion of perspective led the autonomists to develop the understanding that labour’s resistance to the imposition of the wage drives the development of the capitalist mode of production.⁸⁸ Marxists have always been concerned with the relationship between the technical and political organisation of work.⁸⁹ Marx’s detailed analysis of the organisation of work in British factories during the industrial revolution, for example, formed the basis for the radical critique contained in his magnum opus, *Capital*.⁹⁰ The autonomists returned to this method, engaging in a theoretical and practical critique of the way production is organised in contemporary class societies. The official position of the Italian Communist Party in the 1950s was that economic growth and technological development were neutral. If they could be brought under the political control of the working class then they could be made to serve the interests of the working class. This was a common perspective among Marxists in the twentieth century. Even Lenin argued that the revolution in Russia could retain bourgeois technical experts and implement modern management practices such as Taylorism without compromising the working class nature of the

⁸⁶ The autonomist current emerged out of intellectual debates in the Italian left in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. For a representative survey of the key thinkers in Italian autonomism see Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, eds., *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

⁸⁷ Mario Tronti, ‘Lenin in England’, *Classe Operaia* January (1964), <http://libcom.org/library/lenin-in-england-mario-tronti>.

⁸⁸ Eden, *Autonomy*, 14.

⁸⁹ Donald MacKenzie, *Knowing Machines: Essays on Technical Change* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 23–47.

⁹⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1976).

revolution.⁹¹ The autonomists argued against this position. They held that changes in the organisation of production and the introduction of new technologies were primarily motivated by the needs of capitalist managers to control the ever-present revolt of workers against the conditions of their labour.

Negri's original work in Italy in the 1960s and 1970s focused on the increasingly important role of technology in the manufacturing industry of Northern Italy. The autonomists came to recognise that not only the labour of 'productive' workers in the factories but also that of students, the unemployed and housewives was exploited by capital. Antonio Negri, who was at that time a leading theorist in the *autonomia* movement, argued that the process of production now extended beyond the factory walls to encompass processes of consumption, education, housework and even local community life which were all channelled into the profit of the market. In this 'social factory' the 'social worker' could encompass any of the diverse positions of productive and reproductive labour. From this theoretical current arose movements demanding 'wages for students', 'wages for the unemployed' and 'wages for housework'.⁹² As Itō Kimio explains it was for this reason that 'the movement', as the revolutionary struggle in Italy in the 1970s was known, including its *autonomia* current were able to think beyond the industrial working class, which had previously been the principal agent of revolution in socialist theory, and embrace the agency and power of youth, the unemployed, housewives and foreign workers.⁹³

Negri was an important figure in the Italian far left in the 1960s and 1970s. He was recognised in French intellectual life during his exile there in the 1980s and 1990s. It was not until the publication of his collaborative work *Empire*⁹⁴ with American literary theorist Michael Hardt in 2000, however, that Negri's thought became widely known in Anglophone academic and radical circles. *Empire* was completed on the eve of the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in

⁹¹ V. I. Lenin, *On State Capitalism During the Transition to Socialism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983).

⁹² Itō Kimio, 'Sei purekario no kōrin: Itaria ni okeru purekariāto undō o megutte [The Advent of San Precario: Concerning the Precarity Movement in Italy]', *Impakushon* no 151 (2006): 12.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*.

November 1999. These protests, which shut down the WTO Ministerial Meeting, brought the nascent alter-globalisation movement to the attention of the world.⁹⁵ The alter-globalisation movement challenged the growing power of transnational corporations in the post-Cold War world of the 1990s.⁹⁶ Hardt and Negri's *Empire* attracted worldwide attention because 'the widely debated theoretical synthesis that Empire represents has been able to 'tap into' and give rational expression to the optimism expressed in the new age of militancy that emerged in the mid-1990s'.⁹⁷ The pair published two further monographs, *Multitude* in 2004, and *Commonwealth* in 2009 where they further developed their theory that a new globally connected social movement they called the 'multitude' had emerged during the transition to a post-industrial society.⁹⁸

Autonomist ideas began to be translated into Japanese and introduced to Japanese readers in the 1990s. One of the earliest forums where discussion of autonomist Marxism took place in Japan was the journal *Gendai shisō* (Contemporary Thought). A special issue on 'street culture' which appeared in 1997 included extensive discussion of autonomist ideas and practices. This was followed by an issue focusing on Antonio Negri's thought in 1998.⁹⁹ As the journal's former editor Ikegami Yoshihiko explains, *Gendai shisō* introduced many of the key thinkers of French post-structuralism, such as Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault, into Japan.¹⁰⁰ The journal was founded by intellectuals who were critical of Marxism, which, by the end of the twentieth century, had become stagnant. Its organised institutional base in the union movement and the Japan Socialist and Japan Communist Parties was in serious

⁹⁵ A. Cockburn and J. St. Clair, *Five Days That Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond* (London: Verso, 2000); J. Thomas, *The Battle in Seattle: The Story Behind and Beyond the WTO Demonstrations* (Denver: Fulcrum, 2000).

⁹⁶ Amorrry Starr, *Naming the Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalization* (London: Zed Books, 2000).

⁹⁷ Matteo Mandarini, 'Translator's Introduction', in *Time for Revolution*, 3.

⁹⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*; Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*. These works have also been translated into Japanese. See Hardt Michael and Negri, Antonio, *Maruchichūdo: teikoku jidai no sensō to minshubugū*, trans. Ikushima Sachiko, Mizushima Kazunori, and Ichida Yoshihiko, 2 vols. (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2005); Hardt Michael et al., *Komonuerusu: 'teikoku' o koeru kakumei ron [Commonwealth: Revolutionary Theory Beyond Empire]*, trans. Mizushima Kazunori, 2 vols. (NHK shuppan, 2012).

⁹⁹ 'Tokushū: Yūro Radikarizumu, Antonio Neguri No Shisō Ken [Special Issue: Antonio Negri's Intellectual Sphere]', *Gendai Shisō* 26, no 3 (March 1998): 82–296.

¹⁰⁰ 'Gendai-Shiso: Making Use of Postmodernism', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 2, no 3 (2001): 369–371.

decline. Among critical intellectuals post-modernism, as Ikegami explains, had its intellectual origins in the contradictions that arose out of the period after 1973. These included a general retreat from the Marxist social science which had characterised the Japanese intelligentsia in the post-war period, the rise of postmodernism and a more favourable attitude among intellectuals towards the transformative possibilities capitalist power.¹⁰¹

Sociologist Mōri Yoshitaka, has written of how surprised he was to see a special issue on underground political and cultural movements in a journal which had been known as the flagship of postmodernism.¹⁰² He cites editor Ikegami's editorial afterword to the special issue in which he reflects on the significance of the year 1995 in the development of a new wave of social and political activism and theory. For Ikegami, the year 1995, with the Hanshin earthquake, the Aum sarin gas incident, the rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl in Okinawa by U.S. servicemen, the growth of the homeless peoples movements and the concomitant rise of liberalism had all revealed something about the changes going on in post-war Japan. In the midst of these changes he recognised the emergence of new forms of urban activism which appeared in multiple different places and were continually coming together, dispersing, lining up and separating.¹⁰³

The publication of *Empire* in 2000 attracted considerable interest in Japan. A Japanese translation appeared a few years later¹⁰⁴ and was the subject of debate in a number of special issues in intellectual journals,¹⁰⁵ the wider journal literature and

¹⁰¹ Ikegami, Yoshihiko, 'Gendai shisō: making use of postmodernism', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 2, no 3 (2001): 369–371.

¹⁰² Mōri, *Sutorīto no shisō*, 162–163.

¹⁰³ Ikegami Yoshihiko, 'Henshū kōki [Editorial Afterword]', *Gendai shisō* 25, no 5 (May 1997): 326.

¹⁰⁴ Negri Antonio and Hardt Michael, *Teikoku [Empire]*, trans. Mizushima Kazunori et al. (Tokyo: Ibunsha, 2003).

¹⁰⁵ 'Tokushū: Teikoku - Gurōbarizēshon E No Shin Shikaku [Special Issue: Empire - A New Point of View on Globalisation]', *Gendai Shisō* 29, no 8 (April 2001): 46–229; 'Tokushū: Neguri, Hāto No "Teikoku" O Yomu', *Jōkyō Dai San Ki* 4, no 2 (March 2003): 6–47; 'Tokushū: "Teikoku" O Yomu [Special Issue: Reading Empire]', *Gendai Shisō* 31, no 2 (February 2003): 94–228.

several books.¹⁰⁶ Their later works also attracted significant attention and their work has continued to be debated by Marxists and political philosophers.¹⁰⁷ Hardt and Negri's 2011 pamphlet *Declaration*, an essay on Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring and the European anti-austerity movements, has also been translated into Japanese.¹⁰⁸ Negri's visit to Japan in April 2013 was an indication of how seriously his ideas were being taken by scholars in the wake of the 3.11 disaster.

Hardt and Negri argue that the diffusion of capitalist production through global networks means that 'the relations of capitalist exploitation are expanding everywhere, not limited to the factory but tending to occupy the entire social terrain'.¹⁰⁹ There is a 'cyber-marxism'¹¹⁰ which draws on the theories of post-industrialisation and information capitalism outlined by writers such as Manuel Castells.¹¹¹ Precarious forms of work have become increasingly common in labour markets in the advanced capitalist economies since the oil shock crisis of the 1970s.¹¹² In 1973 the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) acted to raise the price of oil significantly in an attempt to shore up their flagging profits

¹⁰⁶ Matoba Akihiro, Marukusu o saidoku suru: 'Teikoku' to dō tatakau ka? [Re-reading Marx: How Do We Fight Empire?] (Gogatsu shobō, 2005); Nishitani Osamu et al., Hitaishō ka suru sekai: 'Teikoku' no shatei [An Asymmetrical World: The Range of Empire] (Tokyo: Ibunsha, 2005).

¹⁰⁷ Kyōichi Mukaiyama, 'Shohyō Antonio Negri, Maikeru Hāto Tekikoku' Gurōbaru Ka No Sekai Chitsujo to Maruchichūdo No Kanōsei', *Shisō* no 949 (May 2003): 70–73; Various, 'Tokushū: Maruchichūdo/Pīpuru/purekariāto', *People's Plan* 35 (2006): 20–118; 'Tokushū: Maruchichūdo No Kanōsei', *Setsuzoku* 7 (2007): 1–123; Matoba Akihiro, *Mō hitotsu no sekai ga yattekuru: kiki no jidai ni atarashi kanōsei o miru* [Another World is Coming: Seeing a New Possibility in an Age of Crisis] (Sekai shoin, 2009); Mōri Satoko, "'Maruchichūdo' ga tsukuru hikareta kūkan: dai nana kai sekai shakai fōramu no hikari to kage' [An Open Space Built by the "Multitude: Light and Shadows from the Seventh World Social Form]", *Setsuzoku* 7 (2007): 2–17; Kazunori Mizushima, 'Shin-shokuminchishugi to maruchichūdo no purojekuto: gurōbaru komon no kyōsō ni mukete [Neo-colonialism and the Project of the Multitude: Towards the Collective Construction of the Common]', *Ritsumeikan Studies in Language and Culture* 19, no 1 (2007): 131–47; Satoko Mōri, 'Uchi naru "maruchichūdo" ga "teikoku" no hara o kuiyaburu ni wa [How the "Multitude" Devours "Empire" from Within]', *Setsuzoku* 7 (2007): 62–66.

¹⁰⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Declaration*. For the Japanese translation see Negri Antonio and Hardt Michael, *Hangyaku: maruchichūdo no minshushugi sengen* [Rebellion: The Multitude's Declaration of Democracy], trans. Mizushima Kazunori and Shimizu Tomoko (Tokyo: NHK shuppan, 2013).

¹⁰⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 209.

¹¹⁰ Dyer-Witheford, *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High-Technology Capitalism*.

¹¹¹ M. Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996). Tessa-Morris Suzuki has discussed the application of information society theory to Japan. See Morris-Suzuki, *Beyond Computopia: Information, Automation, and Democracy in Japan*.

¹¹² Louise Waite, 'A Place and Space for a Critical Geography of Precarity', *Geography Compass* 3, no 1 (2009): 416.

caused by a general inflationary trend in the global economy and the depreciation of the dollar. The oil shock had a major impact on the global economy, exacerbating the existing recession and leading to a period of ‘stagflation’ – stagnant growth coupled with high inflation. Unemployment in the OECD countries increased by 7 million in 1974–1975 and Gross National Product fell.¹¹³ The Gini coefficient, which measures inequality across a society, increased between 1970 and 1980, indicating a growth in inequality within Japanese society.¹¹⁴

In Japan, while precarious forms of work certainly existed throughout the post-war period, it was only after the economic crisis of the early 1990s that precarity became widely recognised as a social problem.¹¹⁵ Neilson and Rossiter have pointed out that the relative employment security experienced by some workers in these advanced capitalist countries was itself always an exception to the ‘precarious labour [that] is the norm of capitalist production and reproduction’.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, while precarity may not be an entirely new phenomenon, the precarisation of work and life in the post-industrial economies is accelerating.

Precarity has been a central question in recent global struggles such as the Arab Spring¹¹⁷ and anti-austerity protests in Europe.¹¹⁸ As I will discuss below, the notion of precarity became increasingly important to political activists in Japan during the 1990s and 2000s as a means of encapsulating the insecurity of life and work in the post-industrial economy. The feminist collective Precarias a la Deriva have noted how a generalised precarity ‘constitutes a daily experience of life, a juncture of

¹¹³ Herman Van der Wee, *Prosperity and Upheaval: The World Economy 1945–1980* (Hammondsworth: Pelican Books, 1987), 84–87.

¹¹⁴ Takashi Machimura, ‘Gendai nihon ni okeru kakusa no jūshōteki kōzō [Multiscalar Structure of Inequality in Contemporary Japan]’, *Hitotsubashi Bulletin of Social Sciences* 6 (2009): 104.

¹¹⁵ Itō, ‘Sei purekario no kōrin: Itaria ni okeru purekariāto undō o megutte [The Advent of San Precario: Concerning the Precarity Movement in Italy]’, 11; Julia Obinger, ‘Working on the Margins: Japan’s Precariat and Working Poor’, *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* (2009), <http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/discussionpapers/2009/Obinger.html>.

¹¹⁶ Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter, ‘Precarity as a Political Concept, Or, Fordism as Exception’, *Theory, Culture and Society* 25 (2008): 58.

¹¹⁷ Lamis Andoni, ‘The Rebirth of Arab Activism’, *Al Jazeera English*, 31 December 2010, accessed 14 May 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2010/12/20101231161958792947.html>.

¹¹⁸ Matthew Jacobson, ‘Precarity and New Social Movements in Southern European Cities’ (Amsterdam, 2011), internal-pdf://Jacobson Precarity 2011-0957284864/Jacobson Precarity 2011.pdf.

material and symbolic conditions which determine an uncertainty with respect to the sustained access to the resources essential to the full development of one's life'.¹¹⁹ Anne Allison uses the notion of 'social precarity' to describe the more general condition of precariousness which has come to pervade life beyond the workplace.¹²⁰ As Tsianos and Papadopoulos explain,

precarity means exploiting the continuum of everyday life, not simply the workforce. In this sense, precarity is a form of exploitation which operates primarily on the level of time.¹²¹

Hardt and Negri draw on this temporal understanding of precarity when they note that precarity 'destroys the division between work time and non-work time, requiring workers not to work all the time but to be constantly available for work'.¹²² With capital accumulation no longer limited to the factory, much of our leisure time is spent creating cultural and linguistic products which are in turn commodified and sold back to us. Even spending time socialising with friends on social networking sites may be exploited by marketers and made to produce a profit.¹²³ Allison has discussed this phenomenon in the context of Japan's popular culture industries. She notes how the very instability and fluidity of the precarious 'life of youth at play, in their imaginations and through the intimacies they form with others' that is put to work to produce cultural commodities.¹²⁴

The growth of informational capitalism and the production of *immaterial* goods like intellectual property rather than manufactured products has contributed to the precarisation of work. In the information economy, the 'social wealth accumulated is

¹¹⁹ Precarias a la deriva, 'Adrift Through the Circuits of Feminized Precarious Work', *Feminist Review* no 77 (1 January 2004): 158.

¹²⁰ Allison, *Precarious Japan*, 17.

¹²¹ Vassillis Tsianos and Dimitris Papadopoulos, 'Precarity: A Savage Journey to the Heart of Embodied Capitalism', *Transveral Journal* (2006), <http://eicpc.net/transveral/1106/tsianospapadopoulos/en>.

¹²² Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 146. Negri's understanding of time in Marx's labour theory of value remains controversial even among autonomists. For a recent critique see Mark Gawne, 'Ontology, Composition and Affect: The Political Limits of Postworkerist Thought' (doctoral dissertation, University of Sydney, 2015).

¹²³ Gill and Pratt, 'In the Social Factory?: Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work', 17.

¹²⁴ Anne Allison, 'The Cool Brand: Affective Activism and Japanese Youth', *Theory, Culture and Society* 26, no 2–3 (2009): 94.

increasingly immaterial; it involves social relations, communication systems, information, and affective networks'. Drawing on the work of Maurizio Lazzarato, Hardt and Negri suggest that in the information society 'immaterial labour' is becoming a hegemonic form of work. The growing service sector, for example, requires that workers display greater communication skills.

Most services indeed are based on the continual exchange of information and knowledge. Since the production of services results in no material and durable good, we define the labor involved in this production as *immaterial labor* – that is, labour that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, a cultural product, knowledge, or communication.¹²⁵

Hardt and Negri make a distinction between two main categories of immaterial labour. The most obvious form of immaterial labour is that found in computer and communications industries such as symbolic analysis.¹²⁶ Affective labour is the labour 'of human contact and interaction', which is prevalent in care industries and entertainment for example. While this labour is indeed embodied labour it is immaterial in their view, in the sense that 'its products are intangible, a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion'.¹²⁷ Their understanding of affective labour draws heavily on the work of feminist theorists of so-called 'women's work' such as caring labour and housework.¹²⁸

For Lazzarato, immaterial labour is important because it is intrinsically social. It relies for its performance on the interaction with others in networks and flows that do not know the boundaries of the factory walls. Lazzarato explains how immaterial labour is organised into a cycle of production by the capitalist when small productive units, sometimes involving as few as one single self-employed worker, are brought together for a limited period of time to complete a project. Such networks are ad hoc and may not last any longer than the project for which they were formed. As a consequence, the workers involved in immaterial labour have to rely on another set

¹²⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 290.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 291.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 293.

¹²⁸ Ibid. See, for example Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1972), <http://libcom.org/library/power-women-subversion-community-della-costa-selma-james>.

of ‘networks and flows’ in order to reproduce and enrich their productive capacities. This is therefore a form of labour in which precariousness, hyper-exploitation, mobility and hierarchy are typical.¹²⁹ Finally, ‘it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish leisure time from work time. In a sense, life becomes inseparable from work’.¹³⁰

Immaterial labour is ‘not reducible to simple labour, to the accumulation of units of measure’ because it relies on the social reproduction of a highly educated and carefully socialised labouring subject. Autonomists have developed Marx’s notion of the ‘general intellect’ to indicate how capitalist production increasingly relies on a highly educated workforce and on the integration of technical knowledge into the process of production.¹³¹ Education and innovation have become important sources of capitalist value and have been integrated into capitalist production.¹³² Protests carried out by students in Chile and London in 2011 over their precarious future highlighted capital’s reliance on a highly educated workforce and its simultaneous lack of willingness to pay for it through the welfare state. The precarity that students experience as they struggle to pay for their education is becoming a permanent condition. Once they graduate they will be expected to continually demonstrate their ‘work-readiness’ in order to gain access to a share of social wealth, whether through wage-labour or from increasingly limited welfare provisions. Thus whether they are working, studying or looking for work their time is always at least potentially subject to the discipline of capitalist work.

¹²⁹ Maurizio Lazzarato, ‘Immaterial Labor’, in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 137, <http://www.generation-online.org/c/fcimmateriallabour3.htm>. Sociologist Sakai Takashi has written extensively on the autonomist movement in Italy and the notion of immaterial labour. See Takashi Sakai, *Jiyūron: Genzaisei No Keifugaku [On Freedom: A Genealogy of the Present]* (Seidosha, 2001).

¹³⁰ Lazzarato, ‘Immaterial Labor’, 138.

¹³¹ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy* (Penguin, 1973), 690–712, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/>. N. Dyer-Witheford, ‘Cyber-Negri: General Intellect and Immaterial Labor’, in *Resistance in Practice: The Philosophy of Antonio Negri* (London: Pluto Press, 2005): 136–162; Paulo Virno, ‘General Intellect’, *Historical Materialism* 15, no 3 (2007): 3–8.

¹³² For an account of the corporatisation of higher education see Andrew Whelan, Ruth Walker and Christopher Moore, eds., *Zombies in the Academy: Living Death in Higher Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). For an overview of some of the struggles against corporatisation in the sector see The Edu-factory Collective, *Toward a Global Autonomous University: Cognitive Labor, The Production of Knowledge, and Exodus from the Education Factory* (New York: Autonomedia, 2009).

Negri suggests that in the precarious times of post-industrial capitalism, class struggles will always be unfinished, incomplete and emergent. Japanese cultural theorist Mōri Yoshitaka describes the strategic exploration of this revolutionary potentiality of the present in recent Japanese social movements in which revolution is not thought of as a point of time located in the future but as an ‘ever-present possibility’ located in the present moment.¹³³ Commenting on the politics of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan after Fukushima, Hirose Jun notes that the nuclear crisis necessitates an indefinite and open-ended struggle rooted in the present because the experience of the crisis is itself an ongoing part of daily life. He observes that the nuclear crisis has no discrete ending. ‘It is not’, he explains, ‘that the nuclear accident *has taken place* as a solution to metastability . . . but that it *is taking place* as a duration of metastability itself’. For Hirose, the ongoing nature of the crisis requires a conception of struggle that is similarly open-ended. He contrasts the notion of an ongoing insurrection against one of revolution as a moment of rupture by noting that,

the joy of revolution is discovered when it has taken place, while the joy of insurrection exists when it is taking place. All the exhaustion in revolution is required by the joy of having shared problems, while in insurrection the exhaustion of living problems is together with its joy.¹³⁴

In the midst of the horror of the unfolding nuclear crisis in Japan a multiplicity of social movements have emerged which seek to both end the nuclear industry itself and to make life liveable in the contaminated zone. In the face of an uncertain future, the focus of struggle shifts to the present and to the everyday. Recent autonomist and anarchist thought emphasises an experimental and prefigurative politics. Movements which adopt prefigurative strategies seek to realise their objectives here and now, even if only temporarily. Anarchist ethnographer David Graeber explains that ‘prefigurative politics involves creating a vision of the sort of society you want to have in miniature’ This approach to politics informed the Occupy Wall Street

¹³³ Mōri, *Bunka=seiji*, 167–168.

¹³⁴ Jun Hirose, ‘Reflections on Nuclear Power and Insurrection’, 2012, <http://www.jfissures.org/2012/01/05/reflections-on-nuclear-power-and-insurrection/>.

movement and had broad currency in the globally connected uprisings of 2011.¹³⁵ For Negri, the significance of prefigurative strategies lies in multiple imperfect acts of creation. ‘Prefiguration’, Negri argues, ‘is *not* in any sense *utopia*, it is concrete activity’.¹³⁶

Because precarious work has the potential to colonise all of the time of life Negri argues that contemporary revolutionary movements must liberate time itself. Unlike leisure time, which is the time left over after wage labour, ‘liberated time is not the residue of exploited time, but is rather the force that breaks up and destroys all the links of capitalist society’.¹³⁷ Liberated time is time stolen from capitalist work, from the production of surplus value. Nevertheless, it is still a productive time. ‘It is productive rationality torn away and isolated from the command that analysed this rationality and extorted it from the time of life’.¹³⁸ The liberation of time involves the collective activity of the proletariat directly producing other values. Carlsson and Manning describe the do-it-yourself ethos of outlaw bicyclists, community gardeners and pirate programmers as *nowtopian*.¹³⁹ These movements establish collective projects that directly produce non-capitalist value. Nowtopian activists engage in complex techno-scientific production based on common knowledges.¹⁴⁰ Carlsson and Manning argue that nowtopian practices ‘hold moments of a post-capitalist society’.¹⁴¹ Rather than allowing their collective productive capacity to be spent producing value for capital, community gardeners, for example, engage in forms of work which ‘fully engage their capacities to create, to shape, to invent and to cooperate without monetary incentive’.¹⁴²

¹³⁵ David Graeber, ‘You’re Creating a Vision of the Sort of Society You Want to Have in Miniature.’, *Ezra Klein’s Wonkblog*, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/youre-creating-a-vision-of-the-sort-of-society-you-want-to-have-in-miniature/2011/08/25/gIQAXVg7HL_blog.html.

¹³⁶ Negri, *Time for Revolution*, 117.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 113.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Chris Carlsson and Francesca Manning, ‘Nowtopia: Strategic Exodus?’, *Antipode* 42, no 4 (2010): 924–953.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 933.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 929.

¹⁴² Ibid., 925. The political potential of gardening as a radical practice was explored in a special issue of the journal *VOL*. See the various articles in ‘Avant-gardening’, *VOL*, no 1 (2006): 114–181.

The precarity of contemporary wage-relations means that workers have to develop their autonomy from the wage by forging bonds with one another in order to guarantee their survival. In contemporary forms of class struggle prefigurative practices and experiments in direct democracy have become a popular means of taking back control over people's lives. These practices occur in the time in-between increasingly fragmented experiences of wage-labour. They take place in the interstices of globally connected urban space. In the next section I turn from the precarity of time to that of space by drawing on critical urban theory.

Critical Urban Theory

In *Commonwealth*, Hardt and Negri draw on some of the new work in geography to argue that for the precarious labourers of immaterial production the city rather than the factory has become the place of work. The city, they note, 'is not just a built environment consisting of buildings and streets and subways and parks and waste systems and communication cables but also a living dynamic of cultural practice, intellectual circuits, affective networks, and social institutions'.¹⁴³ They suggest that 'the metropolis is to the multitude what the factory was to the industrial working class'¹⁴⁴ and that urban life has therefore become the principal site of contestation in contemporary capitalism. Informational capitalism and the hegemony of immaterial labour mean, however, that work becomes increasingly precarious. As global corporations have developed ever-more geographically diffused networks of production workers are thrown into competition with workers from other parts of the world. The powerful role of finance and trade-related services mean that particular cities, like New York, London and Tokyo control production over vast global networks. 'The decline and evacuation of industrial cities', argue Hardt and Negri, 'has corresponded to the rise of global cities, or really cities of control'.¹⁴⁵ Such geographical hierarchies no longer necessarily respect national borders either, creating multiple hierarchies both between and within national and regional areas.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 154.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 250.

¹⁴⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 297.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 335.

Hardt and Negri draw here on a long history of Marxist analysis of the spatial dimensions of capital accumulation and class struggle.¹⁴⁷ Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre is among the best known Marxist theorist to call attention to the city as a place where the abstract mechanisms of capitalism and class struggle described by Marx take on concrete form. Lefebvre's interest in the urban is part of his methodological 'critique of everyday life'. Lefebvre attributes the origins of this method to Marx who, in *Capital*, examines the most mundane of daily transactions, the exchange of commodities which we all engage in on a daily basis, to demonstrate the dialectical totality of social life.¹⁴⁸

Reflecting on the political contestation of space in Paris 1968, Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre argued that '*(social) space is a (social) product*'.¹⁴⁹ Linking the social production of space to Marx's understanding that each society has a dominant 'mode of production', Lefebvre proposed that 'every society—and hence every mode of production ... produces its own space'.¹⁵⁰ Harvey Molotch explains how, for Lefebvre, the production of space involved 'an interlinkage of geographic form, built environment, symbolic meanings, and routines of life'.¹⁵¹ Lefebvre considered the social production of space in terms of three interlocking conceptual apparatuses. *Spatial practices*, which 'embrace the production and reproduction and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation'. *Representations of space*, which encompass the knowledge, signs and codes about the way space is produced within the relations of production and finally *representational spaces*, which relate to the 'complex symbolisms' embodied in particular spaces which are 'sometimes coded and sometimes not' and are 'linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art'.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Andy Merrifield traces the development of the notion of space through more than a century of Marxist writings from Marx and Engels' work on the cities of 19th century Britain to the more recent work of Marxist geographer David Harvey in *Metromarxism: A Marxist Tale of the City* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁴⁸ Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*.

¹⁴⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 26. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 31.

¹⁵¹ Harvey Molotch, 'The Space of Lefebvre', *Theory and Society* 22, no 6 (1993): 887–895.

¹⁵² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 33.

Lefebvre's work inspired a new wave of Marxist urbanism, most critically the work of his student Manuel Castells.¹⁵³ Sociologist Machimura Takashi was one of the first to introduce Castells' Marxist urbanism to Japan through two articles in the Iwanami publishing house's flagship intellectual journal *Shisō* (Thought).¹⁵⁴ Machimura drew on the new Marxist urbanism to explain that while social movements in modern capitalist societies have been represented through a genealogy of collective subjects including class (*kaikyū*), mass (*taishū*) and people (*minzoku*) it has become difficult to comprehend contemporary social movements in the advanced capitalist countries simply by extending this genealogy. For Machimura, ongoing questions in sociology about the relative importance of social structure and subjective agency within social movements can be better answered through an examination of the urban, through which the complex inter-relationship between structure and agency in social change comes to light.¹⁵⁵

Marxist urbanism is a normative project which has an investment in the possibility of changing modern cities so that they respond to the needs of urban residents rather than transnational capitalist forces. Lefebvre's call for the 'right to the city',¹⁵⁶ continues to be echoed today by Marxist urbanists such as geographer David Harvey.¹⁵⁷ Peter Marcuse suggests that the purpose of the contemporary discipline of critical urban theory is 'implementing the demand for a Right to the City'.¹⁵⁸ Yet the Right to the City is not a claim on the existing city. It is a 'right to a future city'

¹⁵³ Castells, *City, Class and Power*; Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*. Castells later rejected his early Marxism but arguably the perspectives he developed in his Marxist urbanism influenced the development of his later ideas of the 'networked society'. For the later work see *The Rise of the Network Society*; 'Flows, Networks, Identities: A Critical Theory of the Informational Society'; 'Spaces of Flows, Space of Places: Materials for a Theory of Urbanism in the Information Age', in *The Cybercities Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), 82–93.

¹⁵⁴ Machimura Takashi, 'Toshishakairon no kokkaron teki isō: "atarashī toshi shakaigaku" o megutte [The State Theory-like Phase in Urban Sociology: On the "New Social Movements"]', *Shisō [Thought]* no 711 (1983): 78–96; 'Toshi shakaiundō ni okeru kōzō to shutai.'

¹⁵⁵ Machimura, 'Toshi shakaiundō ni okeru kōzō to shutai', 158.

¹⁵⁶ Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 63–183.

¹⁵⁷ David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012), 3–25.

¹⁵⁸ Peter Marcuse, 'From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City', *City* 13, no 2–3 (2009): 185.

where ‘the hierarchical distinction between the city and the country has disappeared’.¹⁵⁹

In both activist and academic literatures urban space has become an increasingly important conceptual device for thinking about social movements. Carl Cassegård’s recent work, for example, has highlighted the importance of urban space in the practice of recent social movements in Japan.¹⁶⁰ Mark Pendleton and Vera Mackie’s recent collection, too, examines Tokyo from the point of view of cultural and emotional geography.¹⁶¹ These studies are part of a broader trend which is also present in Japanese language scholarship. Pendleton,¹⁶² for example, draws on Mōri Yoshitaka’s work on the role of space in activist cultures in Japan since the 1990s.¹⁶³ Notable among Japanese language writers who pay attention to space in their work on contemporary activist politics is New York-based writer Sabu Kohso. His *Atarashii anakizumu no keifugaku* (Genealogy of the New Anarchism) traces the genealogies of space in anarchist thought over the past two centuries.¹⁶⁴

The contemporary anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo arose in response to a disaster which occurred more than 200 kilometres from the metropolis in a small rural municipality in Fukushima prefecture. Yet the metropolis was quickly identified as being at risk of radioactive contamination of the air, water and food. The strategies and tactics employed by the movement responded to the urban context in which activists lived. In this thesis I utilise the conceptual tools of Marxist urbanism and the perspective of autonomy to consider the way the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 193.

¹⁶⁰ Carl Cassegård, ‘Public Space in Recent Japanese Political Thought and Activism: From the Rivers and Lakes to Miyashita Park’, *Japanese Studies* 31, no 3 (2011): 405–422; Carl Cassegård, ‘Play and Empowerment: The Role of Alternative Space in Social Movements’, *electronic journal of contemporary japanese studies*, 1 May 2012, accessed 5 February 2013, <http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/ejcs/vol12/iss1/cassegard.html>; Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*.

¹⁶¹ Vera Mackie, ‘Tales of the City’, *Japanese Studies* 31, no 3 (2011): 299–304.

¹⁶² Mark Pendleton, ‘Subway to Street: Spaces of Traumatic Memory, Counter-Memory and Recovery in Post-Aum Tokyo’, *Japanese Studies* 31, no 3 (2011): 359–371.

¹⁶³ Mōri, Bunka=seiji; Mōri, Sutorīto no shisō.

¹⁶⁴ Kohso Iwasaburō, *Atarashii anakizumu no keifugaku* [*A Genealogy of the New Anarchism*] (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 2009). Kohso publishes in English as Sabu Kohso and in Japanese under his full name Kohso Iwasaburō.

unfolded in the everyday production and contestation of urban space. In the next two sections I apply some of these insights to the history of nuclear power in post-war Japan.

Fukushima and the Capitalist Developmental State

Chalmers Johnson argued that in a late industrialising state like Japan, ‘the state itself led the industrialisation drive, that is, it took on *developmental* functions’.¹⁶⁵ The state took responsibility for organising and directing economic growth rather than leaving it to the free market. As Japan emerged from the chaos of war, capitalist developmentalism took shape in the form of a tripartite structure. This structure, known as the ‘iron triangle’ had three main pillars: a powerful economic bureaucracy, the Liberal Democratic Party and a captive private sector. Johnson’s understanding of the Japanese developmental state was developed through his detailed study of the powerful Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI)¹⁶⁶ which played a leading role in forming the industrial policies which produced Japan’s post-war economic boom. By examining the way MITI officials penetrated both the political leadership in the Diet and the business world Chalmers recognised the collusive mechanisms via which elite networks managed Japanese capitalism to ensure the highest possible rates of economic growth.

MITI guided the expansion of Japanese industry using a variety of indirect strategies. Ministerial bureaucrats let private industry know what the government’s objectives were and rewarded those firms which complied with its directives. The close relationship between private industry and the bureaucracy was institutionalised in the practice of *amakudari* (‘descent from heaven’) whereby retired bureaucrats typically ‘descend’ upon retirement within the Ministry into senior roles in the private companies for which they formerly held responsibility as regulators. This practice helped ensure a smooth path for the reception of Ministry direction in private

¹⁶⁵ Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975*, 19.

¹⁶⁶ The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) was renamed the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in 2001 as part of the Central Government Reform (*chūō shochō saihen*) process when it was merged with a number of agencies previously associated with other ministries including the Economic Planning Agency. For further details of this important administrative reform see Stockwin, *Governing Japan: Divided Politics in a Resurgent Economy*, 146–153.

industry.¹⁶⁷ The economic bureaucracy also extended its influence into politics as former bureaucrats entered the National Diet. Former economic bureaucrats such as Kishi Nobusuke (1896–1987); former vice minister in MITI's predecessor the Ministry of Munitions), Ikeda Hayato (1899–1965; former vice-minister of finance) and Satō Eisaku (1901–1975; former vice-minister of transportation) were elected to the Diet in 1949 along with 42 other former bureaucrats. They became powerful figures in the Liberal Democratic Party, formed through the union of the conservative Liberal and Democrat parties in 1952. The three served as prime minister in succession between 1957 and 1972 during which time they dominated Japanese politics.¹⁶⁸

Many people benefited from Japan's rapid economic development after the war. Living standards improved and the rate of poverty fell, although the benefits of economic development were not distributed evenly across the country. The pursuit of a developmentalist strategy by ruling elites resulted in the centralisation of power and control and a highly polarised form of development. While urban centres and manufacturing districts prospered, the regions struggled to attract investment. The lure of jobs and opportunities in the cities led to rural to urban migration on a massive scale. Whereas half of all jobs in 1950 were in the rural industries of fishing, forestry and farming, by 1975 this sector had plummeted to just 15 per cent of the economy.¹⁶⁹ In the Hamadōri region of eastern Fukushima Prefecture, where the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant was built in the 1960s, the agricultural land was poor and residents frequently had to travel outside the region in search of employment during the winter months when work in the fields came to a natural pause.

The history of the Hamadōri region provides a microcosm of the broader history of energy and industrialisation in modern Japan. The region's relationship with the

¹⁶⁷ Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975*. See also Johnson, *Japan: Who Governs? The Rise of the Developmental State*, 115–156.

¹⁶⁸ Kishi served as prime minister from February 1952 until July 1960. Ikeda succeeded him until November 1964 when he was replaced by Satō who served until July 1972.

¹⁶⁹ Machimura, 'Gendai nihon ni okeru kakusa no jyūsōteki kōzō [Multiscalar Structure of Inequality in Contemporary Japan]', 103–105.

Tokyo similarly reflects the unequal distribution of power in modern Japan. The region was already an important energy supply region during the Meiji period.¹⁷⁰ In an island nation relatively poor in indigenous energy resources, the securing of a stable supply of energy to fuel economic growth was always a key concern for Japan's leading industrialists, politicians and bureaucrats. Japan's early industrialisation was heavily dependent on energy derived from coal. Between 1875 and 1919 coal production in Japan increased from 0.6 to 21.3 million metric tonnes. In 1877, when the Meiji regime was well established, coal exports to the capital began in earnest. In 1883, Tokyo industrialist Shibusawa Eiichi (1840–1931), known as the 'father of Japanese capitalism', established the Jōban Coal Company. In 1897 The completion of the Jōban railway line in 1897 connected the coalfields with markets in Tokyo.¹⁷¹

Production in the Jōban fields increased rapidly during the early twentieth century as coal became the primary energy source fuelling Japanese heavy industry in the first half of the twentieth century. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, the so-called 'energy revolution' and a reduction in the price of oil from the Middle East saw the proportion of oil in the total Japanese energy supply increase from 20.5 per cent in 1955 to 77.6 per cent by 1973. The proportion of coal declined from 49.2 per cent to 15.4 per cent over the same period.¹⁷² As imported oil from the Middle East began to replace coal as the primary fossil fuel source for Japan's economic boom, the fortunes of the Jōban coalfields declined. Production finally ceased in 1976.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Japan's modern history is divided into periods whose names are taken from that of the ruling house. The early modern Edo or Tokugawa period (1603 – 1868) refers to the rule of the Tokugawa Shoguns who had their seat of government in the city of Edo, present day Tokyo. Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Shogunate, established his administrative centre in Edo to avoid the intrigue which surrounded the Imperial court in Kyoto. In 1868, a political and military reform movement overthrew the Tokugawa shogunate in the name of the young Emperor Mutsuhito who had ascended to the throne in early 1867. His reign, known as the Meiji period (1868 – 1912), ushered in a period of rapid modernisation. Meiji was followed by the Taishō (1912 – 1926) and Shōwa (1926 – 1989) periods. In 1989 Hirohito, the Shōwa Emperor died and was succeeded by his son Akihito who took the official reign name of Heisei (1989 –). The official calendar in Japan is based on the year of the Emperor's reign. Thus 2011, when the 3.11 disaster took place, is referred to in official Japanese sources as Heisei 23, the 23rd year of the Heisei period.

¹⁷¹ Kainuma Hiroshi, 'Fukushima' ron: genshiryoku mura wa naze umareta no ka [On 'Fukushima': What Brought Forth the Nuclear Village?] (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2011), 89.

¹⁷² Itoh, Makoto, *The World Economic Crisis and Japanese Capitalism* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1990), 143–144.

¹⁷³ Kainuma, 'Fukushima' ron, 192–193.

When plans to build the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant were first being made in the 1950s and 1960s, the nuclear reactor became a site of struggle between the contradictory interests of central power and local community struggles. Local leaders competed with other regional leaders and used their influence in the central government to try and secure access to the opportunities for economic development which the nuclear industry seemed to offer. They were ultimately successful in securing the plant for the region and the first reactor at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant commenced operation in March 1971. Between 1974 and 1979 a further five reactors were built at the plant to supply electricity to the Tokyo Electric Power Company's metropolitan service area. With the plant came money, jobs and economic opportunities which the people of the Hamadōri region had not previously experienced.

Japan's nuclear energy programme had its origins in wartime when a number of unsuccessful research projects were initiated to produce an atomic bomb.¹⁷⁴ Following Japan's defeat and occupation by the Allies in 1945, the office of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) imposed a complete ban on all nuclear research. In September 1951, the Japanese government and the majority of the Allied powers signed the Peace Treaty of San Francisco which came into force in April 1952 formally bringing the occupation to an end. The text of the treaty did not include an explicit ban on atomic research and Japan's nuclear energy research programme re-commenced.¹⁷⁵ In 1953 U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890–1969) presented his plan for 'Atoms for Peace' to the United Nations General Assembly. This speech set the stage for international cooperation in atomic energy and the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Atoms for Peace speech followed on from the successful nuclear tests carried out by the Soviet Union in 1949 and 1953. Prior to Atoms for Peace, the U.S. had implemented a global nuclear regime which aimed to suppress potential competition on nuclear

¹⁷⁴ For a detailed study of Japan's wartime nuclear research programme see Masakatsu Yamazaki, *Nihon no kaku kaihatsu, 1939–1955: Genbaku kara genshiryoku e* [Japan's Nuclear Programme], 1939–1955: From Nuclear Weapons to Nuclear Power] (Tokyo: Sekibundō, 2011). For an account in English see Japan in War and Peace: Selected Essays (New York: New Press, 1993), 55–100.

¹⁷⁵ Kainuma, *'Fukushima' ron*, 228–232.

energy research from West Germany and Japan. After Eisenhower's speech, however, America's allies were encouraged and supported to pursue nuclear energy research under an international framework which the U.S. could control. The policy was intended to ensure that countries with an interest in nuclear energy research would not fall under the influence of the Soviets or pose a threat to U.S. hegemony by developing their own independent nuclear weapons programme. The new policy would also permit American capital, including companies like General Electric and Westinghouse, to export these large-scale technologies as they had with hydroelectric power generation.¹⁷⁶ Sociologist Kainuma Hiroshi explains how 'Atoms for Peace' created a dichotomous framework in which the military use of nuclear power was characterised as shadowy, barbaric and inhuman while the 'peaceful use' was recognised as light, civilised and humanitarian.¹⁷⁷

Japanese officials rushed to take advantage of the technology transfers available under the Atoms for Peace initiative to build the country's first nuclear reactor. Conservative politician Nakasone Yasuhiro (later prime minister from 1982–1987) spearheaded the push for Japan to develop a civilian nuclear power programme. Nakasone had worked in the Navy bureaucracy during the war and possessed a strong interest in nuclear weapons and nuclear energy. He corresponded with U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (1888–1959) as early as 1951, seeking permission for Japan to pursue atomic energy research. In 1954, following the Atoms for Peace speech, Nakasone sought and received approval from the Diet for ¥250 million to be appropriated from the budget for science and technology. ¥235 million of this was to be invested in the construction of Japan's first nuclear reactor.¹⁷⁸ In 1955, Japanese officials including Nakasone attended the UN Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy in Geneva. On his return Nakasone became chair of the new Joint Diet Atomic Energy Committee which included members of both the governing and opposition parties. 'Atoms for Peace' served to unite all the major factions within the Diet behind nuclear power development. In December 1955 the Basic Atomic Energy Law, a legal framework for civilian nuclear power, passed

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 234.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Low, Nakayama, and Yoshioka, *Science, Technology and Society in Contemporary Japan*, 72.

through the Diet.¹⁷⁹ In November that year a U.S.-Japan Atomic Energy Agreement was signed in Washington prompting widespread interest in the technology among Japanese industrialists.¹⁸⁰

As Oguma has observed, the building of Japan's nuclear reactor fleet coincided almost exactly with the dominance of the manufacturing industry in the Japanese economy. Japan's first commercial nuclear reactor commenced operation at Tōkai Mura in 1966. This was one year after manufacturing had topped primary industry for the first time as the largest sector in terms of employment. There was steady growth in the number of nuclear reactors built throughout this period. Since 1997, however, no new nuclear power plants have been completed.¹⁸¹ The nuclear plants, which provided cheap base load power to support the manufacturing industry but required enormous investment to build, were a potent symbol of the high energy consumption, heavy-industrial society which Japan developed during the period of rapid economic growth.¹⁸²

After the oil shock crisis the Japanese government tried to shift the Japanese economy away from heavy industry towards 'knowledge-intensive' industries so as to construct an 'information society'.¹⁸³ The Japanese government began experimenting with neoliberal economic policies an attempt to stabilise economic growth in the face of the global 'stagflation' crisis which followed the oil shocks. Neoliberal economic theory posits that deregulating capital and labour markets will boost economic growth.¹⁸⁴ The Japanese government began to deregulate its domestic capital markets which allowed Japanese corporations to free themselves from their dependence on the banking sector and raise capital by issuing stocks and

¹⁷⁹ Daniel P. Aldrich, *Site Fights: Divisive Facilities and Civil Society in Japan and the West* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 124–125.

¹⁸⁰ Low, Nakayama, and Yoshioka, Science, Technology and Society in Contemporary Japan, 73–74.

¹⁸¹ Oguma Eiji, 'Shakai o kaeru ni wa: kantei demo no genba kara [To Change Society: On the Ground Outside the Prime Minister's Official Residence]', *Bungei shunjū*, April 2013, 37.

¹⁸² Oguma, *Shakai o kaeru ni wa* [To Change Society], 37–39.

¹⁸³ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan: From the Seventeenth to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 210–211.

¹⁸⁴ Anwar Shaikh, 'The Economic Mythology of Neoliberalism', in *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 41–46.

bonds. This process, known as ‘financial engineering’ (*‘zaiteku’*), later became standard practice in Europe and America.¹⁸⁵ The government incurred large fiscal deficits in the 1970s which forced it to relax interest rate controls to make government debt more attractive to financial institutions. Japanese companies began to seek finance in overseas capital markets where finance was available more cheaply. A yen market was established in Europe which was not bound by Japanese government regulation. This encouraged liberalisation of controls in Japan. Japan also joined the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in 1964. Membership of these organisations required that member countries relax restrictions on international current account transactions. The collapse of the fixed exchange rate system in the 1970s and 1980s opened up international capital markets and generated new risks and opportunities for Japanese companies.

In the 1980s most large Japanese firms were able to rid themselves of bank debt and accumulate surpluses of money capital. Firms also made more extensive use of direct finance in both domestic and foreign capital markets to raise money capital by issuing shares, bonds and other securities. The loss of the reliable large firms as customers led Japanese banks to explore new sources of profit by lending to small and medium sized firms, real estate agents and construction companies. Following the Plaza Accord of 1985, which re-valued the yen against the U.S. dollar to improve the balance of trade between the two countries, interest rates were reduced which in turn stimulated domestic demand. These reforms enabled Japan to become a major centre in the growing financial sector, further accelerating post-industrialisation. Japanese firms had already begun sending their manufacturing operations offshore in the wake of the oil shock crisis and a growing citizen-based anti-pollution movement in the 1970s. The Plaza Accords accelerated this tendency and encouraged Japanese firms to develop new sources of profit in the financial services sector.

The surplus money capital in many Japanese firms was deployed in foreign direct investment and domestic speculation. Many large firms, banks and other financial

¹⁸⁵ Driscoll, ‘Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan: On the Two Freeters’, 168. Alexander, *The Arc of Japan’s Economic Development*, 100–101.

institutions engaged in real estate and stock market speculation in Tokyo. Between 1986 and 1990, this speculation led to a bubble of overvalued property and unsecured loans in Japanese real estate and capital markets. The subsequent domestic economic boom seemed to validate the neoliberal policies. This speculative bubble collapsed, however, at the beginning of the 1990s, producing a total loss in asset values of 1000 trillion yen by the mid-1990s, 2.4 times Japan's gross domestic product (GDP). This loss exceeded even that during the U.S. crisis of 1929 in which the U.S. economy had suffered losses of 1.9 times GDP.¹⁸⁶

The effects of the economic crisis were even felt in the highly regulated nuclear power industry. Neoliberals criticised the electric power industry and argued for the liberalisation of electric power markets. They blamed the government-guaranteed monopolies enjoyed by the utilities for inflating electricity prices. The electric power utilities began to feel the effects of neoliberal policies following the victory of the Hosokawa government in 1993. In 1995, the first legislative attacks on the electric power monopolies took place with the passage of the Electricity Business Act (*Denki jigyo hō*). Further liberalisation was stymied, however, when opponents successfully marshalled fears about maintaining 'energy security' so as to maintain the existing monopolies. Kainuma Hiroshi points out that while liberalisation was limited in practice, the debate on liberalisation and concomitant debates on the future of plans to pursue a complete nuclear fuel cycle opened up divisions within the 'nuclear village' – both in the economic bureaucracy and within TEPCO, the leading electric power utility.¹⁸⁷

As I discussed in the Introduction, the concept of the 'nuclear village' is used by critics to characterise the web of collusive relationships that link nuclear power advocates in government, private industry, academia and the media. As Jeff Kingston explains, the nuclear village is 'without boundaries or residence cards, an imagined collective bound by solidarity over promoting nuclear energy'.¹⁸⁸ One mechanism

¹⁸⁶ Makoto Itoh, 'Assessing Neoliberalism in Japan', in *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 246–247.

¹⁸⁷ Kainuma, *'Fukushima' ron*, 170.

¹⁸⁸ Kingston, 'Japan's Nuclear Village'.

via which the village is organised internally, however, is through the energy and nuclear power ‘tribes’ within the LDP. Under the 1955-system, the LDP operated in the Diet through a system of ‘policy tribes’ (*zoku*). These ‘policy tribes’ were made up of Diet members who maintained strong interests in particular policy areas. The energy and nuclear power ‘tribes’ were under the influence of the Electricity Industry Association, the Japanese Business Federation (Keidanren) and the regional electric power companies. As the 1955-system broke down and existing patterns of elite co-operation were disrupted by the 2001 Government Reform and Prime Minister Koizumi Jun’ichirō’s neoliberal reform policies, the structures of the nuclear village were also affected.¹⁸⁹

In the context of a breakdown in the political leadership of the nuclear industry, Fukushima Governor Satō Eisaku, who had been a loyal supporter of the nuclear village when he became governor in 1988, began to challenge the assertions coming from the nuclear village that nuclear power was safe. Following an incident at the Fukushima Daini nuclear power plant in 1989, Satō publicly expressed his dissatisfaction with the way the prefectural and municipal governments were informed about the incident only after it had been reported to TEPCO and MITI headquarters in Tokyo.¹⁹⁰ In 2001, Satō announced a complete freeze on the building of any new nuclear power plants in the prefecture. This dramatic decision followed a series of accidents and cover-ups, most prominently the September 1999 accident at the Tōkaimura nuclear power plant in Ibaraki Prefecture in which two power plant workers died.¹⁹¹ Kainuma argues that the decision reflected the conservative Satō’s disillusionment with central government leadership in the nuclear power industry in the wake of the uncertainties and conflicts which were emerging with the rise of neoliberalism.¹⁹² While the conservative Satō began to question the consequences of neoliberalism in the electric power industry, a much broader struggle was opening up as neoliberal labour market reforms compromised the ideology of Japan’s post-war ‘middle class’ society.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 170–171.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 145–146.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 152–153.

¹⁹² Ibid., 170–172.

Precarious Times in Post-industrial Tokyo

As Japan, like the other advanced economies, has transitioned from an industrial economy centred on manufacturing to a post-industrial one centred on service industries, structural changes in the labour market have produced widespread social displacement. Neoliberal reforms introduced under LDP Prime Minister Suzuki Zenkō during the 1980s facilitated the growth of irregular work in an attempt to reduce labour costs. Neoliberal policies also opened Japanese industries up to greater internationalisation and facilitated the entry of foreign multinationals into the domestic economy.¹⁹³ In the 1970s and 1980s, however, the growing precarisation of the labour force continued to be masked by divisions of labour on the basis of gender and age. The number of women and younger and older workers in irregular employment accelerated but enough male household heads continued to enjoy the benefits of the lifetime employment system for the myth of middle class homogeneity to remain intact. Following the collapse of the bubble economy in the early 1990s, financial shocks in 1997 and 2008 and a consequent reduction in spending on financial assistance and public works, even male, regular employees in large companies began to be laid off. Since 1997, wages in Japan have declined by approximately 15 per cent while between 1995 and 2011 the number of people on welfare has more than doubled.¹⁹⁴

As sociologist Genda Yūji explains, the unemployment rate in Japan remained very low compared with other developed countries even as the rest of the world suffered stagflation and high unemployment in the wake of the oil shocks. Following the collapse of the asset-price bubble in the early 1990s, however, it has increased steadily. Youth were particularly badly affected by the economic downturn. Unemployment among those aged 20–24 reached 12.8 per cent in 2003. Among the 25–29 and 30–34 age brackets it reached 7.1 per cent and 5.8 per cent respectively in 2002. In the 1990s, many firms stopped hiring new high school and university graduates so as to protect the jobs of their existing workforce. This, Genda explains,

¹⁹³ Itoh, 'Assessing Neoliberalism in Japan', 244.

¹⁹⁴ Oguma, *Shakai o kaeru ni wa* [To Change Society], 14.

was one of the key drivers behind the rise in youth unemployment.¹⁹⁵ The problem is worse than these figures suggest. Unemployment statistics only capture unemployed people who are actively looking for work. Those classified as Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), on the other hand, appear in labour market statistics as 'not in the labour force'. This category was previously reserved primarily for full-time housewives, students and the elderly but it has increased since the bursting of the bubble. This suggests that a growing number of young and unmarried people who are not in employment are no longer actively looking for work.¹⁹⁶

Neoliberal policies shifted the burden of Japan's fiscal crisis onto the shoulders of workers and the poor. Real wage growth ground to a halt as productivity increases and the 'rationalisation' of wage costs occurred in most workplaces. A 3 per cent consumption tax which was introduced 1989 was increased to 5 per cent in 1997. Reforms to the welfare system meant that individuals were forced to contribute more to the costs of their medical care, from an initial 10 per cent contribution to 30 per cent by 2003. At the same time, corporate tax rates were reduced from 42 per cent to 30 per cent and the highest marginal tax rate decreased from 75 per cent to 37 per cent. Changes in inheritance taxes benefited the accumulation of wealth by the already wealthy.¹⁹⁷

Further labour market reforms implemented in the 1990s were the result of a political strategy instituted at the highest levels of Japanese capital. The Japan Business Federation's 1995 plan 'Japanese-style Management for the New Era' formalised an emerging neoliberal consensus. The plan encouraged companies to develop a small core of regular employees supplemented by a flexible labour force of contract and part-time employees. As companies began to adopt this strategy, the number of full-time jobs declined rapidly.¹⁹⁸ The 2007 Employment Status Survey conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication showed that the percentage of men

¹⁹⁵ Yuji Genda, 'Jobless Youths and the NEET Problem in Japan', *Social Science Japan Journal* 10, no 1 (2007): 23.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 24.

¹⁹⁷ Itoh, 'Neoliberalism in Japan', 245.

¹⁹⁸ Ishiguro Kuniko, 'Japanese Employment in Transition', *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* (2008), <http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/2008/Ishiguro.html>.

in irregular employment as a proportion of all those in employment more than doubled from 9.1 per cent in 1987 to 19.9 per cent in 2007 while the number of women also increased significantly from 37.1 per cent to 55.2 per cent over the same period. Since 2002, more than half of all women in employment have been doing some form of irregular work. The same figures show that the increase in irregular employment over the same period has been greatest among people aged under 35.¹⁹⁹ Another trend which became apparent is that men in their late twenties tended to move out of casual employment and into full-time regular employment while women moved in the opposite direction. Although people aged under-25 make up the majority of freeters there is also a trend towards an increase in casual work among young men aged 25-34. Only 4.3 per cent of young men were casually employed in 2006 but this was an increase of more than one hundred per cent when compared with the rate of 2 per cent until the mid-1990s. The rate has been increasing steadily.²⁰⁰

While speculators made a fortune in real estate and financial markets during the 1980s, the quality of life for urban residents declined significantly. A land price bubble developed in Tokyo which was fuelled by real estate speculation, the lifting of legal restrictions on planning and construction and political backing for the use of urban land for corporate investment. The ideology of ‘internationalisation’ (*kokusaika*) ushered in major changes in the organisation of urban space in Japan. Property price inflation spread throughout Tokyo and to Japan’s other major cities.²⁰¹ As part of the ‘internationalisation’ strategies of both national and metropolitan governments, Tokyo was presented not primarily as a city in which people lived and worked but as an asset which could be advertised in international markets and exploited as a resource.²⁰² Machimura considers ‘internationalisation’ to be an ideological strategy which was pursued by national and local governments, large-

¹⁹⁹ Statistical Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *Heisei 19 nen shūgyō kōzō kihon chōsa* [2007 Employment Status Survey] (Tokyo, 2007), 33.

²⁰⁰ Kosugi, *Escape from Work*, 4-6.

²⁰¹ Paul Waley, ‘Tokyo: Patterns of Familiarity and Partitions of Difference’, in *Globalizing Cities: A New Spatial Order?*, ed. Peter Marcuse and Ronald van Kempen (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 136.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 139–140.

scale urban development corporations and the ruling conservatives.²⁰³ It served to strengthen the incorporation of Tokyo's urban spaces into the global circuits of capital accumulation at the same time as it obscured the social problems in the capital produced by speculation and redevelopment.²⁰⁴

While corporate profits and state tax revenues boomed in the 1980s, urban restructuring under the ideology of 'internationalisation' resulted in worsening living conditions in the capital.²⁰⁵ By 1990, a typical 57-square metre apartment in the 23 ward area²⁰⁶ cost 12 times the average annual salary. Even those families who could afford to buy homes had to do so further and further from the city centre resulting in longer commutes (to an average of 70 minutes) and overcrowded trains (200-per cent plus congestion during peak times). The burgeoning satellite towns generally failed to generate local jobs which could retain residents, necessitating long daily commutes for suburban residents into the city for work.²⁰⁷ Paul Waley observes that 'corporate intervention in the city was so massive in the 1980s that it came to resemble a grotesque parody of the traditional vision of the city as locale of bustle and prosperity.'²⁰⁸ Tokyo was becoming not a city for living but a site of capital accumulation in which young unemployed and underemployed workers struggle to find a place. Out of the conflicts over the integration of urban space into the circuits of capital accumulation emerged movements which were precursors to the anti-nuclear movement emerged to contest the corporate 'internationalisation' of their city.

As I discussed in the Introduction, young workers who remain in a series of irregular jobs without ever making the transition to full-time work are known in Japan as

²⁰³ Takashi Machimura, 'Symbolic Use of Globalization in Urban Politics in Tokyo', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 22, no 2 (1998): 183–186.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 186–187.

²⁰⁵ Waley, 'Tokyo: Patterns of Familiarity and Partitions of Difference', 141.

²⁰⁶ The Tokyo Metropolitan Government area is sub-divided into a number of local government administrations designated as wards (*ku*), cities (*shi*), towns (*machi*) and villages (*mura*). 23 municipalities in the most densely populated core of the metropolis are designated as "special wards".

²⁰⁷ Waley, 'Tokyo: Patterns of Familiarity and Partitions of Difference', 148.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 154.

‘freeter’ (*furiitā*).²⁰⁹ During the 1980s, the term freeter evoked the image of ‘a young person boldly choosing to struggle in some form of casual employment while they worked toward some goal’, something which was incompatible with full-time work. The collapse of the bubble economy and the growth of irregular work, however, have produced a series of different cultural understandings of this kind of work. Understandings of who and what ‘freeters’ actually are vary. The term may refer to someone who prefers not to work at all or, conversely, to someone who wants to find a full-time job but is unable to do so and works part-time out of necessity. It may refer to people who sustain themselves with part-time work while trying to establish an artistic or creative career. School teachers use the term to describe graduating students who are unsure as to their plans for further education or employment. Labour sociologist Kosugi Reiko explains that these meanings all tend to signify ‘a new departure from a way of life that has been the norm in Japan since the end of the war in 1945’.²¹⁰

While the term freeter tends to be applied to young people in irregular employment, there is growing debate in the media, the academy and among social welfare providers that poverty, even amongst those who are working full-time hours, is increasing at all levels of Japanese society. A 2006 NHK documentary series on the working poor revealed that increasing numbers of people in Japan are struggling to meet their daily needs.²¹¹ Anti-poverty activist Yuasa Makoto has been a key figure much to bring the problems of the working poor into the spotlight through his writing and advocacy and his involvement in the social welfare organisation centre Moyai which provide support to those struggling on the margins of the Japanese labour market.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Kosugi Reiko, *Escape From Work: Freelancing Work and the Challenge to Corporate Japan* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2008).

²¹⁰ Kosugi, *Escape from Work*, 1-3.

²¹¹ NHK supesharu ‘Wākingupua’ shuzaihan, *Wākingupua: nihon o mushibamu yamai* [Working Poor: The Sickness Undermining Japan] (Tokyo: Poplar, 2007).

²¹² Yuasa Makoto, *Hanhinkon: suberidai shakai kara no dasshutsu* [Anti-poverty: Escaping the Slide Society] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2008). On Moyai see, Allison, *Precarious Japan*, 55–59.

Sociologist Genda Yūji explains that many young people today experience a ‘nagging sense of job insecurity’ which reflects more than the obvious uncertainties associated with the risk of mass unemployment stemming from the post-bubble economic malaise, the decline in the labour force, globalisation and international competition, and technological change. This second sense of uncertainty is more ambiguous. It is often expressed through a series of concerns about widening economic disparities. These concerns are often discussed in Japan in terms of the development of a *kakusa shakai* (gap society), an issue which has sparked a significant commentary.²¹³ Empirically, Genda argues, evidence of a growing ‘gap’ is weak. Nevertheless, he readily admits that, ‘what undoubtedly is spreading through society as a whole is a nagging sense of insecurity about it’. ‘Many people’, he observes, ‘feel a vague uneasiness about the future of employment and more specifically about their own work opportunities’.²¹⁴

The flexibilisation and precarisation of work has given birth to the unravelling of established forms of politics and the rise in swing voters and abstention. As the way people work has become more flexible and the patterns of work more varied there has been a decline in the unionisation rate and in the organisational structures of regional society. Neighbourhood associations, shopkeepers associations, agricultural cooperatives and unions which used to form a fixed support base for particular political parties have lost members and become less reliable in terms of their support for a particular party.²¹⁵ In their place, however, have developed new forms of what sociologist Carl Cassegård refers to as ‘freeter activism’.²¹⁶ Freeter activism emerged as early as the 1980s when various ‘new cultural movements’ emerged on university campuses and in counter-cultural districts like Harajuku in downtown Tokyo.²¹⁷ While the bursting of the bubble in the 1990s often serves as a trope for narratives of

²¹³ Tachibanaki Toshiaki, *Nihon no keizai kakusa: shotoku to shisan kara kangaeru* [Japan’s Economic Gap: Thinking from the Perspective of Income and Assets] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1998); Satō Toshiki, *Fubyōdō shakai Nihon: sayonara sōchūryū* [Unequal Japan: Farewell to the Middle Class Society] (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2000).

²¹⁴ Yūji Genda, *A Nagging Sense of Job Insecurity: The New Reality Facing Japanese Youth* (Tokyo: International House of Japan, 2005), 2.

²¹⁵ Oguma, Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito, 249.

²¹⁶ Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*, 3–8.

²¹⁷ Mōri, *Bunka=seiji*.

a Japan in decline, for many writers, thinkers and activists the end of the ‘bubble’ also opened up more space for different forms of resistance which had been closed down during the mania of consumption in the bubble years.²¹⁸ In the following five case studies I describe the development of freeter activism and the way it has been articulated with anti-nuclear demands after 3.11.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the key theoretical and historical background which underpins my argument in this thesis. From the perspective of autonomy, the changing form of class struggles are inseparable from transformations in the organisation of work. In the precarious times of post-industrial capitalism, urban space has become a site of capital accumulation. As will be discussed further below, it has also therefore become a site of class struggle. The nuclear power industry in Japan was developed during the era of LDP dominance known as the ‘1955-system’. While many elements of the 1955-system remain in place, the introduction of neoliberal economic policy and the shift to a post-industrial society have undermined industries such as the electric power industry which were heavily regulated during much of the post-war. These policies have also thrown more and more workers into increasingly precarious forms of work. I turn now to the first case study where I discuss the way freeter activists used urban space to challenge the nuclear power industry after 3.11 In this chapter and throughout the rest of this thesis I draw on the ideas developed above to analyse the strategy and tactics of the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo after 3.11.

²¹⁸ Carl Cassegård, ‘Exteriority and Transcritique: Karatani Kōjin and the Impact of the 1990s’, *Japanese Studies* 27, no 1 (2007): 1–18; Carl Cassegård, ‘Japan’s Lost Decade and Its Two Recoveries: On Sawaragi Noi, Japanese Neo-Pop and Anti-War Activism’, in *Perversion and Modern Japan: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Culture*, ed. Nina Comyetz and Keith Vincent (Routledge, 2009); Matthew C. Strecher, ‘Beyond “Pure” Literature: Mimesis, Formula, and the Postmodern in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki’, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no 02 (1998): 354–378; Rio Otomo, ‘A Girl with the Amoebic Body and Her Writing Machine’ (presented at the 16th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Wollongong, 2006), <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/SpecialProj/ASAA/biennial-conference/2006/Otomo-Rio-ASAA2006.pdf>.

CHAPTER TWO – GENPATSU YAMERO!

Festival! Festival!

Make Some Noise! Make Some Noise!

Matsumoto Hajime²¹⁹



Figure 2 Poster advertising April 2011 Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Kōenji.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Matsumoto Hajime, *Binbōnin no gyakushū* [Counter-attack of the Poor] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2008), 10.

²²⁰ Matsumoto Hajime, 'Kūzen no chō kyodai demo chikashi!! 4 gatsu 10 nichi "Kōenji genpatsu yamero demo!" mokuzen

On 10 April 2011, one month after the 3.11 disaster, thousands of people took to the streets of Kōenji in Tokyo's Suginami ward to call for an end to nuclear power. Organisers had expected that a thousand people might turn out for the demonstration. By the two o'clock starting time, however, 3,000–4,000 people had already gathered in the small park near Kōenji station which was to serve as a marshalling ground. By the end of the march, organisers estimated that 15,000 people had taken part. This was an unprecedented number of people for a demonstration in Kōenji and one of the largest demonstrations to take place anywhere in Tokyo for many years. It took nearly two hours from the time the first demonstrators began marching until the final group were able to set out from the crowded park.²²¹ Journalist Itaka Yasuhiko described the scene.

It was just like a rock festival or an Edo period peasant rebellion. A generator was mounted on a pickup truck at the front of the demonstration. It wove its way through the Kōenji area accompanied by the sound of loud rock bands and performance groups. Participants were mainly young people in their 20s and 30s who said 'this is my first demonstration'. The demonstrators carried home-made placards which said 'Stop the Reactors' or 'Save Fukushima' or wore colourful homemade costumes. They vented their grievances and their anger.²²²

The celebratory atmosphere which Itaka describes here is documented in two videos embedded on the webpage of the April demonstration.²²³ The videos show thousands of people marching through the streets. Some of the participants dance along to music broadcast from the back of numerous trucks laden with speakers, turntables and DJ equipment. Others wear colourful costumes while others are clad in more

Yamero Demo!" Imminent]', *Magajin 9* [Magazine 9], 6 April 2011, accessed 6 May 2012, <http://www.magazine9.jp/matsumoto/110406/index.php>.

²²¹ Matsumoto Hajime, 'Matsumoto Hajime no nobinobi daisakusen No. 43: genpatsu yamero demo dai seikyō! shijō kūzen no 15,000 nin ga Kōenji ni! [Matsumoto Hajime's Carefree Grand Strategy No. 43: No Nukes Demo a Great Success! An Unprecedented 15,000 People in Kōenji]', *Magajin 9* [Magazine 9], 13 April 2011, accessed 6 December 2013, <http://www.magazine9.jp/matsumoto/110413/>.

²²² Itaka Yasuhiko, 'Kōenji de 1 man nin kibo no demo: kakuchi ni hirogaru "hangenpatsu" [A Demonstration of 10,000 People in Kōenji: "No Nukes" Spreads to All Districts]', *Shūkan kinyōbi* [Weekly Friday], 15 April 2011.

²²³ '4.10 Genpatsu yamero demo!!!!!!!', accessed 28 October 2012, <http://410nonuke.tumblr.com/>. The videos are available on Youtube. See 'Tami no koe [Voice of the People] / STOP NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS / KOENJI TOKYO', 12 April 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leafNnVWB24&feature=youtube_gdata_player; 'Kōenji 4.10 han genpatsu demo [4.10 Anti-nuclear Demonstration in Kōenji]', 11 April 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAU1kos_n9g&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

sombre garb, wearing face masks to protect themselves from inhaling radioactive fallout.

The demonstration was organised by members and friends of Shirōto no Ran (Amateur Revolt), a loose network of freeter activists which was established in the Kōenji area in 2005 to protest against poverty and inequality in the city through acts of carnivalesque rebellion. They promoted the April 2011 event as the ‘Super Huge Anti-nuclear Rock Festival Demo’ (*chō kyodai hangenpatsu rokku fesu demo*) on social media.²²⁴ The festive atmosphere of the demonstration seems at odds, however, with the sober realities of 3.11: thousands killed in the tsunami, whole villages destroyed, nuclear meltdown and radioactive contamination spewing from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Some people criticised the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations for creating a festive atmosphere in the midst of so much suffering. Activist Hoshino Megumi, who participated in the April demonstration dressed as a clown, describes how she was confronted by an evacuee from Fukushima during the march who criticised her for ‘having fun without thinking about us’.²²⁵

The participation of so many thousands of people in the April demonstration suggests, however, that the carnivalesque tactics of Shirōto no Ran possessed a wide appeal, at least for Tokyo residents. The April protest spurred a series of similar events. Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations were held in different parts of Tokyo in May, June, August and September of 2011 and again in July 2012. Throughout 2011 the Genpatsu Yamero protests attracted a similar number of participants who expressed their opposition to nuclear power through the festive demonstrations.

²²⁴ Hajime Matsumoto, ‘Mō atama ni kita! Genpatsu abunee! Chō kyodai hangenpatsu 30 man nin demo kaisai e [Enough Already! Nuclear Power is Dangerous! Let’s Convene a Super Huge Rock Festival Demonstration of 300,000]’, *Magajin 9* [*Magazine 9*], 30 March 2011, accessed 9 February 2015, <http://www.magazine9.jp/matsumoto/110330/>.

²²⁵ Nakamura Mizuki and Hoshino Megumi, ‘Rōkaru na tsunagari de shakai o kaeru! Nakamura Mizuki san (Suginami zaijuu, “demo wari” puromoutaa) ni kiku [Change Society By Connecting Locally! Interview with Nakamura Mizuki (Suginami Resident, “Demonstration Discount” Promoter)]’, *People’s Plan* no 59 (October 2012): 129–130.

In this chapter I describe and analyse the carnivalesque politics of the April demonstration. I begin by describing the ‘atmosphere of restraint’ which pervaded Tokyo after the compound disaster. This atmosphere limited the ability of Tokyo residents to express their emotional reactions to the disaster. I explain how, in this context, a festive style of demonstration gave voice to the diverse emotions which many residents felt in the wake of the disaster and produced a feeling of liberation and emotional release. Next I explain the origins of the ‘sound demonstration’ style in the movement against the U.S.-led ‘war on terror’ in the early 2000s. Sound demonstrations draw on notions of the reclamation of urban space which derive from both Japanese protest traditions and the global social movement culture of the 1990s and 2000s. I show how the reclamation of space was an important part of the April Genpatsu Yamero demonstration, further developing the idea of the protest as a space of liberation. I then explain the origins of Shirōto no Ran and their development of festive protest as a means of protesting against poverty and social exclusion in post-industrial Tokyo. The group had a keen sense of history, which was reflected in their deliberate evocation of tropes from the peasant rebellions (*ikki*) of mediaeval and early modern Japan. I explain the anti-consumerist politics of Shirōto no Ran and how activists continued to articulate these politics developed after 3.11 into a broader critique of the political and economic structures which bought cheap electricity into the city to fuel consumer capitalism. Finally I consider how the politics of festive noise create spaces for joyful communion.

A Breath of Fresh Air

In the wake of the tremendous loss of human life in Tōhoku due to the 3.11 disaster an atmosphere of sadness and mourning pervaded Tokyo. Many people also experienced feelings of fear and anxiety due to the unfolding situation at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.²²⁶ Major aftershocks continued to rock the city for months after the 11 March earthquake only reinforcing the sense of uncertainty about the future. Matsumoto Hajime, a member of Shirōto no Ran and a key organiser of the April protest, described his feeling that an oppressive ‘mood of self-restraint’ (*jishuku mūdo*) had developed in the wake of the disaster. This ‘mood

²²⁶ Oguma, Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito, 195–197.

of self-restraint' was, he felt, serving to restrict freedom of expression.²²⁷ In promoting the April Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in his column in the online publication *Magazine 9*, Matsumoto urged his readers to 'smash this horrible mood of self-restraint and head into the streets'.²²⁸

For some activists, the mood of 'self-restraint' was eerily reminiscent of the enforced 'self-restraint' surrounding the death of Emperor Hirohito in January 1989. During the former emperor's illness in late 1988 and for some time after his actual death in January 1989 local village festivals, end of year parties and other social events were cancelled. Commercial advertisements and television broadcasts were also dropped or altered as a sign of 'self-restraint'. For critics, however, this was not 'self-restraint' (*jishuku*) but 'imposed restraint' (*tashuku*).²²⁹ Freeter activist Sono Ryōta wrote about his fear that calls in the media and from political leaders for the Japanese nation to come together and work hard to respond to the disaster might serve to conceal the responsibility of those in power for causing the disaster in the first place.²³⁰ In the days and weeks after 3.11 the mainstream Japanese media downplayed the danger of radiation leakage and reported the situation at the plant as stable.²³¹ Social media users, too, found themselves subject to criticism for their supposed lack of 'self-restraint' during online debates about the disaster.²³²

One of the first public figures to break this silence was popular rock and roll musician Saitō Kazuyoshi. Saitō appeared on video sharing site YouTube on 7 April 2011 playing a new song called 'It was always a lie' (*Zutto uso datta*) which he had

²²⁷ Matsumoto, 'Kūzen no chō kyodai demo chikashi!!'

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Kyung-Koo Han, 'Two Deaths of Hirohito in Japan', *Death of the Father: An Anthropology of the End in Political Authority* (2004): 113. See also Watanabe Osamu, 'The Sociology of Jishuku and Kichō: The Death of the Shōwa Tennō as a Reflection of the Structure of Contemporary Japanese Society', *Japan Forum* 1, no 2 (1 October 1989): 275–289.

²³⁰ Sono Ryōta, *Boku ga Tōden mae ni tatta wake* [Why I Stood in Front of TEPCO] (Tokyo: Sanichi shobō, 2011), 27–32.

²³¹ Gono, 'Demo' to wa nani ka, 185–190.

²³² Keiko Nishimura, 'On Exhaustion, Self-Censorship and Affective Community', *Fieldsights - Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology Online*, 6 July 2011, accessed 17 May 2015, <http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/302-on-exhaustion-self-censorship-and-affective-community>.

written in response to the Fukushima disaster.²³³ In the song, Saitō accused the government and the nuclear industry of deliberately deceiving the public about the dangers of nuclear power. In an interview with Imai Tomoko for *Music Magazine* the artist explained that he produced the song not only to express his anger at those he held responsible for the disaster but because ‘it felt wrong that even though everyone was surely angry, there was an atmosphere in which you couldn’t speak out’.²³⁴ When 15,000 people turned out for the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Kōenji, it became clear that Saitō’s song had tapped into the feelings of the crowd. Some of the participants even sang ‘It was always a lie’ as they marched.²³⁵ The song, Imai commented, had brought a ‘breath of fresh air’ that helped dispel this mood of self-restraint and open up a space in which to talk openly about the nuclear disaster.²³⁶

Rapper Arai Rumi (stage name ‘Rumi’), who performed at the April demonstration in Kōenji, was also troubled by the silence in Tokyo in the wake of the Fukushima disaster. Rumi was on tour in London when the earthquake and tsunami struck on 11 March. There she watched the massive anti-nuclear demonstrations which took place in Germany on 26 March on television in her hotel.²³⁷ Upon returning to Japan, Rumi expected to find people openly expressing their anger toward the government. Instead she found that the ‘mood of self-restraint’ was also prevalent in the music scene. Many concerts had been cancelled and the clubs in Shibuya where she usually

²³³ “It was always a lie” is based on Saitō’s earlier “*Zutto suki datta*” (I always loved you”), a single he originally produced for a cosmetics advertisement. For the YouTube video see ‘Saitō Kazuyoshi Zutto uso datta [Saitō Kazuyoshi It was always a lie]’, 7 April 2011, <https://youtu.be/FZ2-vE6PqAg>.

²³⁴ Imai Tomoko and Saitō Kazuyoshi, ‘Saitō Kazuyoshi rongu intabyū: shinsaku “45 STONES” kansei ni itaru 3.11 ikō no kokoro o kataru [Long Interview with Saitō Kazuyoshi: Baring his Chest About Fukushima and the Making of the New Album “45 STONES”]’, *Music Magazine*, 1 November 2011, 34.

²³⁵ Gonoī, ‘Demo’ to wa nani ka, 193.

²³⁶ Imai and Saitō, ‘Saitō Kazuyoshi rongu intabyū’, 32; Gonoī, ‘Demo’ to wa nani ka, 190. Tamura Takanori describes how the Saitō’s song affected one Twitter user, motivating her to join her first ever demonstration in ‘The Internet and Personal Narratives in the Post-Disaster Anti-Nuclear Movement’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, no 6.4 (16 February 2015), <http://japanfocus.org/-Takanori-Tamura/4280>.

²³⁷ David S. Morris, ‘Rap Artist Rumi Stokes Nuke Fires’, *Japan Times Online*, 2011, <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fm20110616a1.html>. The date for the German demonstration was fixed prior to the Fukushima disaster. In the wake of 3.11, however, German activists made reference to Fukushima as part of their protest. See ‘Thousands Protest against Germany’s Nuclear Plants’, *BBC News Europe*, 2011, accessed 18 May 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-12724981>.

performed were closed.²³⁸ Rumi was troubled by the contradiction between the image of rebelliousness which is part of the hip hop, club and hard-core music scenes where she regularly performs and their silence in the face of the disaster. ‘Why were people who had been angry when everything was calm and peaceful not angry now?’ she pondered. When she was invited to perform at the April Genpatsu Yamero demonstration she decided to take part in her first ever political demonstration.²³⁹

Sociologist Mōri Yoshitaka, who attended the April Genpatsu Yamero demonstration, explains how the festive demonstration helped to create a ‘feeling of liberation’ among participants. After weeks of ‘self-restraint’ and anxiety about the radiation released by the Fukushima disaster people were able to gather in large numbers with others who shared their concerns. Mōri felt that the sense of relief which this engendered explains why the April demonstration had such a festive and enjoyable atmosphere despite the seriousness of the issue which had provoked it.²⁴⁰ In a contribution to an anti-nuclear zine, ‘nacca’, a participant in the April demonstration, described her consciousness of the pervading atmosphere of ‘self-restraint’ after the disaster and the emotional release she felt while attending the demonstration.

At school, university or work, all these everyday places, there weren’t many opportunities for you to express candidly the intense thoughts you were having. If you are trying to read the vibes (*kūki o yomu*) when there is this pressure from some huge power, if it becomes common sense that you have to watch out for what other people might be thinking then it is easy to start saying things which you are not even sure are your own words. ... The Genpatsu Yamero Demo of 10 April blew a breath of fresh air through that atmosphere.²⁴¹

nacca refers here to the stress of trying to ‘read the vibes’ (*kūki o yomu*) in the midst of the mood of self-restraint. The phrase ‘*kūki o yomu*’ refers to the practice of checking for non-verbal cues in social situations so as to avoid disrupting group

²³⁸ Likkle Mai, Rumi, and Shin Futatsugi, ‘One Step to Live’, in *Shall We Dansu? [Shall We Dance?]* (Tokyo: Media sōgō kenkyūjo, 2012), 64–65.

²³⁹ Ibid., 65.

²⁴⁰ Mōri speaks to camera about these issues from 0:8:48 – 0:10:00 in the documentary film by Julia Leser and Clarissa Seidel, *Radioactivists: Protest in Japan seit Fukushima*, 2011.

²⁴¹ nacca, ‘2011.4.10 Genpatsu yamero demo ni tsuite [On the 2011.4.10 Genpatsu Yamero Demonstration]’, *Pace*, 2 December 2012, 63–64.

harmony and conform to expected group behaviour.²⁴² Shoko Yoneyama has written of how the ability to ‘read the air’ became extremely important in the 1990s. A pattern of bullying behaviour, which was particularly common in high schools at that time, involved labelling peers as ‘K.Y.’, meaning ‘unable to read the vibes’ (*kūki o yomenai*), as a means of social exclusion. Rumi performed her song ‘A.K.Y.’, which is a critique of ‘K.Y.’ bullying, at the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration. In ‘A.K.Y.’, Rumi sings that she is not unable to ‘read the vibes’ (*kūki o yomenai*) but deliberately chooses ‘not to read the vibes’ (*aete kūki yomimasen*). The song celebrates individuality and rejects the idea that conformity is somehow desirable. For nacca, Rumi’s performance of her song ‘A.K.Y.’ at the April demonstration was particularly powerful because it spoke to the issues raised in the quotation above.²⁴³ The song legitimises speaking out and having one’s own opinion even in the face of a ‘mood of self-restraint’.

Like the pressure to ‘read the vibes’, the notion of ‘self-restraint’ is a cultural practice of self-censorship in a conformist society. Essentialist accounts of Japanese society, known as ‘*nihonjinron*’ (theories of Japanese-ness), often claim that the high degree of conformity found in Japan is an intrinsic cultural trait. Sociologist Shibuya Nozomu, on the other hand, discusses group conformity as one of the middle class values which were encouraged during the post-war period as part of the culture of industriousness and self-discipline essential to Japan’s rapid economic growth.²⁴⁴ In the 1990s, as the cracks in ‘Japanese-style industrial society’ were deepening, Yoneyama describes how ‘reading the vibes’ became a means of enforcing group discipline with tragic results in terms of bullying leading to suicide. Rumi attended school during this period. The attempts to shore up Japanese capitalism through the imposition of neoliberalism required ever greater forms of violence, often quite subtle. Kainuma Hiroshi writes that in the villages in which nuclear power plants are sited in Fukushima prefecture and elsewhere people learn not to speak about the potential pitfalls of the technology. Kainuma is keen to point out that this is a unique

²⁴² Shoko Yoneyama, ‘The Era of Bullying: Japan Under Neoliberalism’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 1, no. 3.9 (2008), <http://japanfocus.org/-Shoko-YONEYAMA/3001>.

²⁴³ ‘2011.4.10 Genpatsu yamero demo ni tsuite [On the 2011.4.10 Genpatsu Yamero Demonstration]’, 64.

²⁴⁴ Shibuya Nozomu, *Midoru kurasu o toinaosu: kakusa shakai no mōten* [Questioning the ‘Middle Class’: The Blind Spot of ‘Gap Society’] (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2010), 54–88.

feature of host communities on the Japanese periphery and reflects the unequal position in which they are placed with regard to the centre.²⁴⁵

Rumi's 'A.K.Y.' is a cover of the song 'U.Y.C.' by fellow rapper and sometime collaborator *SHINGO★nishinari*. In 'U.Y.C.' Shingo pointed out the hypocrisy of politicians who 'say one thing and do the other'.²⁴⁶ Rumi quotes from Shingo's original song to criticise the myth of nuclear safety. 'What they're saying and what they're doing, they ain't the same. What's this about safety'? While the April demonstration was Rumi's first experience of participating in a street protest, the song 'A.K.Y.' attests to the fact that she has always been concerned with the freedom to speak one's mind. As a child Rumi became conscious that in school and in the wider world there were 'things one could not say'. Through hip-hop, however, she discovered a place where expressing one's opinion was not only permitted but even celebrated.²⁴⁷ Skilfully weaving her performance from the repertoires of rap music and popular culture, Rumi linked the problem of KY bullying with the broader social phenomenon of being unable to speak out on social issues due to an inhibiting 'mood of self-restraint'.²⁴⁸

For *nacca*, whose writing I quoted above, as well as Matsumoto and Rumi the April demonstration was important precisely because it enabled them to express thoughts and feelings about nuclear power which they had felt unable to express due to the prevailing 'mood of self-restraint'. Before joining the demonstration, Rumi had considered 'whether what was important now was for us to be angry or whether to go to the disaster-affected areas in Tōhoku and volunteer or to make music for charity and cheer up the victims'. Rumi eventually went on to do all of these things. In April 2011, however, she decided to join the demonstration because she felt that 'it would

²⁴⁵ Kainuma, *Fukushima'ron*, 101–118.

²⁴⁶ 'U.Y.C / SHINGO★nishinari', *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deHUqUpw5A4>. The title of the song "U.Y.C." is derived from the colloquial Japanese phrase "*uiteiru koto to yatteiru koto ga chaimasu nee*". Here, "*chaimasu*" is a corruption of "*chigaimasu*" ("different").

²⁴⁷ Likkle Mai, Rumi, and Futatsugi, 'One Step to Live', 92–94.

²⁴⁸ 'RUMI Kōenji Genpatsu Yamero demo!!! 2011.4.10 [RUMI KKōenji Genpatsu Yamero Demonstration!!! 2011.4.10]', *YouTube*, accessed 18 May 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmgUUxyi6jY>.

be good if more people came out and really let out their anger'.²⁴⁹ She identified her own need for emotional release with that of others and considered this to be sufficient motivation to join a political demonstration.

Sociologist James Jasper observed in 1998 that social movement theorists had not paid enough attention to the role of the emotions in collective action.²⁵⁰ He ascribes this in part to an overemphasis on notions of rationality and the presumption that rationality and emotion are incompatible. Shirōto no Ran issued a call for people to attend the 10 April demonstration which they circulated online in the lead up to the demonstration. The text avoided any overly theoretical analysis of 3.11, using simple, emotive words such as 'dangerous' and 'frightening' to describe the nuclear disaster. While nuclear power was supposed to have been 'safe' and 'ecological', they continued, the technology had in fact led to a serious incident involving the release of radioactive fallout. The contamination threatened to make food from the district unsafe and was hindering the rescue effort after the tsunami.²⁵¹ As Jasper points out, political activism becomes powerful when it gives political form to often vague anxieties and fears.²⁵² The call to attend the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration named common fears and anxieties about radiation and posited the demonstration as a way of responding to these feelings and joining with others who shared them. Precarity activist and writer Amamiya Karin described the feeling of relief she felt when reading this call to demonstrate. She felt stupefied by the enormity of the earthquake and tsunami with their ever increasing death tolls. She was overwhelmed by the conflicting information about the nuclear disaster in the media and online. The more she read the more confused she became. Amamiya described how, when she read the call to demonstrate on 10 April, she could agree with the slogans 'dangerous!' and 'frightening' and was eager to join the demonstration.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Likkle Mai, Rumi, and Futatsugi, 'One Step to Live', 65.

²⁵⁰ James M. Jasper, 'The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements', *Sociological Forum* 13, no 3 (1998): 397–399.

²⁵¹ '4.10 Genpatsu yamero demo!!!!!!'

²⁵² Jasper, 'The Emotions of Protest', 409.

²⁵³ Amamiya Karin, 'Demo no aru ikizurakunai machi [A City Where There Are Demonstrations and Where Life is No Longer Painful]', *Sekai [World]*, September 2012, 150–151.

Affective protest can lay claim to a space for the expression of emotions, particularly negative emotions, which may not be socially acceptable.²⁵⁴ Mōri and nacca both describe how the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration of April 2011 produced a feeling of liberation which contrasted with the oppressive mood of ‘self-restraint’ which prevailed in the aftermath of the disaster. For many participants the chance to gather with like-minded people in the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty was reason enough to demonstrate. While participants may have shared common concerns about nuclear power in the wake of 3.11, they were not necessarily unified through a shared ideology or group membership. In the next section I examine the sound demonstration form of protest which was adopted at the April demonstration. I discuss the way music and dance enable participants to express their opposition to nuclear power while preserving their individual autonomy.

Dance to Demonstration

Music, as Eyerman and Jamison observe, is a powerful medium for expressing the affective dimensions of protest politics.²⁵⁵ Musicians like Rumi played an important role in April’s ‘Rock Festival Demonstration’ and at subsequent Genpatsu Yamero events. As a multitude of bodies gathered in the small park in Kōenji which served as a marshalling area for the 10 April demonstration, contemporary *chindon-ya*²⁵⁶ group Cicala-Mvta (pronounced *jintaramūta*) serenaded the crowd with their instrumental rendition of Chilean communist singer-songwriter Víctor Jara’s 1971 song *El derecho de vivir en paz* (The right to live in peace).²⁵⁷ Genpatsu Yamero organiser

²⁵⁴ James M. Jasper, ‘Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research’, *Annual Review of Sociology* 37, no 14 (2011): 296.

²⁵⁵ Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge Cultural Social Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

²⁵⁶ Chindon-ya are troupes of extravagantly dressed performers who employ a hybrid of Western and Japanese musical instruments and styles to hawk for shops and businesses. Shinoda Masami, CD, *Tokyo Chin Don* (Tokyo: puff up labels, 1992), Tokyo. For a discussion of the *chindon-ya* revival in political protest movement in the 1990s and early 2000s see footnote 22 in Hayashi and McKnight, ‘Goodbye Kitty, Hello War.’ For further background on the continuing presence of *chindon-ya* in urban Japan see Marié Abe, ‘Sounding Imaginative Empathy: Chindon-Ya’s Affective Economies on the Streets of Osaka’, in *Sound, Space and Sociality in Contemporary Japan*, ed. Carolyn S. Stevens and Joseph D. Hankins (New York: Routledge, 2014), 89–107.

²⁵⁷ “*El derecho de vivir en paz*” has been translated into Japanese as “*Heiwa ni ikiru kenri*”. A video of this performance is available on Youtube here: ‘Shirōto no ran: 2011.04.10 Kōenji chūō kōen [Shirōto no Ran: 2011.04.10 Kōenji Central Park]’, 10 April 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6G5DA8GmyM&feature=youtube_gdata_player. For a discussion

Matsumoto Hajime describes how Cicvala-Mvta's performance roused the demonstrators 'whether they were ready for it or not', describing the way the rhythms of this classic protest song 'moved' the crowd emotionally and physically. As participants inched out of the park and onto the road to begin the march, however, Cicvala-Mvta's rhythms became just one refrain in a cacophony of festive noise. The demonstration was divided up into 'blocs' as it made its way through the street. Each of these blocs was led by a 'sound truck' fitted out with a public address system which played a different genre of music. Rumi performed as part of the 'Dance Bloc' which also included a number of DJs and reggae artist Rankin Taxi. The 'Live Bloc' incorporated punk rock bands and Cicala-Mvta. The 'Silver Bloc' was an impromptu marching band in which anyone was free to participate. Adding to the sounds of the demonstration were those made by participants themselves with their chants, cries, songs and instruments.

This style of protest where music is played from the back of trucks is known as a 'sound demonstration'. It is a tactic which emerged in Tokyo in 2003 out of the meeting of artists and musicians in the movement against the Iraq war.²⁵⁸ The first sound demonstration in Tokyo took place on 10 May 2003 in the fashionable shopping and entertainment precinct of Shibuya.²⁵⁹ The 'Street Rave Against War', as the demonstration was called, was the first in a series of five anti-war sound demonstrations held between May 2003 and February 2004 in Shibuya. The demonstrations combined the music of the underground dance party scene with the radical politics of street protests. They were organised by a loose association of people including musicians, designers, writers, critics, freeters, university lecturers and students who came together in the first-half of 2003 under the name 'Against

of Victor Jara and the New Chilean Song Music see Martha Nandorfy, 'The Right to Live in Peace: Freedom and Social Justice in the Songs of Violeta Parra and Victor Jara', in *Rebel Musics: Human Rights, Resistant Sounds, and the Politics of Music Making*, eds. Daniel Fischlin and Ajay Heble (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2003), 172–209.

²⁵⁸ Mōri, *Bunka=seiji*, 159–166; Hayashi and McKnight, 'Goodbye Kitty, Hello War'; Driscoll, 'Debt and Denunciation in Post-Bubble Japan: On the Two Freeters'; Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*, 67–78.

²⁵⁹ Noda Tsutomu, Mita Itaru, and Mizukoshi Maki, 'Dansu tū demonsutorēshon [Dance To Demonstration]', *Gendai shisō [Contemporary Thought]* 31, no 7 (2003): 93–101.

Street Control'.²⁶⁰ As the name of the group indicates, the activists were concerned not only by the war in Iraq but by increased repression at home.

The prevalence of freeters and workers in creative industries reflected the post-industrialisation of Japanese society. During the financial crisis of the 1990s the promise of a full-time job in a good company began to appear more and more out of reach, even for university graduates. Many youths began to abandon the prescriptive ideal of the middle class life course which led from school to university and into the corporate labour market.²⁶¹ They tried to find alternative paths through life by taking off on world trips and working holidays²⁶² or by studying abroad.²⁶³ DJ Seino Eiichi's book *Rave Traveller*²⁶⁴ was representative of the experience of many young people who chose to travel the world and seek new experiences. The 1990s also witnessed a flourishing of the rave subculture in the mountains surrounding the metropolis and in Tokyo's Yoyogi Park.²⁶⁵ Seino was also a pioneer in the rave scene which emerged in Tokyo's Yoyogi Park in the 1990s. He first went to the park in Christmas of 1996 to play CDs on a stereo system with friends. Other users of the park spontaneously joined in and started dancing. As these experiments were repeated, more and more music booths began to crop up in the park.²⁶⁶ The sound demonstrations drew on the music and culture of these rave parties. Seino was one musician who became active in the anti-war movement where he performed at the

²⁶⁰ ECD et al., 'Tōkyō saundo demo kaigi', in *Oto no chikara: 'sutoriito' senkyo ben [The Power of Sound: The 'Street' Occupation Edition]*, ed. DeMusik Inter (Tokyo: Inpakuto shuppan kai, 2005), 119.

²⁶¹ While the proportion of the male population who could take advantage of this life course did increase throughout the 1970s, 1980s and even into the mid-1990s it was never a universal reality and was largely off limits to women. Nevertheless, as a normative prescription for the ideal middle class Japanese lifestyle it became increasingly powerful from the 1970s. See David Chiavacci, 'From Class Struggle to General Middle-Class Society to Divided Society: Societal Models of Inequality in Postwar Japan', *Social Science Japan Journal* 11, no 1 (2008): 15–16.

²⁶² Kumiko Kawashima, 'Japanese Working Holiday Makers in Australia and Their Relationship to the Japanese Labour Market: Before and After', *Asian Studies Review* 34, no 3 (2010): 267–286.

²⁶³ Curtis Andressen and Keichi Kumagai, *Escape from Affluence: Japanese Students in Australia*, Australia-Asia Paper 79 (Queensland: Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations, 1996), 2–3, 55, 76.

²⁶⁴ Seino Eiichi, *Odoru tabibito = Rave traveller* (Tokyo: Ōta shuppan, 1997). Seino later wrote about travelling and attending rave parties in Australia in *Chi no hate no dansu [Dancing at the Edge of the Earth]* (Tokyo: Media wākusū, 1999).

²⁶⁵ Tsurumi Wataru, *Ori no naka no dansu [Dancing in a Cage]* (Ōta shuppan, 1998); Tsurumi Wataru and Seino Eiichi, *Reiru ryoku - rave of life [Rave Power: Rave of Life]* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2000).

²⁶⁶ Seino Eiichi, 'Tōkyō no furii pātii: Yoyogi kōen [Tokyo's Free Parties: Yoyogi Park]', *Inter communication* 11, no 1 (2002): 84–91.

sound demonstrations.²⁶⁷ Many of the musicians who took part in the anti-war sound demonstrations, including Japanese rap pioneer ECD and techno musician DJ Mayuri also took part in the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations of 2011.

The sound demonstrations were part of a much broader movement against the U.S.-led war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq.²⁶⁸ On 21 March 2003 a large umbrella organisation called World Peace Now organised a 50,000-strong demonstration to protest the invasion of Iraq by U.S. and British forces which had commenced the previous day. The vibrancy of the peace movement was in part a reflection of the rejuvenation of civil society in the 1990s. The Great Hanshin Earthquake, which struck the western Japanese port city of Kobe in 1995, acted as a catalyst for this renaissance.²⁶⁹ The earthquake killed more than 6,000 people and caused extensive damage to infrastructure in Kobe. Local government in the affected areas was, however, ill-prepared for the disaster. More than 1.3 million volunteers and many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) went to the city to assist in reconstruction.²⁷⁰ Many of the NGOs formed in the 1990s later played a role in the anti-war movement.²⁷¹ The rejuvenation of civil society in the wake of the earthquake had an effect on musical culture, too. The folk music group Soul Flower Mononoke Summit formed after the earthquake to give free concerts for those

²⁶⁷ Mōri, *Bunka=seiji*, 163–165.

²⁶⁸ For an overview of the anti-war movement in Japan in the 1990s and 2000s see Michiba Chikanobu's works *Senryō to heiva: 'sen go' to iu keiken [Occupation and Peace: The Experience of the 'Post-war']* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2005); *Teikō no dōjidaishi: gunjika to neoriberarizumu ni kō shite [A Contemporary History of Resistance: to Militarisation and Neoliberalism]* (Kyoto: Jinbun shoin, 2008).

²⁶⁹ Rajib Shaw and Katsuihicro Goda, 'From Disaster to Sustainable Civil Society: The Kobe Experience', *Disasters* 28, no 1 (2004): 19–20; Isa Duce, *Civil Society and the Internet in Japan* (Routledge, 2007), 35. One consequence of this resurgence of civil society was the passage of the Special Nonprofit Organisations Law in 1998. For some perspectives on this law see Robert Pekkanen, 'Japan's New Politics: The Case of the NPO Law', *Journal of Japanese Studies* 26, no 1 (1 January 2000): 111–148; Jennifer Chan-Tiberghien, *Gender and Human Rights Politics in Japan: Global Norms and Domestic Networks* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Simon A. Avenell, 'Facilitating Spontaneity: The State and Independent Volunteering in Contemporary Japan', *Social Science Japan Journal* 13, no 1 (2010): 69–93.

²⁷⁰ Tadashi Yamamoto, 'Emergence of Japan's Civil Society and Its Future Challenges', in *Deciding the Public Good: Governance and Civil Society in Japan*, ed. Tadashi Yamamoto (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1998), 97, http://www.jcie.org/researchpdfs/DecidPublicGood/public_yamamoto.pdf.

²⁷¹ Michiba, *Senryō to heiva: 'sen go' to iu keiken [Occupation and Peace: The Experience of the 'Post-war']*, 581.

affected by the disaster.²⁷² Soul Flower Mononoke Summit and the related band Soul Flower Union²⁷³ then became active in the anti-war movement. The *chindon-ya* group Cicala-Mvta, who performed at the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration, is primarily made up of members of Soul Flower Mononoke Summit.

Emerging internet technologies, particularly the Bulletin Board Service network facilitated volunteer activities after the Hanshin earthquake and helped to forge connections between volunteers and disaster victims.²⁷⁴ These technological developments facilitated the kinds of horizontal organising which was so important to the way activists responded to the war on terror not only in Japan but around the world.²⁷⁵ Hayashi and McKnight have highlighted how the anti-war sound demonstrations exploited these new communications technologies. Participants used their mobile phones to alert friends about what was happening or to take photographs of the demonstration which were then circulated via the internet.²⁷⁶ After the 3.11 disaster new internet technologies like social media joined these existing tools as a means of co-ordinating grassroots response to the disaster²⁷⁷ including volunteering in Tōhoku and organising anti-nuclear demonstrations.²⁷⁸

One of the most important tactical developments in the anti-war sound demonstrations was their emphasis on the affective dimension of protest. Oda Masanori, who was involved in the Genpatsu Yamero protests as part of the Silver Bloc marching band, was one of the original organisers of the sound demonstrations

²⁷² Yoshiji Awatani, 'Media Space and "Users": A Study in Media and People's Practice After the Great Hanshin-Ajiwa Earthquake', *Keio Communication Review* no 32 (n.d.): 79–80.

²⁷³ See, for example, the group's 2004 anti-war release Soul Flower Union, *All Quiet on the Far Eastern Front*, CD (BM-tunes, 2004).

²⁷⁴ Awatani, 'Media Space and "Users": A Study in Media and People's Practice After the Great Hanshin-Ajiwa Earthquake', 80–83.

²⁷⁵ Michiba, Senryō to heiwa: 'sen go' to iu keiken [Occupation and Peace: The Experience of the 'Post-war'], 625.

²⁷⁶ Hayashi and McKnight, 'Goodbye Kitty, Hello War', 94–96. See also Tim Clark, 'Online Anti-War Activism Gains Momentum in Japan', *Japan Media Review* (3 April 2003), <http://209.200.80.136/japan/internet/1049353263.php>.

²⁷⁷ David H. Slater, Keiko Nishimura, and Love Kindstrand, 'Social Media, Information and Political Activism in Japan's 3.11 Crisis', *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10, no 24.1 (2012), <http://japanfocus.org/-Nishimura-Keiko/3762?rand=1350712554&type=print&print=1>.

²⁷⁸ Gono, 'Demo' to wa nani ka, 15–16; Tamura, 'The Internet and Personal Narratives.'

against the Iraq war. Writing about his involvement in the anti-war movement he insisted that what brought people into the streets for the aforementioned World Peace Now demonstration of 21 March 2003 was a visceral reaction to the prospect of war.

...the people who gathered in Shiba Park and demonstrated along the road from Tokyo Tower didn't go there seeking to carry out a clear political action. Before that came the feeling 'for today at least I can't remain at home, this is no time to sit in front of the television or the computer. At any rate I can't just stand here, it's no good just continuing quietly as we are, if we don't make some noise there will be further trouble'. It was with this feeling of being at one's wits end, of being unable to bear this suffocating feeling that people dashed outside.²⁷⁹

Jasper observes that 'collective rites remind participants [in social movements] of their basic moral commitments, stir up strong emotions, and reinforce a sense of solidarity with the group, a "we-ness"'.²⁸⁰ For Jasper, singing and dancing are a means of generating a collective identity. They are 'the one moment when a large group can attain a certain coordination and unity, can silence the small groups talking among themselves, can concentrate the attention of all'. Participants in the sound demonstrations, however, felt that this style of demonstration was important because it could facilitate the expression of difference. One such participant was Mizukoshi Maki who described how she valued the sound demonstrations precisely because they were 'a place where different people could express their various feelings and thoughts'.²⁸¹ Far from silencing the small groups in the way Jasper suggests, the sound demonstrations created space for difference within a collective act of protest. Mizukoshi admits that the lack of a central message 'may have made [the demonstrations] weaker'. She insists, however, that 'it was precisely for that reason that I was able to be there'. She only felt able to join in the affective experience of the demonstrations because she did not have to subscribe to a central slogan or idea.

²⁷⁹ Oda Masanori and Irukomonzu, 'Bokura no sumu kono sekai de wa demo ni deru riyū ga ari inu wa hoeru ga demo wa susumu [In This World in Which We Live There is Reason to Demonstrate. The Dogs Howl But the Demonstration Continues]', *Jōkyō dai san ki [Situation Third Series]* 4, no 9 (October 2003): 210. The title of this article is a play on the popular song by Shibuya-kei musician Ozawa Kenji, 'Bokura ga sumu kono sekai dewa tabi ni deru riyū ga aru' (In This World in Which We Live There is Reason to Go Away).

²⁸⁰ Jasper, 'The Emotions of Protest', 418.

²⁸¹ Kodama Kazufumi and Mizukoshi Maki, 'Yappari, ningen wa mō dame nan da yo [It's True, People Are Just No Good]', in *NO!! WAR*, ed. Noda Tsutomu et al. (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 2003), 40.

The cacophony of festive noise at sound demonstrations creates an atmosphere which embraces all the participants. It does not demand a unified mode of participation in the way that formal chanting, for example, might. Music writer Isobe Ryō, who was also a participant in the anti-war sound demonstrations, was quite ambivalent about the political slogans and chants which could be heard at the anti-war protests.

Although I personally can agree with all of them, I really can't get into the chanting and I haven't taken part in any of it. More than all that, it's the dancing that I really get into. It's true, though, that sometimes I can't shake the feeling that I'm being exploited (*sakushu*) by all these slogans and chants.²⁸²

These doubts were offset, however, by the freedom to dance in one's own style.

Laughing and drinking beer while dancing along? The sound-demo is the place where even that kind of irreverent (*katte na*) behaviour is OK. More than that, isn't it OK if some people just dance their socks off, even if they can't agree with the slogans? Ultimately, dancing in the streets is itself a political act. Whatever the slogan, this is the politics that is emphasised in the sound-demo. If someone can agree with that, then I think they are one of us (*nakama*).²⁸³

Reflecting on the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration of April 2011, music critic Hirai Gen described how he 'wandered here and there' through the festive space rather than 'marching in the ranks'.²⁸⁴ This quotation suggests that the atmosphere of the 'rock festival' demonstration was quite different from Jasper's notion of music as a way of harmonising the voices of protest. Hirai celebrated the way the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration preserved a space for difference. Shirōto no Ran activist and music critic Futatsugi Shin, too, felt that the demonstration had enabled 'all sorts of different people to feel at ease to call out 'stop nuclear power' in their own way'.²⁸⁵

Contradicting theories of 'collective identity', the anti-nuclear movement culture which was manifest at the April 2011 demonstration was characterised by ambiguous and shifting subjectivities which convene around the common demand to end nuclear

²⁸² Ryō Isobe, 'Demo=pāti Ron [On the Demonstration-Parties]', *Jōkyō Dai 3 Ki* 5, no 2 bessatsu (2004): 75. My translations of this essay reflects the conversational style Isobe adopted in the original.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Hirai Gen, Futatsugi Shin, and Ōkuma Wataru, 'Toppaguchi wa ongaku demo de ee janaika [Musical Demonstration Will Be an Opening]', *Inpakushon* no 183 (January 2012): 208.

²⁸⁵ Futatsugi Shin, 'Naze Tōkyō ni [Why Tokyo?]', *Sabaku [Desert]*, 30 April 2011, 6.

power but often diverge on tactical and philosophical questions. Jasper suggests that, for participants in a protest to ‘lose themselves’ in a collective expression of ‘we-ness’, they ‘must know the dances and the lyrics’. He does acknowledge, however, that ‘it is hard to imagine *all* participants joining in’.²⁸⁶ Performance theorist Randy Martin reflects on the way dance as a form of protest ‘makes legible the social kinaesthetic, the shared physical sensibility and context we join as we rumble and tumble together’.²⁸⁷ Dancing together in the streets allows for a collective act of protest while preserving a space for difference. Dancing bodies can respond to the same rhythms without having to dance the same steps. In rave culture, which was one of the inspirations for the development of sound demonstrations, it is precisely the lack of formalised steps which facilitate the sense of liberation which participants experience on the dance floor.²⁸⁸

Hardt and Negri have argued that the carnivalesque protest movements which became popular throughout the world in the 1990s and 2000s are characterised by a multitude of singular subjectivities which are expressed through collective protest without creating a unified collective identity.²⁸⁹ Their understanding of multitude is based on their analysis of the praxes of the alter-globalisation and anti-war movements of the early 2000s. Sociologist Kevin McDonald also argues that contemporary globally connected social movements cannot be adequately understood through notions of collective identity. Writing about the role of dance music at alter-globalisation protests against the World Economic Forum in Melbourne, Australia in 2000, he notes that, rather than trying to generate a collective identity, the dance protest aimed ‘to change the codes that govern urban experience’. He explains that ‘this is not an experience of simultaneity as one of temporal acceleration and loss of capacity to produce distance, but one of multiplicity’.²⁹⁰ This disavowal of ideological unity and the embrace of multiplicity was evident in the anti-war sound

²⁸⁶ Jasper, ‘The Emotions of Protest’, 418.

²⁸⁷ Randy Martin, ‘Dancing through the Crisis’, *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture and Action* 4, no 2 (2010): 59.

²⁸⁸ Tsurumi and Seino, *Reivu ryoku - rave of life* [Rave Power: Rave of Life].

²⁸⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*.

²⁹⁰ Kevin McDonald, ‘From Solidarity to Fluidarity: Social Movements beyond “Collective Identity”--the Case of Globalization Conflicts’, *Social Movement Studies* 1, no 2 (2002): 111.

demonstrations. They possessed what Hayashi and McKnight call a ‘baggy’ composition reflecting the highly fragmented labour market of post-industrial Japan. The protests incorporated ‘twentyish *furiitā* [freeters], students on the verge of getting a job, and downsized office ladies (OLs) [sic] and salarymen’.²⁹¹ Mizukoshi Maki and Noda Tsutomu, two organisers of the anti-war sound demonstrations celebrated the way they were able to bring musicians, many of whom had displayed little previous interest in politics, and political activists together.²⁹²

Ethnomusicologist Noriko Manabe describes the inclusive style which was adopted by the organisers of the April 2011 Genpatsu Yamero demonstration. The organisers relied on their friendship networks and broader contacts. Music critic and Shirōto no Ran member Futatsugi Shin told Manabe ‘we’re not really organizers so much as we invite people to participate. If someone approaches us and says, “I want to have a reggae truck, a hard-core truck”, or whatever, we invite them to do it, as long as they take care of renting the truck and sound system themselves’. Futatsugi explains how this approach reflected the organising philosophy of Shirōto no Ran. ‘It’s best to have a diversity of people there—suspicious characters, the shopkeepers and shoppers of the commercial streets (*shōtengai*), labor unions, families, everyone—showing their individuality while saying, “We’re against nuclear power”’.²⁹³ The Shirōto no Ran organisers were inundated with requests from musicians who wanted to play at the demonstration.²⁹⁴

Social movements in Tokyo today are defined less by shared ideological commitments or formal group membership than by practices which intervene in and transform public space.²⁹⁵ The anti-war sound demonstrations transformed the sonic landscape of Shibuya with their playful combination of techno beats and anti-war

²⁹¹ Hayashi and McKnight, ‘Goodbye Kitty, Hello War’, 94.

²⁹² In Noda, Mita, and Mizukoshi, ‘Dansu tū demonsutorēshon’, 94, 101. ‘OL’ is a common Japanese abbreviation for Office Ladies and refers to the gendered roles women play in corporate offices in Japan.

²⁹³ Noriko Manabe, ‘The Evolution of Musical Style in Antinuclear Sound Demonstrations’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 11, no 42.3 (21 October 2013), <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Noriko-MANABE/4014>.

²⁹⁴ Matsumoto, ‘Kūzen no chō kyodai demo chikashi!!’

²⁹⁵ Mōri, Bunka=seiji; Watanabe Futoshi, *Ai to yūmoa no shakai undō: makki shihon shugi o ikiru tame ni* [Social Movements of Love and Humour: For Life in Late Capitalism] (Kyoto: Kita ōji shobō, 2012), 104–139.

messages. Cassegård, in a recent essay, highlights the importance of play as a tactic in recent urban social movements in Japan. Play can ameliorate the feelings of powerlessness which many of the precariat experience due to their social and economic marginalisation.²⁹⁶ Music and dance are forms of ‘playful empowerment’ which facilitate participation in political protest and create a ‘baggy’ sense of community among disempowered and alienated youth. In the next section I discuss the ‘playful’ protest style developed by the Shirōto no Ran network which became visible to a wide audience at the April 2011 demonstration.

Genpatsu Yamero as a Temporary Autonomous Zone

In the epigraph to this chapter I quoted from Matsumoto Hajime’s 2008 book *Counter-attack of the Poor* where he called upon the urban poor to assert their interests through carnivalesque protest. ‘Festival Festival!’ he wrote, ‘make some noise! Make some noise!’²⁹⁷ So far in this chapter I have discussed the way the April 2011 demonstration enabled people to express their emotional reactions to the 3.11 disaster. Hirai Gen, for example, described the ‘amazing feeling of liberation’ he felt while listening to a performance by reggae performer Rankin Taxi at the demonstration.²⁹⁸ This quest for liberation through festive protest has been key to Shirōto no Ran’s protest strategy since its inception in Kōenji in 2005.

Humour is an important social movement tactic in post-industrial Japan, as Watanabe has discussed with regard to precarity movements in Kyoto.²⁹⁹ Shirōto no Ran’s protest style has always displayed an idiosyncratic sense of humour. This can be seen in the first demonstration they organised in Kōenji, the *Jitensha o kaese!* (‘Give Me My Bike Back!’) demonstration in August 2005. Suginami ward, like most Tokyo municipalities, impounds bicycles which are not parked in designated bicycle parking areas. In order to retrieve an impounded bicycle one has to pay a fee. The Give Me My Bike Back protest was meant to challenge this practice which

²⁹⁶ Cassegård, ‘Play and Empowerment.’

²⁹⁷ Matsumoto, *Bimbōnin no gyakushū*, 9–10. This popular book was re-issued in a compact “*bunko bon*” (pocket book) edition in 2011 and has also been translated into Korean and Chinese.

²⁹⁸ Hirai, Futatsugi, and Ōkuma, ‘Toppaguchi wa ongaku demo de ee janaika’, 208.

²⁹⁹ Watanabe, *Ai to yūmoa no shakai undō*, 140–168.

disproportionately affects poor people who tend to live further away from major railway stations and need to commute by bicycle in order to catch the train. Matsumoto saw as emblematic of the way the rich exploit the poor. Another protest organised by Shirōto no Ran highlighted the high cost of living in inner-city Tokyo by demanding ‘Make Rent Free’. In one of their better known demonstrations, Shirōto no Ran reacted to the excessive policing of their first protest by holding a ‘Three People Demonstration’. The police did not believe the organisers assurances that only three people would attend the demonstration and a full complement of police vehicles and personnel was deployed to follow the three as they wandered aimlessly about Kōenji.³⁰⁰

These protests appear to have largely trivial or unrealistic demands. The slogan ‘Give Me My Bike Back!’ seems unlikely to succeed. Exactly who was supposed to ‘Make Rent Free’ was never specified in the protest. For Matsumoto, demonstrations do not need to make specific demands. Rather, holding a demonstration is a way for the urban poor to make irregular use of a nominally ‘public’ space which is usually inaccessible to them. By calling a demonstration ‘you can use the road and say what you want in the way you want to’, Matsumoto writes. He criticises what he sees as the ‘boring’ style of demonstrations in which people march along shouting ‘we oppose xxx’. By making festive noise, he insists, ‘you can cause an enormous uproar which has tonnes of impact!’³⁰¹

Matsumoto’s tactical approach to demonstrations as a means of reclaiming the streets for politics and self-expression is reflective of a broader concern with space in recent social movements. Sociologist Mōri Yoshitaka explains how the struggle for space has become a central issue for recent social movements in Japan like the anti-Iraq war movement described above. Space was also central to the carnivalesque protest movements which took place in Europe and the United States in the 1990s such as ACT UP³⁰² and Reclaim the Streets.³⁰³ These movements all raised questions about

³⁰⁰ Matsumoto, *Binbōnin no gyakushū*, 111–112.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 111.

³⁰² ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) was a grassroots movement which began in the United States in the late 1980s that forced the US government and mainstream media to deal with the growing AIDS crisis. The movement had an important influence relationship to the development of queer

who space belongs to and what it actually means to ‘reclaim space’. Mōri contrasts this focus on urban space with what he characterises as the traditional Marxist-Leninist concern with the ‘battle for history’.³⁰⁴ Marxist-Leninist strategy often prioritised the future revolutionary seizure of state power over contemporary demands. Mōri’s chronology does, however, tend to obscure the long view of spatial politics. He claims that the spatial politics of the 1990s and 2000s differed fundamentally from the concerns of 60s radicalism. As Anthony Ashbolt has argued, however, space was a central concern of protest movements in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1960s.³⁰⁵ In Japan, too, as Peter Eckersall has shown, the concern with ‘reclaiming’ and ‘liberating’ urban space was a key concern of 1960s radicals who sought to transform the city into a theatre of protest.³⁰⁶

The anarchic transformation of public space through music and dance during the sound demonstrations produces something like the ‘Temporary Autonomous Zone’ (T.A.Z.) theorised by the radical philosopher Hakim Bey.³⁰⁷ Temporary Autonomous Zones are based on a prefigurative notion of politics. Prefigurative political strategies emphasise taking direct action to produce the kinds of spaces, social relations and temporalities which the movement aims to achieve in the here and now. This is in contrast to the politics of the ‘battle for history’ discussed by Mōri above, in which these aims are posited as something to be implemented *after* the movement has achieved its goals. Bey’s work was translated into Japanese in 1997. His ideas have exerted a significant influence on the activists who organised the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations. A small indication of this influence was the T-shirt emblazoned with

theory. See Ken Plummer and Arlene Stein, ‘I Can’t Even Think Straight: “queer” Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology’, *Sociological Theory* 12, no 2 (1994): 178–187. For a documentary film on the history of ACT UP, see Jim Hubbard, *United in Anger: A History of ACT UP* (The Film Collaborative, 2012). Mōri’s discussion is in *Bunka=seiji*, 56–91.

³⁰³ Reclaim the Streets was an urban movement in 1990s Britain that contested the control of public space through holding impromptu, illegal rave parties in the streets of major cities. See Mōri, *Bunka=seiji*, 92–123; George McKay, *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998).

³⁰⁴ Mōri, *Bunka=seiji*, 167–168.

³⁰⁵ Anthony Ashbolt, *A Cultural History of the Radical Sixties in the San Francisco Bay Area*, Studies for the International Society for Cultural History (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013).

³⁰⁶ Eckersall, *Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan: City, Body, Memory*.

³⁰⁷ Hakim Bey, *The Temporary Autonomous Zone: Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (New York: Autonomedia, 1985).

the title of Bey's book, 'T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism', which one activist was wearing at the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration.³⁰⁸ The makers of the T-shirt, a small collective of activists, describe the Temporary Autonomous Zone on their blog as a means of describing the potential for spaces of freedom and liberation to emerge during short-term occupations of public space. Because the 'Autonomous Zone' is temporary, it takes advantage of the window before state-power shuts down the space. A temporary space of liberation can then be created elsewhere.³⁰⁹

In a jubilant column in the online magazine *Magajin 9* (Magazine 9) Matsumoto celebrated the diversity of the participants in the protest.

People sincerely shouting and full of rage at TEPCO and the government, the elderly walking slowly, people dancing every which way, people with a beer in one hand who looked like they were headed to a cherry-blossom viewing party,³¹⁰ families who looked like they were going for a picnic, people wandering about with enormous art objects they had made for the occasion, leftists who looked like they had travelled 40 years through time with their *zekken*³¹¹ and people carrying the Japanese flag who looked like they had travelled 70 years through time,³¹² performers dressed as clowns and celebrities like actor Yamamoto Tarō³¹³ and Bose from Scha Dara Par.³¹⁴ The number was endless!³¹⁵

³⁰⁸ See the festival by Kawanishi Ryō in 'Tokushū: genpatsu hantai [Special issue: Against Nuclear Power]', *Shukusai [Festival]*, 11 June 2011, n.p.

³⁰⁹ 'Wearable Ideas RLL - T.A.Z', accessed 30 July 2014, http://www.rll.jp/hood/tee/rll02_taz.php.

³¹⁰ Between March and April each year when the cherry blossoms bloom across the Japanese archipelago thousands of people flock to the public parks and riverbanks to have picnics under the trees. Cherry blossom viewing parties are typically the occasion for heavy drinking.

³¹¹ *Zekken* are vests with plastic inserts into which pieces of paper bearing slogans can be inserted for use during political protests. These protesters would have "time travelled" from the 1960s when *zekken* were in vogue among student protesters, Marxist political parties and trade unionists.

³¹² 70 years prior to the April demonstration in the early 1940s Japan was at war and the Japanese rising sun flag was a prominent symbol of militant nationalism.

³¹³ Yamamoto Tarō is an actor who came out against nuclear power after Fukushima. As a result he lost most of his acting contracts, an experience he describes in his book. He entered the National Diet in the Upper House elections of July 2013 as an independent candidate. See Yamamoto Tarō, *Hitori butai [Solo Performance]* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2012).

³¹⁴ Scha Dara Parr is a Japanese hip hop outfit which formed in 1988.

³¹⁵ Matsumoto, 'Matsumoto Hajime no nobinobi daisakusen No. 43.'

One activist who helped organise the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration described how the April 2011 event connected the desire to liberate space with the issue of nuclear power.

There are close to zero places in the city where you can gather for free. There is too much control of the streets; in order to dispel anxiety and loneliness you have to pay; if you make a political claim then people look at you indifferently; and people are divided one from another. Along with all of this we are now forced to go on living in a society where all of a sudden you are surrounded by a minefield of nuclear reactors. Moments/places (*shunkan/ba*) like the 10 April Kōenji demonstration are more and more necessary everywhere in Japan! What is going on in a society where demonstrating is seen as more troublesome (*meiwaku*) than radiation?³¹⁶

This account posits the creation of free and uncontrolled ‘moments/places’ as an alternative to a city in which freedom of expression is highly restricted. The Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations, with their festive occupation of the public streets, enacted a temporary space of liberation.

Both Amamiya Karin and Mōri Yoshitaka have observed how the sound demonstration format resembles that of Japanese shrine festivals known as *matsuri*.³¹⁷ In *matsuri* large numbers of people throng in the streets, often bearing *omikoshi* (portable shrines). Participants in the festivals typically bang drums, dance and wear special clothing. Shirōto no Ran have frequently used tropes drawn from these festivals in their demonstrations. In September 2009 at the ‘Make Rent Free Demo’ sound demonstration a group of performance artists joined the demonstration as it approached its destination near Kōenji station. They carried a large portable *omikoshi* emblazoned with the slogan ‘Kōenji NEET Union’ and cried out ‘wasshoi, wasshoi’, the chant which is used when carrying *omikoshi* at shrine festivals. A similar *omikoshi* appeared at the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Shibuya in May 2011, this time in the shape of a nuclear reactor.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ ‘4.10’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 13 April 2011, accessed 23 February 2015, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/04/410.html>.

³¹⁷ For an overview of Japan’s traditional festival culture see Herbert Plutschow, *Matsuri: The Festivals of Japan: With a Selection from P.G. O’Neill’s Photographic Archive of Matsuri* (Routledge, 2013).

³¹⁸ This nuclear reactor *mikoshi* is depicted in the documentary film *Radioactivists*. See Leser and Seidel, *Radioactivists*.

Herbert Plutschow argues that the culture of *matsuri* continues to exercise a strong influence over many aspects of contemporary Japanese culture. He identifies, for example, the influence of *matsuri* on demonstrations in the 1990s. According to Plutschow, *matsuri* preserve a tradition of un-making existing social hierarchies. During *matsuri* ‘laws, taboos and other rules of behaviour were relaxed in an effort to abolish the distinctions that uphold the ordinary social order’.³¹⁹ *Matsuri* not only allow for the dissolution of the old order but enable the creation of ‘a healthy anti-structure clearly opposed to the real world ... It creates a vacuum that makes it possible to question the efficacy and relevance of the ordinary human order’.³²⁰

Carl Cassegård has discussed the way freeter activism goes beyond the critique of the objective conditions of precarity faced by freeters. Freeter activists have protested ‘the tendency to put the blame for the precarious living conditions of young people on their own laziness and unwillingness to lead a conventional life’.³²¹ He describes how activists often find new meaning in their lives and new understandings of themselves through participating in politics and taking an active role in trying to shape the conditions of their lives. Playful forms of protest like the sound demonstrations, Cassegård argues, are a way for the socially excluded freeters to reinsert themselves in urban public space. These forms of playful empowerment ‘offer subaltern groups the chance of experiencing that they are not one-sidedly subject to the power of society, but are also capable of ‘retaliating’ by acting back on it and experiencing it as changeable through human action’.³²² While festive noise may not result in immediate social change it helps empower participants to take collective action. Developing social networks which can facilitate survival and further struggles for the empowerment of the precariat has been a key strategy for Shirōto no Ran. In the next section I explore the networks formed in the group’s six years of protest and community organising in Kōenji.

³¹⁹ Herbert Plutschow, ‘Matsuri in Everyday Japan’, *Japan Quarterly* 44, no 3 (1997): 66–77.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Cassegård, ‘Play and Empowerment.’

³²² Ibid.

Shirōto no Ran's Post-industrial *ikki*

In a scene from one of the official videos of the April demonstration, three youths who are waving their skateboards for the camera are joined by a shirtless man with his head swathed in a *tenugui*³²³ who would not look out of place in a woodblock print of an Edo streetscape.³²⁴ He cries out *ee janai ka! ee janai ka!* and the four dance about maniacally. '*Ee janai ka*' is a nonsense phrase which translates roughly as 'and why not?' It was the signature slogan of an *ikki* (peasant uprising) which took place in 1867, in the final days of the Edo period. Perhaps it was a scene like this which prompted journalist Itaka Yasuhiko to compare the April Genpatsu Yamero protest with an Edo period peasant rebellion in the quotation above.³²⁵ The *ikki* were predominantly peasants rebellions during which people left their villages and gathered together to seek justice from those in authority. They often involved large-scale violence and property destruction.³²⁶ The 1867 *Ee ja nai ka* rebellion, unlike most *ikki*, was made up primarily of the urban poor. Its memory has been preserved in popular culture. Imamura Shōhei's (1926 – 2006) film *Ee ja nai ka*,³²⁷ for example, portrays the rebellion as a desperate reaction to the despotism of the ruling classes during the dying days of the Tokugawa shogunate.

Like the colourfully-dressed participants in the Genpatsu Yamero protest, peasant protesters donned special garb during the *ikki*. They gathered to express their anger as well as making specific demands.³²⁸ In Imamura's film, the rebels dress up in costumes and dance about chanting '*ee ja nai ka*'. Shirōto no Ran has drawn widely on the linguistic tropes and practices of the *ikki* in order to reclaim an indigenous Japanese tradition of resistance and rebellion. The '*ran*' (revolt) in the group's name evokes these historic *ikki*, some of which were referred to as '*ran*'. In 2007, Matsumoto Hajime even ran a spoof electoral campaign in the Suginami ward

³²³ A *tenugui* is a thin Japanese hand towel made of cotton and usually bearing some printed pattern. It is often worn as a headband by workers.

³²⁴ The scene appears from 5:41 to 5:48 in 'Kōenji 4.10 han genpatsu demo [4.10 Anti-nuclear Demonstration in Kōenji].'

³²⁵ Itaka, 'Kōenji de 1 man nin kibo no demo.'

³²⁶ Herbert P. Bix, *Peasant Protest in Japan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), xix.

³²⁷ Imamura Shōhei, *Ee janai ka* (Shochiku, 1981).

³²⁸ Bix, *Peasant Protest in Japan*, 143–144.

council elections under the grandiose title of *Kōenji ikki* (Kōenji Uprising). The purpose of the election campaign, Matsumoto explains, was not to win a seat on the ward council but to use various provisions of the electoral law which allow campaigners to hold rallies in the street without special permits. Taking advantage of these provisions, the Kōenji Uprising sought to create a ‘state of festive revelry’ in front of Kōenji station. As part of the campaign organisers parked their campaign truck outside the station and held daily concerts which featured loud punk rock bands. They also organised public talks by precarity activists like Amamiya Karin.³²⁹

By drawing on these traditions of protest, Shirōto no Ran worked to counter the idea that protest is something foreign to Japanese culture. The stereotypical view of Japan as a society uniquely free of social conflict is still prominent both inside and outside the archipelago today.³³⁰ Recalling a symposium at the New School of Social Research in New York in which Matsumoto took part alongside Occupy Wall Street activists in September 2011, he described how the American activists underestimated Japan’s indigenous traditions of protest and rebellion. They seemed to believe that democracy was introduced to Japan from above during the Allied Occupation after the end of the Second World War.³³¹ The idea that democracy was something foreign to Japan was shared by many of Japan’s post-war intellectuals.³³² Maruyama Masao (1914–1996), one of post-war Japan’s most prominent political theorists, argued that Japan’s lack of an indigenous democratic tradition had allowed the country to be subsumed in the drive to total war in the 1930s and 1940s.³³³ Matsumoto rejects this

³²⁹ Matsumoto Hajime, *Binbōnin dai hanran: ikinkui yo no naka to tanoshii tatakau hōhō* [The Great Mutiny of the Poor: Hard Life and a Fun Way to Fight Back] (Tokyo: Asupekuto, 2008), 10.

³³⁰ Journalist Ken Belson, for example, repeats this stereotype in a *New York Times* article about the citizen-based radiation monitoring movement in Japan. See ‘Doubting Assurances, Japanese Find Radioactivity on Their Own’, *The New York Times*, 31 July 2011, sec. World / Asia Pacific, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/01/world/asia/01radiation.html>.

³³¹ Matsumoto Hajime et al., ‘Kōenji “Shirōto no ran” to woūru gai senkyo o musubu: tōron [Tie up Kōenji “Shirōto no ran” with Occupy Wall Street: Discussion]’, *Quadrante* no 14 (March 2012): 11.

³³² Matsumoto Kenichi, ‘Sekaishi no chikaku hendō to Takeuchi Yoshimi [The Shift in the Earth’s Crust of History and Takeuchi Yoshimi]’, in *Mukon no nashonarizumu o koete: Takeuchi Yoshimi o saikō suru* [Overcoming Groundless Nationalism: Reconsidering Takeuchi Yoshimi], by Tsurumi Shunsuke and Kagami Mitsuyuki (Tokyo: Nihon hyōron sha, 2007), 141–142.

³³³ Maruyama Masao, ‘Anpo tōsō no kyōkun to kongo no taishūtōsō [Lessons of the Anpo Struggle and the Mass Struggle to Come]’, in *Maruyama Masao shū* [Works of Maruyama Masao], vol. 8 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996), 337; Rikki Kersten, ‘The Intellectual Culture of Postwar Japan and the 1968-1969

characterisation of Japanese history. He defends Japan's history of democratic traditions which extend back to the *ikki* and other grassroots practices which existed prior to the Meiji restoration of 1868.³³⁴

Shirōto no Ran is certainly not the first protest group in modern Japan to invoke the memory of the *ikki*. Mediaevalist Goza Yuichi explains how Nobel Prize winning author Ōe Kenzaburō references the *ikki* in his 1967 novel *The Silent Cry*,³³⁵ a literary portrayal of the 1960 Anpo struggle. Ōe wove the story of the 1960 protests with that of an historical peasant uprising which had occurred one hundred years earlier in 1860. Post-war Marxist historians, too, projected their desires for class struggle and revolution onto the historic *ikki*. Goza suggests that the post-war Marxist understanding of *ikki* as a form of revolutionary class struggle was historically inaccurate.³³⁶ He suggests, however, that the *ikki* may have more in common with today's social movement culture with its dependence on personal relationships and social networking technologies. *Ikki* were not, Goza argues, a violent force which aimed to topple the existing political system. They were a particular kind of social relation based on the connection between people (*hito to hito no tsunagari*).³³⁷

Cassegård explains that the resurrection of the *ikki* as a model in freeter activism, reflects the desire of activists in the 2000s to dissociate themselves from the legacy of the New Left.³³⁸ As Patricia Steinhoff explains, the memory of New Left protest

University of Tokyo Struggles: Repositioning the Self in Postwar Thought', *Social Science Japan Journal* 12, no 2 (2009): 1.

³³⁴ Matsumoto et al., 'Kōenji "Shirōto no ran" to woūru gai senkyo o musubu: tōron [Tie up Kōenji "Shirōto no ran" with Occupy Wall Street: Discussion]', 11.

³³⁵ Kenzaburō Ōe, *The Silent Cry*, trans. John Bester (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1981). The novel's original Japanese title *Man'en gannen no futtobōru* translates literally as "Football in the First Year of Man'en". Man'en is the era name for the reign of the emperor Kōmei which lasted from March 1860 until February 1861. "Man'en gannen" means "the first year of the Man'en era". This was the year of Japan's first foreign mission to the United States, an event which Ōe's novel connects with the protests against the U.S.-Japan Security Treat in 1960.

³³⁶ Goza Yuichi, *Ikki no genri: Nihon chūse no ikki kara gendai no SNS made* [The Principles of Peasant Uprisings: From Japan's Mediaeval Peasant Uprisings to Today's SNS] (Tokyo: Yōsensha, 2012), 5–8.

³³⁷ Ibid., 10.

³³⁸ Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*, 76.

in Japan is bound up with the violence which descended upon the student movement in the early 1970s. New Left protest in the late 1960s and early 1970s ‘was a period of political, ideological, and physical conflict in Japan’ which ‘deeply marked the generation that came of age as students during that period, and has produced polarised, contending collective memories in contemporary Japan’.³³⁹ The most spectacular incident of violence of the New Left period was the harrowing and carefully mediatised Rengō Sekigun purge and the Asama Mountain Lodge siege. During the siege five members of the United Red Army holed themselves up in a remote mountain lodge for nine days in February 1972 while police laid siege. Only after the siege was broken and the hostage takers were arrested did details of the purge come to light. Media audiences who had followed the nine day siege learned that 14 members of the group had been murdered by their comrades as part of a ferocious internal purge.³⁴⁰ The Asama Mountain Lodge incident, Cassegård explains, ‘achieved iconic status as a powerful symbol of the New Left’s failure’.³⁴¹

The emergence of the freeter movement in the early 2000s ‘on a scale that invited comparison to the era of the Vietnam War appears to have made it urgent for many of them to show that they were not repeating the mistakes of the past’.³⁴² Cassegård suggests that:

freeter activism may have arisen in opposition to the legacy of the New Left, but its attempt to overcome this legacy has not meant a rejection of the entire history of previous struggles. The re-innovation of activism has taken place hand in hand with politics of choosing predecessors, which are held up as positive models for today’s movement.³⁴³

³³⁹ Patricia G. Steinhoff, ‘Memories of New Left Protest’, *Contemporary Japan* 25, no 2 (2013): 129.

³⁴⁰ For an account of the United Red Army and the Asama Sansō incident see Yoshikuni Igarashi, ‘Dead Bodies and Living Guns: The United Red Army and Its Deadly Pursuit of Revolution, 1971-1972’, *Japanese Studies* 27, no 2 (2007): 119–137.. For an in-depth account of the Japanese Red Army faction see Patricia G. Steinhoff, *Nihon Sekigunba: Sono Shakaigakuteki Monogatari [The Japanese Red Army Faction: A Sociological Tale]* (Tokyo: Shōbō Shinsha, 1991).

³⁴¹ Carl Cassegård, ‘Lovable Anarchism: Campus Protest in Japan From the 1990s to Today’, *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research* 6 (2014): 365.

³⁴² Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*, 76.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 43.

Genpatsu Yamero organisers take pains to identify predecessors of the movement which are not tainted by association with the legacy of New Left protest. Futatsugi Shin, for example, points to other more modern forms of protest such as the Freedom and People's Rights Movement of the late nineteenth century and Taishō democracy and other popular movements of the Meiji and Taishō periods such as the rice riots which took place in 1918.³⁴⁴ Echoing the claims of Mōri Yoshitaka, Futatsugi regards late 1960s student protest as primarily ideologically driven. He differentiates this approach from that of today's anti-nuclear movement which, he claims, as driven less by ideology than by 'a fight to protect our health and our children and things like that, to protect our livelihood (*seikatsu*)'.³⁴⁵ The way activists construct their histories may not always be accurate when viewed from the perspective of an historian but for the activists themselves they serve as a way of differentiating the movement from the still traumatic memories of the 1970s. The example of the *ikki*, with their basis in the principle of 'one-to-one connection', confirms Shirōto no Ran's own organising strategy as part of a legacy of indigenous anti-authoritarian protest.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, organisers expected perhaps a thousand people to attend the April 2011 Genpatsu Yamero demonstration which actually attracted 15,000 people. The average turnout for a demonstration in Kōenji had previously been around 200 to 500 people.³⁴⁶ The expected number, then, would have been twice that which the group had attracted to any of their previous events. Oguma Eiji describes how, after the April demonstration, the notion that 'young people in the inner city got together via the internet' became something of a stereotype of the Genpatsu Yamero movement.³⁴⁷ Certainly the group used various forms of online communication to advertise the demonstration. They set up a page on

³⁴⁴ Futatsugi Shin, 'Interview by Kodama Yūdai. Teikō to risei no hazama de [The Interval Between Resistance and Reason]', in *Shall we dansu? [Shall We Dance?]* (Tokyo: Media sōgō kenkyūjo, 2012), 117.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ 'Japan's Anti-Nuke Agitator Speaks out', *Time Out Tokyo*, <http://www.timeout.jp/en/tokyo/feature/2840/Japans-anti-uke-agitator-speaks-out>.

³⁴⁷ Oguma, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito*, 199.

social media site Tumblr³⁴⁸ and organisers posted links to the page on their own blogs,³⁴⁹ for example. Matsumoto insisted, however, that the organisers' use of social media was insufficient to explain the success of the event. He felt that the number and diversity of the participants was a reflection of the way the Shirōto no Ran network had developed deep and wide roots in local communities. These connections extended to shopkeepers, musicians, thespians and artists located not only in Kōenji but across Tokyo. The group had also developed an extensive international network as Shirōto no Ran activists visited similar groups in other countries and international activists and residents came to Kōenji. Through these contacts they were able to reach out even further to related communities.³⁵⁰ In Matsumoto's view, the success of the April demonstration was the product of six years of organising in the Kōenji area.

Shirōto no Ran began when Matsumoto Hajime, a political activist and aspiring second-hand goods dealer, and Yamashita Hikaru, a second-hand clothing dealer and performance artist, rented an empty shop in Kōenji's Kitanaka Street. The shop, like many in the area, had been shuttered for some time and was destined for demolition. Matsumoto and Yamashita took over the semi-derelict shopfront and established Shirōto no Ran Shop No 1 (*1 gōten*). They patched up the holes in the walls, laid some artificial turf on the floor and set up a studio in the back. They operated a small bar and commenced nightly internet radio broadcasts.³⁵¹ This was the first of a number of Shirōto no Ran shops which later opened in the district. Like Shop No 1, each shop was given a number based on the order in which the shops were established.

Shop No 1 quickly became a gathering place for the pair's friends and passers-by, some of whom set up their own shops, bars and meeting spaces under the loose

³⁴⁸ 'APRIL 10th ANTI-NUCLEAR DEMO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!', *Shirōto no ran 5 gō ten tenshu nikki* [*Shirōto no Ran Shop No 5 Shopkeeper's Diary*], 2 April 2011, accessed 20 May 2015, <http://ameblo.jp/tsukiji14/entry-10849526326.html>; '4.10.'

³⁴⁹ '4.10.'

³⁵⁰ Karatani Kōjin and Matsumoto Hajime, 'Seikatsu to ittaika shita demo wa tezuyoi [Demonstration that are Integrated with Daily Life are Strong]', in *Datsu genpatsu to demo: soshite, minshushugi* [*Demonstrations Against Nuclear Power: And Then, Democracy*] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2012), 128–129.

³⁵¹ Matsumoto, *Binbōnin no gyakushū*, 59–60.

umbrella of ‘Shirōto no Ran’. Film lovers in the network established a Shirōto no Ran movie night and one local resident established an English class called Shirōto no Ran University. Some of the shops were used for music and dance performances. The internet radio station Shirōto no Ran featured programmes by the various shopkeepers and individuals who were circulating in the group’s orbit. The activists also established a weekly newsletter.³⁵² As the network grew its boundaries blurred. Matsumoto reflects that ‘we had no idea who was doing it and who was calling themselves Shirōto no Ran’ as the network escaped the control of any one individual.³⁵³

The composition of Shirōto no Ran was ‘baggy’ in the sense described by Hayashi and McKnight. While I have described the April protest as having been organised by Shirōto no Ran it is not actually possible to determine who is or is not a member of the network. Shirōto no Ran can be defined narrowly as encompassing those activists who are directly involved in the operation of the shops, bars and cafés in Kōenji which use the name Shirōto no Ran. In organising the April demonstration organisers like Matsumoto, who are more clearly associated with the name ‘Shirōto no Ran’ joined forces with a much broader community of freeter activists which I describe in the next chapter as the Nantoka Neighbourhood. Many of these activists had taken part in Shirōto no Ran protests in the past. Many of them had also taken part in protests against the G8 Summit in Hokkaido in 2008.

As Goza explains, the 3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake disaster prompted the revival of discussions about the value of *kizuna* (‘bonds’) and ‘*tsunagari*’ (‘connections’).³⁵⁴ These discussions have taken place in a society where anxieties about dying alone and the development of a ‘*muen shakai*’ (‘a society without connections’) have become common in media and political discourse.³⁵⁵ In 2009, for

³⁵² Ibid., 60–61.

³⁵³ Ibid., 61.

³⁵⁴ See, for example, Tamaki Tokita’s discussion of the notion of *kizuna* in post-3.11 Japanese literature. Tamaki Tokita, ‘The Post-3/11 Quest for True Kizuna: Shi No Tsubute by Wagō Ryōichi and Kamisama 2011 by Kawakami Hiromi’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, no 6.7 (16 February 2015), <http://japanfocus.org/-Tamaki-Tokita/4283/article.html>.

³⁵⁵ Goza, Ikki no genri, 1.

example, national broadcaster NHK televised a special on *muen shakai* which focused in particular on the issue of elderly people dying alone.³⁵⁶ The 3.11 disaster further exposed the frailty of social connections in contemporary Japan, prompting a widespread reaction on both the left and the right that some kind of social change is necessary.³⁵⁷

The development of social connections among the precariat has been the concern of Shirōto no Ran's strategy of urban revolt. The group never aimed to build a broad movement against precarity but rather focused on the one-to-one connections which sustain life and make activism possible over time. For Matsumoto, rebellion is not a singular event but a way of life which is made possible through connections with others. This is the sense in which the history of the *ikki* is important to Shirōto no Ran. Matsumoto, in discussion with philosopher Karatani Kōjin, described how the *ikki*, which often took place over a number of years, involved a transformation of the everyday such that the protest 'really becomes one with daily life' (*'hontō ni seikatsu to ittaika shiteiru'*). He cites as an example the Kawamata incident where peasant farmers affected by pollution from the Ashio copper mine in Tochigi Prefecture walked all the way from Gunma Prefecture to Tokyo.³⁵⁸ When the 3.11 disaster occurred, an existing set of overlapping social networks came together in protest in Kōenji. Goza argues that the principle of *ikki* has remained alive in Japanese culture as a philosophy of social connectedness.

Shirōto no Ran's post-industrial *ikki* is a strategy for developing dense social relationships which might sustain the urban poor. In order to do so, however, they have had to develop an alternative to consumerist culture. In the next section I discuss the presence of anti-consumerist ideas in Shirōto no Ran's post-3.11 activism.

³⁵⁶ Allison, *Precarious Japan*, 126–127.

³⁵⁷ Goza, *Ikki no genri*, 215.

³⁵⁸ Karatani and Matsumoto, 'Seikatsu to ittaika shita demo wa tezuyoi [Demonstration that are Integrated with Daily Life are Strong]', 129.

Demonstrating Saves Electricity

In an interview with the online magazine *Tokyo Timeout* in the lead up to the April demonstration, Matsumoto Hajime was asked: ‘Your event is a campaign against nuclear power, but what do you see as being the alternatives?’ ‘I have no idea’, Matsumoto replied jokingly, going on to say:

I’d rather live with much less electricity if it comes with the kind of risk we are seeing now. Japan’s electricity use is excessively wasteful. Seeing 20 vending machines lined up on the side of the street is just one example. I think there are lots of possible alternatives, but our top priority is to stop the nuclear power plants.³⁵⁹

In the immediate aftermath of the Fukushima disaster, TEPCO implemented rolling blackouts in Tokyo. Corporate, governmental and household consumers were asked to reduce their use of electricity. Signs announcing ‘currently saving electricity’ (*setsuden chū*) appeared in public buildings as air conditioners were set a few degrees higher than usual or lights were switched off. Like Matsumoto, anthropologist Carolyn Stevens noted the powerful symbolism of the vending machine. She photographed one machine which bore a ‘*setsuden chū*’ sign when she visited Tokyo in early 2012. Commenting on how the hot beverage she purchased from the machine was ‘just as hot as I thought it needed to be’ she went on to describe how the sign, ‘[caused] me to reflect on what ‘appropriate’ energy usage should, or could, be’. Stevens suggests that *setsuden chū* ‘came to signify a statement to the government that Japan could manage using less electricity (obviating the need for so many nuclear reactors, or for any nuclear reactors)’.³⁶⁰

Shirōto no Ran’s politics are deeply rooted in the notion of reducing and conserving the consumption of energy and goods. These strategies embrace both a critique of consumer culture and a practical set of tools for surviving on a low income. The first small recycle shop in Kōenji which Matsumoto and his friend Yamashita Hikaru opened in 2005 has since been redeveloped, but Matsumoto continues to make his living by operating another recycle shop in Kōenji’s Kitanaka Street. For Matsumoto,

³⁵⁹ Jon Wilks, ‘Japan’s Anti-Nuke Agitator Speaks out’, *Time Out Tokyo*, <http://www.timeout.jp/en/tokyo/feature/2840/Japans-anti-nuke-agitator-speaks-out>.

³⁶⁰ Carolyn Stevens, ‘Images of Suffering, Resilience and Compassion in Post 3/11 Japan’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, no 6.9 (16 February 2015), <http://japanfocus.org/-Carolyn-Stevens/4285/article.html>.

recycling is not only a means of making a living, it is a strategic attack on what he calls the ‘*bottakuri keizai*’ (rip-off economy).³⁶¹ In *Counter-attack of the Poor*, Matsumoto calls for a ‘recycling revolution’ as part of a broader strategy of creative resistance to the many pressures and expectations placed on the urban poor in post-industrial Tokyo.³⁶²

Counter-attack of the Poor, whose subtitle is ‘how to live for free’, contains a combination of philosophical musings on life and struggle and practical strategies for getting by on a shoestring. Some of the ideas in the book are serious suggestions drawn from his own experiences of precarity, activism and communal living in Tokyo. Surveying different ways of living cheaply, for example, Matsumoto advocates sourcing run-down apartments which can be rented inexpensively or creating shared living arrangements to spread the cost.³⁶³ Some of the other suggestions are more comical. In a section on ‘The Art of Saving on the Cost of Food’ Matsumoto recalls (presumably fictitious) attempts to live on McDonalds hamburgers or pieces of torn-up bamboo flooring but that neither of these strategies was really consistent with a healthy lifestyle. A more realistic strategy, he suggests, is to share the cost of groceries and cooking with friends. At the core of the book’s philosophy is the idea that by using less and reducing our dependence on the cash economy through sharing, recycling and political campaigning it is possible to live, if not for free, at least for very little.

Matsumoto’s main target in *Counter-attack of the Poor* is the culture of consumerism. He regards consumerism as a form of modern slavery which traps us into working long hours in order to buy things we do not really need. He uses anecdote and humour to convey his critique of consumer culture.

³⁶¹ Matsumoto, *Binbōnin no gyakushū*, 63.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 63–69.

³⁶³ Experiments in communal living are an important part of the freeter movement culture of the 1990s and 2000s. See, for example, the report of a communal living project organised by people in the Dame Ren circle Kanō Hoko and Chinbotsu Kazoku, ‘Hoiku ni hito ga yattekuru: “chinbotsu kazoku” kyōdōhoiku no kokoromi [People Come and Help Raise the Children: The Communal Child-raising Experiment “Sinking Family”]’, *Gendai shisō* [*Contemporary Thought*] 25, no 5 (1997): 195–207.

I'm walking through Shinjuku on my day off when I get lost in the home theatre experience corner of one of the ubiquitous Yodobashi Camera outlets. Even though I didn't particularly want one, now I do and inadvertently buy one. In the end I even ended up taking out a loan!³⁶⁴

One of the best strategies for reducing our dependence on the consumer economy, Matsumoto argues, is to find ways to recycle already existing commodities. He proposes that we look on second hand goods as 'allies' so as to avoid being taken in by the merchants of expensive consumer products. 'Let the rich fools buy new stuff!' he proclaims. He does not argue that we should not enjoy home theatre systems and other consumer goods but that we should not work the long hours which are necessary to pay for all these goods. Rather than buying new things, Matsumoto suggests that the poor buy second-hand goods. Matsumoto suggests that using this strategy we can work fewer hours and take time off to enjoy life. If we take advantage of a local recycle shop, Matsumoto insists, we can reduce our expenditure on transport and circulate money locally rather than giving it all to the major brands. Matsumoto argues that this reliance on recycling is both a personal saving and an attack on the 'rip-off' economic system. It is therefore implicitly political. He expresses this idea in a typically grandiose and comedic manner with the call to 'stand up! The time for insurrection is at hand! I'm going to sell something I don't need at the recycle shop!'³⁶⁵

Matsumoto's philosophy of recycling also includes the idea of repairing and repurposing existing goods. He suggests that the urban poor can develop the local economy and produce a kind of 'autonomy of things' by making use of local repair shops or learning how to repair things themselves. He illustrates these ideas with anecdotal accounts of his own struggle to live cheaply in Kōenji. In one such story he explains how he sometimes loans the items offered for sale in his recycle shop to members of the many small theatre troupes and independent filmmakers in the area. This, he argues, is a way of contributing to the creation of a local economy of sharing amongst the poor. Similarly, in many of the demonstrations organised by Shirōto no Ran, they have been able to use items already accumulated in the recycle shop rather

³⁶⁴ Matsumoto, *Binbōnin no gyakushū*, 63.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 65–66.

than having to go out and buy them.³⁶⁶ Applying this philosophy to the Genpatsu Yamero protests, the group asked participants to bring their used cooking oil so it could be collected and converted into a renewable energy resource.³⁶⁷

While Matsumoto's notion of a 'recycling revolution' may seem ridiculous, the group have had to fight to defend the right to recycle. In 2006, Shirōto no Ran took part in a broader struggle against a new law to regulate the sale of second-hand electrical goods. The 2001 Product Safety Electrical Appliance and Material Law (*Denki yōhin anzen hō*), known as the PSE law, was due to come into effect in 2006. The law would have restricted the sale of second-hand electrical goods which did not bear a special mark indicating they had been tested and approved for sale by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Shirōto no Ran organised a demonstration against the law in Kōenji on 18 March 2006, just two weeks before the grace period was to expire on 1 April. The demonstration attracted approximately 100 people.³⁶⁸ In order to demonstrate the utility of second-hand electrical goods, organisers mounted a second-hand amplifier and old computer on the sound-truck which was used for the demonstration.

Writing in the radical intellectual journal *VOL*, music writer Futatsugi Shin described the anti-PSE struggle in class terms. He noted that some opponents of the PSE law, such as musician Sakamoto Ryūichi,³⁶⁹ objected primarily because it would have restricted the trade in vintage musical equipment. Futatsugi insisted, however, that the real impact of the law would be on the lifestyle of the urban poor who cannot afford expensive consumer electrical appliances and instead rely on cheap, second-hand microwaves, refrigerators, washing machines and home hi-fi equipment. For Futatsugi, the demonstration against the PSE law arose from an explosive class

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 66–68.

³⁶⁷ Matsumoto, 'Kūzen no chō kyodai demo chikashi!!'

³⁶⁸ "Furukutemo Tsukaeru" PSE Hō Hantai Demo', *Asahi Shimbun*, 19 March 2006, Morning edition, Tokyo.

³⁶⁹ Japanese musician Sakamoto Ryūichi is a musician who attained worldwide fame as a member of the electronic music group Yellow Magic Orchestra.

consciousness among the urban poor who responded to calls such as that of Matsumoto to ‘Save the Household Electrical Goods of the Poor’.³⁷⁰

For Futatsugi, the anti-PSE demonstration was a manifestation of class consciousness. He compared the movement with a contemporaneous struggle by young people in France against the introduction of a new type of employment contract known as ‘First Employment Contracts’ (*Contrat première embauche*) which would make it easier to fire young workers within the first two years of their employment. These protests were widely regarded as a signature moment in the emerging global movement against precarity.³⁷¹ Futatsugi’s notion of class consciousness is not, however, reducible to the traditional Marxist understanding of a unified working class. Class, for Futatsugi, is not premised on the unity of the proletariat but allows space for difference and internal heterogeneity. Futatsugi draws on Hardt and Negri’s notion of multitude,³⁷² which posits that internal differences within the proletariat actually enable communication and action in common. He insists that within the riotous space of Shirōto no Ran’s anti-PSE demonstration, with their semi-audible sound projections from aging electronic hardware, that which separates the participants is also that which connects them.³⁷³ As I have already discussed in this chapter, the notion that demonstrations are actually strengthened by allowing space for difference was critical to the inclusive strategy of the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations.

The struggle against the PSE law pitted Shirōto no Ran against the powerful industry which sells consumer electrical goods. It is worth noting that the electrical appliance industry has close links with the electric power industry. METI, which was to be responsible for regulating the sale of second-hand electrical goods under the new law,

³⁷⁰ Futatsugi Shin, ‘PSE hō wa kaikyū no mondai de aru [The PSE Law is a Problem of Class]’, *VOL* no 1 (15 May 2006): 195.

³⁷¹ Neilson and Rossiter, ‘Precarity as a Political Concept, Or, Fordism as Exception’, 53; Satō Noriko, ‘Gurōbarizēshon to purekarite: furansu • CPE tai undō no jirei kara [Globalisation and Precarity: From the Example of the Movement Against the CPE in France]’, *Chiba keizai ronsō* [Chiba Keizai University Papers] 40 (2009): 21–34; Alice Mattoni, *Media Practices and Protest Politics: How Precarious Workers Mobilise* (Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 58.

³⁷² Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*.

³⁷³ Futatsugi, ‘PSE hō wa kaikyū no mondai de aru [The PSE Law is a Problem of Class]’, 196.

is also responsible for the promotion and regulation of the nuclear industry. The anti-PSE demonstration provided the group with an opportunity to develop their strategy and tactics and forge relationships with other movements and organisations. These links widened the reach of the Shirōto no Ran network and contributed to the group's ability to bring tens of thousands of people together for Genpatsu Yamero. Shirōto no Ran's playful protest tactics celebrate alternative ways of life based on sharing and co-operation. Matsumoto's refusal to provide a clear answer to *Tokyo Timeout*'s question about alternatives to nuclear power suggests an understanding of protest not as a direct engagement with the 'public' sphere but as a form of immanent critique where the performance of protest is imbued with intrinsic meaning. In the next section I consider the politics of 'festive noise' as a protest tactic.

The Politics of Festive Noise

After refusing to provide an alternative to nuclear power in the *Tokyo Timeout* interview cited above, Matsumoto poured scorn on conservative Tokyo governor Ishihara Shintarō's call for people to exercise 'self-restraint' by cancelling the *hanami* (cherry blossom viewing) parties which are a feature of life in Tokyo in early April.³⁷⁴

I want to point out that gatherings are environmentally effective—they're more fun and use less electricity compared to each person individually using power at home ... they should encourage year-round cherry blossom viewing parties to save electricity.³⁷⁵

Matsumoto's playful suggestion that cherry blossom viewing parties might help save electricity implies a critique of the increasingly individualised and atomised nature of life in post-industrial Tokyo.³⁷⁶ Post-industrial societies are characterised by a significant increase in the number of single person dwellings. Ronald and Hirayama

³⁷⁴ Ishihara Shintarō, 'Chiji no heya: Tōhoku chihō taiheiyō oki jishin, Tōkyō chiji hatsugen [The Governor's Office: The Tokyo Governor Speaks on the Tōhoku Pacific Ocean Earthquake]', *Tokyo Metropolitan Government*, 31 March 2011, accessed 24 May 2015, http://www.metro.tokyo.jp/GOVERNOR/ARC/20121031/eq2011_tomin9.htm.

³⁷⁵ Wilks, 'Japan's Anti-Nuke Agitator Speaks out.'

³⁷⁶ Matsumoto, 'Kūzen no chō kyodai demo chikashi!!'

suggest that up to 43 per cent of Tokyo households may contain just one person.³⁷⁷ The proliferation of this individualised lifestyle, in turn, increases demand for and consumer electrical goods and the electricity needed to power them. Matsumoto's response reflects Shirōto no Ran's rejection of individualism and consumerism.

Matsumoto's philosophy for surviving in a post-industrial society by learning to live with less might appear at first to be a fairly ascetic approach to life. Similarly, the prospect that people might have to curb their electricity usage due to TEPCO's reduced capacity to generate electricity from nuclear power with the loss of the Fukushima Daiichi plant appears to be a kind of hardship which needs to be overcome. Stevens' reflections on conserving electricity in Japan quoted above, however, suggest that the practice might also prompt people to reflect on their real needs. During the high economic growth period which commenced in the mid-1950s and continued throughout the 1960s Japanese society underwent what Irokawa Daikichi calls a 'lifestyle revolution'. Approximately 10 million people moved from the countryside to the cities in a process that involved changes to modes of transportation and communication, consumption, etiquette and ritual and general social conditions. People began to develop new 'needs' for domestic electric household appliances and other consumer goods. Between 1955 and 1961, as the post-war boom began to take off, ordinary people began to covet the so-called 'three sacred treasures' of a washing machine, a refrigerator and a television. In the 1970s the 'three sacred treasures' gave way to the 'three Cs': the colour television, the car and the cooler (air conditioner). Domestic consumer demand became one of the powerful drivers of economic growth.³⁷⁸

As the anti-nuclear movement in Japan has grown, so have the voices which question not only the technology itself but the notion of material prosperity powered by a fast-growing economy that was central to the dream of post-war economic growth. When writer and precarity activist Tsurumi Wataru addressed the crowd at a Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Hibiya park in August 2011, he insisted that the problem

³⁷⁷ Richard Ronald and Yosuke Hirayama, 'Home Alone: The Individualization of Young, Urban Japanese Singles', *Environment and Planning. A* 41, no 12 (2009): 2842.

³⁷⁸ Daikichi Irokawa, *The Age of Hirohito: In Search of Modern Japan* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 40–41, 52, 60.

of nuclear power raised a fundamental problem about the meaning and purpose of life. ‘We don’t live for the sake of the economy’, he declared, ‘the economy should serve us so that we can live well’. Nuclear power, he explained, is a profit-making industry. Japanese conglomerates Toshiba, Hitachi and Mitsubishi are among the only companies in the world who still manufacture nuclear reactors. The nuclear reactors that exploded at Fukushima Daiichi were built by Toshiba, Hitachi and U.S. conglomerate General Electric. Rather than apologise for having produced such a dangerous technology, Tsurumi complains, they are aggressively pursuing further profits through the export of nuclear technology to countries such as Vietnam. The mass media, he alleges, do not question the propriety of these exports, despite the obvious problems raised by the Fukushima accident, because these companies are major sponsors of the mass media. Regardless of the tragedy that has occurred in Tōhoku, these companies are only motivated by money. For Tsurumi, while the first aim of the anti-nuclear movement is obviously to shut down the nuclear industry, he argues that we need to change the whole system in which the economy dictates the terms of our lives.³⁷⁹

Tsurumi’s critique of nuclear power is bound up with his emerging critique of the broader structures of capitalism. As a writer, Tsurumi possesses one of the most powerful voices of the freeter generation. His debut work, the *Kanzen jisatsu manyuaru* (The Complete Manual of Suicide), expressed the frustration many of his generation felt in the 1980s towards a society and a way of life which were entirely premised on work.³⁸⁰ After the dazzling success of *The Complete Manual of Suicide*, Tsurumi went on to detail his various attempts to find meaning in life outside of the corporate world by taking drugs and getting involved in the blossoming rave party scene. After *Ori no naka no dansu* (Dancing in a Cage), published in 1998, and the book he co-authored with Seino Eiichi *Reivu ryoku: rave of life* (Rave Power: Rave of Life) published in 2000, Tsurumi did not release another book for more than ten

³⁷⁹ Tsurumi Wataru, ‘Keizai no tame ni ikiteiru wake janai [We Aren’t Alive For the Sake of the Economy]’, in *Datsu genpatsu to demo: soshite, minshushugi* [Demonstrations Against Nuclear Power: And Then, Democracy] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2012), 31–33.

³⁸⁰ Tsurumi Wataru, *Kanzen jisatsu manyuaru* [The Complete Manual of Suicide] (Tokyo: Ōta Shuppan, 1993).

years.³⁸¹ In an interview with Anne Allison in 2008, Tsurumi said that his feeling of dissatisfaction with life had not significantly improved during the early 2000s and that he had not had any hope for future social change. His attitude shifted, however, due to the explosion of the precariat movement in 2008. Tsurumi told Allison that when he saw people taking to the streets and becoming socially engaged he began to feel a sense of hope.³⁸² In these comments, he reflects Amamiya Karin's feelings, noted above, that the alienation they experienced in recessionary Japan was a product not of economic factors alone but came from a sense of being unable to connect with other people experiencing similar feelings.

The publication of *Datsu shihonshugi sengen* (De-capitalism Manifesto) in 2012 suggests that Tsurumi feels that social change is now possible. The critique of the nuclear industry presented in the *De-capitalism Manifesto* specifically theorises the problem of nuclear power as a problem of capitalist social organisation. In the introduction to this book Tsurumi attacks the notion that 'there's no choice because it's for the economy' (*keizai no tame dakara shikata ga nai*) which he feels is used to justify the continuation of the dangerous nuclear industry. He suggests that during the high economic growth period Japanese people were incited to become 'economic animals' who act as if the economy were an external force beyond their control. He blames the nuclear accident at Fukushima on this same ideology which, even after such a tragic event, makes it impossible to end nuclear power production because it is 'for the economy'.

Political scientist Robin Le Blanc, too, has identified what she calls the 'salaryman breadwinner imaginary' for restricting the debate on nuclear power to the narrow question of economic livelihoods. She recalls how one anti-nuclear activist she interviewed during the 1990s tried 'to draw my attention to the way advocates for all kinds of power generation silenced opponents by insisting upon the inevitability of individuals' sacrifice for the goods dependent on electricity'.³⁸³ Critically, she

³⁸¹ Tsurumi, *Ori no naka no dansu* [Dancing in a Cage]; Tsurumi and Seino, *Reivu ryoku - rave of life* [Rave Power: Rave of Life].

³⁸² Allison, *Precarious Japan*, 132–135.

³⁸³ Robin M. LeBlanc, 'Lessons from the Ghost of Salaryman Past: The Global Costs of the Breadwinner Imaginary', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no 4 (November 2012): 858.

identifies how this imaginary is gendered as male. In the debate on nuclear power, she notes, ‘manhood matters because behind the nuclear power debate lurks an unarticulated but framing concern with whether the Japanese economy will allow workers (breadwinners) to feed their families’. The gendered imagery of the heroic, self-sacrificing salaryman restricts the debate ‘between the polarising dangers of nuclear power and economic decline’. One reason for this, she suggests, is that ‘at each pole of the debate, interlocutors summon up terms of critique that imply failed manhood, such as unwarranted idealism or unreasonable anxiety’. They are, she observes, ‘thinking empathetically from a breadwinner’s (male) position’.³⁸⁴

Tsurumi suggests that we re-examine our connection with the natural world in order to find an alternative way of being in the world to that of the ‘economic animal’. He believes that many people have begun to recognise this connection in the wake of the Fukushima disaster ‘as the radioactive fallout makes its way into our bodies through every conceivable pathway’.³⁸⁵ He articulates the connections between the problematics of capitalism, nuclear power and value. Relationships based on money, he writes, have dispossessed us of our human to human connections, our connections with the local (*chiiki*) and our connections with nature (*shizen*). In the resurgence of global movements against capitalism which have grown over the past 10 years, Tsurumi divines a new set of values (*kachikan*) which are not based on money. Today we face a choice, he declares, of whether to continue to be an ‘economic animal’ or not.³⁸⁶

The notion of a ‘*kakusa shakai*’ (‘gap society’) has become a common way of describing the growing problems of precarity and inequality in post-industrial Japan.³⁸⁷ Matsumoto is critical of the way discourses about a *kakusa shakai* have

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 860.

³⁸⁵ Tsurumi Wataru, *Datsu shihonshugi sengen: gurōbaru keizai ga mushibamu kurashi* [The De-capitalist Manifesto: The Global Economy that Eats Away at Our Way of Life] (Tokyo: Shichōsha, 2012), 15. For a review of *Datsu shihonshugi sengen* see Higuchi Takurō, ‘Review of Tsurumi Wataru, *Datsu shihonshugi sengen*’, *People’s Plan* no 59 (2012): 169–170.

³⁸⁶ Tsurumi, *Datsu shihonshugi sengen*, 16–17.

³⁸⁷ Tachibanaki, *Nihon no keizai kakusa*; Yamada Masahiro, *Kibō kakusa shakai: ‘makegumi’ no zetsubōkan ga Nihon o hikisaku* [A Hope Gap Society: The Despair of Being a ‘Loser’ that is Tearing Japan Apart] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2003); Ōtake Fumio, *Nihon no fubyōdō: kakusa shakai no gensō*

proliferated in the new millennium. He sees this discourse as contributing directly to the ‘pressure to aim high’ so as not to be left behind.³⁸⁸ Sociologist Shibuya Nozomu also suggests that the discourse on *kakusa shakai* focuses attention on the problems of poverty and the working poor, typically designated as ‘losers’ (*makegumi*) but it fails to challenge the supposed ‘wealth’ of the ‘winners’ (*kachigumi*) or the middle class.³⁸⁹ Shibuya’s critique echoes that of Matsumoto Hajime and Shirōto no Ran. They emphasise the agency of the poor and their ability to take political action to challenge the way in which discussions about youth unemployment and poverty typically take place. In *Counter-Attack of the Poor*, Matsumoto presents the ‘NEET Union’ demonstrations in Kōenji as part of a broader movement among the urban poor that challenges the way work and livelihood are defined in Japan today.³⁹⁰

Even if one were to achieve an ideal lifestyle and become one of the ‘winners’ in the gap society, Matsumoto opines, you would still be poor. Here he refers to the precarity of success, the fact that even ‘winners’ have little financial freedom due to the proliferation of a consumer lifestyle that means that they spend as quickly as they earn. Furthermore, ‘winners’ are time poor. They cannot afford to take time off work because the cost of living a middle class lifestyle is so high. Matsumoto explains that we are poor precisely because we are surrounded by a bunch of people who have set up a system that makes them rich no matter what they do. Matsumoto adopts a simplified notion of class. More than 90 per cent of people in Japan today, Matsumoto suggests, can be considered to be in the ‘poor’ class. The only difference is that between the exemplary prisoners and the problem children, in either case we are prisoners and we have to get out.³⁹¹ Matsumoto’s somewhat arbitrary selection of the ‘90 per cent’ who make up the ‘poor class’ is reminiscent of the idea of the ‘99%’ developed by the Occupy Wall Street movement in late 2011. It suggests an attempt to rethink some sort of common basis for politics in an era when subjects like ‘the

to mirai [Inequality in Japan: The Illusions and Future of a Gap Society] (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 2005).

³⁸⁸ Matsumoto, *Binbōnin no gyakushū*, 7.

³⁸⁹ Shibuya, *Midoru kurasu o toinaosu*, 10.

³⁹⁰ Matsumoto, *Binbōnin no gyakushū*.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 8–9.

working class', 'the masses' and 'the people' are increasingly suspect. Matsumoto conceives of himself and others like him who lack secure work, family and community ties as 'the poor' (*binbōnin*). He dismisses the idea that the poor should 'aim high' and hope to secure their place in the middle class through the gendered pathways which had become a prescriptive ideal by the 1970s. He rejects the gendered division of labour implicit in middle class notions of becoming a 'winner', criticising the choice between becoming 'half-baked salaryman' with a 30-year mortgage or 'settling for marrying the first man that comes along and leading a boring life as a housewife, suffocating one's children with stress'. Similarly, Matsumoto rejects the idea that one should work hard as a part-timer with the hope of one day being asked to go full-time only to get used up along the way, develop depression or die (perhaps through suicide or death by overwork (*karōshi*)). He criticises the notion that the middle-class lifestyle, which remains an ideal in Japan's popular imagination and government policy, is the only way to live.³⁹²

Matsumoto understands poverty as a kind of wealth. In order to escape from this system Matsumoto suggests that we should live how we want and stop working so hard. Key to this philosophy is the idea of a 'carefree' (*nobi nobi*) existence. 'Let's do as we please!' he implores, asking the reader to join him in 'festive uproar' and show the world the anger of the poor. Matsumoto's philosophy and Shirōto no Ran's activist practice are based on the assumption that self-organisation is the only way the urban poor can guarantee their survival.

The festive noise which Shirōto no Ran create in their protests is not meant to empower them to become 'winners' within the existing order of society. Rather, the protests serve to vent anger and frustration at the lack of real choice available in contemporary Tokyo. The group do not try to enter into the debate on nuclear power in the public sphere by presenting themselves as rational actors. They reject the terms in which 'public debate' is conducted in the first place. Futatsugi Shin wrote about one rapper who posted critical messages about the anti-nuclear demonstrations on

³⁹² Ibid., 7.

Twitter, saying ‘if you don’t have an alternative then don’t complain. That is common sense for an adult. Anyone can criticise’. Futatsugi rejected this criticism:

I have the completely opposite way of thinking. I think we ought to criticise, even if we don’t have an alternative. I think fools should keep giving voice to their ideas. I think that is just using a word which sounds serious ‘adult common sense’ to suppress free expression and free thought.³⁹³

Futatsugi poses a different notion of political debate.

Change begins with the angry voice which simply says ‘enough!’. We have to leave an environment in which people cannot freely express their reckless idealism and pipedreams. That’s the power people have. To just contribute jointly the opinions they have and then debate them. Then that unproductive time, which is not bound by common sense, can become the stimulus for creative change.³⁹⁴

Futatsugi’s further reflections on the demonstration suggest that protest is an end in itself and does not need to produce alternative policy proposals in order to be legitimate or effective.

Is it the happiness in the midst of misfortune? Or is it rather that the scattered ranks of the demonstrators leaves an impression of its diversity. People who enjoy their lives feel that nuclear power can disrupt their enjoyment of their lives. Because it’s people like that who are getting together, is it any wonder that they are enjoying themselves thoroughly at the demonstration? Nuclear power is not over, but we succeeded in expressing the first step by saying ‘Stop Nuclear Power!!!!’ on a scale far greater than we could have imagined.³⁹⁵

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the carnivalesque politics of the April 2011 Genpatsu Yamero demonstration. The style of the demonstration was the result of tactical innovations which can be traced to the anti-war movement of the early 2000s. This festive style created space for the expression of affective responses to the 3.11 disaster while allowing space for the multitude of differences which existed between participants. The carnivalesque tactics of Genpatsu Yamero emphasised the liberation and disruption of urban space through creative and noisy protest. The

³⁹³ Futatsugi, ‘Naze Tōkyō ni [Why Tokyo?]’, 5.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 6.

Shirōto no Ran network organises on the basis of one-to-one relationships between people which can sustain them in the atomised world of post-industrial Tokyo. The group models itself on a notion of *ikki* which Matsumoto has interpreted as a form of resistance rooted in everyday life. The group's anti-consumerist politics reflect the broader politics of the precarity movements in Tokyo in the 1990s and 2000s. In Genpatsu Yamero, the critique of middle class values which was implicit in Shirōto no Ran's organising prior to 3.11 was articulated with anti-nuclear ideas after 3.11. The organisers embraced a politics of festive noise which disrupted the everyday rhythms of the city, reclaiming space for politics and imagining resistance as an immanent practice which nevertheless had long historical precedents.

CHAPTER THREE – TOKYO NANTOKA

Just as we've been doing up until now we will create community, maintain a 'place' where people can connect. Then when things turn sour they can help one another. This way of doing things will not change whether before or after the earthquake disaster.

Futatsugi Shin³⁹⁶

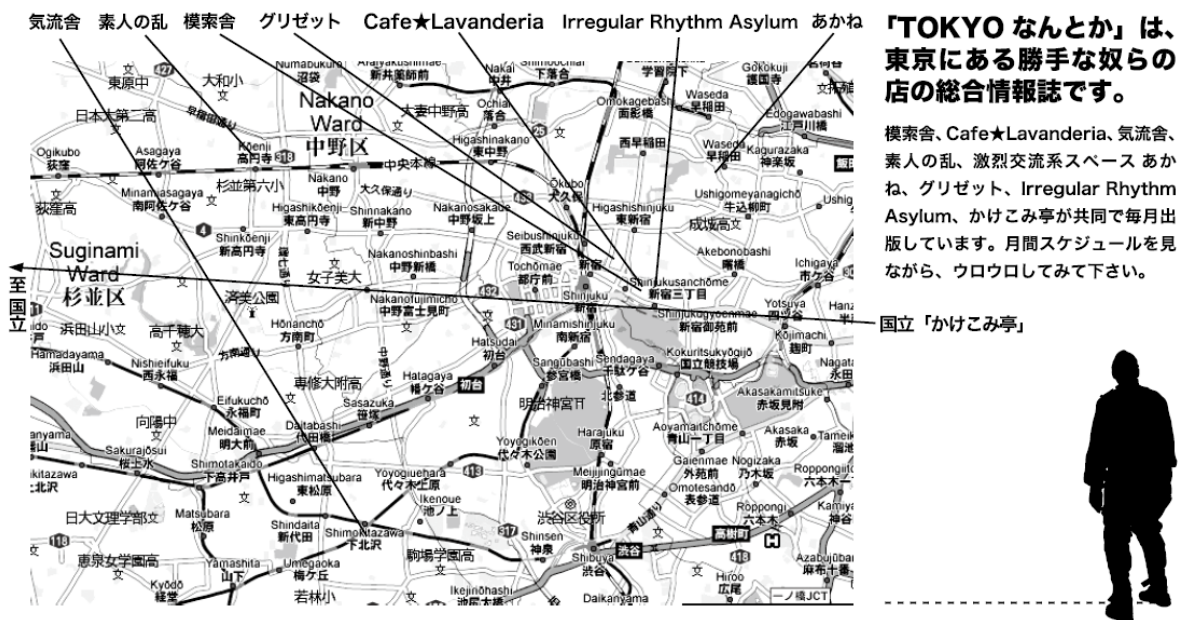


Figure 3 Map of the Nantoka Neighbourhood³⁹⁷

The destructive effects of the 3.11 earthquake and tsunami affected primarily the Tōhoku region. In the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, just 13 houses were destroyed and 351 partially damaged. The immediate consequence of the disaster for most Tokyo residents was the disruption of Tokyo's railway services. A survey conducted by the Cabinet Office found that 5 million of the estimated 7.1 million people who make the

³⁹⁶ Futatsugi, 'Interview by Kodama Yūdai. Teikō to risei no hazama de [The Interval Between Resistance and Reason]', 123.

³⁹⁷ *tokyo nantoka*, April 2011.

daily commute into central Tokyo from the surrounding areas were unable to return home that day.³⁹⁸ At approximately seven o'clock that evening, four hours after the earthquake struck, an estimated 3 million pedestrians were attempting to walk home through the metropolitan area.³⁹⁹ In response, activist and illustrator Narita Keisuke offered his small shop in Shinjuku as a place to take shelter for anyone who was stranded in the city. Narita operates the Irregular Rhythm Asylum (IRA), a tiny bookshop situated on the third floor of a narrow building in a back alley of Shinjuku's first district.⁴⁰⁰ The IRA website describes the space as 'an infoshop in Shinjuku where contemporary progressive information, goods and people from both inside and outside Japan are gathered'.⁴⁰¹ 'Infoshops' like IRA are self-managed spaces which typically combine the functions of a bookshop with that of a venue for meetings and events. They became popular in punk and anarchist sub-cultures in Europe and North America in the 1990s where they emerged out of the squatting movements of the 1980s.⁴⁰² Influenced by the 'do-it-yourself' ethic of the global anarchist movement, Narita established his infoshop in 2004.⁴⁰³

Narita issued his invitation to stranded commuters in a blog post titled 'Asylum = *hinanjo* (shelter)'. The meaning of the English name which Narita uses for his shop may well have been unfamiliar to regular readers of his blog. By connecting the English word with its Japanese equivalent the post extended the offer of a place of

³⁹⁸ Cabinet Office (Emergency Management Officer), Kitaku konnan sha taisaku no jittai chōsa kekka ni tsuite: 3.11 no taisaku to sono go no torikumi [Result of Actual Condition Survey in Countermeasures for Stranded Commuters: Response in March 11th and Subsequent Initiatives], 2011, <http://www.bousai.go.jp/jishin/syuto/kitaku/2/pdf/4.pdf>. The results of this survey are discussed in Junko Ueno, 'Breakdown of Infrastructures and Urban Disconnection: Tokyo in Post-Quake Chaos', *Disaster, Infrastructure and Society: Learning from the 2011 Earthquake in Japan* no 4 (March 2013): 13–14.

³⁹⁹ Ueno, 'Breakdown of Infrastructures and Urban Disconnection: Tokyo in Post-Quake Chaos', 14.

⁴⁰⁰ Tokyo municipalities such as Shinjuku are divided into towns (*chō*) which are further sub-divided into districts (*chōme*). Districts generally align with city blocks. Shinjuku's first district is part of the town of Shinjuku within the municipality of Shinjuku ward.

⁴⁰¹ Narita Keisuke, 'About IRA', accessed 16 March 2011, http://irregular.sanpal.co.jp/?page_id=3411.

⁴⁰² Chris Dodge, 'Taking Libraries to the Street: Infoshops and Alternative Reading Rooms', *American Libraries* 29, no 5 (1998): 62–64; Chris Atton, 'The Infoshop: The Alternative Information Center of the 1990s', *New Library World* 100, no 1146 (1999): 24–29.

⁴⁰³ Keisuke Narita, 'Irregular Rhythm Asylum yori [From Irregular Rhythm Asylum]', *VOL 1* (May 2006): 201.

shelter implicit in the name ‘Irregular Rhythm Asylum’.⁴⁰⁴ The 11 March blog post suggested that readers could take shelter in the Asylum, drink tea and follow announcements about the earthquake and the disruption of the transport system on the radio or internet. The post also offered practical information for readers by providing a link to a map of the official evacuation areas located all over Tokyo.⁴⁰⁵

A week later, amidst the continuing disruption to the city’s infrastructure caused by the 3.11 disaster, Narita assured his readers that IRA was still open.

In these anxious times things may not be ‘business as usual’ but IRA is still open. I thought I had better make this clear at this time when the number of the shops in the ‘Nantoka Neighbourhood’ (*nantoka kaiwai*) which are closed due to evacuations is rising.

The ‘Nantoka Neighbourhood’ which Narita refers to here includes a number of small shops and activist spaces. Figure 3 is a map of these shops which include Irregular Rhythm Asylum, the Shirōto no Ran network (which includes several shops and meeting places) and a number of other bars, bookshops and cafes. The term ‘*kaiwai*’ (‘neighbourhood’) implies that the Nantoka Neighbourhood is a loosely connected community rather than a formal organisation. The Japanese word ‘*kaiwai*’ literally means the nooks and crannies (*wai*) which exist on the border (*kai*) of a defined geographical space. The use of the word ‘*nantoka*’ to describe the Neighbourhood emphasises its ephemeral nature. The word has the sense of ‘somehow’ or ‘something’, as in the colloquial phrases ‘*nantoka suru*’ (‘I’ll manage somehow’) and ‘*nantoka naru*’ (‘something will work out’).⁴⁰⁶ These phrases are used frequently by members of the precariat who are scraping by in the risky and alienated social and economic landscape of post-industrial Tokyo.

Historian Jordan Sand explains how the notion of *kaiwai* was developed by

⁴⁰⁴ ‘ASYLUM (=hinanjo) [Asylum (=shelter)]’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 11 March 2011, accessed 11 April 2014, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/asylum.html>.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. These “evacuation areas” are generally open spaces such as parks to which Tokyoites are encouraged to evacuate in case of earthquake.

⁴⁰⁶ For a discussion of some of the multifarious ways in which the word “*nantoka*” is used in contemporary Japanese see Akemi Tanahashi and Hitomi Tashiro, ‘Learn “nantoka” Any Way You Can’, *The Japan Times Online*, 16 March 2015, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2015/03/16/language/learn-nantoka-way-can/>.

architectural theorists in the 1960s. Their understanding of *kaiwai*, which they translated into English as ‘activity space’, ‘fused an organicist reading of Japanese space as an integrated order with an emphasis on spontaneity and irregularity’.⁴⁰⁷ Sand explains Itō Teiji’s reading of *kaiwai* as being ‘a distinctively Japanese pattern that was spatial and yet undelineated, a kind of ‘mist’, or atmosphere, generated by what happened there rather than by the drawing of boundaries’.⁴⁰⁸ The structure of the Nantoka Neighbourhood reflects this understanding. It is not a single, clearly delineated physical place but encompasses a number of spaces which are dispersed across a wide swathe of western Tokyo from Shinjuku to Kunitachi. These spaces are ‘somehow’ (*nantoka*) bound together by the relationships between the people who use these spaces, common ideas and images, and a rich print and online media.

In this chapter I explore the role of the Nantoka Neighbourhood in the anti-nuclear movement after 3.11. The Neighbourhood was a conceptual and linguistic device through which its members oriented themselves spatially in Tokyo. It was also a temporal concept which, like the politics of festive noise, depended on both immediacy and historicity. I begin by analysing the way members of the Neighbourhood responded to the disruption which 3.11 caused in Tokyo. I then discuss how the idea of the Neighbourhood emerged out of the coming together of various activist groupings in the mid-2000s. I discuss the role of the print and online media associated with the Nantoka Neighbourhood in constructing the Neighbourhood. I then show how these media functioned as an informational infrastructure for the anti-nuclear movement. This is followed by a discussion on the importance of locality in the Shirōto no Ran movement and the way the notion of taking activism in the ‘space of everyday life’ (*‘seikatsu no ba’*) informed the group’s activism in Kōenji before and after 3.11. In the final section I consider the notion of *‘ibasho’*, ‘a place in which to be’, speculating that the creation of autonomous space has given shelter to the precariat in the harsh environment of post-industrial Tokyo.

⁴⁰⁷ Jordan Sand, *Tokyo Vernacular: Common Spaces, Local Histories, Found Objects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 31–32.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 31. Sand draws here on Itō’s contribution to a special issue on “*Nihon no toshi kōkan*” (“Urban Space in Japan”), Itō Teiji, ‘Kaiwai: Activity Space’, *Kenchiku bunka [Architectural Culture]* 18, no 206 (December 1963): 68.

The Nantoka Neighbourhood Disrupted

Narita updated his blog frequently in the days after the 3.11 disaster. His posts from this period give a sense of the fear and uncertainty which prevailed in Tokyo while regular aftershocks rattled the ground beneath residents' feet and alarming reports emerged about the situation at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The 3.11 disaster caused significant disruption to the Nantoka Neighbourhood, as it did to communities across the Greater Tokyo Area.⁴⁰⁹ Neighbourhood members' experiences of this disruption were expressed in online media such as Narita's blog. Matsumoto Hajime, for example, in a 19 March post on his recycle shop blog, told the story of what happened when he announced that he would be temporarily closing his own shop. On hearing the news 'Motchan', the manager of another shop in the Shirōto no Ran network, packed all of his belongings into a truck and left Tokyo within the hour. He arrived at his family home in Yamanashi Prefecture only to encounter another large aftershock which shook the telegraph poles. Deciding it was just as dangerous in Yamanashi as it was in Tokyo, Motchan immediately returned to the metropolis and re-opened his shop.⁴¹⁰ Matsumoto tells the tale with his usual humour, marvelling at how quickly his friend had packed his things only to return to Tokyo with such speed. Despite the humorous tone, however, the story gives a sense of the sense of chaos and confusion which many in the Nantoka Neighbourhood felt in the days after 3.11.

As I explained in Chapter Two, many events and concerts were cancelled in the days after 3.11, including in the Nantoka Neighbourhood. In a blog post dated 20 March, Narita explained that an event which was scheduled to take place at Nantoka Bar (*nantoka bā*), one of the Nantoka Neighbourhood shops, had been cancelled. The event in question was to be hosted by a German activist visitor who is referred to in the post by the Japanese nickname 'Nobita'. Nantoka Bar is a small *izakaya*⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ Ueno, 'Breakdown of Infrastructures and Urban Disconnection: Tokyo in Post-Quake Chaos'; Machimura Takashi, ed., *Keikaku teiden, setsuden to Kunitachi eki mae shōtengai* [Planned Outages, Conserving Electricity and the Kunitachi Station Area Commercial District] (Tokyo: Hitotsubashi daigakuin shakaigaku kenkyūka shakaigaku kyōdō kenkyūshitsu, 2012).

⁴¹⁰ 'Motchan densetsu [The Tale of Motchan]', *Shirōto no ran 5 gō ten tenshu nikki* [*Shirōto no Ran Shop No 5 Shopkeeper's Diary*], 19 March 2011, accessed 23 February 2015, <http://ameblo.jp/tsukiji14/entry-10835880009.html>.

⁴¹¹ An *izakaya* is a Japanese bar at which food is served to accompany the drinks.

located in a side street off Kōenji's Kitanaka Street. It was opened by the Shirōto no Ran network in 2010 and is staffed on a roster system. Each night a different person plays host at the bar, often organising the night based around a particular theme. Narita writes that Nobita's plan for the night was to play hip hop from around the world while Narita screened a number of films about street art.⁴¹² Friends of the Shirōto no Ran network from outside the city often take a turn staffing the bar when they visit Tokyo, providing an opportunity for them to make a little money for their trip while meeting likeminded people.⁴¹³ Nobita, however, had evacuated Tokyo for Osaka immediately after the 3.11 disaster. From there he returned straight to Germany, apparently following advice from the German embassy and at the urgent insistence of his family.⁴¹⁴ Narita explained on his blog that he still intended to open the bar without Nobita, depending on the weather. 'I can't say to my friends 'come drinking' in the middle of rain which we suspect might be contaminated with radioactive substances', he wrote. In the aftermath of the 3.11 disaster, even something as unremarkable as the rain had the potential to disrupt the rhythms of daily life.

Connections between people like Narita, who are active in Nantoka Neighbourhood, and activists from outside Japan like Nobita were activated in the days after the earthquake. These connections gave people in the Neighbourhood insight into the very different way in which the nuclear threat was perceived by media organisations and governments overseas.⁴¹⁵ While the Japanese media tended to echo government claims that the situation at Fukushima was under control, a number of foreign embassies reacted to the news of radiation leaks from the Fukushima Daiichi plant by instructing their nationals to evacuate. The United States government advised its

⁴¹² '21 nichi Nantoka bā [Nantoka Bar on the 21st]', *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 20 March 2011, accessed 23 February 2015, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/21.html>.

⁴¹³ 'Nantoka BAR (16 gō ten) [Nantoka Bar (Shop No 16)]', *Shirōto no Ran*, accessed 23 February 2015, http://trio4.nobody.jp/keita/shop/16_nantoka.html.

⁴¹⁴ '21 nichi Nantoka bā.'

⁴¹⁵ On the differences between Japanese and foreign reporting of the nuclear disaster see David McNeill, 'Them Versus Us: Japanese and International Reporting of the Fukushima Crisis', in *Japan Copes with Calamity: Ethnographies of the Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disasters of March 2011* (Oxford: Peter Lang AG, 2013), 127–149. Matsumoto wrote about the gap between the way the nuclear disaster was reported in the Japanese and non-Japanese media in 'Kūzen no chō kyodai demo chikashi!'

citizens to remove themselves to a distance of at least 80 kilometres from the plant. The French went further, suggesting evacuation from a radius of 250 kilometres around the plant, a distance which would have included Tokyo.⁴¹⁶

Narita's Irregular Rhythm Asylum is particularly well connected with the international activist scene.⁴¹⁷ As explained above, the 'infoshop' model on which it is based comes from global anarchist and punk sub-cultures. As Narita explains, DIY punk has a rich internal culture in which bands and fans produce their own media, organise independent concerts, distribute their own music and form their own music labels. They develop a network which supports the scene and supports individual members in their pursuit of an alternative lifestyle. These networks have extended across national borders as punks self-organise tours and distribution.⁴¹⁸ Narita has always sought to foster connections with global activist networks. His infoshop is listed in a number of international directories of infoshops, such as that maintained by the publishers of the *Slingshot* organiser which lists activist centres and infoshops from around the world.⁴¹⁹ Activist ethnographer Higuchi Takurō points out that the networks of the alter-globalisation movement largely excluded East Asia prior to 2008. This began to change when hundreds of international activists travelled to Japan to take part in protests against the G8 summit which took place in the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido that year.⁴²⁰ Irregular Rhythm Asylum in Shinjuku was the main convergence centre utilised by international activists in Tokyo.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁶ Gill, Steger, and Slater, 'The 3.11 Disasters', 12.

⁴¹⁷ Mōri Yoshitaka, *Hajimete no DIY: nan demo okane de kaeru to omou na yo!* [My First DIY: Don't Think You Can Buy Everything With Money!] (Tokyo: Burūzu ontāakushonzu, 2008), 137–138.

⁴¹⁸ Gomi Masahiko, Narita Keisuke, and Hosoya Shūhei, 'Shintai teki media no jissen [Putting Embodied Media into Practice]', in *Media to kassei [What's Media Activism?]* (Tokyo: Inpakuto shuppan kai, 2012), 176–177. The English translation given for the book's title here is from the cover. A literal translation of the Japanese title would be "Media and Activity".

⁴¹⁹ 'Radical Contact List', *The Slingshot Collective*, accessed 26 May 2015, <http://slingshot.tao.ca/contacts/#cy-jp>. The *Slingshot* organiser, which is available for sale at IRA, is an annual publication which lists radical history events for each day and contains other useful information for activists.

⁴²⁰ Takuro Higuchi, 'Global Activist Network Involving Asia: Global Continuation and Evolution in Japan', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 13, no 3 (2012): 468.

⁴²¹ 'G8 Japon "Camino a Hokkaido 1 - Aterizaje e IRA" [G8 Japan "Road to Hokkaido" - Landing and IRA]', 2008, accessed 7 April 2015, <http://youtu.be/3ePCL5IpQnY>.

These international connections were visible on the Irregular Rhythm Asylum blog in the days and weeks after 3.11 in the messages of support which Narita received from activists in Italy,⁴²² Germany⁴²³ and the United States.⁴²⁴ Two of these messages were from Japanese activists who were in the U.S. when the 3.11 disaster occurred, further demonstrating the connections between the Neighbourhood and broader global activist networks. In one such post, Narita reflected on a telephone conversation he had had with a friend in Germany. ‘Mario’ had called Narita urging him to evacuate Tokyo immediately. Reflecting on his reasons for staying, Narita wrote sadly that he felt he lacked the courage to leave. He expressed his admiration for those who were willing to pack up their lives and make the ‘revolutionary’ decision to start a new life elsewhere. As the conversation wore on, however, he ‘began to get annoyed with Mario’s persistent urge to evacuate’. Nevertheless, Narita was ‘happy that he cared so much about me’. Narita wrote that while he could not personally bring himself to leave Tokyo, neither could he reassure his loved ones that ‘everything will be all right’ or that there was ‘no need to worry’.⁴²⁵

Non-Japanese residents in Japan, too, responded to the disaster through their connections with the Neighbourhood. Narita writes about one American who was living in Japan at the time who came into his shop and spoke regretfully about not having done more to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005. This conversation spurred Narita to propose a model of ‘solidarity not charity’ based on the work of the Common Ground Collective, a grassroots collective which was set up in New Orleans in response to Katrina.⁴²⁶ His blog provided an online space for

⁴²² “‘Sei purekario” kara no rentai messeeji from Milano [A Solidarity Message from San Precario from Milan]’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 25 March 2011, accessed 24 February 2015, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/from-milano.html>.

⁴²³ ‘Berurin Kara No Denwa [A Phone Call from Berlin]’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 20 March 2011, accessed 24 February 2015, http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/blog-post_20.html.

⁴²⁴ ‘Ringo maru kajiri [Chomping on an Apple]’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 15 March 2011, accessed 25 February 2015, http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/blog-post_15.html; ‘Kaisō jin from NY [Seaweed Zine from NY]’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 29 March 2011, accessed 25 February 2015, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/from-ny.html>.

⁴²⁵ ‘IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM -Blog’, 20 March 2011.

⁴²⁶ ‘Solidarity not Charity (jizen de wa naku rentai o)’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 20 March 2011, accessed 24 February 2015, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/solidarity-not-charity.html>. For more on Common Ground see ‘About Us - Rebuilding New Orleans: Volunteering and

circulating ideas about an autonomous approach to disaster response. The ideas of DIY punk culture, through which Narita came to activist politics, inspired some musicians in Tokyo to organise their own grassroots relief effort. Narita publicised a call from the ‘Tokyo Band Scene Disaster Relief’ to ‘all our friends in the underground music scene’ asking for donations of money and supplies. The group planned to take a truck to Sendai and distribute these goods at a local live music venue. The text of the call said that as discussions with larger political parties and non-profit organisations had been too slow they had decided to organise an independent relief effort. This initiative evolved into the Human Recovery Project, self-described as a form of ‘d.i.y. music network ‘nobody for everybody’ outreach’.⁴²⁷ The members of the project organised regular shipments of supplies to the disaster-affected areas of Tōhoku as well as taking part in organising anti-nuclear demonstrations in Tokyo.

Self-organised disaster relief such as the Human Recovery Project was not the only way members of the network sought to assist the victims of the disaster in Tōhoku. In a post on 28 March, Narita confirmed that he had indeed cancelled his appearance at Nantoka Bar because of the rain. In his stead, Matsumoto Hajime had organised a ‘Solidarity Party’ to raise money for the city of Minamisōma.⁴²⁸ Minamisōma is a coastal city in Fukushima Prefecture which was one of the areas worst affected by the 3.11 disaster. The city was severely affected by the earthquake and tsunami as well as being exposed to radioactive fallout from Fukushima Daiichi. Matsumoto explained on his blog how the idea for the fundraiser had emerged after he discovered that Suginami Ward, the Tokyo municipality in which Kōenji is located, had a sister city relationship with Minamisōma. The money raised from the ‘Solidarity Party’ was to be donated to a fundraising campaign for Minamisōma

Community Advocacy’, *Common Ground Relief*, accessed 25 May 2015, <http://www.commongroundrelief.org/about-us>.

⁴²⁷ ‘Human Recovery Project: About H.R.P’, accessed 25 February 2015, <http://hrp-diymusic.blogspot.com.au/p/about-hrp.html>.

⁴²⁸ ‘Nantoka bā 28 nichi [Nantoka Bar on the 28th]’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 26 March 2011, accessed 23 February 2015, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/28.html>.

initiated by the Kōenji Shopkeepers Association.⁴²⁹ The Kōenji Shopkeepers Association is an umbrella organisation which represents the numerous Shopkeepers Associations in each shopping street of the Kōenji area. Shopkeepers Associations, unlike the Nantoka Neighbourhood, are formally constituted bodies. They have played an important role in organising street festivals and maintaining social order in post-war Japan. As will be discussed further below, Shirōto no Ran has pursued a deliberate strategy of building links with established organisations such as local Shopkeepers Associations as a means of creating space for their radical activities. The development of these relationships in providing relief to the disaster-affected areas of Tōhoku also helped to develop the deep relationships which Shirōto no Ran and the Nantoka Neighbourhood relied upon to draw tens of thousands of people into the streets for the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations.

The Shape of the Nantoka Neighbourhood

The Nantoka Neighbourhood is made up of places, people and media which ‘somehow’ (*nantoka*) coalesce through common concerns with precarity and the reclamation of space. The appearance of the first issue of *tokyo nantoka* in January 2009 signified the growing interconnection of a number of activist communities who shared the ‘*nantoka*’ ethos. A short message announcing the new publication appeared on the Japanese social media site Mixi in December 2008.

Well, to put it simply it's a joint newsletter for Shirōto no Ran, Irregular Rhythm Asylum, Poetry in the Kitchen, Mosakusha, Kiryūsha and Akane.

As well as information about all the shops in Tokyo which are doing their own thing (*katte na koto o yatteiru*) there is also a monthly schedule of events. How convenient!!

Even if you are from outside Tokyo, if you come to Tokyo, grab a copy and wander around Tokyo!!⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹ ‘Asu, hisaichi kyūen SOLIPARTY! [Tomorrow, SOLIPARTY for Disaster Relief], *Shirōto no ran 5 gō ten tenshu nikki* [*Shirōto no Ran Shop No 5 Shopkeeper's Diary*], 20 March 2011, accessed 23 February 2015, <http://ameblo.jp/tsukiji14/entry-10836444669.html>.

⁴³⁰ “‘TOKYO nantoka’ zōkan!’, *mixi komyuniti*, 26 December 2008, accessed 17 March 2014, http://mixi.jp/view_bbs.pl?comm_id=689660&id=38298756.

The announcement calls into being a community which encompasses some of the activist spaces which I have discussed thus far: the Shirōto no Ran network and the Irregular Rhythm Asylum. Mosakusha⁴³¹ is a bookshop in Shinjuku which is part of the Nantoka Neighbourhood. Established in 1970 by student activists, Mosakusha is by far the oldest shop in the network. It carries a wide variety of books, magazines, self-published zines and other *minikomi* as well as the newspapers of numerous left-wing groups who are still active in the city. Poetry in the Kitchen is a bar which moved to Shinjuku as the January 2009 newsletter went to press. After moving it changed its name to Café Lavanderia, memorialising the shopfront's previous use as a laundry (*lavanderia* is Spanish for laundry). Kiryūsha is a 'second-hand bookshop café' located in the trendy Shimokitazawa district near Shibuya.⁴³² It is a gathering place for people who are interested in counter-cultural spirituality, psychedelic drugs and rave culture. Akane is a small bar near Waseda University, one of Tokyo's largest private universities. It was established in 1998 and is closely associated with the precariat activist group Dame Ren.⁴³³

The event schedule which was included in this first edition of *tokyo nantoka*⁴³⁴ gives an indication of the diverse activities which take place within the community. At Shirōto no Ran's various spaces in Kōenji, these included a vegetarian kitchen (*Beji shokudō*)⁴³⁵ open every Wednesday, puppet making and sour dough bread making workshops, a bar called Sepia, the Ōkura *kotatsu* craft café,⁴³⁶ an 'Underground University'⁴³⁷ event called 'Local Music: From France to Japan' and an avant-garde

⁴³¹ 'Mosakusha', *Mosakusha*, accessed 8 June 2015, http://www.mosakusha.com/voice_of_the_staff/.

⁴³² The name Kiryūsha (House of the Airflow) is derived from the title of sociologist Mita Munesuke's study of the commune movement that emerged out of the 1960s counterculture. See Maki Yūsuke, *Kiryū no naru oto: kōkyō suru komyūn* [*The Sound of the Air Flow: The Symphonising Commune*] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2003). (Maki Yūsuke is the pseudonym Mita used for many of his books written for a popular audiences).

⁴³³ For a discussion of Akane and Dame Ren see Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*, 57–67.

⁴³⁴ *tokyo nantoka*, January 2009.

⁴³⁵ Beji Shokudō blogged irregularly at: <http://trio4.nobody.jp/keita/shop/vege/>.

⁴³⁶ A *kotatsu* is a low table with a heater attached to the underside and a blanket over the top. Participants in Ōkura's *kotatsu* craft café sat together keeping warm, gossiping, drinking tea and doing craft activities.

⁴³⁷ Underground University is an occasional seminar series organised by left-wing intellectuals in Tokyo outside of any formal academic structure. 'Chika daigaku: naze nara, uta wa ubawareteiru kara [Underground University: Why? Because Our Songs Have Been Stolen]', *Chika daigaku: naze nara, uta wa*

performance. The Akane listing simply specified the bar's rotating managers for each night of the week. At Shinjuku's Irregular Rhythm Asylum is a weekly sewing circle, Numan, which is said to operate 'until the last train'. At Kiryūsha, special events for the month include an 'Evening Knowledge Café', a reading group on Levi-Strauss, a 'philosopher's café' event on Wittgenstein, and 'MASA'S CAFÉ'.

The map which I reproduced at the beginning of this chapter as Figure 3 was taken from the April 2011 edition of *tokyo nantoka*. Reflecting the steady westward march of the city's population centre in the twentieth century, most of the shops are located to the west of the city rather than in the old Edo districts to the east. There is a concentration of spaces in the Shinjuku ward area, which was a hive of student radicalism and avant-garde theatre in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴³⁸ Despite the urban redevelopment that took place in the 1980s, it continues to be an important cultural hub.

The February 2011 issue of *tokyo nantoka*, just prior to the 3.11 triple-disaster, shows how the *nantoka kaiwai* was spreading out, particularly to the west of the city. In addition to the spaces listed above, the newsletter now included a small bar called *Grisette* in Shinjuku's 'Golden City' ('*goruden gai*'), a district packed with tiny bars which may seat as few as three or four customers. Another space located far to the west of the city centre in Yaho was Kakekomitei, a small bar in the municipality of Kunitachi. These spaces and groups have become increasingly inter-connected, particularly since the movement against the Iraq war in 2003–04. Figure 3 is a map of *tokyo nantoka* taken from the first issue of the newsletter. It shows the location of the shops and spaces in relation both to one another and to the geography of inner-city Tokyo.

Each of the shops listed in *tokyo nantoka* had its own history, community of regular users and political culture. While Akane, for example, was first established by non-

ubawareteiru kara [Underground University: Why? Because Our Songs Have Been Stolen], 2012, accessed 8 June 2015, <http://www.chikadaigaku.net/>.

⁴³⁸ Eckersall, Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan: City, Body, Memory.

sect student activists from Waseda University,⁴³⁹ Kiryūsha was set up by a disillusioned designer who was trying to find an alternative to forms of work which, he felt, only perpetuated the consumer economy.⁴⁴⁰ Around what, then, does the Nantoka Neighbourhood coalesce? In her study of activist culture in Okinawa, Miyume Tanji tried to understand how activists managed to create and sustain a sense of commonality among the diverse struggles of the Okinawan islanders over a long period of time.

The many voices of Okinawan protest are bound informally by common values, shared experiences, and collective memories that lend themselves to the ideas of continuous struggle and one people. At the same time, however, the meaning of these values, experiences, and memories is constantly in contention, constantly undergoing revision and reinterpretation. Among the protesters who share these common, invisible elements constitute what I call the ‘community of protest’ in Okinawa. Likewise and accordingly, these common, invisible elements are sometimes more encompassing and cohesive and sometimes less so, sometimes more able to outbid competing claims on loyalty and sometimes less so, sometimes more single-minded and sometimes less so. The ‘community of protest’, however, is always there, always a virtual presence.⁴⁴¹

The Nantoka Neighbourhood appears bound together in a similar fashion by a set of ‘common values, shared experiences, and collective memories’. One of these ‘common values’ was the notion of ‘doing your own thing’ (*katte na koto o yatteiru*) which was mentioned in the original announcement in Mixi. To ‘do one’s own thing’ is to act freely, wilfully and without authorisation. The adjective ‘*katte*’ which is used here means ‘one’s own convenience’ or ‘one’s own way’. It also has the sense of unauthorised or unofficial activity. In an editorial column in the first issue of *tokyo nantoka*, Shirōto no Ran’s Matsumoto Hajime also uses ‘*katte*’ to describe the people who operate the shops in the Nantoka Neighbourhood. They are ‘*katte na yatsura*’ (‘rebellious types’ or ‘the type who do their own thing’) he writes, highlighting the

⁴³⁹ Many student activists who were not members of any established left-wing political party referred to themselves as “non-sect radicals” (“*non sekuto rajikaru*”). There were many on-sect radicals at Waseda University who later became involved in freeter activism. See Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*, 57–58.

⁴⁴⁰ Kodama Yūdai, ‘Kiryū no naru oto no hō e: Furuhon kafe “kiryūsha” tenshu interview [Towards the Sound of the Air Flow: Interview with the Owner of Second Hand Bookshop “Kiryūsha”]’, in *Shall we dansu? [Shall We Dance?]* (Tokyo: Media sōgō kenkyūjo, 2012), 146–152.

⁴⁴¹ Miyume Tanji, *Myth, Protest and Struggle in Okinawa* (London: Routledge, 2006), 7.

values of rebelliousness and spontaneity which run through the Neighbourhood.⁴⁴² The word *yatsura* (guys/types) is an informal and even derogatory term which is used here in a way which highlights the casual nature and rebellious attitudes which characterise the network members and their activities. Like the word *yabai*, which literally means terrible, awful or dangerous but is used colloquially to mean something akin to the English slang ‘sick’ (meaning good), *yatsura*, when used among friends, reflects a joking familiarity and closeness that is expressed through playful linguistic games involving put-downs and mock disrespect.

As a means of characterising the network’s constituency the term *katte na yatsura* is ‘baggy’ just like the composition of the sound demonstrations discussed in Chapter Two. Rap pioneer and anti-war activist ECD composed ‘*Iu koto kiku yo na yatsura janai zo*’⁴⁴³ in response to two arrests which occurred at a sound demonstration in Shibuya in July 2004.⁴⁴⁴ Sharon Hayashi and Anne McKnight translate the title of the rap as ‘Us Guys Don’t Just Do as We’re Told’. The term ‘*yatsura*’ (‘guys’) was used in the song to describe the rebellious community which ECD felt was converging around the anti-war sound demonstrations in 2004. Hayashi and McKnight suggest that the song ‘create[s] and make[s] an invitation to a rhetorical community (‘us guys’) that calls out an anti-Ishihara/anti-Koizumi platform and becomes an activist community working to reclaim public space and its terms of occupation’.⁴⁴⁵ The notion of a rebellious community opposed to the policies of then Prime Minister Koizumi Jun’ichirō and Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintarō has clearly played a role in formulating a *nantoka* (‘somehow’) community among precarity activists in Tokyo. The song became something of an anthem for the precarity movement in the mid-2000s. In 2007, for example, ECD performed the song as part of the Kōenji Ikki, Matsumoto’s spoof election campaign for the

⁴⁴² Matsumoto Hajime, ‘U~n, benri na mono ga dekiteshimatta! [Yes, We’ve Gone and Created Something Handy!], *tokyo nantoka*, January 2009, http://a.sanpal.co.jp/irregular/tokyonantoka/200901_01.pdf.

⁴⁴³ The *yo* in the title of the rap is a short, casual form of the word *yō* meaning “the type”.

⁴⁴⁴ Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*, 71.

⁴⁴⁵ Hayashi and McKnight, ‘Goodbye Kitty, Hello War’, 94.

Suginami ward council discussed in Chapter Two.⁴⁴⁶ The publication of the *tokyo nantoka* newsletter in print and online provided a medium for coordinating the activity of the ‘rebellious types’ in the Neighbourhood.

With the announcement of the launch of *tokyo nantoka*, the editors envisioned a community based in Tokyo which extended well beyond the boundaries of the city. The announcement suggests a kind of radical alternative to the usual tourist routes where visitors to the capital might connect with the city’s underground culture, rather than simply visiting landmarks like the Imperial palace or Tokyo Tower. The announcement goes on to list a number of underground spaces in Fukuoka, Nagoya, Nara, Nagano, Osaka, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Kokura and Kagoshima where the publication might be available (though no guarantees are made!), evoking a much broader radical network that spans the archipelago rather than being limited to the capital. Groups like Shirōto no Ran have been building these networks since their inception, often building on earlier networks such as Mosakusha’s national network and the network of campus activists discussed above. The group has opened Shirōto no Ran shops in Kyoto as well as maintaining links with fellow travellers across Japan. Matsumoto, for example, describes the Hiroshima record shop Sharevari in *Counter-Attack of the Poor* and suggests that the poor need to build networks across the country so they can travel and share experiences without spending money.⁴⁴⁷

The networks of *tokyo nantoka* are not limited to Japan. They extend to many of the world’s major cities. The creation of the *tokyo nantoka* newsletter itself was partly inspired by the growing links between members of the *nantoka kaiwai* and the urban insurrections that are taking place throughout the world’s major cities. In the first issue of *tokyo nantoka* Matsumoto describes how the idea for the newsletter originated during his visit to Germany in 2007 where such free papers listing all the alternative ‘hot spots’ in Berlin already existed. He explains how the paper lists alternative spaces, events, demonstrations and places which serve meals. With a

⁴⁴⁶ ‘ECD “Iu koto kiku yo na yatsura janai zo” @ Kōenji eki mae 2007.4.15 [ECD “Us Guys Just Don”’t Do As We’re Told’ @ Kōenji Station 2007.4.15]’, *YouTube*, 15 April 2007, accessed 27 May 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RtNZXBk8cs>.

⁴⁴⁷ Matsumoto, *Binbōnin no gyakushū*, 146–157.

guide such as this, he enthuses, ‘you can wander around the city without ever having to consume at the rip-off merchants’. Similarly, he hopes that with *tokyo nantoka* in hand one can encounter the *manuke toshi* (‘fool’s city’) without spending a lot of money.⁴⁴⁸

Nantoka Media

While the internet has transformed political organising, the rich print media produced in the Nantoka Neighbourhood attests to the continuing political importance of physical artefacts in the internet age. *tokyo nantoka* is one publication in a dazzling array of print leaflets, ‘what’s on’ style guides, zines and other media which represent the geography of Tokyo’s precariat and anti-nuclear movements in print. These underground media, referred to in Japanese as *minikomi*,⁴⁴⁹ have long played an important role in bridging the gap between radical spaces, individual activists and events like street protests and rallies. Vera Mackie describes the important role the diverse *minikomi* of the feminist movement played in communicating feminist ideas in the 1980s and early 1990s.⁴⁵⁰

The relationship between print and electronic publications is a dynamic one. The original announcement of *tokyo nantoka* quoted above spoke to the do-it-yourself ethic of the *tokyo nantoka* community by highlighting the problems of print and distribution faced by a small underground cultural community. Electronic distribution can facilitate the diffusion of print media. Readers of *tokyo nantoka* were encouraged to download and print out copies of the guide from the web. The file was formatted for ease of printing so that it could be printed on a double-sided A3 page and folded in four to produce the publication. Only some issues of *tokyo nantoka* became available online, however. In a Neighbourhood which only ‘somehow’ sticks together ephemerality is to be expected. Speaking of the feminist *minikomi* of the early 1990s, Mackie describes ‘the blurring of public and private concerns’, stories of ‘personal difficulties’ experienced by the producers of *minikomi* in the texts

⁴⁴⁸ Matsumoto, ‘U~n, benri na mono ga dekiteshimatta! [Yes, We’ve Gone and Created Something Handy!].’

⁴⁴⁹ The term *mini komi* is contrasted with *masu komi* (mass communications).

⁴⁵⁰ Vera Mackie, ‘Feminism and the Media in Japan’, *Japanese Studies* 12, no 2 (1992): 23.

themselves and the hard work involved in producing regular publications, resulting at times in interrupted printing schedules and ‘ephemerality’.⁴⁵¹ These are all features of contemporary activist *minikomi* like *tokyo nantoka*.

The activist spaces which are connected through *tokyo nantoka* also act as distribution points for the newsletter. Mackie explains how spaces such as Mosakusha have long served as central hubs for the distribution of underground media.⁴⁵² This continues today, through the various spaces associated with the Nantoka Neighbourhood. Narita’s IRA serves a similar function. He describes his infoshop as ‘the international version’ of Mosakusha.⁴⁵³ The shop carries *minikomi*, books, T-shirts and other materials produced and distributed in the global activist ‘neighbourhood’. I used the Nantoka Neighbourhood’s function as a distribution network for activist media myself when I collected copies of *tokyo nantoka* from Mosakusha, Irregular Rhythm Asylum and Kiryūsha during my visits to Tokyo. The overlapping of digital and print media with physical distribution networks helps create the sense of an interconnected Nantoka Neighbourhood which is ‘somehow’ continuous across different kinds of physical and representational space.

The newsletters always included a map of the Nantoka Neighbourhood which showed where each of the activist spaces was located with regard to the broader geography of Tokyo. Figure 3 at the beginning of this chapter is one such map. The inclusion of a map of the physical space inhabited by the Nantoka Neighbourhood made this claim to a ‘somehow’ community more tangible. Artist and cartographer Denis Wood argues that maps should be thought of not as representations of space but rather as performative objects which create the places which they predict. The maps which are created by the state, he explains, ‘perform the shape of statehood’.⁴⁵⁴ The maps included in the *Tokyo Nantoka* newsletter have a different function. Unlike official state maps their purpose is not to provide a definitive shape of an ephemeral

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁵² Mackie, ‘Feminism and the Media in Japan.’

⁴⁵³ Gomi, Narita, and Hosoya, ‘Shintai teki media no jissen [Putting Embodied Media into Practice]’, 176.

⁴⁵⁴ Denis Wood, ‘The Anthropology of Cartography’, in *Mapping Cultures*, ed. Les Roberts (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 297.

‘somehow’ community. The maps have the practical function of helping people find the small activist spaces within the Neighbourhood. Beyond this, however, they seem to have a representational function which invites readers to step down the rabbit hole and into the world of alternative spaces which lie beneath the streets. The maps are performative in the sense used by Wood here. They call into being a sense of the Neighbourhood which goes beyond the individual shops and bars within it, something which appears as more than the sum of its individual parts.

Images such as these maps in *tokyo nantoka* can be thought of as a kind of representational space in the sense discussed by Henri Lefebvre. Representational space, Lefebvre explained, ‘is the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects’.⁴⁵⁵ The images and symbols which appeared in *tokyo nantoka* often caricatured symbolic representations of state power in Tokyo. Figure 4 below is an example of this kind of representational détournement of urban space. The imposing twin towers of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building in Shinjuku is one of the most potent symbols of the project of urban restructuring I discussed in Chapter One as ‘World City Tokyo’. In Figure 4 a silhouette of the towers, which appears on the front cover of *tokyo nantoka*, is superimposed with the English word ‘Burn!!’

⁴⁵⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 39.



Figure 4 Silhouette of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building on the cover of *tokyo nantoka*, January, 2009.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government building was designed by architect Tange Kenzō (1913–2005) and completed under the administration of Tokyo Governor Suzuki Shun’ichi (1910–2010) in March 1991. For Lefebvre the work of architects and town planners contributed to the production of ‘representations of space’. Such representations of space, he maintained, are ‘the dominant space in any society (or mode of production)’.⁴⁵⁶

They intervene in and modify spatial textures which are informed by effective knowledge and ideology. Representations of space must therefore have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction—in other words, by way of architecture, conceived of not as the building of a particular structure, palace or monument, but rather as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture which calls for ‘representations’ that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms.⁴⁵⁷

Tange’s architecture played an important part in the creation of ‘representations of space’ in post-war Japan. He designed the 1964 Olympic stadium and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, places which, like the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building,

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 38–39.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 42.

projected state-sanctioned images of the kind of Japan elites wanted to build in the post-war. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government building is a potent symbol of municipal, and particularly gubernatorial power. Less a building than ‘a city in its own right’ the Tokyo Metropolitan Government ‘is a fortress of government authority and administrative power’.⁴⁵⁸ Its fortress-like appearance is reinforced by the design of the base of the main tower, made with finely cut granite ‘with the slight hint of curvature and inward slope which is characteristic of Japanese castle architecture’.⁴⁵⁹ Suzuki, who held office between 1979 and 1994, was ‘the consummate manager for the capital city as ‘growth machine’ of a developmental state’.⁴⁶⁰ A heavyweight in the LDP, Suzuki had a long track record staging spectacles. He was largely responsible for overseeing the Tokyo Olympics and was secretary general in charge of the Osaka World Expo of 1970.⁴⁶¹ He also worked with Tange on both these projects. The supreme power of the Tokyo governor within the metropolitan government is reflected in the design of the governor’s office itself which extends across the entire width of Tower I and occupies an area of 195,000 square metres, projecting beyond the exterior walls of the surrounding tower on both sides, gazing out over the plaza below in a manner which William Coaldrake compares with ‘the habit of medieval lords in Europe of placing their personal suites over the main entrances to their castles for better control and supervisory purposes’.⁴⁶² The image in Figure 4 overlays a kind of ‘representational space’ of revolutionary desire over this symbol of technocratic authority.

Another symbol of state power détourned in the first issue of *tokyo nantoka* is the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department’s mascot ‘Piipo-kun’. Piipo-kun is a cute character whose features are based on a number of animals. He has large ears to ‘hear the voices of the citizenry’, an antenna so he can ‘catch quickly the movement of society’ and large eyes which enable him ‘to see into every corner of society’. Created in 1987, Piipo-kun was given his name based on the first two letters of the

⁴⁵⁸ William Howard Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996), 266.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 274.

⁴⁶⁰ Sand, Tokyo Vernacular: Common Spaces, Local Histories, Found Objects, 17.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁶² Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan*, 272.

English loan words *piipuru* (people) and (*porisu*) symbolising his role as a ‘mediator between the people and the Metropolitan Police Department’. The image in *tokyo nantoka*, however, subverts this helpful image. A bold black line appears over Piipokun’s eyes, giving an aura of impropriety or criminality to a figure which is designed to soften the image of the police.⁴⁶³ Next to the mascot appear the words ‘Police is [sic] not our friend’ written in English. To the left of this figure is another spoof. In this silhouette a policeman is bending down to talk to a little boy. Rather than listening attentively, however, the little boy is giving him the finger. These images were part of an article advising readers of their right to refuse police questioning. At the bottom of the article is the contact information for the Kyūen Renraku Sentā (Kyūen). Kyūen is an activist legal centre which was established in the late 1960s to provide legal support to anyone who is ‘oppressed by the state’ regardless of their ideological affiliation or group membership.⁴⁶⁴ If this image of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building represents the city which the *katte na yatsura* want to (figuratively) ‘burn’ down, their network of radical spaces constitutes an alternative set of spatial practices, a ‘*katte na*’ urbanism that is posed against the capitalist city.

The Neighbourhood against Nuclear Power

On 26 March, less than two weeks after 3.11, Narita’s blog carried the first post containing details of an upcoming anti-nuclear demonstration. The Ginza Demo/Parade was organised by a group which had been campaigning for a long time against the construction of a nuclear waste reprocessing facility in Rokkasho Village in the northernmost part of Tōhoku.⁴⁶⁵ This group was not closely associated with the

⁴⁶³ A black line over the eyes is used to obscure the identity of underage suspects in criminal cases and in adult print and online literature to suggest that, for some reason, the performer is unable to reveal their identity. See ‘Mesen/kuro mesen [Line Over the Eyes/Black Line Over the Eyes]’, *Dōjin yōgo no kiso chishiki* [Basic Knowledge of Fandom Jargon], 20 March 2004, accessed 8 June 2015, http://www.paradisearmy.com/doujin/pasok_mesen.htm.

⁴⁶⁴ Patricia G. Steinhoff, ‘No Helmets in Court, No T-Shirts on Death Row: New Left Trial Support Groups’, in *Going to Court to Change Japan: Social Movements and the Law in Contemporary Japan*, ed. Patricia G. Steinhoff (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, 2014), 21.

⁴⁶⁵ ‘Hangenpatsu, Ginza Demo, Parade [No Nukes: Ginza Demonstration/Parade]’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 26 March 2011, accessed 23 February 2015, http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/blog-post_26.html. Rokkashomura is a village in Aomori, the northernmost prefecture in the Tōhoku region. It is the site of the Rokkasho Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing Facility, a large reprocessing plant which has yet to commence operations. The facility has

Nantoka Neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the appearance of the post on Narita's blog shows how blurry the boundaries between activist groups are.

The Nantoka Neighbourhood's international connections also supported the organisation of the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations. On 27 March, Matsumoto updated his blog with a post about a countrywide series of anti-nuclear demonstrations in Germany which had occurred the previous day. 'Those Germans are quick!' he quipped, adding that 'we had better do something in Tokyo as well'.⁴⁶⁶ A few days later the Irregular Rhythm Asylum blog confirmed that the Neighbourhood had begun to prepare their own protest march against nuclear power. On 2 April, Narita's blog carried a graphic which utilised DIY punk imagery and references to seminal DIY punk band Crass. The graphic contained the words '*Genpatsu nashi de Crass*' (Crass without Nuclear Power), a pun which plays on the fact that the Japanese pronunciation of the band's name (*kurasu*) is the same as a Japanese word, '*kurasu*', which means 'to carry out one's life'. 'I don't have much time for myself or for this site. But anyhow, let's go to Kōenji on 10 April!' Narita wrote under the graphic, affixing a link to the Tumblr page for the first Genpatsu Yamero demonstration on 10 April.

On 13 April Narita updated his blog with a report about the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration, writing 'while I've been putting up a huge number of blog posts I noticed that I haven't updated my own website or blog at all. No good!' The report was illustrated with pictures and YouTube videos documenting the demonstration. The report included a link to a page on the Genpatsu Yamero website containing videos and photographs of solidarity actions in other cities. Narita mentions 'Kamakura, Montreal and Berlin' as his favourites, indicating the global imaginary of the Nantoka Neighbourhood.⁴⁶⁷

long been the target of anti-nuclear protest. See Koide Hiroaki, Watanabe Mitsuhiro, and Akashi Shōjirō, '*Saiaku no kaku shisetsu: Rokkasho sai shori kōjō* [*The Worst Nuclear Facility: Rokkasho Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing Plant*]' (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2012).

⁴⁶⁶ 'Doitsu no renchū, hayai! [Those Germans are Fast!]', *Shirōto no ran 5 gō ten tenshu nikki* [*Shirōto no Ran Shop No 5 Shopkeeper's Diary*], 27 March 2011, accessed 24 February 2015, <http://ameblo.jp/tsukiji14/entry-10842517099.html>.

⁴⁶⁷ '4.10.'

One week after the April Genpatsu Yamero demonstration, the April issue of *tokyo nantoka* appeared on the Irregular Rhythm Asylum blog.⁴⁶⁸ This issue, Narita explains, was produced for the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration. It featured a front cover which screamed ‘Hey! Was it all a lie?’ along with a picture of a kitten. The caption below the picture reads ‘Kinako-san, who was born under an old building in Shinjuku’s second district is also shocked’. The image, with its suggestion that a stray kitten might have an opinion on the Fukushima disaster, is ridiculous. Yet this idiosyncratic humour typifies the visual language of the Nantoka Neighbourhood. Perhaps the kitten symbolises the innocent belief in the safety of nuclear power which many people shared prior to 3.11. The alleged birthplace of the kitten – born in the interstices beneath the neon lights of Shinjuku which are powered by nuclear energy – seems to symbolise the birthplace of the urban precariat.

On the inside of the newsletter is a page reproducing some of the anti-nuclear iconography from the 10 April Genpatsu Yamero demonstration website. The April issue also makes reference to the growing number of Tokyo residents evacuating the city to escape the effects of radiation. On one page of the newsletter is a directory of activist spaces, bookshops, cafes and bars across Japan which might be of interest to people in the Nantoka Neighbourhood. Amidst the growing fears of radioactive contamination a message above the directory contains an ominous warning.

Those of you who usually wander around Tokyo, those who were shocked by the explosion at the nuclear power plant and have already escaped to the west or even those who will be running here and there if something happens at the Monju reactor, you will probably have more opportunities to wander around Japan.⁴⁶⁹

During my time as a research student at Hitotsubashi University from October 2011 I went for a drink at a bar in Kōenji where I was given the flier reproduced here as Figure 5 for an event at Akane, the small bar near Waseda University area which is part of the Nantoka Neighbourhood. Waseda University is one of the most

⁴⁶⁸ ‘TOKYO nantoka 4 gatsu gō (2011) [Tokyo Nantoka April Issue (2011)]’, *TOKYO nantoka*, 17 April 2011, accessed 25 February 2015, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/04/tokyo-2011.html>.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

prestigious of the private universities in the capital and the area surrounding it is home to many students, cheap eateries and bookshops. The flier is a simple black and white photocopy which could easily have been produced on the cheap coin-operated photocopiers/printers which are widely available at convenience stores. The ready availability of these photocopiers has been a boon to social movements in Tokyo.



Figure 5 Flier for an Event at Akane.

The flier parodied the style of the wanted posters which can be found on the noticeboards outside police boxes and in railway stations all over Japan. These posters commonly feature the faces of former New Left student activists from the 1970s who are accused of terrorism offences. As I discussed in Chapter Two, memories of the New Left are frequently associated with the violence of groups like the Japanese Red Army who conducted a number of very public hijackings, robberies and murders. Another group who typically feature on wanted posters are members of the religious sect Aum Tenrikyo. The group conducted the well-known sarin gas attacks in the Tokyo subway system in the 1990s among a host of other murderous

acts.⁴⁷⁰ Rather than long-missing student terrorists, however, Akane's flier features the faces of a number of senior politicians and capitalists. The role of each in the development of the Japanese nuclear industry is summarised in a small text box below each picture. Their names are given in large Chinese characters above each face. The Chinese characters used in Japanese names can be difficult to read, even for native speakers. On wanted posters and other public announcements such as election posters, difficult to pronounce names are often surtitled with their pronunciation using the Japanese syllabic alphabet. In keeping with this official style, the flier follows this convention.

Across the top of Akane's flier is a headline which reads 'Indiscriminate Radiation Terrorist Organisation' (*hōshanō musabetsu tero soshiki*). The descriptions 'indiscriminate killing' and 'terror' are keywords found on the wanted posters for left-wing terrorists. By using this language, the pamphlet's author clearly expresses a view of the actions carried out by the nominally respectable characters whose mug shots appear in the central panels below. The pamphlet identifies the intelligence connections between some of the figures displayed and key institutions of the United States government, including the Central Intelligence Agency, by describing them as 'Covert Operatives Supporting Nuclear Power'. In the top left corner of the pamphlet is the word 'extremist' which is another word typically used on the wanted posters for New Left activists. Above the word 'extremist' is the word 'nuclear interests' and below 'a group of radioactive exposure murderers'. Below these dire pronouncements a touch of humour 'Ah! I've seen him on TV!!' playfully implies that those who appear on television as respectable politicians and business people are actually criminals with links to a shadowy gang of international nuclear terrorists.

The figures represented in the lower half of the flier are key figures in the nuclear village. They are individuals whom anti-nuclear activists blame for the proliferation of an unsafe nuclear industry in Japan. Many of them played major roles in introducing nuclear power to Japan and co-operated closely with U.S. interests. First on the list is Shōriki Matsutarō whose face is marked '*shibō*' ('dead'). He is the only

⁴⁷⁰ On the memories of Aum see Mark Pendleton, 'Sarin Traces: Memory Texts and Practices in Postwar Japan, 1995-2010' (doctoral dissertation, University of Melbourne, 2011).

deceased member of this ‘radioactive indiscriminate terrorist organisation’. The remainder are very much alive and continue to advocate for nuclear power even after Fukushima. Shōriki is described as an indicted Class A war criminal and a C.I.A. agent, an accusation for which substantial evidence has come to light.⁴⁷¹ Below Shōriki’s mugshot the pamphlet alleges that Shōriki secured his release from prison through his dealings with the C.I.A.. Shōriki is also described as the ‘father of professional baseball’, the ‘father of broadcasting’ and the ‘father of nuclear power’. His media and communications empire played a key role in the promotion of nuclear energy technology in Japan in the early post-war period.⁴⁷² Next to Shōriki is a politician whose own connection with the United States government was strong, former prime minister Nakasone Yasuhiro. It was Nakasone who first proposed that the Diet support a budget for the establishment of nuclear power research in 1950. The pamphlet accuses him of being the principal culprit responsible for starting nuclear power as public policy. Furthermore, the pamphlet noted that Nakasone’s support for nuclear power has been unwavering, even after the Fukushima accident.

The flier represents an alternative history of nuclear power. It demonstrates a deep understanding of the shadowy connections between U.S. and Japanese officials which facilitated the development of the nuclear power industry in post-war Japan. At the same time, the pamphlet advertises a specific event, a free talk at the Akane. Beside the address for the Akane bar in Waseda, Shinjuku ward, in the bottom right of the pamphlet is another picture: Piipo-kun, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police mascot discussed in the previous section.

In the description of Akane as a ‘*gekiretsu kōryū supēsu*’ (extreme commingling space) on the flier, the creator appropriates the label ‘extreme’. The word ‘*gekiretsu*’ (extreme) overlaps with the word ‘*kagekiha*’ (extremist group) which is often applied to left wing groups on wanted posters and in general parlance. Reclaiming and subverting the notion of ‘extremism, the description on the pamphlet suggests that taking part in the event will involve more than simply absorbing information about

⁴⁷¹ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, ‘The CIA and the Japanese Media: A Cautionary Tale.’, *Pearls and Irritations: John Menadue Web Site*, 17 September 2014, accessed 21 October 2014, <http://johnmenadue.com/blog/?p=2437>.

⁴⁷² Kainuma, ‘*Fukushima*’ *ron*, 235–240.

the history of nuclear power and its imbrication with conservative politics in Japan, but an opportunity to communicate with others in a ‘extreme’ way. Akane is managed by people who were part of the Dameren circle. Formed by students and freeters in the 1990s, Dameren emphasised the importance of honest communication.⁴⁷³ Rather than organising street protests the group tried to facilitate ‘intercourse’ (*kōryū*) by holding discussions and developing and maintaining relationships.

The notion of ‘intercourse’ is an important one in the Nantoka Neighbourhood, partly due to the influence of Dameren. This notion goes back further, however, Gomi Masahiko from the bookshop Mosakusha in Shinjuku describes the bookshop as ‘a place (*basho*) for people to gather, to debate, to rest and to interact (*kōryū*)’.⁴⁷⁴ Mosakusha’s origins are in the New Left student culture of the late 1960s. It was established in 1970 after the repression of major student occupations on University campuses such as the University of Tokyo, had been broken up by police. With large-scale occupations coming under increasing pressure, the establishment of Mosakusha in a legally rented building enabled the New Left culture to continue to grow and network. Gomi describes how, in the early days, Mosakusha had extensive *kōryū* with the tent-theatre movement, with producers of *minikomi* all over Japan, with independent film producers and with the folk music scene. As a centre for the distribution of *minikomi*, Mosakusha also maintained communication with similar spaces that were cropping up all over the country. Gomi explains how this nationwide network was conceived at the time not in terms of the yet-to-be-introduced Japanese transliteration of the English network (*nettowāku*) but with the similar, indigenous term *ami no me* (mesh).⁴⁷⁵

These practices of ‘intercourse’, both in physical activist spaces and through the sharing of *minikomi*, enabled the Nantoka Neighbourhood to develop and grow. After the 3.11 disaster, this existing infrastructure facilitated the development of the

⁴⁷³ For a detailed overview of Dameren see Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*, 57–67.

⁴⁷⁴ Gomi, Narita, and Hosoya, ‘Shintai teki media no jissen [Putting Embodied Media into Practice]’, 166.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 173–174.

anti-nuclear movement. As activists responded to contemporary events, they continued to dialogue with the memories of New Left activism preserved in images and spaces like Mosakusha. By questioning who the real ‘extremists’ are the Akane flier suggested that a different memory of the New Left and a different conception of activism might be possible.

Everyday Life as a Place for Politics

In the interview with *Tokyo Timeout* discussed in the Chapter Two, Matsumoto Hajime was asked why the April Genpatsu Yamero demonstration would be held in Kōenji rather than ‘somewhere that forces TEPCO to see it’?⁴⁷⁶ Matsumoto’s response reveals an important aspect of the group’s relationship to urban space.

This demonstration was planned by a number of people who live and work in Kōenji. The crisis is casting a shadow over the safety of our livelihoods, so I think it’s natural to raise our voices from the place where we live (*seikatsu no ba*).⁴⁷⁷

This notion of doing politics in the ‘place where we live’ is central to the praxis of Shirōto no Ran. The group’s success in creating a network which encompasses work, play and political activism came into clear view with the April 2011 demonstration which brought 15,000 people into the streets of Kōenji.

The Japanese word *seikatsu* is a combination of two Chinese characters ‘*sei*’ meaning life and ‘*katsu*’ meaning ‘to activate’ or ‘to live’. *Seikatsu* refers to the activity which makes up our lives. In everyday use it can refer to the rhythms of daily activity which make up our lives but it is often used in the more specific sense of earning a livelihood. Matsumoto has always been concerned with the political significance of the quotidian. As a university student at Hōsei University in the 1990s he became involved in struggles over access to and control of the physical space of the campus itself. Japan’s university campuses were key sites of student movement organising in the 1960s and 1970s. Largely as a result of those struggles many university campuses had self-governing student dormitories, clubhouses and

⁴⁷⁶ Wilks, ‘Japan’s Anti-Nuke Agitator Speaks out.’

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

cultural facilities which provided an infrastructure for autonomous activism and musical culture well into the 1990s. Hōsei University, for example, was famous among students and music lovers across Japan for its student-run Culture Hall which hosted many concerts featuring underground Japanese bands.

In the 1990s, however, when Matsumoto entered Hōsei as an undergraduate student, the student-managed spaces at many universities were under threat. Universities across the country were under pressure to restructure their campuses so as to increase the space available for capital accumulation as the ‘internationalisation’ I discussed in Chapter One forced them to adopt a neoliberal approach. This process intensified after 1997 when Japanese government education policies encouraged Japan’s national universities to become Independent Administrative Institutions (*dokuritsu gyōsei hōjin*). With the advance of neoliberal managerialism as an ideology within the universities, university managements across the country struggled to take back control of these spaces from students, converting them into university-managed facilities or commercial outlets. This was a trend seen around the world.⁴⁷⁸ Self-governing dormitories at the University of Tokyo and at Yamagata University in the Tōhoku region, for example, and many of the student self-governing spaces on university campuses, such as the Komaba dormitory at the University of Tokyo, were demolished.⁴⁷⁹ At Hōsei University, one such struggle erupted over university management’s move to increase prices in the student canteen. Spatial practices employed by the movement included organising ‘hot pot parties’ in the university grounds. Sharing food and drink are central to Matsumoto’s understanding of how to create communities of resistance because this is a practice grounded not in grand theory but in everyday life.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁸ At my own *alma mater*, the University of Wollongong struggles to defend student-controlled spaces from being seized by university management at times led to open confrontation with the police. What was once a free student lounge and Student Representative Council controlled organising space in the university’s Union building is now occupied by a number of retail food outlets.

⁴⁷⁹ Komaba ryō sonzoku o shien suru kai [committee to Support the Continued Existence of the Komaba Dormitory], ‘Komaba ryō o kangaeru [Thinking About Komaba Dormitory]’, *Gendai shisō* [Contemporary Thought] 25, no 5 (1997): 144–156.

⁴⁸⁰ Matsumoto, *Binbōjin dai hanran*, 26–75.

In 2001, Shirōto no Ran activist Matsumoto was arrested and thrown out of Hōsei University due to his involvement in a student protest during which paint was thrown over university officials and guests. After having working in the second-hand business for a number of years Matsumoto established his recycle shop in Kitanaka Street, Kōenji. Like the universities, small shopping streets like Kitanaka Street were facing intense pressure as Tokyo was ‘internationalised’ and corporate-friendly policies were implemented. Kanezawa Seiichi, citing data from the Statistical Bureau of Japan’s ‘Labour Force Survey’, explains that the number of self-employed persons and those working in family businesses, which had reached 9.76 million in 1972 and 10.52 million in 1980, had declined to 6.72 million by 2006. He identifies the deregulation of the large retail sector as a primary factor in the decline in the number of people who are self-employed. Deregulation of the large retailers was implemented following pressure from the United States as part of the bilateral Structural Impediments Initiative agreement of 1990. This eventually led to the scrapping of the 1972 Large-scale Retail Store Law (*Dai kibo shōbai tenpo hō*) and its replacement in 2000 by the Large-scale Retail Location Law (*Dai kibo shōbai tenpo ricchi hō*). These laws facilitated the development of large retail stores, often international chains. Large retailers also changed their strategy for locating large stores by shifting from the centre of cities to the outskirts. Large general supermarkets and shopping centres began to increase on the periphery of cities while existing central shopping streets were hollowed out, resulting in the creation of ‘shuttered streets’ (*shattā dōri*).⁴⁸¹

In response to these pressures, local shopkeepers’ associations have adopted a variety of strategies to try and maintain their livelihoods and the cultural traditions of neighbourhoods centred on the local shopping street.⁴⁸² In Kōenji, the Kitanaka street shopkeepers’ association was concerned that their small shopping street (*shōtengai*)

⁴⁸¹ Kanezawa Seiichi, ‘Toshi chūshinbu no jieigyōsō no eigyō to kurashi no jittai: komyuniti o sasetekita jieigyōsō no genjō to kadai [A Preliminary Survey on the Business of Self-employed Class in Cities Center and Their Actual Living Condition: Focusing on Present Condition of Self-employed Class Supporting Communities and their Problems]’, *Bukkyō daigaku sōgō kenkyū kiyō* [Bulletin of the Research Institute of Bukkyo University] 16 (25 March 2009): 195–196.

⁴⁸² For an account of the daily rhythms of an active shopping street in a typical small inner-city shopping street in Tokyo in the 1980s see Theodore C. Bestor, *Neighborhood Tokyo* (Stanford University Press, 1989), 31–44.

was in danger of being redeveloped into a residential area. Members of Kōenji's Kitanaka Street shopkeepers' association decided that they should try and get some young people in to occupy some of the vacant shops in the street. Matsumoto was put in contact with the shopkeepers association by a friend in the area.⁴⁸³ The experiment was very successful. By January 2011 there were seven Shirōto no Ran shops operating in the Kōenji district, and one in the neighbouring district of Asagaya.⁴⁸⁴

In *Counter-Attack of the Poor*, Matsumoto advocates the tactical creation of autonomous zones in the city as part of a broader strategy of liberation from inequitable wage-slavery. Matsumoto explains how his 'Unrivalled City-wide Grand Strategy' might create a zone where the urban poor can live independently of the '*bottakuri keizai*' (rip-off economy).

I want to devise a means of creating a space (*kūkan*) where it is easy to live (*seikatsu shiyasui*) in the broadest sense, encompassing personal connections and the local area. This is an area-wide self-sufficiency strategy for all the poor. Wow! To put it another way, if we can devise an amazing fools-area (*manuke eria*) in which places of work, of play and housing are lumped together then we wouldn't have any reason to be afraid.⁴⁸⁵

Yamashita Hikaru, who co-founded the first Shirōto no Ran shop with Matsumoto, came to Kōenji as an 18-year-old and supported himself with part-time employment while he tried to work out what he wanted to do. Having already developed a fondness for the area, Yamashita describes how, while he worked part-time, he developed 'the feeling that I wanted to do something here'.⁴⁸⁶ As labour sociologist Kosugi Reiko has observed, many freeters talk about their decision not to seek full-time work in terms of having 'something they want to do' (*yaritai koto*). Working part-time while working towards some artistic or creative project is a common pattern for freeters.⁴⁸⁷ He started a kind of informal gathering, later known as

⁴⁸³ Matsumoto Hajime, 'Dai 1 kai "Nobi nobi daisakusen no hajimari hajimari ~!" [No 1 The Carefree Grand Strategy Begins Begins!]', *Magajin 9* [*Magazine 9*], 14 January 2011, accessed 30 January 2014, <http://www.magazine9.jp/matsumoto/090114/>.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Matsumoto, *Binbōnin no gyakushū*, 56.

⁴⁸⁶ Matsumoto Hajime and Futatsugi Shin, *Shirōto no ran* [*Amateur Revolt*] (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 2008), 18.

⁴⁸⁷ Kosugi Reiko, *Escape from Work: Freelancing Work and the Challenge to Corporate Japan*, 1–3.

Bashoppu, outside the McDonalds next to Kōenji station. *Bashoppu* was a ‘shop’ (*shoppu*) with no physical shop and no buying or selling. Instead it was a gathering of 20–30 year olds who used the road ‘just like a *salon*’. This project was only one of a number of small underground projects attempting to create some kind of ‘free space’ in the Kōenji area. Yamashita met Matsumoto Hajime while he was operating numerous small business ventures where he tried to make money by selling comic books gathered from people’s rubbish piles or selling second hand clothing.⁴⁸⁸

These ‘free space’ projects provided a space for intercourse between likeminded individuals and groups. It was in one such free space, the *Oku garō* art gallery in Kōenji, that Yamashita encountered members of the freeter network Dameren. At Shinjuku’s *minikomi* distributor Mosakusha, Yamashita first came across Matsumoto’s work when he picked up a copy of the *Binbōnin Shimbun* (Pauper’s Newspaper), which he found particularly engaging. The newspaper, which Matsumoto put out as part of his activities with the group *Binbōnin Daihanran* (Great Pauper Rebellion), sought to appeal to freeters. Yamashita recalls how he came across an issue of the paper in the basket on his bicycle. It called on ‘Ladies and Gentlemen, you who are regular subscribers to [employment classifieds paper] *Furomu A*, there is nothing left but to riot!’.⁴⁸⁹ It was in the pages of *Furomu A* that the term freeter first appeared in the 1980s, in its section advertising casual part-time employment.⁴⁹⁰

Shirōto no Ran developed a political strategy based on building connections in their local community. This strategy has not changed fundamentally since 3.11. Rather, the basis of community organising enabled the group to organise its successful Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations. Futatsugi Shin expressed this idea in the quotation cited in the epigraph to this chapter.

Just as we’ve been doing up until now we will create community, maintain a ‘place’ where people can connect. Then when things turn sour they can help one another.

⁴⁸⁸ Matsumoto and Futatsugi, *Shirōto no ran*, 18–22.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁹⁰ Kosugi Reiko, *Escape from Work: Freelancing Work and the Challenge to Corporate Japan*, 1.

This way of doing things will not change whether before or after the earthquake disaster.⁴⁹¹

Since its establishment in 2005 the group has not only organised demonstrations but has also become involved with the local shopkeepers association and the flea markets and festivals which take place in Kitanaka Street. I experienced this connection first-hand when I was working in Japan as an English teacher at the time of the anti-G8 summit demonstrations in 2008. I received an email sent to international activists asking for people to help out with the Kitanaka Street shopkeepers association festival as part of Shirōto no Ran's efforts to improve relations with the local shopkeepers. Relations had become strained, I was informed at the time, due to the influx of large numbers of radical activists from abroad whose presence had caused a degree of tension between activists and the local community.

In his *Magazine 9* column on the April 2011 Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Kōenji, Matsumoto Hajime refers to the ever-present potential for conflict to arise between activists and shopkeepers in such a tight-knit community. He jokes that after the demonstration he spotted the 'big boss' of all the Kōenji shopkeepers associations eyeing him sternly from the corner of the station plaza. Writing about this encounter in his online Column at *Magajin 9* he feigned concern that the association boss might be angry about the disturbance caused by the demonstration. 'Oh no! Am I going to get a good scolding?' He goes on to suggest, however, that any tensions caused by the carnivalesque demonstration might be resolved by his helping out with the local festival. 'If I annoy the big boss then I might be press ganged into helping with the Bon odori⁴⁹² or some shopkeepers' association event', Matsumoto mused. This so-called 'punishment' for breaching the peace of the community Matsumoto positions parenthetically that 'actually that could be kind of fun'. When Matsumoto approached the 'big boss' he did not receive a reprimand, however, but was simply asked to keep things under control. The 'big boss' even offered to accompany the demonstrators in the shopkeepers' association's own truck

⁴⁹¹ Futatsugi, 'Interview by Kodama Yūdai. Teikō to risei no hazama de [The Interval Between Resistance and Reason]', 123.

⁴⁹² Bon Odori is a traditional Japanese dance performed during the summer festival of Obon. The Bon Odori which is performed in Kōenji is the Awa Odori, a traditional dance of the Tokushima region of the island of Shikoku.

to Tōhoku to help distribute the donations which had been raised during the demonstration.⁴⁹³ It seems unlikely that relations between an insurgent group of activists and the established shopkeepers association always proceed as smoothly as Matsumoto alludes to here. Matsumoto's description emphasises the need to constantly negotiate this relationship in order to create space in the area for political protest.

In his ethnography of a Tokyo neighbourhood anthropologist Theodore Bestor has described the important role festivals play in the maintenance of the local social order.⁴⁹⁴ Shirōto no Ran, as its name (Amateur Revolt) clearly states, explicitly seeks to disrupt the social order by staging its own festive protests and establishing autonomous spaces for activism and counter-cultural dissent within the local community. Their strategy, Matsumoto explains, is to try to resolve this implicit tension by carrying out their revolt *with* the local community. The development of ties to the local social order – such as by participating in the festive life of the community – is a way of reconciling some of the tensions between their disruptive and constitutive practices.

The connections which Shirōto no Ran had already developed with local groups such as the shopkeepers association prior to the Fukushima nuclear disaster smoothed the way for them to organise the large 10 April 2011 Genpatsu Yamero demonstration. This strategy for protest rooted in the local community would again inform Matsumoto's own involvement in the Datsu-genpatsu Sugunami anti-nuclear demonstrations which also took place in Sugunami ward in early 2012. Even when major demonstrations outside the Prime Minister's residence (to be discussed below) reached their peak in the summer of 2012 local demonstrations continued to take place all over Tokyo.⁴⁹⁵ As Matsumoto observes, it is these daily life activities which connect the community of the poor and facilitate their participation in the

⁴⁹³ Matsumoto, 'Matsumoto Hajime no nobinobi daisakusen No. 43.'

⁴⁹⁴ Bestor, *Neighborhood Tokyo*, 224–255.

⁴⁹⁵ Murakami Rappa, 'Gotōchi datsu genpatsu rōkaru demo!! (4) Genpatsu iya da! Fuchū no katsudō', *Kikan pīpuruzū puran* no 62 (August 2013): 84–85; Yasuda Hibari, 'Gotōchi rōkaru demo dai 3 kai: Minna no NONUKES Nishi Tōkyō [Local Demonstrations No 3: Everybody's No Nukes Western Tokyo]', *Kikan pīpuruzū puran* no 61 (May 2013): 8–9.

demonstrations.⁴⁹⁶ These dense networks of relationships, infused with a spirit of rebellion and resistance, brought the precariat into the streets following the nuclear disaster at Fukushima. Futatsugi explains his view that so many people responded to Shirōto no Ran's call to demonstrate because demonstrating has become an extension of the everyday culture of play, in clubs, live music houses and bars.⁴⁹⁷

The spaces established by Shirōto no Ran facilitated daily life activities like eating, drinking and recycling. Activists then developed their protest strategies while carrying out these activities. The idea for the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration of April 2011 was conceived in Shirōto no Ran's collectively run bar, *Nantoka bā* (Nantoka Bar). In the documentary film *Radioactivists*, which charts the rise of the Genpatsu Yamero movement, Irregular Rhythm Asylum's Narita Keisuke explains how the idea for the April demonstration had come up during a conversation while he was tending bar a few weeks earlier. Later in the film we see Nantoka Bar come into its own as an organising space. Crammed into the tiny space, activists are shown planning the demonstration and debating the best ways to handle the pressure they anticipate from the police harassment.⁴⁹⁸

Later in the film we see how the spaces of Shirōto no Ran, like Matsumoto's recycle shop, function not only as businesses but as organising spaces. Matsumoto is filmed answering telephone inquiries about the demonstration from behind his shop counter. He and a number of other activists also appear on the steps outside his shop painting a banner in preparation for the May demonstration. Other spaces, like Shop No 12, an art gallery and meeting and performance space located in Kōenji, also appear in the film. Here Matsumoto, Oda Masanori and other activists work to make the portable 'nuclear reactor' *omikoshi* which I described in the previous chapter. The spaces of *Shirōto no ran* are multi-functional spaces which embody Matsumoto's ideal of an 'area-wide strategy of self-sufficiency for all the poor'.

⁴⁹⁶ Karatani and Matsumoto, 'Seikatsu to ittaika shita demo wa tezuyoi [Demonstration that are Integrated with Daily Life are Strong]', 128–129.

⁴⁹⁷ Hirai, Futatsugi, and Ōkuma, 'Toppaguchi wa ongaku demo de ee janaika [Musical Demonstration Will Be an Opening]', 208.

⁴⁹⁸ Leser and Seidel, *Radioactivists*.

At Irregular Rhythm Asylum, a weekly sewing group known as NUMAN gathers to produce clothes, share food and make patches and other textile craft objects. The emphasis is on the DIY ethos rather than on professional production values. Narita explains that ‘originally I wanted a place to gather’ but this always seemed to end up being somewhere where people drink.

Drinking together is certainly fun, but all that is left is a bunch of empty cans. To be blunt, that is really empty. I was sick of that so I wanted to do something where the gathering would have some sort of form. Furthermore, fundamentally I am thinking about the production of a new set of values (*kachikan*). I wanted a place where I could do something like that.⁴⁹⁹

This new set of values, Narita explains, are counter-posed to the dominant values of consumer society such as buying new things because they are fashionable or wearing new clothes in order to avoid feeling uncomfortable. ‘I thought we needed to create values that we can really feel with our own power and share, a kind of community’.⁵⁰⁰ The Neighbourhood facilitates the production of a very different kind of ‘everyday’ in which participants co-operate to ensure their survival by making clothes, recycling and sharing food and drink. The notion of ‘Neighbourhood’ (*kaiwai*), Jordan Sand observes, suggested that ‘the unique character of Japanese urbanism lay in the ways in which ordinary people appropriated space spontaneously and in the kinds of places that accommodated and lent themselves to this spontaneous appropriation. *Kaiwai* thus supplemented citizen politics with an aesthetic of the everyday’.⁵⁰¹

Ibasho

Narita has described Irregular Rhythm Asylum as ‘a meeting place for all those people who for some reason refuse the social and cultural status quo’.⁵⁰² Although it sells books and records, it is ‘first and foremost a meeting point’, a place where you

⁴⁹⁹ Gomi, Narita, and Hosoya, ‘Shintai teki media no jissen [Putting Embodied Media into Practice]’, 181.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Sand, Tokyo Vernacular: Common Spaces, Local Histories, Found Objects, 33.

⁵⁰² Gianni Simone, ‘Narita Keisuke: Keeping Japanese Counter Culture Alive’, *CNN International*, 2011, accessed 20 August 2012, <http://travel.cnn.com/tokyo/visit/revolution-will-be-photocopied-narita-keisuke-400374>.

can ‘relax on the sofa, have a nice cup of coffee while chatting with interesting people, and spend as much time as you want’.⁵⁰³ Anne Allison explains how freeters often feel excluded from spaces like the home, educational institutions or the workplace which provided defined locations for members of the middle class in post-war Japan. With the collapse of these ‘places’, Anne Allison argues that an increasing number of people in Japan are experiencing what she calls ‘ordinary refugeeism’. Through her ethnographic research into ‘precarious Japan’, Allison explains, she discovered that many people lack a sense of having a place in which they can simply be.

It is not simply the working poor who get stricken by unease in facing basic existence. The phrase I kept hearing over and over, and wherever I went, was ‘*ibasho ga nai*’—without a place or space where one feels comfortable and ‘at home’.

As she explains, this is not simply a question of a physical ‘home’ but of ‘the normalcy of being and belonging that often gets associated with the my-home-ism of the post-war social contract’.⁵⁰⁴ Without access to a stable family, home or work environment where does one spend one’s day? In creating spaces for *kōryū*, for economic self-sufficiency, for cultural activities and for political organising, the spaces of the Nantoka Neighbourhood create an ‘*ibasho*’, a ‘place in which to be’ in a society where many feel adrift. In the post-3.11 context, the contamination of the city through radiation only further intensified the sense of risk, alienation and danger which many urban residents already felt. When IRA’s Narita Keisuke offered up the use of his infoshop as a place of refuge to stranded Tokyoites unable to get home in the wake of the 3.11 earthquake, he emphasised that his shop, the Irregular Rhythm Asylum, is in fact a place of refuge, an asylum in its original sense. He reinforced this message by titling the post ‘Asylum (= *hinanjo*)’, using both the English word and its Japanese equivalent. He proposed this in quite a literal sense. Cassegård suggests that the spaces of freeter activism are a form of ‘alternative space’, which ‘can contribute to empowerment [by providing] ‘shelters’ to the subaltern from the

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Allison, *Precarious Japan*, 47.

pressures of mainstream society’.⁵⁰⁵ By serving as spaces for the dissemination of knowledge about the effects of radiation and for organising a powerful political response to the nuclear disaster the Nantoka Neighbourhood constitutes a real alternative, a ‘space outside’. This space is located in the interstices of the contaminated capitalist city. It opens, however, into a globally connected geography of autonomy, cultural creativity, refuge and conviviality.

Summary

In this chapter I have described the shape and texture of the Nantoka Neighbourhood in space and time. The Neighbourhood emerged as a concept among a group of precarity activists who were organising around discrete activists spaces in different parts of the city. After 3.11, these networks took on an important role within the anti-nuclear movement. The Neighbourhood only has a loose structure but is ‘somehow’ held together as a ‘community of protest’ by shared values, media and lifestyles. Participants tend to value ‘doing your own thing’ and seek pathways for maintaining their lifestyles through collective living, protest and creative practice. The media of the Neighbourhood, both in print and online, are an important representational space for imagining alternatives to the post-industrial city. These representations, both before and after 3.11, work by subverting the symbols of state and corporate power. They also act as objects of memory, changing the way the past is remembered so as to open up the potential for contemporary activist practice. Activists have tried to create alternative lifestyles by ‘digging in’ to different parts of the city and trying to unite strategies of political activism, media production and economic activity so as to create ‘alternative space’ within ‘the place of everyday life’ (*seikatsu no ba*). Here the precariat can not only meet their material needs but find a place to simply be (*ibasho*) in the post-industrial metropolis.

⁵⁰⁵ Cassegård, ‘Play and Empowerment.’

CHAPTER FOUR – HIROBA

*This place became ‘No Nukes Plaza’ and all of a sudden a ‘liberated zone’ appeared
in the middle of the bustling streets outside the station!*

Amamiya Karin⁵⁰⁶



Figure 6 ‘Special Issue’ of the ‘Nantoka Newspaper’ celebrating No Nukes Plaza⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁶ Amamiya Karin, ‘Shinjuku “Genpatsu yamero demo!”’, mō kono ikioi o dare ni mo tomerarenai!! [Shinjuku “Genpatsu Yamero Demonstration!”, No-one Can Stop this Momentum Now!], *Magajin 9* [Magazine 9], 15 June 2011, accessed 18 June 2014, <http://www.magazine9.jp/karin/110615/>.

⁵⁰⁷ ‘Nantoka Shimbun Gōgai [Special Issue of the Nantoka Newspaper]’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 17 June 2011, accessed 4 March 2015, http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2011/06/blog-post_17.html.

On 11 June 2011, three months after 3.11, I was in Tokyo to take part in a conference on ‘Emergent Forms of Engagement and Activism in Japan’.⁵⁰⁸ At the end of the day I accompanied a number of other conference participants to the east exit of Shinjuku station to witness some ‘engagement and activism’ in practice. There we joined approximately 20,000 anti-nuclear protesters who were gathered in a small plaza outside the eastern exit. The event, which organisers referred to as ‘*Genpatsu yamero hiroba*’ (‘No Nukes Plaza’), was part of a day of protest dubbed the ‘Million Person Action Against Nuclear Power’. According to the report of the event reproduced in Figure 6, an estimated 67,000 people participated in the 144 actions which took place across Japan as part of the day of action. Internationally, 22 actions took place in 11 countries. A further 32 actions were also organised in France and 200 in Taiwan.⁵⁰⁹

Three separate protest marches took place in Tokyo that day. Shirōto no Ran organised a Genpatsu Yamero march which began in Shinjuku’s Central Park and ended at No Nukes Plaza, where the demonstrators remained late into the night. As I approached No Nukes Plaza through a pedestrian tunnel connecting the east and west sides of Shinjuku station I saw a large number of police with megaphones attempting to control the demonstration. The police had surrounded the east exit plaza and were refusing people entry. As we walked around the circumference of the plaza I could see thousands of people inside dancing, singing and waving sunflowers. Finally we found an entrance to the plaza on the far side and crossed the road to enter. Once inside I began running into some friends I had made in the Tokyo activist scene while working in Japan several years prior. Later in the night, after the crowds had dispersed and the police had gone, some activists remained in the square, talking and drinking. As I sat with them we relished the feeling of freedom which comes from occupying public space.

⁵⁰⁸ ‘ICAS Event: Academic Conference - “Emergent Forms of Engagement and Activism in Japan: Politics, Cultures and Technologies”’, *Temple University Japan Campus*, 2012, accessed 9 June 2015, <https://www.tuj.ac.jp/events/2011/0611.html>.

⁵⁰⁹ A comprehensive list of the actions which took place as part of the “Million Person Action Against Nuclear Power” is given in Sono, *Boku ga Tōden mae ni tatta wake [Why I Stood in Front of TEPCO]*, 124–125.

A few days later, Figure 6, a mock *Nantoka Newspaper* front page, appeared on the Irregular Rhythm Asylum blog.⁵¹⁰ This ‘extra’ (*gōgai*) edition, which was actually the only ever issue of the *Nantoka Newspaper* ever published, celebrated the successful action in Shinjuku. The bold yellow headline across the top screamed ‘No Nukes Plaza Appears at Alta-mae 6.11’. Superimposed over the headline was a subheading which read ‘the number of participants in the Shinjuku Genpatsu Yamero Demo exceeded 20,000’. In the vertical yellow subheading to the right of the image was another subheading which proclaimed that the action ‘was just like Tahrir Square!!!’ This reference to the democratic uprising which took place in Egypt as part of the Arab Spring in 2011 showed how the producers of the image thought about their own protest action within a global imaginary. The photograph, too, of thousands of people overflowing from the square also evoked a series of similar occupied squares and plazas in North Africa, the Middle East and Europe which were circulating on social media and global news websites at the time.⁵¹¹

The Shirōto no Ran organisers of the 11 June No Nukes Plaza were so taken with the success of the event that they deployed the idea again at Genpatsu Yamero protests in August and September and again in July the following year. In this chapter I discuss the notion of a *hiroba* in the No Nukes Plaza protests. I begin by discussing the No Nukes Plaza actions in Shinjuku in June 2011 as a ‘liberated zone’. I consider the event in terms of Shirōto no Ran’s ongoing interest in intervening in public space. I then discuss No Nukes Plaza in the context of the history of Shinjuku as a site of public protest. Shinjuku was the site of major protests during the late 1960s, including the ‘folk guerrilla’ actions which took place in Shinjuku station’s west exit plaza in 1969. I show how the history and memory of protest at Shinjuku station informed the No Nukes Plaza action. Having located the *hiroba* in time I then discuss its relations to similar urban square protests which were taking place in major urban centres around the world in 2011.

⁵¹⁰ ‘Nantoka Shimbun Gōgai.’

⁵¹¹ For a discussion of the way photographs can be read in the context of genealogies of similar images which are likely to be familiar to the viewer see Vera Mackie, ‘Putting a Face to a Name: Visualising Human Rights’, *Cultural Studies Review* 20, no 1 (19 March 2014): 224–228.

No Nukes Plaza was a contested spatial practice. At the commencement rally for the 11 June Genpatsu Yamero protest, tensions erupted among participants over the inclusion of a right-wing anti-nuclear activist on the speaker's platform. I discuss how the debates which surrounded this controversy demonstrated the limits of the *hiroba*. How inclusive can the *hiroba* be and how might the inclusion of some preclude the participation of others? Later in the year, at the 11 September Genpatsu Yamero and No Nukes Plaza actions, conflict between Genpatsu Yamero activists and the Tokyo Metropolitan Police exploded in Shinjuku. The police arrested 11 participants during the march, including a number of key organisers. In response, activists and intellectuals associated with the Genpatsu Yamero protests struggled to articulate their desires for a *hiroba* where open democracy and freedom might be possible. Finally I consider the politics of the *hiroba* in terms of broader theoretical debates about political participation and street politics in Japan.

The Hiroba as a Liberated Zone

The Tumblr page for the 11 June 2011 Genpatsu Yamero demonstration foreshadowed the 'appearance' (*shutsugen*) of No Nukes Plaza at six o'clock in the evening in front of the Alta building at the eastern entrance to Shinjuku station. The website provided few clues, however, as to what could be expected on the day. The names of three speakers were given alongside a vague reference to 'participants and performers who have finished marching', implying that the programme for the event was open-ended. The website text tickled the imagination with the suggestion that 'something incredible will happen!!!! and be enacted' (*'tondemonai nanika ga okiru !!!! okosu !!!!'*). This juxtaposition of the intransitive (*okiru*) and transitive (*okosu*) forms of the verb 'to happen/make happen' suggested that, while something would certainly happen (*okiru*) in the plaza, participants would have to become active subjects in order to make it happen (*okosu*).⁵¹²

The attempt to create an open *hiroba* at No Nukes Plaza was a continuation of Shirōto no Ran's longstanding tactic of intervening in public space to create

⁵¹² '6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu Yamero Demo !!!!!', accessed 20 June 2014, <http://611shinjuku.tumblr.com/tagged/call>.

‘liberated zones’ and repurpose public space for contentious politics. In the group’s ‘Smash Christmas’ action of December 2007, for example, a small number of activists gathered near Shinjuku station and attempted to have a *nabe*⁵¹³ party. When the police arrived to move the group along Matsumoto challenged them, asking what was wrong with their sharing food in the street. The scene is captured in Nakamura Yūki’s documentary film *Shirōto no ran* (Amateur Revolt). In an intertitle which appears after this scene, Nakamura poses the following question.

The police say ‘you are causing a nuisance in a public place (*kōkyō no ba*)’. But what is a public place? To whom does the city belong?⁵¹⁴

This is one of the key questions underlying much of Matsumoto Hajime and Shirōto no Ran’s activism. As I discussed in Chapter Two, in Shirōto no Ran’s demonstrations and performative protests they have sought to make irregular use of ‘public’ spaces such as streets and plazas as places for political expression. Like the ‘Smash Christmas’ hotpot party, many of their actions have been less concerned with protesting particular issues than with the attempt to reclaim ‘the street’ as a place for politics. In a city that lacks extensive public parks, and in which ‘public space’ is increasingly regulated, they have sought to claim space not only for protest but for simply being.

Making irregular use of public space is not, however, an easy task. The laws governing the use of public space in Tokyo are strict. Shirōto no Ran and the precarity movements have attempted to increase the space for protest in the city by utilising existing legal loopholes, such as during the aforementioned Kōenji Ikki election campaign. As sociologist Oguma Eiji explains, the Japanese police usually aim to bring demonstrations to a close as quickly as possible once they have completed their pre-approved course. It was only possible for the demonstrators to remain in the east exit plaza of Shinjuku station on 11 June because the organisers had contacts with a number of political parties who were willing to lend their campaigning vehicles to the demonstration. These vehicles are equipped with a

⁵¹³ A *nabe* is a Japanese style of hotpot that is frequently served at social events.

⁵¹⁴ Nakamura Yūki, *Shirōto no ran*, DVD, documentary film, 2008.

rooftop platform and public address system from which speakers can address the crowd. They were thereby able to avoid being broken up by the police thanks to legal protections for public campaign rallies.⁵¹⁵

The organisers speculated that if a large number of people were to attend the No Nukes Plaza action then it would be unlikely that the police would intervene to make arrests. When the evening of 11 June arrived and 20,000 people filled the square, organisers were thrilled with the success of their plan. Precarity activist and writer Amamiya Karin was one of the organisers of the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations. In a passage from her blog at *Magazine 9* Amamiya described the jubilant scenes she witnessed from the roof of a public address vehicle while speaking at No Nukes Plaza.

The demonstrators who had left Shinjuku Central Park at 3 o'clock began to arrive outside the Alta building one after the other. From here on in it was more than just chaotic noise. This place (*ba*) became 'No Nukes Plaza' and all of a sudden a 'liberated zone' (*kaihōku*) appeared in the middle of the bustling streets outside the station! When I climbed up onto the public address vehicle and looked around I was blown away. As far as the eye could see for 360° there were people, people, people. The ranks of the demonstration continued on and on into the far distance and the *hiroba* in front of me was overflowing with people. From here and there came the call '*genpatsu iranai*' ('we don't need nuclear power') which reverberated across like a rumble from the ground, the sound of drums, the sound of sirens, the dizzy faces of person after person and balloons inscribed with '*genpatsu iranai*', countless placards, flags and banners. It was a site that made you wonder 'is this Tahrir Square?' Then, when I started chanting 'No Nukes' the voices of people crying out together came back to me from 360°. To tell the truth, it was the best I have ever felt in my life!!⁵¹⁶

Amamiya celebrates the *hiroba* as a 'liberated zone'. She delights in the cacophony created by the different sounds and the large numbers of people who gathered in the square. After years of experiments in creating 'liberated zones' through protests, election campaigning and guerrilla actions this was without doubt the most successful attempt at creating a 'liberated zone' which Shirōto no Ran had ever been involved in. The demonstrations and protests which Shirōto no Ran and other precarity activists had organised in public places prior to June 2011 were usually

⁵¹⁵ Oguma, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito*, 203.

⁵¹⁶ Amamiya, 'Shinjuku "Genpatsu yamero demo!"'

short-lived marches or spontaneous performance actions like ‘Smash Christmas’. No Nukes Plaza, however, extended the liberation of space which took place during the various anti-nuclear marches which took place in Tokyo that day well into the night.

The feeling of liberation Amamiya describes is in marked contrast with the ‘*ikizurai*’ feeling which she became famous for articulating through her speaking and writing. In her 2007 book *Ikisasero! Nanminka suru wakamonotachi* (Let Us Live! The Refugee-isation of Young People) Amamiya had described the ‘pain of life’⁵¹⁷ which she had felt as a young woman stuck in dead-end precarious work. As a young person she engaged in self-harm, eventually finding a means of self-expression through the right-wing punk scene. In a 2012 essay, however, she described how the proliferation of street demonstrations after 3.11 had taken away her ‘pain of life’.⁵¹⁸

The No Nukes Plaza action took place in the area known as *Aruta mae* (in front of the Alta building).⁵¹⁹ Completed in 1980, the Alta building featured the world’s first large, building-mounted outdoor television screen known as ‘Alta Vision’.⁵²⁰ Its prominent location took advantage of the estimated 100,000 people who pass by the building on a daily basis. In addition to the visually striking television screen the building’s mixed-use design ensures a steady stream of visitors. In its basement are cafes and restaurants which are connected to Shinjuku station by an underground passageway. The six floors above are filled with boutiques. ‘In front of the Alta building’ is a well-known landmark where people rendezvous before heading out into Shinjuku’s entertainment and shopping districts. At the top of the building is Studio Alta, a television studio which produces television programmes and commercials. The construction of the building reflects the logic of post-industrial forms of information capitalism. As Tong Chen observes, ‘Studio Alta functions as a medium for the self-presentation of the owner—a joint venture between Fuji

⁵¹⁷ This translation of “*ikizurai*” as “pain of life” is taken from Anne Allison. She discusses Amamiya’s work and her understanding of precarity in *Precarious Japan*, 1–20.

⁵¹⁸ Amamiya, ‘Demo no aru ikizurakunai machi.’

⁵¹⁹ Technically, the demonstration took place opposite the Alta building in the Shinjuku station east exit plaza but the term “in front of the Alta building” is often used to describe the whole area.

⁵²⁰ ‘Enkaku [History]’, *Sutajio Aruta [Studio Alta]*, accessed 15 July 2014, <http://www.studio-alta.co.jp/company/history.jsp>.

Television and Mitsukoshi Department Store, and as an interface for the other parties' telepresence'.⁵²¹ Chen even suggests that 'Studio Alta's reputation goes far beyond Shinjuku, even beyond Tokyo' as the popular television programmes which are produced in the building which are broadcast to millions of viewers on television sets around the country.⁵²²

The name 'Alta mae' references the building's commercial function thereby defining it as a space of consumption. By filling the space 'in front of Alta' with music and lively debate and asking passers-by to join in, Genpatsu Yamero activists sought to re-define the space as a *hiroba* for the performance of politics. This location seems particularly appropriate when considered against the transformation of Tokyo from an industrial to a post-industrial city. If Studio Alta and the development of television advertising initiated this digitally connected spatial presence, post-industrial social movements, with their savvy use of media and communications technology made subversive use of these same technologies to develop a '*hiroba*' that went far beyond the temporary occupation of the Alta-mae station square. The occupation of space outside the Alta building extended to the building itself which activists 'hijacked' by projecting anti-nuclear messages above the giant television screen.⁵²³ As such, it is representative of the media-saturated consumer society which Matsumoto saw as the root cause of the nuclear disaster.⁵²⁴ The Shinjuku No Nukes Plaza therefore serves as a protest against the domination of public space by commercial activity, something many activists understood as contributing to demand for nuclear-generated electricity.

By appropriating public space and creating a *hiroba*, activists did not necessarily seek to convey a coherent political message. Rather, they aimed to facilitate the expression of a multitude of voices against nuclear power. Amamiya describes No

⁵²¹ Tong Chen, 'Twin Cities: Cyberspatial Qualities of Contemporary Tokyo' (Masters dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1995), 41, <http://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/65042>.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ The screen was changed for the fourth time in 2014 to a new energy-saving technology that uses half of the electricity it did previously.

⁵²⁴ Tōkyō shimbun 'kochira kara tokuhōbu', ed., 'Datsu genpatsu shimin undō, kono saki dō miru [The Citizen's Movement Against Nuclear Power, What Next?] 13 September 2013', in *Higenpatsu: 'Fukushima' kara 'zero' e* (Ichijōsha, 2013), 657.

Nukes Plaza as a space in which diversity – the different sounds, placards, faces and drums – coexists with a collective voice – ‘crying out together from 360°’. Amamiya goes on to describe some of the encounters she had in the *hiroba*. There were speakers from a variety of non-governmental organisations and political parties including Greenpeace Japan, Greens Party, the Social Democratic Party and a speaker involved in the citizen’s referendum on nuclear power. At the same time, other voices were giving speeches and making appeals in different parts of the square. In one corner there was a kind of dance party happening around a drumming group while in another the chant ‘No Nukes’ continued.

When I joined the No Nukes Plaza that evening I could not make out what any of the speakers were saying over the hubbub of the crowd. Instead, I roamed about the square finding different groups of friends and chatting with them about the demonstrations which had occurred earlier that day. The *hiroba* facilitated this kind of encounter. Amamiya Karin recounts some of her own encounters in the square. She described one young university student who was so overcome with emotion that he repeated ‘I’m not alone, I’m not alone’ until ‘his voice dried out’.⁵²⁵ This does not seem to have been an unusual experience. The daily *Tōkyō Shimbun* (Tokyo Newspaper) interviewed a 30 year old dentist from Mitaka who explained that ‘I’ve met so many people. I was able to have a proper conversation about the nuclear issue which is difficult to talk about with my friends. I feel refreshed’. These reports echo those discussed in Chapter Two of the feeling of relief participants in the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration felt when they encountered other people who shared their concerns about the nuclear issue.

In their wrap-up report after the event the organisers celebrated the demonstration and the No Nukes Plaza. The report focused on the differences between participants—scholars, politicians, local and international activists, musicians and ‘people who just happened to be there’. ‘It is often said that ‘there are no *hiroba* in Japan’’, the report read, ‘if that is the case then we need to make them’ and ‘on that

⁵²⁵ Amamiya, ‘Shinjuku “Genpatsu yamero demo!”’

day without doubt a *hiroba* appeared'.⁵²⁶ While the report responds to popular notions of a lack of democratic protest traditions in Japan, the organisers were actually engaging with that history through their choice of Shinjuku as a site of protest. In the next section I discuss the relationship between No Nukes Plaza and a set of protests at Shinjuku station in 1969 which sought to turn the west exit plaza on the other side of the station into a *hiroba*, namely, the so-called 'folk guerrilla' movement.

The Hiroba in Time

As political scientist Gonoï Ikuo points out, the June demonstration was only the second time in post-war Japanese history that the east entrance of Shinjuku station was overflowing with such a crowd. The last time was the so-called 'Shinjuku riot' which took place on 21 October 1968 when crowds of students engaged in property destruction and succeeded in stopping two of Tokyo's most important commuter railway lines, the Yamanote and Chūō lines.⁵²⁷ Gonoï emphasises the differences between the violence of the Shinjuku riot and the 'tacit understanding shared by people [at No Nukes Plaza] to protest in a non-violent and peaceful manner'.⁵²⁸ Yet even though the 1960s are often remembered for the violent scenes visible at the Shinjuku riot, at the same time a diverse, non-violent and non-sectarian protest movement was already emerging which prefigured many of the carnivalesque tactics of the Genpatsu Yamero movement.

The first performer listed to appear at No Nukes Plaza was 'Jeremy', who was described as an American resident in Japan. Clicking on his name on the demonstration's Tumblr page took readers to a YouTube video of Jeremy performing folk singer Okabayashi Nobuyasu's classic '*Tomo yo*' (My friend). '*Tomo yo*' was the anthem of the student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The song was often sung in Shinjuku station's west exit plaza in 1969 when, for several months, a group of student activists, hippies and musicians staged regular 'folk guerrilla'

⁵²⁶ '6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu yamero demo hōkoku [Report on the 6.11 Genpatsu Yamero Demonstration in Shinjuku]', accessed 4 August 2014, <http://611shinjuku.tumblr.com/post/7724014059/6-11>.

⁵²⁷ Gonoï, 'Demo' to wa nani ka, 8.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 9.

gatherings where they sang protest songs, held debates and tried to transform the functional space of the west exit plaza into a genuine *hiroba*. The Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in June 2011 also featured a ‘Shinjuku Folk Guerrilla’ sound truck. This signalled the activists’ awareness of the history of the Shinjuku station precinct as a site of protest and their desire to infuse their protest with that history.

The ‘Folk Guerrilla’ gatherings, like No Nukes Plaza, contested the right to the city. The folk guerrillas held their gatherings in an underground plaza of Shinjuku station which was officially called a *hiroba*. The activists involved took that idea and tried to put it into practice by using the plaza as a place for civic action and debate. Following their eviction by the riot police, however, the plaza underwent an important symbolic change. Railway authorities renamed the ‘plaza’ (*hiroba*) a ‘passageway’ (*tsūro*). As Peter Eckersall points out, ‘the space was transformed from an associative and collective space to a linear and functional one’.⁵²⁹

Among the crowd at No Nukes Plaza was New York based expatriate writer and translator Sabu Kohso. Kohso later wrote that standing in the square had conjured up memories of Japan in the 1960s.⁵³⁰ As an activist and intellectual, Kohso has engaged deeply with the history of protest in Japan and the United States. In his theoretical and historical exploration of what he calls the ‘new anarchism’, he develops an intriguing conception of place.

‘Place’ (*basho*) is a meeting point (*shūgōten*) for events (*dekigoto*). Different space-times are entangled (*sakusō suru*) in that ‘point’ in ‘sacred places’ or ‘squares’ (*hiroba*) the assembledness itself appears as a peculiar power. However, it is not that all of the elements of which it is composed can be seen. The hidden events, the excluded events, dwell latent within. They are ghosts. This visibility and invisibility becomes the expression of the place’s politics. The erasure of memory is evidence of ‘primitive accumulation’. But various clues which can call up these memories remain. All the events of the past are waiting for the day when they will be excavated once again. They are waiting for the day they will come back to life as a

⁵²⁹ Peter Eckersall, ‘The Emotional Geography of Shinjuku: The Case of Chikatetsu Hiroba (Underground Plaza, 1970)’, *Japanese Studies* 31, no 3 (2011): 340.

⁵³⁰ Sabu Kohso, ‘Fangs Hiding in the Green: Impressions of Post 3/11 Japan’, *Through Europe*, 24 July 2011, accessed 1 July 2014, <http://th-rough.eu/writers/kosho-eng/fangs-hiding-green-impressions-post-311-japan>.

model of liberation. In this sense the whole land of America—indeed all the lands of the earth—are a place of struggle over ‘place and memory’.⁵³¹

Working from this suggestive starting point, we can understand the manifestation at Alta-mae by exploring both the visible manifestations and the ‘hidden elements’ which constitute Alta-mae and the Shinjuku station area more generally as a place (*basho*) at which a variety of events (*dekigoto*) are gathered together (*shūgō*). How have the memories of protest and gathering in Shinjuku been ‘excluded’ and ‘erased’ and how did No Nukes Plaza serve to reignite the struggles over ‘place and memory’ that are no less a part of the Japanese landscape as they are the American?

As Kohso has argued above, just because ‘events’ have been excluded from a particular place their memory cannot be entirely suppressed. The memory of the Folk Guerrilla occupations is preserved through visual media, as in the film *Chikatetsu Hiroba*.⁵³² The memory of these struggles has also been kept alive by participants and their accounts of experiences in the *hiroba*. As was discussed in Chapter Three, the *hiroba* also inspired groups like Mosakusha who set up rented, legal *hiroba* to continue the free exchange of information and debate that they regarded as central to the *hiroba* as a practice. The bookshop carries shelves of works on the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s which have served as a resource for contemporary activists to explore Japan’s sometimes forgotten history. In a freewheeling essay on the West Exit Plaza and the Folk Guerrillas in 2003, anti-war activist Oda Masanori reflects on how exclusion the exclusion of activists from the *hiroba* by the police signalled the subsumption of citizen’s democracy within the forms of a spectacular capitalism. As the radical protests of the late 1960s petered out, Japan’s consumer society began to enter a new golden age. When the police cleared the folk guerrillas from the West Exit Plaza in 1969 the name of the plaza was changed from ‘plaza’ (*hiroba*) to passageway (*tsūro*) and an announcement was repeated over the loudspeaker ‘please don’t stop, keep walking’. This announcement, Oda remarks, ‘trained obedient citizens of the society of the spectacle, it is a command for the purpose of control, it excluded citizens from a place (*genba*) in

⁵³¹ Kohso, *Atarashii anakizumu no keifugaku*, 64.

⁵³² Eckersall, ‘The Emotional Geography of Shinjuku.’

which they could construct the situation or intervene in it'.⁵³³ By creating a *hiroba* in the Shinjuku station area No Nukes Plaza re-inserted this history of defiance and protest into public space. Furthermore, they did so at a time when activists around the world were staging protests in the squares of major cities.

The Global Hiroba

The Fukushima nuclear disaster was a global event which quickly became the catalyst for a global outpouring of anti-nuclear sentiment. On 12 March 2011, the day after the 3.11 disaster, 60,000 demonstrators marched against nuclear power in Stuttgart, Germany.⁵³⁴ The protest had been planned long before the Fukushima disaster but now activists pointed to what had happened in Japan as evidence of the lack of safety of nuclear power. A few weeks later, after her Christian Democrat party lost the state elections in Baden-Württemberg largely due to nuclear fears,⁵³⁵ German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that Germany would phase out all of the country's nuclear power plants by 2020.⁵³⁶ In a referendum in Italy in June to decide on whether the country should revive its nuclear programme more than 90 per cent of voters rejected the proposal.⁵³⁷ Amamiya Karin celebrated the referendum result in her reflections on the 11 June No Nukes Plaza action.⁵³⁸ Activists in Australia, too, held solidarity actions in support of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan and staged protests against uranium mining.⁵³⁹

⁵³³ Masanori Oda, 'Toshi No Minzokushi (2) Tōkyō Fōku Gerira Nō Ritānzū (Besshō = Shōwa Zankyōden) [Ethnography of the City (2) Tokyo Folk Guerillas No Returns (Or, Reverberations of Shōwa)]', *Ten plus One* no 32 (2003): 34.

⁵³⁴ 'Thousands Protest against Germany's Nuclear Plants.'

⁵³⁵ Julia Dempsey, 'Merkel Loses Key State on Nuclear Fears', *The New York Times*, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/28/world/europe/28germany.html?_r=2.

⁵³⁶ Deborah Cole, 'Fukushima Fallout: Germany Abandons Nuclear Energy', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2011, Sydney, <http://www.smh.com.au/world/fukushima-fallout-germany-abandons-nuclear-energy-20110530-1fczb.html>.

⁵³⁷ John Hooper, 'Berlusconi's Nuclear Power Plans Crushed', *The Guardian*, 14 June 2011, sec. World news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/13/berlusconi-nuclear-power>.

⁵³⁸ Amamiya, 'Shinjuku "Genpatsu yamero demo!"'

⁵³⁹ Alexander Brown, 'Globalising Resistance to Radiation', *Mutiny Zine*, 18 August 2012, <http://mutinyzine.blog.com/2012/08/18/globalising-resistance-to-radiation/>; Brown Alexander, 'Uran saikutsu o tometara, genpatsu mo tomaru: hankaku undō no nichigō rentai ni mukete [If We Stop the Uranium Mines, the Nuclear Plants Stop Too: Towards Japan-Australia Solidarity in the Anti-nuclear Movement]', *People's Plan* no 60 (February 2013): 4–8; Vera Mackie, 'Fukushima, Hiroshima, Nagasaki,

While activists around the world responded to the situation in Fukushima, Genpatsu Yamero activists in Tokyo were themselves informed and inspired by the global uprisings of 2011. One example of this was when activists uploaded a picture of the M1 encampment in Catalonia Square, Barcelona to promote No Nukes Plaza on the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration Tumblr page. This protest camp was set up as part of the Spanish *indignados* movement which challenged the austerity policies of the Spanish government in early 2011. The Spanish protesters were themselves inspired by the Arab Spring which was unfolding across North Africa from late 2010. Anti-nuclear and alter-globalisation activists in Japan followed these developments and wrote about them in movement publications.⁵⁴⁰ Some left intellectuals in Japan and North America established the website ‘Japan: Fissures in the Planetary Apparatus’ in order to support the movement in Japan. They translated key texts between Japanese and English and provided a central point for the exchange of information and analysis relating to the anti-nuclear movement.⁵⁴¹ These links are a manifestation of the growing interconnectedness of Tokyo’s urban social movements with the alter-globalisation and global peace movements which, as Ruth Reitan explains, emerged out of the waves of alter-globalisation and anti-war protest of the late 1990s and early 2000s.⁵⁴²

The emergence of links between the Japanese anti-nuclear movement and the global democratic movements of 2011 was predicated on a number of existing relationships. In 2012 a seminar series at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies was organised to explore some of these connections. The seminar series was called ‘*Sekai wa kaerareru to iu yokan*’ (‘The Premonition that the World Can Change’) and included

Maralinga’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, no. 6.5 (16 February 2015), <http://japanfocus.org/-Vera-Mackie/4281/article.html>.

⁵⁴⁰ The intellectual journal *Gendai shisō*, for example, published a special issue on the Arab Spring which hit newsstands just after the Fukushima disaster. See, ‘Sōtokushū Arabu kakumei: Chunijia, ejiputo kara sekai e [Special Issue: The Arab Revolution: From Tunisia and Egypt to the World]’, *Gendai shisō* [Contemporary Thought] no Supplement (April 2011). The *indignados* protests were also discussed by left intellectuals. See Ishida Nodaka, ‘Supein repōto: subete wa hiroba kara hajimatta [Spain Report: Everything Began in the Square]’, *Sabaku* [Desert], August 2011.

⁵⁴¹ ‘Japan – Fissures in the Planetary Apparatus’, accessed 17 July 2014, <http://www.jfissures.org/>.

⁵⁴² Ruth Reitan, ‘Theorizing and Engaging the Global Movement: From Anti-Globalization to Global Democratization’, *Globalizations* 9, no. 3 (2012): 323–324.

three events on the themes of 3.11, the human cost of the nuclear disaster and the notion of the ‘publicness’ (*kōkyōsei*) of the streets in the light of various ‘occupations’ then taking place around the world.

At the first of the seminars, ‘Connecting Kōenji ‘Shirōto no Ran’ With Occupy Wall Street’, political scientist and member of the organising committee for the Genpatsu Yamero protests Kinoshita Chigaya explained that the visit by Shirōto no Ran activists to Occupy Wall Street had come out of existing global connections. Prior to the establishment of the Occupy camp in New York, Kinoshita had planned to visit the U.S. along with the intellectual Ikegami Yoshihiko as part of a series of events called ‘The Global Significance of 3.11 Fukushima’⁵⁴³ scheduled to take place from 21–26 October at various locations around New York. The event was organised by Sabu Kohso of the JFissures group.⁵⁴⁴

Gonoi Ikuo situates No Nukes Plaza at Shinjuku station within the global context defined by the Arab spring, the European anti-austerity movements and the Occupy movement in the United States. In all these movements the occupation of public space was an important strategy. Like the demonstrators in Tokyo, Occupy protesters chose to re-name the space they occupied in Zuccotti Park in September. The name they chose was ‘Liberty Square’.⁵⁴⁵ These strategies of renaming public space are largely symbolic, but they speak to a common desire to reshape urban space as a place for participatory democracy. Discussing the global wave of struggles, Gonoi emphasises the ways in which ideas are translated and transmitted around the world.

Just as the comic book version of Martin Luther King's exposition of civil disobedience was translated into Arabic and was adapted into the repertoire of the non-violent occupation of a square, Cairo's Tahrir Square and Spain's Puerta Del Sol became the No Nukes Plaza at Alta-mae in Japan and ‘Liberty Square’ in New York's Zuccotti park.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴³ ‘Todos Somos Japon Presents: GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE OF 3.11 FUKUSHIMA | Japan - Fissures in the Planetary Apparatus’, accessed 12 August 2014, <http://www.jfissures.org/todos-somos-japon-presents-global-significance-of-3-11-fukushima/>.

⁵⁴⁴ Matsumoto et al., ‘Kōenji “Shirōto no ran” to woūru gai senkyo o musubu: tōron [Tie up Kōenji “Shirōto no ran” with Occupy Wall Street: Discussion]’, 9.

⁵⁴⁵ Gonoi, ‘Demo’ to wa nani ka, 10–12.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 12.

However, for Gonoï it is not only a repertoire of protest and a common language which are transmitted between globally connected social movements. Perhaps more important is the way global events can give activists the courage to move from a sense of injustice to throwing their own bodies into action. Pointing to the influence of the Russian philosopher Tolstoy's ideas of non-violence on the young Gandhi, studying in what was then British South Africa, and in turn their manifestation in the Indian Independence movement, Gonoï emphasises the global circulation of radical ideas that underlies modern protest movements.⁵⁴⁷ Sabu Kohso, too, points to the collective intellectual endeavour which takes place as social movements communicate across the globe.

In ... Fukushima 3/11 and OWS, we are observing the advent of an age of the collective intellect as singular events within the general intellect, wherein traditional roles of intelligent leaders are diminishing while a massive, dialogic and collaborative engagement in knowledge production is rising on the horizon, notwithstanding the presence of irregularities, discrepancies and conflicts.⁵⁴⁸

A few days after the 11 September demonstration in Tokyo, democracy activists in New York, inspired by the Arab Spring and anti-austerity movements in Europe, organised a protest march in the financial district around Wall Street and established the protest camp in Zuccotti Park which would become the symbol of Occupy Wall Street.⁵⁴⁹ At the centre of Occupy Wall Street was the democratic experiment for which it has become famous: the General Assembly.⁵⁵⁰ Eager to exchange ideas and draw inspiration from Occupy Wall Street, anti-nuclear activists and intellectuals from Japan rapidly descended on the Occupy camp.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 12–13. Intellectual historian Sho Konishi has argued that Russian anarchism already had an important intercourse with political movements in Japan in the early twentieth century. See his *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperatism and Japanese-Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan*, Harvard East Asian Monographs ; 356. 0073-0483 (Cambridge, Massachusetts ; London: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center and distributed by Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁵⁴⁸ Sabu Kohso, 'Rise of the New Collective Intellect: From Apocalyptic Disaster and Mass Insurrection', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 13, no 1 (2012): 163.

⁵⁴⁹ Writers for the 99%, *Occupying Wall Street: The inside Story of an Action That Changed America* (Brunswick: Scribe Publications, 2012), 5–23.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., 25–32.

Like Occupy Wall Street and many of the global democracy movements which occurred in 2011, Genpatsu Yamero was not a single, unified movement with clearly defined boundaries. Kohso explains how OWS, too, was made up of a number of decentralised and diverse individuals and affinity groups each with their own particular relationality (*kankeisei*) and ways of intervening (*kainyū hōhō*).⁵⁵¹ Gonoï, visited Occupy Wall Street in an attempt to better understand the unfolding anti-nuclear movement back home. Like Kohso, he argues that OWS didn't end when the Occupy camp was evicted. Indeed, it had really only just begun. No longer bound by their location in Liberty Plaza the Occupy movement has spread out to encompass a range of different activities stitched together by personal and internet-based networks of communication. Similarly, when we conceive of the No Nukes Plaza as part of this broader tendency, we can see how the temporary *hiroba* outside Shinjuku station serves as a physically bound node in a communication *hiroba* which spans Tokyo and has connections with democracy movements around the world.

Sabu Kohso observed, in his commentary on the Japanese edition of the Occupy Wall Street publication *Occupying Wall Street*, that 'the occupy movement which spread throughout the world is not over. It is in the present continuous (*genzai shinkō chū*). Indeed, it has only begun'.⁵⁵² The Occupy camp in Zuccotti Park may have been evicted on 15 November 2011 but the movement from which it arose and to which it gave birth could not be so easily extinguished. It was not, Kohso argues, a single movement but part of a broad global 'tendency' (*sūsei*) which transcended any one movement or group. The 'movement' known as Occupy Wall Street was not the whole movement. It was only a part of this broader tendency.⁵⁵³ Yet as global social movements adopt more diffuse organisational structures, important questions arise about just who can be included in the *hiroba*. The rejection of a vaguely defined 'orthodox leftism' which is common to many contemporary social movements does

⁵⁵¹ Writers for the 99% and Seiichi Ashihara, *Wōrugai O Senkyo Seyo: Hajimari No Monogatari = Occupying Wall Street: The inside Story of an Action That Changed America / Raitāzu Fō Za 99% Cho*; Ashihara Seiichi Yaku; Kōso Iwasaburō Kaisetsu (Tōkyō: Kabushiki Kaisha Ōtsuki Shoten, 2012), 246.

⁵⁵² Kohso Iwasaburō, 'Kaisetsu [Commentary]', in *Wōrugai o senkyo seyo: hajimari no monogatari [Occupying Wall Street: The Inside Story of an Action that Changed America]*, by Writers for the 99%, trans. Ashihara Seiichi (Tokyo: Ōtsuki shoten, 2012), 245–256.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 246.

not necessarily insure against the kind of ideological conflict many participants would like to avoid.

Beyond Left and Right?

In Chapter Two I quoted from Matsumoto Hajime's description of a kind of 'time travel' at the first Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in April 2011. He described some leftists who 'looked like they had travelled 40 years through time with their *zekken* and people carrying the Japanese flag who looked like they had travelled 70 years through time.'⁵⁵⁴ Seventy years prior to the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in 1941, Japan was in the midst of its war with China and was soon to declare war on the United States with its attack on Pearl Harbour. The Rising Sun flag remains a potent symbol of Japanese militarism for most leftists and pacifists in Japan and is widely reviled in Japan's former colonies in East Asia. The Japanese flag is revered by rightist groups known as *uyoku*⁵⁵⁵ who constitute a small but very vocal presence in Tokyo's streetscape. At the No Nukes Plaza demonstration on 11 June, however, I was surprised to see numerous groups of people standing around the outside of the square carrying Japanese flags and other symbols of Japanese nationalism. Were they there as part of a counter-protest or to support the demonstration?

In recent years a new right-wing nationalist movement has grown in Japan, particularly on the internet. Many disaffected youth and precarious workers have combined their anger at the precarious conditions of their lives and labours with nostalgic longings for an imagined Japanese nationalism.⁵⁵⁶ In 2007, freeter writer Akagi Tomohiro articulated a critique of the increasing precariousness of life for young people in Japanese society in a disturbing essay titled 'Our Hope is War' in

⁵⁵⁴ Matsumoto, 'Matsumoto Hajime no nobinobi daisakusen No. 43.'

⁵⁵⁵ *Uyoku* literally means "right" (*u*) "wing" (*yoku*).

⁵⁵⁶ Rumi Sakamoto and Matthew Allen, "'Hating 'The Korean Wave'" Comic Books: A Sign of New Nationalism in Japan?', *Japan Focus*, 4 October 2007, accessed 2 September 2014, <http://japanfocus.org/-Rumi-SAKAMOTO/2535>; Rumi Sakamoto, "'Koreans, Go Home!' Internet Nationalism in Contemporary Japan as a Digitally Mediated Subculture', *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 9, no 10.2 (7 March 2011), <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Rumi-SAKAMOTO/3497>.

right-wing current affairs magazine *Ronza*.⁵⁵⁷ Precarity activist Amamiya Karin, too, began her journey into political responses to precarity by joining a neo-nationalist punk band. Amamiya eventually left the right-wing punk scene but she continues to be one of a number of precarity activists who have sought to articulate a politics which is ‘beyond left and right’.⁵⁵⁸

After Fukushima, many new right activists identified with the anti-nuclear cause. Some rightist groups began to participate in anti-nuclear demonstrations, including those organised by Shirōto no Ran. Popular neo-nationalist comic book artist Kobayashi Yasunori’s revisionist history of Japan’s Asia-Pacific War *Sensōron* (On War) is a key text for the new right movement.⁵⁵⁹ After Fukushima, however, Kobayashi published a comic book criticising the nuclear power industry in a new comic called *Datsu genpatsu ron* (On Abandoning Nuclear Power).⁵⁶⁰ As Jeff Kingston explains, Kobayashi’s intervention ‘seeks to rally people from across the political spectrum against those who have needlessly exposed Japan to the existential threat of nuclear energy’.⁵⁶¹

One right-wing group which began organising relief in the disaster-affected areas in Tōhoku was the Tōitsu Sensen Giyūgun (United Front Volunteer Army). In July they even began to organise their own anti-nuclear demonstrations.⁵⁶² The group’s leader, Hariya Daisuke, was invited to speak at a rally at the start of the 11 June Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Shinjuku Central Park. His appearance was advertised on the demonstration’s website. At the last minute, however, Hariya’s address was cancelled. In a report later published by the Genpatsu Yamero organisers on the

⁵⁵⁷ The article appeared in English translation as Tomohiro Akagi, ‘War Is the Only Solution. A 31-Year-Old Freeter Explains the Plight and Future of Japan’s Marginal Workers’, trans. Kyoko Selden, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* (17 June 2007), <http://japanfocus.org/-Akagi-Tomohiro/2452>.

⁵⁵⁸ Amamiya Karin and Jodie Beck, ‘Suffering Forces Us to Think beyond the Right–Left Barrier’, *Mechademia* 5, no 1 (2010): 251–265.

⁵⁵⁹ Kobayashi Yoshinori, *Sensō ron [On War]* (Tokyo: Gentōsha, 1998). For an analysis of Kobayashi’s popularity in the context of neoliberalism and war see Mark Driscoll, ‘Kobayashi Yoshinori Is Dead: Imperial War/Sick Liberal Peace/Neoliberal Class War’, *Mechademia* 4 (2009): 290–303.

⁵⁶⁰ Kobayashi Yoshinori, *Datsu genpatsu ron [On Abandoning Nuclear Power]* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2012).

⁵⁶¹ Kingston, ‘Japan’s Nuclear Village.’

⁵⁶² ‘Anti-Nuclear Movement Unites Rightists, Leftists’, *AJW by The Asahi Shimbun*, http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201201270001.

demonstration website, they explained the circumstances surrounding the cancellation.⁵⁶³ According to the report, due to various delays the list of speakers for the rally had only been decided a few days prior. The final decision as to who would speak at the rally had been delegated to a single individual on the understanding that ‘if they are opposed to nuclear power then anyone is OK’. With little time and much to do the organising group was in a chaotic state. There had been no time to secure a consensus about who would speak. The organising group then received a number of objections to Hariya’s appearance at the rally. The principle objections were raised by a group called the Heitosupiiichi ni Hantai suru Kai (Committee Against Hate Speech). The group had been founded in 2009 by a group of people who were concerned about the rise of the new right.⁵⁶⁴ In an open letter published on their blog the Committee Against Hate Speech threatened to disrupt the rally if Hariya were permitted to speak.⁵⁶⁵ The Genpatsu Yamero organisers decided to contact Hariya and ask him not to speak, a decision which was noted on the rally programme on the demonstration website.

Despite the organisers having cancelled Hariya’s address, controversy over the rightists’ planned speech did flare up during the rally. Members of the Committee Against Hate Speech heckled the actor Nakayama Kazuya when he made a reference to ‘the pride of the Japanese people’ (*‘Nihonjin wa sekai ni hokoreru minzoku’*) during his speech. Nakayama challenged them to ‘come here if you’ve got a problem with what I’m saying’. When he stepped down from the speakers’ platform, members of the Committee approached the stage and began arguing with him and with the demonstration organisers.⁵⁶⁶ While this scuffle took place to one side of the

⁵⁶³ ‘6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu yamero demo hōkoku [Report on the 6.11 Genpatsu Yamero Demonstration in Shinjuku].’

⁵⁶⁴ “‘Heito supiiichi ni hantai suru kai” to shite sai sutāto shimasu [We Will Start Again as the “Committee Against Hate Speech”]’, *Heito supiiichi ni hantai suru kai [Committee Against Hate Speech]*, 17 December 2009, accessed 28 May 2015, <http://livingtogether.blog91.fc2.com/blog-entry-8.html>.

⁵⁶⁵ “‘6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu yamero demo” ni tai suru kōkai shitsumon jō [Open Letter Concerning the “6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu Yamero Demonstration”]’, *Heito supiiichi ni hantai suru kai [Committee Against Hate Speech]*, 11 June 2011, accessed 4 August 2014, <http://livingtogether.blog91.fc2.com/blog-entry-96.html>.

⁵⁶⁶ This account is based on a video of the incident which was posted on YouTube. See ‘6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu yamero demo! shuppatsu mae 06: Nakayama Kazuya san/5.7 taihōsha kyūenkai hoka [6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu Yamero Demonstration! Before the March 06: Nakayama Kazuya/5.7 Arrestee Support Group Etc.]’, 11 June 2011,

stage the MC invited the next speaker to the platform. This speaker was from a supporters' group for people who had been arrested at the previous Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Shibuya in May.⁵⁶⁷ She tried to talk about the success of the fundraising campaign her group had organised and give advice to the crowd as to what to do if anyone was arrested. Beside the stage, however, the scuffle continued. Pointing to the scrum she commented, 'as you can see here this is a place (*ba*) in which there are lots of opinions'. Some applause came up from the crowd while she continued to comment on the ongoing dispute to the side of the stage. 'So let's express ourselves frankly like that', she continued, pointing at the disputants. 'I support this fight!' she joked, raising her fist in the air. 'Let everyone say what they want to say'.

These comments suggested an understanding of the *hiroba* as necessarily marked by internal division and conflict. In this speaker's view conflict was not something to shy away from but a virtue of political engagement. The conflict did not end there. As the defendant support group speaker finished speaking and went to step down from the platform, a young man holding a Japanese flag on a bamboo pole rushed in and grabbed the microphone. The rally marshals seemed to tacitly approve of this and stood to the side of the stage while he made his speech.

I'm sorry but just quickly I'm taking the microphone. He made a fairly garbled speech, saying 'I'm not really a leftist ... I mean I'm not really a rightist. A right-wing activist Hariya from the United Front Volunteer Army was supposed to be here but a few misguided leftists said something stupid like 'don't let him speak'. I'm

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boYumfuaEh4&feature=youtube_gdata_player. I have also drawn on a summary of the incident from the following blogs: '6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu Yamero Demo!!!!', *Mainapōtaru* [Minor Portal], 12 June 2011, accessed 7 August 2014, <http://ch10670.seesaa.net/article/209375392.html>; 'Uyoku ga hangenpatsu demo ni sankā shite nani ga warui? [What is Wrong With Rightists Participating in Anti-nuclear Demonstrations?]', *Fujōri nikki* [Absurdism Diary], 27 June 2011, accessed 7 August 2014, <http://himadesu.seesaa.net/article/212089508.html>.

⁵⁶⁷ Defendant support groups are typically formed to raise money for the defendant and assist in preparing their legal defence. Patricia Steinhoff has researched the culture of defendant support groups in Japan's New Left culture. While freeter activist groups like Shirōto no Ran are a step removed from the New Left, their practices surrounding arrestee support draw on the experiences and institutional precedents of the New Left. Patricia G. Steinhoff, 'Doing the Defendant's Laundry: Support Groups as Social Movement Organizations in Contemporary Japan', *Japanstudien. Jahrbuch Des Deutschen Instituts Fur Japanstudien* 11 (1999): 55–78; Steinhoff, 'No Helmets in Court, No T-Shirts on Death Row: New Left Trial Support Groups.'

actually opposed to the Japanese flag and the national anthem but just this once I'll raise the flag. Can you believe a story as silly as this?'

He then waved the Japanese rising sun flag he was carrying briefly. Someone who had been disputing at the side of the stage rushed over and grabbed the microphone from him before he was wrestled away by rally marshals.

Yamashita Hikaru from Shirōto no Ran, who was master of ceremonies for the rally, took to the podium while the fight continued to the side of the stage and tried to bring some resolution to the conflict. 'There are various points of view', he yelled. 'Now is not the time for bothersome conflicts between left and right', he continued, suggesting that surely the contending parties at least shared a common interest in stopping nuclear power. 'Let's go!' he cried, encouraging the participants to head into the road and start the march. As people were moving off a member of the Committee Against Hate Speech stepped onto the podium. He explained that he had asked for a chance to respond to the previous speaker and spoke briefly as to why his group objected so strongly to patriotic displays at the demonstration. 'The national people (*kokumin*) or a national people's movement (*kokumin undō*) cannot stop nuclear power', he stated. He explained his view that in order to stop nuclear power the movement had to include people both within and without the Japanese archipelago many of whom are not Japanese citizens.⁵⁶⁸

The demonstration organisers' report, while it stopped short of criticising the heckling, asked participants 'from now on, please do not disrupt the rally'. In the report, organisers tried to make sense of the dispute and to defend the idea that only a broad anti-nuclear movement which went beyond left and right could change energy policy.

This demonstration was organised with the understanding that 'it is OK for anyone to participate so long as they are opposed to nuclear power' and therefore people with all sorts of ideological backgrounds were there. There were lots of people at each of our demonstrations because we accepted this just for that day. Because we accepted this for the day of the demonstration, lots of people came to each

⁵⁶⁸ '6/11 Shinjuku demo Nakayama Kazuya kara no momegoto epiōgu [Epilogue to the Nakayama Kazuya Dispute at the 6/11 Shinjuku Demonstration]', 12 June 2011, accessed 5 March 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mc5kLO8_uzE&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

demonstration. As a consequence, however, there will be plenty of things which you do not like and which do not suit your own policy. If, however, we excluded people whose thoughts do not align with our own based on something other than their opposition to nuclear power then there would be no end to it. Firstly, let us focus on stopping nuclear power which, in addition to being extremely dangerous, is built upon a huge system of special interests.⁵⁶⁹

While clearly targeted at the Committee Against Hate Speech, this call for unity under the banner of opposition to nuclear power was not universally accepted, even among the demonstration organisers. A supplementary report later appeared on the demonstration website. It began by noting that ‘we have received various indications from both within and without the organising group with regard to the explanation we published the other day. Therefore we will explain in more detail what has taken place’. The supplement revealed how seriously the issue had divided the organising group. Some organisers, including the organisers of the Human Recovery Project, had threatened to pull their punk rock sound truck from the demonstration due to the inclusion of a rightist on the rally’s platform. This was the group, discussed in Chapter Three, to whose disaster relief activities in Tōhoku the money raised at the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations was to be donated. Those within the organising group who were critical of the inclusion of Hariya on the platform were not, the report now conceded, concerned about ‘a superficial issue of ‘differing ideologies between left and right’’. They felt that this was a much larger issue which went ‘to their very existence’. For these critics the apparent endorsement of a rightist speaker challenged the very lives of people who suffer from discrimination because of their gender, because they are day-labourers and or due to their ethnicity.⁵⁷⁰

In their original open letter to the Genpatsu Yamero demonstration organisers the Committee Against Hate Speech drew connections between the structural oppression of regional Japan and the oppression of non-Japanese residents and other minorities in Japan. The Tōhoku region has been placed in a position where it is forced due to economic depression to accept nuclear power plants to provide electricity to the wealthier cities. The letter also suggested that workers in nuclear power plants are

⁵⁶⁹ ‘6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu yamero demo hōkoku [Report on the 6.11 Genpatsu Yamero Demonstration in Shinjuku].’

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

drawn from the most exploited sectors of the labour force: day-labourers and foreign workers. While the exact composition of the workforce at the Fukushima Daiichi plant remains unclear, there is evidence that TEPCO sub-contractors rely on day-labourers, a large percentage of whom are members of one of Japan's ethnic minorities or of the *burakumin* outcast caste.⁵⁷¹ Matthew Allen explains how many Okinawans, for example, are driven to seek work in the mainland nuclear industry due to a lack of economic development in the south-western archipelago.⁵⁷² For members of the Committee Against Hate Speech giving a platform to groups for whom discrimination against foreigners and low-class workers was a fundamental part of their ideology was incompatible with building an effective movement against nuclear power and the underlying structural issues on which the industry is predicated.⁵⁷³

This incident highlighted how difficult it is to create a truly open *hiroba* where everyone who is opposed to nuclear power can participate. The Committee Against Hate Speech and the Human Recover Project emphasised that not all individuals are equally powerful in a 'public' sphere which is already riven by structural inequalities. Shirōto no Ran's entry into anti-nuclear politics after 3.11 brought new challenges for a group that has tried to carry out politics not primarily in a 'public place (*kōkyō no ba*) but rather in the 'place of everyday life' (*seikatsu no ba*). Yet there is little doubt that the policy of facilitating maximum participation based on the common demand to end nuclear power explains why the demonstrations were so successful.

The organisers' position that opposition to nuclear power should be the only factor in determining whether someone could speak at Genpatsu Yamero events reflects their desire to break out of the 'leftist' subculture and create a popular movement against nuclear power. This would have been unlikely to succeed had the organisers demanded strict ideological unity among demonstration participants. As I will discuss further in Chapter Six, this tendency towards an anti-ideological position

⁵⁷¹ Paul Jobin, 'Dying for TEPCO? Fukushima's Nuclear Contract Workers', *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 9, no 18.3 (2 May 2011), <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Paul-Jobin/3523/article.html>.

⁵⁷² Matthew Allen, 'Okinawa's Fukushima Connection: Nuclear Workers at Risk', *The Asia-Pacific Journal* (14 July 2011), <http://www.japanfocus.org/events/view/97>.

⁵⁷³ "6.11 Shinjuku Genpatsu yamero demo" ni tai suru kōkai shitsumon jō'.

within the movement became even stronger at the Kantei Mae demonstrations (to be discussed in Chapter Six). For anti-capitalists like Sabu Kohso, the position of the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrators revealed both a lack of political sophistication and the way in which the anti-nuclear issue was so closely bound up with the broader politics of Japanese capitalism.

Since an event space involved in the coalition had too loose a political articulation, it somehow ended up allowing the participation of a racist group who was not only present but also demanded to speak at the rally. The group is notorious for denying the comfort women issue. Of course, there was a harsh dispute and the representative did not get to speak. Herein arose one of the problems concerning the slogan of anti-or de-nuke. *What does it mean in the post 3/11 climate, in terms of politics, economy, culture and everyday life?* Fascists and nationalists can say No Nuke! [*sic*] for the sake of the national well-being. Neoliberal entrepreneurs can propose alternative energy for their new means of profit making. The government and corporations can create projects for recovery of the disaster area that would encourage people to remain there—with radiation—forever. Finally, even a prime minister can propose a de-nuked society. We have innumerable questions to tackle.⁵⁷⁴

No Nukes Plaza opened up a space where participants could express these conflicting understandings of anti-nuclear politics. Disagreements over who is allowed to participate in the *hiroba* demonstrate the difficulty of implementing direct democracy. The conflict which arose over the inclusion of rightists in the 11 June demonstration was never satisfactorily resolved. At the September Genpatsu Yamero demonstration, however, a further challenge to the freedom of the *hiroba* came when the Metropolitan Police attacked the demonstration and arrested 12 participants, including a number of demonstration organisers. These attacks, in addition to bringing out a defensive response, also forced participants to more clearly articulate the kind of *hiroba* they wanted to create.

For the Freedom of Demonstration and Assembly⁵⁷⁵

In response to the arrests at the 11 September Genpatsu Yamero demonstration, a number of intellectuals, including literature scholar and philosopher Karatani Kōjin,

⁵⁷⁴ Kohso, 'Fangs Hiding in the Green: Impressions of Post 3/11 Japan.'

⁵⁷⁵ Some of the material in this section appeared in edited form in Alexander Brown, 'A Society in Which People Demonstrate: Karatani Kōjin and the Politics of the Anti-Nuclear Movement', in *Proceedings of the 18th Conference of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia* (presented at the 18th Conference of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia, Canberra, Australia, 2014), <http://japaninstitute.anu.edu.au/projects/jsaa2013/papers>.

sociologist Oguma Eiji and French literature scholar Ukai Satoshi, issued a ‘Joint Statement for the Freedom of Demonstration and Assembly’ to protest the ‘blatantly gratuitous nature of the arrests’.⁵⁷⁶ The Joint Statement alleged that, by targeting members of the organising collective in particular, the police were engaging in a deliberate strategy to repress anti-nuclear demonstrations.⁵⁷⁷ The three scholars held a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan together with anti-nuclear activist Amamiya Karin from the demonstration’s organising group to discuss their opposition to the arrests. They collected signatures in support of the Joint Statement and raised funds to assist the arrestees with their legal defence.

The Joint Statement was written by Karatani with input from the other two scholars. It described the post-Fukushima anti-nuclear demonstrations as ‘testament not to confusion or disorder, but to the maturity of Japanese civil society’. The authors argued that the organisation and joining of rallies was protected under Article 21 of the Japanese Constitution which guarantees ‘freedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press and all other forms of expression’. They accused the police of ‘systematically obstructing the demonstrations’ and conducting ‘coercive arrests without any reasonable grounds’. The Joint Statement argued that, rather than simply enforcing the law, the arrests revealed the ‘true intention’ of the police was directed toward ‘repressing all anti-nuclear demonstrations by targeting the particular group that has successfully organised rallies with young people’.⁵⁷⁸

In an article in the monthly current affairs magazine *Sekai* (World) Karatani explained how writing the Joint Statement had forced him to think more deeply about the language of the Japanese Constitution.⁵⁷⁹ There is no specific mention of demonstrating, he notes, within the text of the Constitution. The notion of

⁵⁷⁶ ‘Background’, ‘Demo to hiroba no jiyū’ no tame no kyōdō seimei [Joint Statement for the Freedom of Demonstration and Assembly], accessed 27 September 2013, <http://jsfda.wordpress.com/background/>. Translation in original.

⁵⁷⁷ Karatani Kōjin, Oguma Eiji, and Ukai Satoshi, ‘Joint Statement’, ‘Demo to hiroba no jiyū’ no tame no kyōdō seimei [Joint Statement for the Freedom of Demonstration and Assembly], 29 September 2011, accessed 27 September 2013, <http://jsfda.wordpress.com/joint-statement/>. Translation in original.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Karatani Kōjin, ‘Hito ga demo o suru shakai [A Society in Which People Demonstrate]’, *Sekai [World]* no 834 (September 2012): 94–101.

demonstrating is, rather, subsumed within Article 21 which covers freedom of assembly (*shūkai*), association (*kessha*) and expression (*hyōgen*). Interpreting the word *shūkai*, however, Karatani noted that the original English draft indeed used the word ‘assembly’. For Karatani, movement is central to the democratic power of demonstrations. The English word ‘assemble’, he explained, implies movement by the physical act of coming together in one place. In Japanese there is a distinction between the words demonstration (*demo*) and assembly (*shūkai*). He criticises what he sees as the separation between ‘static’ assemblies and ‘moving’ demonstrations in Japan. Where there is no freedom to demonstrate, he argues, there is no real freedom of assembly. This has long been the situation in Japan, he complains, where demonstrations tended to be made up of small groups of ‘leaders’ while assemblies, while often large and popularly attended, were not connected with demonstrations.⁵⁸⁰

Karatani argues that the demonstrations in Japan after 3.11 are neither *shūkai* nor *demo* but true ‘assemblies’.⁵⁸¹ Karatani does not use the Japanese word ‘*shūkai*’ here but a Japanised word ‘*asenburii*’ which he uses to indicate Rousseau’s notion of an assembly. For Rousseau, the assembly is an organ of popular direct democracy. He contrasts the direct democracy of the assembly with the delegation of popular sovereignty to elected representatives which occurs in parliamentary systems.⁵⁸² At the September Genpatsu Yamero demonstration Karatani gave a speech in which he repeated some of the clichés about Japanese democracy as immature and imported from the West which I discussed in Chapter Two. In his *Sekai* article, however, he identifies a similarity between Rousseau’s notion of an assembly and a form of political gathering which has existed in Japan in pre-modern times: the village *yoriai*. This village *yoriai*, as described by folklorist Miyamoto Tsuneichi, was a form of assembly in which the members of a village or larger community gathered in one place to discuss and decide on the issues of the day.⁵⁸³ This political form, Karatani asserts, existed in all clan societies in one form or another and is the origin of later

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 100.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., 100–101.

⁵⁸² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, 2nd ed (Indianapolis, IN ; Cambridge: Hackett Pub. Co, 2011), 217.

⁵⁸³ Miyamoto Tsuneichi, ‘Mura no yoriai [The Village Yoriai]’, *Gengo seikatsu [Language Life]* no 163 (April 1965): 44.

forms of peoples' assemblies and councils. In modern representative democracies it is this direct democracy of the *yoriai* which has been lost. In order to reclaim direct democracy, Karatani argues, we need assemblies.

Karatani rejects the idea that demonstrations are simply a means (*shudan*) by which to achieve a particular goal. He is equally critical of two distinct Japanese political traditions: the revolutionary tradition in which demonstrations were regarded simply as a means of making violent revolution; and the parliamentary tradition in which demonstrating was undertaken primarily to help parties win votes in future elections. He blames both of these approaches, in which the demonstration itself is subordinated to some greater political goal, for the lack of political demonstrations in Japan prior to 3.11.⁵⁸⁴ These 'two traditions' are caricatures and Karatani provides little evidence to support his claims. Nevertheless, the instrumentalist understanding of demonstrating he identifies here is something many Genpatsu Yamero activists have rejected.

Karatani rejects the separation between means and ends which is implicit in instrumental reason. Rather than viewing demonstrating as a means by which society can influence a separate sphere of parliamentary government, Karatani demands that demonstrations be considered as ends in themselves. The power of demonstrating is that it produces 'a society in which people demonstrate'. The anti-nuclear movement does have a clearly defined end in terms of its demand to end Japan's reliance on nuclear power. Yet Karatani, like many of the activists I have discussed so far, see the anti-nuclear demonstrations as possessing a much more general potential. Anti-nuclear demonstrations produce 'liberated zones' and *hiroba* where democratic discussions and debates can take place. In doing so, they reveal the possibility of more direct forms of democracy. These notions of democracy are counter-posed to the representative politics of Japanese parliamentarism. Karatani cites Rousseau's idea that in the assembly the people exercise sovereignty directly without the mediation of any representative.⁵⁸⁵ In a 'society in which people demonstrate'

⁵⁸⁴ Karatani, 'Hito ga demo o suru shakai', 101.

⁵⁸⁵ Rousseau, Basic Political Writings, 271.

sovereignty rests not in the parliament but ‘with ordinary people’. It is not brought about via electing representatives but by demonstrating.

Karatani’s words echo the reflections of Judith Butler. The global uprisings of 2011, particularly the Occupy Wall Street movement, prompted the philosopher to theorise the way demonstrating inscribes democratic praxis into public space.

In the first instance, no one mobilizes a claim to move and assemble freely without moving and assembling together with others. In the second instance, the square and the street are not only the material supports for action, but they themselves are part of any theory of public and corporeal action that we might propose. Human action depends upon all sorts of supports – it is always supported action. But in the case of public assemblies, we see quite clearly not only that there is a struggle over what will be public space, but a struggle as well over those basic ways in which we are, as bodies, supported in the world – a struggle against disenfranchisement, effacement, and abandonment.⁵⁸⁶

In the same article, Butler emphasises the way the assemblies took to the streets as an act of reclaiming politics as something people already participate in through the substance of daily life.

And when crowds move outside the square, to the side street or the back alley, to the neighbourhoods where streets are not yet paved, then something more happens. At such a moment, politics is no longer defined as the exclusive business of public sphere distinct from a private one, but it crosses that line again and again, bringing attention to the way that politics is already in the home, or on the street, or in the neighbourhood, or indeed in those virtual spaces that are unbound by the architecture of the public square.⁵⁸⁷

Hardt and Negri have theorised the subjectivities of contemporary social movements in terms of a ‘multitude’. Yet the multitude can never become a stable political subject like ‘the people’, ‘the masses’ or ‘the working class’. Rather, they argue that ‘if the multitude is to form a body ... it will remain always and necessarily an open, plural composition and never become a unitary whole divided by hierarchical organs’.⁵⁸⁸ Amamiya Karin, in her writing on the No Nukes Plaza action in June

⁵⁸⁶ Judith Butler, ‘Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street’, *Transversal, Eipcp*, September 2011, accessed 19 March 2015, <http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en>.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 189–190.

compared the scene with the *chhimōryō* of Japanese mythology. These are the nebulous spirits and monsters of mountains and rivers, which, Amamiya suggests are able to express their version of the ‘No Nukes’ message in whatever way they like. Japanese mythology inspired freeter activism prior to 3.11, too. Cassegård documents that anti-war activists Oda Masanori and rapper ECD had been inspired to organise the anti-war sound demonstrations by a scene in the horror movie *Yōkai hyaku monogatari* (One Hundred Ghost Stories) where monsters marched out into the street from a run-down old house.⁵⁸⁹ Hardt and Negri suggest that multitude will always refuse to become a stable political body. It remains a living, monstrous flesh which refuses to sacrifice its singularity behind a unifying identity. Nevertheless, the gatherings in the squares demonstrated that singularities can articulate common political desires for democracy. The multitude is the ‘subjectivity that emerges from this dynamic of subjectivity and commonality’.⁵⁹⁰ Yet, despite the importance of individuality and difference in contemporary social movements, it is through coming together in the streets and in the squares that activists have been able to create a space for the collective expression of difference.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the *hiroba* as a tactic in the anti-nuclear movement. Genpatsu Yamero activists sought to create a liberated zone where people could share their thoughts and feelings about nuclear power. In doing so they entered into a dialogue with the history of *hiroba* as a social movement tactic in Shinjuku and contributed to an ongoing discussion about the role of the *hiroba* as a space for democracy in Japan. They did not, however, limit these discussions to the Japanese context. Genpatsu Yamero activists were in contact with activists in the Occupy Wall Street movement and similar urban social movements in Europe and Asia. Their development of the *hiroba* was informed by these global discussions about how to make cities into spaces for radical democratic praxis. The ideal of the *hiroba* was tested, however, by the issue of whether right-wing activists who were opposed to nuclear power would also be permitted to participate in the *hiroba*. Activists also had

⁵⁸⁹ Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan*, 73.

⁵⁹⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 196–202.

to confront the repressive power of the state when activists were arrested at the September Genpatsu Yamero protest. These challenges also provided an opportunity for participants to deepen their debate on how democratic praxis could ‘take place’ in contemporary Tokyo. For some philosophers and activists who were involved in the movement, this led to the development of a notion of the assembly. The notions of assembly and of *yoriai* were marshalled to shed further light on the debate on how to create a truly democratic *hiroba*. These debates highlighted once again the importance of community-building and inter-personal relationships in the democratic praxis of the Genpatsu Yamero movement.

CHAPTER FIVE – YAHŌ VILLAGE

The ‘local’ cannot hold a mass rally or demonstration. If, however, the ‘local’ is a single star then the ‘power of the people’, is the power of many stars shining brightly in various colours. If you then link one star to another, you can make constellations; and constellations cover the whole universe.

Yasuda Hibari⁵⁹¹



Figure 7 Kunitachi demonstration, February 2012⁵⁹²

⁵⁹¹ Yasuda, ‘Gotōchi rōkaru demo dai 3 kai: Minna no NONUKES Nishi Tōkyō [Local Demonstrations No 3: Everybody’s No Nukes Western Tokyo]’, 9.

On Christmas Day in 2011 the ‘We Don’t Need Nuclear Power! Costume!! Disguise!! Christmas Demonstration in Kunitachi’ wound its way through the streets of the western Tokyo municipality of Kunitachi. At the time I was living in Kunitachi at the beginning of an eighteen month research studentship at Hitotsubashi University which is located in the district. I seized the opportunity to observe one of the many local demonstrations which took place during my stay.

The Kunitachi ‘costume’ demonstration was true to its name. About half the participants were dressed in a wide variety of costumes: from a ‘clown army’ with Santa hats and military fatigues to belly-dancers, Mexican Zapatista guerrillas and drummers wearing the Guy Fawkes masks which were made popular in 2011 during the Occupy Wall Street protests.⁵⁹³ The demonstration began in the north of Kunitachi in a park near Yaho railway station. It snaked through the Yaho shopping district before heading along University Avenue towards the main Kunitachi shopping district outside Kunitachi railway station. That evening, the demonstrators reconvened outside the station and marched back up University Avenue to the Yaho area where the protest march culminated in an all-night party at a local bar.

The Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations which I have discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four were the largest protests to take place in the first six months after 3.11. After the eleven arrests at the September 2011 Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Shinjuku, however, Shirōto no Ran did not organise another Genpatsu Yamero action until July 2012. Oguma Eiji records how the mounting pressure on the group caused by the arrests and their almost incessant activity during the six months after 3.11 had left them exhausted. Over the winter of 2011–2012 the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo entered a quiet phase.⁵⁹⁴ Yet while there were no large

⁵⁹² ‘2/5 (nichī) Kunitachi “hōshanō wa iranai! kasō! henshin! setsubun demonsutoreeshon in Kunitachi” - Oni datte okotteru ze!! [2/5 (Sunday) Kunitachi “We Don’t Need No Radiation! Costume! Disguise! Setsubun Demonstration in Kunitachi” - Even the Devils are Angry!!]’, *Izaburogo*, 5 February 2012, accessed 8 April 2015, <http://blog.livedoor.jp/izunute/archives/2752283.html>.

⁵⁹³ The popularity of the Guy Fawkes mask at Occupy Wall Street was actually due to its use in the cult graphic novel and film *V for Vendetta*. See Tamara Lush and Verena Dobnik, ‘Occupy Wall Street: Vendetta Masks Become Symbol Of The Movement’, *Huffington Post* 4 (2011), <http://nolanenglish.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/63678270/Vendetta%20Masks%20Occupy%20Wall%20Street.docx>.

⁵⁹⁴ Oguma, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito*, 215–217.

centralised demonstrations during this period innumerable smaller actions continued to take place across the metropolitan area. The Christmas 2011 demonstration and subsequent actions in Kunitachi were an example of this.

As I explained in Chapter Two, Shirōto no Ran's politics were built upon the notion of the 'place of everyday life' (*seikatsu no ba*). After the first Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in April 2011, however, the focus of the group's activity had shifted from Shirōto no Ran's home in Kōenji to larger urban centres such as Shibuya and Shinjuku. In 2012 many Genpatsu Yamero activists returned to the neighbourhoods where they lived to organise and take part in local actions against nuclear power. The Datsugenpatsu Suginami demonstrations in February and May of 2012, for example, took place in Suginami ward, the municipality which includes Kōenji. They were supported by Matsumoto Hajime and other Shirōto no Ran activists from the area.⁵⁹⁵ Many of the activists who took part in the Kunitachi demonstrations were also involved in Genpatsu Yamero, some in organisational roles. The convenient location of the Kunitachi and Kōenji railway stations on the Chūō railway line readily facilitated the participation of activists based in Kunitachi in the Genpatsu Yamero movement. As political scientist and anti-nuclear activist Kinoshita Chigaya points out, the various neighbourhoods along the Sōbu and Chūō lines⁵⁹⁶ constituted an important axis of anti-nuclear struggle in Tokyo. These neighbourhoods have a long cultural history of non-sectarian protest. Anti-nuclear protests were held at numerous towns along the Sōbu-Chūō line after 3.11⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁵ Kinoshita Chigaya, 'Hangenpatsu demo wa dono yō ni tenkai shita ka [How Did the Anti-nuclear Demonstrations Evolve?]', in *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito: 3.11 kara kantaei mae made* [People Who Stop Nuclear Power Plants: From 3.11 to the Prime Minister's Residence], ed. Oguma Eiji and Kinoshita Chigaya (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2013), 310.

⁵⁹⁶ The Sōbu and Chūō lines are largely coterminous central trunk lines running east-west across Tokyo. The Sōbu line connects Chiba Prefecture to the east of the metropolis with the Chūō line which extends westward through Tokyo's Tama district. Slower, all-stations services run on the Sōbu line while faster, express services run on the Chūō line.

⁵⁹⁷ Kinoshita, 'Hangenpatsu demo wa dono yō ni tenkai shita ka [How Did the Anti-nuclear Demonstrations Evolve?]', 310. Kinoshita draws here on the work of political scientist Hara Takeshi who writes about the cultural geography of political movements in post-war Tokyo in *Reddo arō to sutaabansu-mō hitotsu no sengo shisōshi* [Red Arrow and Star House: Another History of Post-war Thought] (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2012), 392–393. Of course, these activist pathways have their own precedents. Vera Mackie discusses communist writer Nakamoto Takako's account of her activist journeys between the Anpo protests in Tokyo's government district and the western Tama region in 'Embodied Memories, Emotional Geographies: Nakamoto Takako's Diary of the Anpo Struggle', *Japanese Studies* 31, no 3 (1 December 2011): 319–331.

As I have discussed in the previous three chapters, the demonstrations organised by Shirōto no Ran and the Nantoka Neighbourhood emerged from a set of already existing alternative communities in Tokyo which then formed the basis of an anti-nuclear movement after 3.11. Like Genpatsu Yamero, the Kunitachi demonstrations incorporated music, costume, dance and street theatre into their protest repertoire. The demonstrations reflected the growth of the new activist culture in western Tokyo. Kunitachi has a proud tradition of residents' movements (*jūmin undō*) and peace activism.⁵⁹⁸ The anti-nuclear protests I discuss in this chapter, while overlapping with these movements in various ways, were primarily organised by a group of relatively recent migrants to this part of the city. The growing number of precarious workers, artists and musicians in Kunitachi who maintained links to the cultural world of the Sugunami and Nakano ward areas in the inner-city brought the political style of the precarity movements into the mix of Kunitachi's existing grassroots political culture.⁵⁹⁹

The Kunitachi demonstrations were organised at a small bar located near the Yaho railway station. It was to this bar that participants generally returned at the end of the day to drink, eat and 'mingle' (*kōryū*). I begin by discussing the way Kunitachi demonstration organisers conceived of the demonstration as a means not only of political expression but also of community building. I then analyse the way the music of the demonstrations acted as a conduit for the cultural memories of anti-nuclear activism in Japan. The music of the late Imawano Kiyoshirō (1951–2009), a one-time Kunitachi resident, helped local activists to connect with a long history of anti-

⁵⁹⁸ On Kunitachi's residents' movements see, Kadomatsu Narufumi, 'Keikan hogo teki machizukuri to hō no yakuwari: Kunitachi shi manshon funsō o megutte [Community Development for Scenic Preservation and the Role of Law: A Case Study of the Kunitachi High-rise Apartment Dispute]', *Toshi jūtaku gaku [Urban Housing Sciences]* no 38 (2002): 48–57; André Sorensen and Carolin Funck, *Living Cities in Japan: Citizens' Movements, Machizukuri and Local Environments* (Taylor & Francis, 2009), 41–42, 262–264. Kunitachi is located nearby to Sunagawa where, in the 1950s, a major struggle broke out against the expansion of a U.S. military airbase. See Kenji Hasegawa, 'The Lost Half-Decade Revived and Reconfigured: Sunagawa, 1956', *Yokohama Kokuritsu Daigaku Ryūgakusei Sentā Kyōiku Kenkyū Ronshū* 16 (2009): 117–141. Eventually the U.S. airbase was returned to Japan and it has now become a Japanese Self-Defense Forces base. Local residents continue to protest the base to this day and some activists associated with the anti-base movement in Sunagawa became involved in anti-nuclear protests after 3.11. See, for example, the account of one such activist in Oguma, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito*, 152–154.

⁵⁹⁹ Kinoshita, 'Hangenpatsu demo wa dono yō ni tenkai shita ka [How Did the Anti-nuclear Demonstrations Evolve?]', 311.

nuclear struggle. The region's ties to the counter-culture and the anti-nuclear 'new wave' movement of the 1980s were also reflected in the music of the Kunitachi demonstrations. As has been discussed in previous chapters, anti-nuclear activists in Tokyo were well aware of the connections between their struggle and anti-nuclear and democracy movements around the world. I analyse the way Kunitachi activists made these connections explicit through the use of film and song from the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common in England, one of the most important feminist and anti-nuclear movements of the 1980s and 1990s. In the final two sections I discuss the way performance and props were used at the Kunitachi demonstrations. Activists lampooned powerful figures such as the Tokyo Electric Power Company and tried to act out possible alternative futures through street theatre. They also 'gave shape' to these ideas by creating props and costumes which were exhibited at a small gallery in Kunitachi in early 2013. In this chapter I discuss the role of memory and place in the development of anti-nuclear culture in a local community. I show how the 'localisation' of the anti-nuclear movement in this western Tokyo community reflected the politics of the *seikatsu no ba*, the 'place of everyday life' discussed in Chapter Two and how the memories of past protest captured in music and film informed contemporary practices.

Walking for the Future You Desire

In the lead up to the first Kunitachi Demonstration on Christmas Day 2011, protest organisers released the following short statement.

What is the purpose of a demonstration?

There are probably people who think:

'I wonder if you can really say that nuclear power can be stopped by going to a demonstration?'

What might be the purpose of a demonstration?

Demonstrations exist to show one's feeling that 'I do not accept this situation'.

There is no winning or losing here.

There is only your determination.

There is only your body, walking for the future you desire.⁶⁰⁰

In this extract organisers explicitly reject the idea that a demonstration is simply a means by which to effect policy change. Rather, they suggest an understanding of the practice of demonstrating as a collective performance which gives expression to participants' desires for a different kind of future. Like the Shirōto no Ran demonstrations discussed in Chapter Two, these Kunitachi demonstrations proposed a festive, immanent conception of protest. In a sense they would achieve their purpose if participants felt they were able to give vent to their feelings regardless of whether they were successful at stopping the nuclear power plants. Such protests are concerned as much with the constitution of a community as they are with making an intervention into the formal political sphere.

New York-based political philosopher Sabu Kohso draws on Rebecca Solnit's history of walking⁶⁰¹ to highlight the importance of 'walking together'. When the people of the world "walk together" and "fight together", he writes, the space they occupy becomes 'a place of 'projection', 'retrogression' and 'divergence''. Here the direct connection between cause and effect is broken right from the start. Even the dyads 'hope' and 'despair', 'forward' and 'backward' and 'victory' and 'failure' are not simply antagonisms. They are all indispensable elements of the demonstration.⁶⁰²

Like the Committee to Hold the Kunitachi Demonstration, Kohso rejects the simplistic binaries of winning and losing; success and failure. Walking together, he suggests, is a means of embodying the kind of community that participants desire. Implicit in this idea is the rejection of instrumental logic which has been a common feature of the anti-nuclear movements across the industrialised world since the 1980s. Antonio Negri, writing on the anti-nuclear movements of the 1980s, reflects that 'nowadays the centre of struggles for liberation consists in the multiplication of movements and in the daily, on-going effort to eliminate the fear which derives from

⁶⁰⁰ 'Demonsutoreeshon in Kunitachi: Kurisumasu demonsutoreeshon yarō kai kara no messeeji [Demonstration in Kunitachi: A Message from the Committee for Holding the Kunitachi Demonstration]', *Demonsutoreeshon in Kunitachi*, 14 December 2011, accessed 14 May 2014, http://nonukes-kunitachi.blogspot.com.au/2011/12/blog-post_14.html.

⁶⁰¹ Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Viking, 2000).

⁶⁰² Kohso, Atarashii anakizumu no keifugaku, 72.

the logic of nuclear power – and the spontaneous proposal of new modes of existence, in the affirmation of a project of renewal and transformation which is in no circumstance subordinated to a logocentric and instrumental logic’.⁶⁰³

The tactical rejection of logo-centrism and instrumental logic within anti-nuclear movements stands out because the nuclear power industry always appears cloaked in the language of scientific reason. If the anti-nuclear movement is understood as a thoroughgoing movement to ‘de-nuclearise’ (*datsu genpatsu*) society, then the premises upon which that industry is built must be called into question. ‘Walking for the future you desire’ is a projective project. Victory and defeat can be seen as part of a learning process for a logic based on solidarity rather than the authority of expertise. Activists in the precarity movements in Tokyo prior to 3.11 recognised that their ability to affect the formal political sphere was limited. Amamiya Karin, writing about the precarity movements, suggests that the act of demonstrating is its own reward. ‘A bunch of oddballs suddenly turning the street into a liberated area! That is the real pleasure of a demonstration’, she explains.⁶⁰⁴ Such an approach could be interpreted as evidence of a lack of confidence in the power of street politics. Yet activists have attempted to turn their relative weakness in the public sphere around by creating spaces in which to celebrate their marginalised positionality.

Demonstrating in this vein is not about party politics. Rather, it is an assertion of the political nature of the everyday and of the everydayness of political practice. Takemasa Ando explains how, after the Fukushima disaster, ‘people have been thinking about the everyday politics of living an affluent, consumerist lifestyle - urban residents in particular who depend on the generation of power in villages and small towns’.⁶⁰⁵ Mizota Miyuki, one of the organisers of the Kunitachi demonstrations, distributed a flier in the lead up to the Christmas Day demonstration in which he called on his readers to ‘make demonstrating just like pooing and

⁶⁰³ Antonio Negri, *The Politics of Subversion: A Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, UK: Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005), 199.

⁶⁰⁴ Amamiya, Hangeki karuchā: purekariāto no yutaka na sekai, 87.

⁶⁰⁵ Takemasa Ando, *Japan's New Left Movements: Legacies for Civil Society* (London: Routledge, 2013), 2. Ando shows how the politics of the everyday are rooted in the political legacy of the New Left movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

weeing’. He explained this crude expression further by saying that ‘demonstrating is a way of life, an act of expression that is a natural part of daily life’. In this sense ‘it doesn’t differ much from pooing or weeing’.⁶⁰⁶

This call to make demonstrating an everyday activity recalls the discussion between Shirōto no Ran’s Matsumoto Hajime and political philosopher Karatani Kōjin which I discussed in Chapter Two. Here, Matsumoto recalled the peasant rebellions (*ikki*) which have inspired his own understanding of radical politics. ‘The peasant rebellions really had to be carried out over an extremely long time. Sometimes they continued for years. That is when it really becomes integrated into daily life’.⁶⁰⁷ Karatani and Matsumoto agree that demonstrating is powerful because it transforms everyday life, making rebellion a habitual and ordinary state of affairs. Miyadai Shinji has argued that the struggle against nuclear power is really a struggle to transform the kind of society in which the building of nuclear power plants has been made possible.

Mizota’s use of the crude analogy ‘pooing and weeing’ for demonstrating might be understood in terms of the literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin’s observation of the importance of crude folk humour in the folk culture of the marketplaces of mediaeval Europe. In the ‘grotesque realism’ of the marketplace, Bakhtin explains, ‘the bodily element is deeply positive. It is presented not in a private, egotistical form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal, representing all the people’.⁶⁰⁸ Bakhtin contrasts the comedic recognition of the body in grotesque realism with the bourgeois desire to ‘contain the bodily functions in the bourgeois ego’. Rather than being contained within the individualistic bourgeois ego, the ‘material bodily principle is contained not in the biological individual ... but in the

⁶⁰⁶ Kamite Keiko, ‘Gotōchi datsu genpatsu rōkaru demo dai 1 kai: Hōshanō wa iranee! kasō! henshin! demonsutorēshon in Kunitachi [My Local Anti-nuclear Demonstration Number 1: We Don’t Need No Radiation! Costume! Disguise! Demonstration in Kunitachi]’, *Kikan pīpuruzū puran* [People’s Plan Quarterly] no 59 (October 2012): 95.

⁶⁰⁷ Karatani and Matsumoto, ‘Seikatsu to ittaika shita demo wa tezuyoi [Demonstration that are Integrated with Daily Life are Strong]’, 129.

⁶⁰⁸ M. M. Bakhtin, ‘Rabelais and His World’, in *Literary Theory, an Anthology* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), 687–688.

people, a people who are continually growing and renewing'.⁶⁰⁹ Mizota's crudeness upsets middle class sensibilities about appropriate language. He embraces an embodied positionality from which participants might challenge the bourgeois sensibilities which make the dominance of the nuclear village seem ordinary and natural.

In a tight-knit community like Kunitachi, however, engaging in contentious politics poses a risk to an individual's reputation. Kamite Keiko, a participant in the demonstrations, explains why organisers decided to make the Kunitachi demonstrations a costumed affair. Some local mothers, she writes, had spoken to Mizota of their desire to express their anger over the nuclear issue. They were concerned, however, that they might be recognised by other mothers if they were seen attending a demonstration. Thus the idea of a 'Costume and Disguise' (*kasō henshin*) demonstration was born.⁶¹⁰ The difficulties raised by these women suggests that there might be a problem holding demonstrations in a local neighbourhood in which participants already possess strong community ties. Disagreements over political questions might pose a threat to the relationships through local schools, workplaces and families which residents need to maintain in order to continue living in the community.

Based on my experience of observing the Kunitachi demonstrations I find it hard to believe that the costumes would have served as an effective means of disguise. Few of the participants were so well concealed that they could not have been recognised with a cursory glance. Donning costumes does, however, serve as a symbolic marker of separation from everyday life. The use of costume and dance in the Kunitachi demonstrations draws attention to the bodies of the participants but it also masks their individuality, 'turning upside-down' the daily reproduction of an individualistic subjectivity and allowing collective subjectivities to emerge in the rhythms of the carnival. The Kunitachi demonstrations therefore contained a paradox. Organisers

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 688.

⁶¹⁰ Kamite, 'Gotōchi datsu genpatsu rōkaru demo dai 1 kai: Hōshanō wa iranee! kasō! henshin! demonsutorēshon in Kunitachi [My Local Anti-nuclear Demonstration Number 1: We Don't Need No Radiation! Costume! Disguise! Demonstration in Kunitachi]', 94.

wanted to make demonstrating an everyday act ‘like pooing and weeing’. They chose to do so, however, through the medium of carnival – something which implicitly lies outside of everyday experience.

Kamite paints a picture of the Kunitachi demonstrations which embraces both the everyday and the carnivalesque.

People walking while playing drums or guitars, people carrying their own home-made placards, people in costume. Of course, just as there are people walking in their everyday clothes and others who joined in along the way, there are people with their pets.⁶¹¹

Mizota calls for demonstrating to become a part of everyday life but he insists that we have to transform the way we demonstrate in order to make that possible. We have to don costumes and disguises and take a step outside our daily life routines in order to make demonstrating a simple act of daily life. Perhaps this suggests an ‘ordinariness’ that is more open to change, more flexible than the ‘mundane’ repetition which characterises much of everyday life. Mizota further argues that we have to change the way we demonstrate in order to overcome the idea that street politics is boring. Clichéd notions of demonstrations as overly serious and aggressive limit participation. In the flier in which he called on participants to make demonstrating ‘like pooing and weeing’ he also asked participants to re-invent their understanding of what a demonstration is. ‘Please be inventive in your participation and transform (*dai henshin*) the image of a “demonstration” that we have held up until now’, he says.⁶¹²

The sight of the Kunitachi demonstrations passing through the streets of the city and along the long University Avenue lined with cherry and maple trees was not an everyday one. It did, however, bear a strong resemblance to local festivals which also utilise this route. The Kunitachi demonstrations typically commenced at the Yaho end of University Avenue and marched towards Kunitachi railway station. The Yaho Tenmangū Shinto shrine is also located in the Yaho district, a very old settlement

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 95.

⁶¹² Ibid.

which predates the more modern development around Kunitachi station. Cycling down University Avenue one morning at the beginning of the Tenmangū shrine festival I witnessed a parade of priests on horseback, shrine maidens and members of the community riding on large portable shrines. The shrine festival parade reminded me of the Kunitachi demonstrations with their costumes, props and music. I realised that the theatrical style of the demonstrations was not dissimilar to the festive traditions of the Kunitachi area. I also evoked the image of the peasant *ikki*, which were often carried out in the name of religious ritual and used many of the tropes of shrine festivals.

Like the Christmas Day demonstration of 2011 with which I opened this chapter, the Kunitachi demonstrations always took place on or about significant events in the calendar. Organisers made use of both indigenous and imported festival days, creating a new culture of festive anti-nuclear protest which might form a new kind of calendar with strong ties to the seasonal life of the local area. Following the Christmas demonstration in 2011 was a demonstration on the *setsubun*⁶¹³ festival in February. Playing on the *setsubun* ritual, which involves throwing soy beans at a family member dressed as a ‘demon’ and driving him out of the house, this demonstration featured a number of costumed ‘demons’. Emblazoned on the banner at the front of the demonstration was the humorous slogan ‘Hey! Even the Demons are Angry!!’ On April Fool’s Day a group of clowning performers distributed ‘Safe Sweets’ from a fictitious ‘Restart Shop’. When they were unwrapped the packages were found to contain nothing but crumpled paper (I will discuss this prop further below). At the Tanabata Star Festival Demonstration in July a costumed ‘prince’ (*hikoboshi*) and princess (*orihime*) acted out the annual reunion of two celestial lovers which is celebrated in this traditional festival.⁶¹⁴ In October, the Kunitachi demonstration took a Halloween theme while in March 2013 the theme was the Dolls Festival (*hinamatsuri*).

⁶¹³ *Setsubun*, the “bean-throwing festival”, is an old lunar festival in which households enact a ritualistic casting out of demons by throwing soybeans at a family member who is dressed as a demon (*oni*) while chanting “*oni wa soto, fuku wa uchi?*” (“Demons out, good luck in”).

⁶¹⁴ The Tanabata Star Festival is based on the Chinese folktale of two lovers, the Weaver (*orihime*) and the Cowherd (*hikoboshi*), who live on either side of the Milky Way but are forbidden by *orihime*’s father, the Sky King, from meeting. Only once per year, on the seventh night of the seventh month on which the Tanabata Star Festival is held, are the two lovers re-united.

These seasonal themes served to connect the demonstrations with the existing rhythms of the festive year while infusing it with a spirit of resistance and rebellion. The Christmas Day demonstration featured a TEPCO Santa and Setsubun had a number of different coloured ‘demons’. At the Tanabata Star Festival demonstration, activists adapted the Tanabata custom of writing wishes on slips of paper and hanging them on a bamboo frond. Participants wrote out their wishes for a nuclear-free Japan, attached them to bamboo fronds and carried them through the street as part of the procession. At the Halloween demonstration, a cast of ghosts and ghouls broke into an ‘anti-nuclear’ version of Michael Jackson’s hit song ‘Thriller’ as they paraded past Kunitachi station and turned into University Avenue. At the Dolls Festival demonstration two costumed demonstrators played the role of ‘Odairisama’ and ‘Himesama’, the dolls representing the emperor and empress of Japan which are displayed in Japanese homes during this festival.

While the carnivalesque atmosphere of the parades lasted for only a few hours, the demonstration served to connect participants to a ritualised community of the streets. In a sense the demonstration adapted the function of local shrine festivals in consolidating a community through ritual.⁶¹⁵ While local shrine festivals work to preserve the social order, however, the Kunitachi Demonstration aimed to subvert and transform it. They disrupt the soundscape of the capitalist city for a few hours before the bodies of the demonstrators disperse and the sounds of the city return. The seasonal manifestations of the anti-nuclear movement in Kunitachi were one means by which a community of resistance was produced and sustained in the municipality. By adapting the existing rhythms of the festive calendar, the protests sought to invest the seasonal rhythms which punctuate everyday life in Japan with the spirit of protest. While making protest a part of these familiar rhythms activists also sought to call up memories of protest captured in music. In a city with a vibrant music scene the histories and practices of rebel music were another powerful means by which to produce an anti-nuclear community.

⁶¹⁵ Bestor discusses the role of local shrine festivals in maintaining neighbourhood communities in Tokyo in *Neighborhood Tokyo*, 224–255.

Remembering Kiyoshirō

In the centre of Figure 7, a photograph of the ‘*setsubun*’ Kunitachi demonstration in February 2012, are two figures dressed in brightly coloured clothes with skin-tight leggings and white-painted faces. These two protesters paid homage to the memory of the late Imawano Kiyoshirō, Japan’s glamorous ‘King of Rock’, by imitating his garish style of dress. At the April Fool’s Day demonstration later that year, ‘Kiyoshirō’ made another appearance, this time as a man wearing a Kiyoshirō mask and riding a bicycle while wearing a bright yellow shawl. He joined the demonstration as it passed the ‘Tamaranzaka’ area at the end of Kunitachi’s Asahi Street. Kiyoshirō, as he is affectionately known by his fans, grew up in the Kunitachi area. Later in life he lodged in the Tamaranzaka district, a period he commemorated in a song of the same name. Local anti-nuclear protesters, many of whom were active in the region’s underground rock and roll music scene, displayed great pride in the fact that the former rock legend had once lived in their town. They mourned his untimely death in 2009 at the age of just 58 by evoking his memory at the demonstrations.

Kiyoshirō was an important figure for the anti-nuclear movement primarily because of two anti-nuclear songs which he and his band R.C. Succession had recorded for their *Covers* album in 1988.⁶¹⁶ The songs were covers of two classic American songs—Eddie Cochran’s ‘Summertime blues’ and Elvis Presley’s ‘Love me tender’—which he had rewritten with anti-nuclear lyrics. The album was planned for release by the band’s record company Toshiba-EMI. The inclusion of the anti-nuclear songs, however, caused the label to cancel the release of the album.⁶¹⁷ At the time, a Toshiba-EMI spokesperson explained the company’s decision not to release the album by stating that the album was ‘not suitable for Toshiba-EMI to sell’.⁶¹⁸ The record label’s parent company Toshiba, is one of Japan’s largest manufacturers of nuclear reactors. They had built 10 of the 36 nuclear reactors operating in Japan at

⁶¹⁶ RC Sakushon, CD, *COVERS* (Kiti rekōdo, 1988).

⁶¹⁷ Igarashi Daisuke and Nakai Daisuke, ‘Hibiku hangenpatsu rokku [Reverberations of Anti-nuclear Rock]’, *Asahi shimbun*, 27 April 2011, Evening edition.

⁶¹⁸ Thomas Walkom, ‘Japanese Rock Group Loses Recording Contract Are Anti-Nuke Songs Too Hot to Handle’, *The Globe and Mail*, 25 June 1988.

the time the album was recorded. Toshiba-EMI's actions typified the cosy relationship between the nuclear power industry, the electrical appliance industry and the entertainment business.

Covers was subsequently released under a different label and the controversy surrounding the cancellation did nothing to hurt sales. The record debuted at number one in Japan's *Oricon* music charts.⁶¹⁹ After Fukushima, video recordings of R.C. Succession's live performances of these songs began attracting attention on the video sharing site YouTube. Tokyo disc jockey Peter Barakan reportedly received numerous requests to play them on his radio show on InterFM. He played 'Summertime blues' but, after consultation with station management, he did not play 'Love me tender'. In this rendition of Elvis's original song Imawano referenced the contamination of the milk supply after the Chernobyl disaster by singing 'I want to drink milk'. Station management claimed that they did not want to play the song out of a concern that it would create fear about the safety of drinking milk.⁶²⁰ Whatever their motives, the incident demonstrated that more than 20 years after their release, the songs still had the power to ignite controversy and invite censorship from the gatekeepers of the music industry.

Kiyoshirō's example as a popular artist who risked his career in order to speak out against the nuclear industry was an inspiration to many of the artists who intervened in the debate on nuclear power after 3.11. Rocker Saitō Kazuyoshi, whose 'It was always a lie' was discussed in Chapter Two, acknowledges Kiyoshirō as a key inspiration as do rapper Arai Rumi and Kunitachi-based reggae singer Likkle Mai.⁶²¹ Remembering Kiyoshirō and his anti-nuclear music at the Kunitachi demonstration connected the movement against nuclear power in post-Fukushima Japan with a long history of anti-nuclear struggle. Furthermore, the anti-nuclear songs, taken as they are from the great American rock and roll tradition, bring longer histories of

⁶¹⁹ Carolyn S. Stevens, *Japanese Popular Music: Culture, Authenticity and Power*, Media, Culture, and Social Change in Asia Series 9 (Milton Park: Routledge, 2008), 151.

⁶²⁰ Matthew Penney, 'Songs for Fukushima', *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 2 June 2011, accessed 30 September 2014, <http://www.japanfocus.org/events/view/94>.

⁶²¹ For Saitō's comments see, Imai and Saitō, 'Saitō Kazuyoshi rongu intabyū', 34–35. Rumi discusses Kiyoshirō's influence in, Likkle Mai, Rumi, and Futatsugi, 'One Step to Live', 73.

resistance into the cultural world of Tokyo's contemporary anti-nuclear movement. Sociologists Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison have shown how the music of social movements can act as a repository for the memories of protest. In their study of the music of the U.S. Civil Rights movement and of protest music in the 1960s, they showed that songs often outlives the original waves of social protest in which they are created, making the histories of these movements available to future generations.⁶²² Nor is this a simple matter of singing old songs and evoking nostalgic longings about movements past. Like Kiyoshirō, artists typically adapt and modify existing songs, either directly by creating cover-versions or by adapting aspects of earlier musical styles. Like Saitō or Arai they can also adapt their own earlier repertoire to address current political issues. The musical cultures of social movements are 'spaces for cultural growth and experimentation, for the mixing of musical and other artistic genres and for the infusion of new kinds of meaning into music'.⁶²³

The artists who took part in the Kunitachi demonstrations celebrated Kiyoshirō's political stance in numerous ways. The demonstrations in Kunitachi were organised by people who were very active in Tokyo's musical and artistic sub-cultures. The organising committee met in a Yaho bar which hosted weekly concerts featuring underground bands from the area and around the country. Local musicians regularly held intimate concerts at the bar, where they took turns to perform songs from Kiyoshirō's oeuvre. Unlike the 'King of Rock', however, the musicians who were active in the Kunitachi demonstrations were primarily independent artists who were not signed to major labels. Reggae singer Likkle Mai, a local resident who performed at the Kunitachi demonstrations, explained in an interview with Shirōto no Ran's Futatsugi Shin how her independence from the major labels gave her the freedom to speak her mind on the nuclear issue.⁶²⁴ The invocation of Kiyoshirō's memory at demonstrations and at more intimate occasions such as the concerts helped Kunitachi artists to create a popular mythology which legitimated their own positionality as activist-musicians.

⁶²² Eyerman and Jamison, *Music and Social Movements*, 1–2.

⁶²³ Ibid., 1.

⁶²⁴ Likkle Mai, Rumi, and Futatsugi, 'One Step to Live', 97–100.

In an interview with Shirōto no Ran's Futatsugi Shin, Likkle Mai explained how she was influenced by Kiyoshirō as well as figures such as Bob Marley within her own roots reggae tradition. She explained the web of political relationships which sustain the nuclear village using the conceptual language of roots reggae culture.

Nuclear power is being supported by the Babylon system under which large corporations with huge vested interests and some powerful people force these risks onto us ordinary citizens in order to make money.⁶²⁵

The notion of 'Babylon' in reggae and Rastafarian culture refers to the corruption and immorality of Western colonialism and neoliberal capitalism. Marvin Sterling explains that in Japanese reggae culture, the notion of Babylon has been adapted to encompass both notions of the domination of Japan by Western culture and the way Japanese capitalism exploits the poor in Japan and around the world.⁶²⁶ Likkle Mai uses her understanding of the 'Babylon system', derived from roots reggae culture, to develop a critique of the contemporary nuclear industry in Japan.

Like Likkle Mai, Kiyoshirō relied on his own musical roots in the rebellious culture of rock and roll music to produce the critiques of nuclear power on the *Covers* album. Imawano's anti-nuclear cover of 'Summertime blues', pays homage to the original. George Lipsitz explains that the politics of Eddie Cochrane's 'Summertime blues', 'drew a connection between youth, dependency, sexual repression, poverty, and the political impotence of youth'. He argues that the genre of rock and roll music to involve 'a dialogic process of active remembering'. It 'derives its comedic and dramatic tensions from working-class vernacular traditions, and ... carries on a prejudice in favour of community, collectivity, and creativity in its very forms and constructs'.⁶²⁷ By drawing on American rock and roll to communicate his opposition to nuclear power and to the networks of power which sustain the industry, Kiyoshirō

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 73.

⁶²⁶ Marvin Sterling, *Babylon East: Performing Dancehall, Roots Reggae, and Rastafari in Japan* (Duke University Press, 2010), 6.

⁶²⁷ George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 116.

entered into an ongoing dialogue that positions rock and roll as a subversive medium for speaking truth to power and giving expression to the frustrations of oppression.

Cultural sociologist Mōri Yoshitaka has highlighted the importance of culture as a site of politics in social movements around the world since the 1990s.⁶²⁸ He notes that in the cultural politics of recent ‘carnavalesque’ social movements politics has become a ‘war of position’.

This war of position is not a temporary battle over the solution of a specific problem but rather an endless struggle. This struggle develops in the streets, parks, schools and other specific places, as it is controlled and suppressed and subjected inevitably to oppression and surveillance it is scattered and dispersed but, while it goes underground, it somehow manages to live on.⁶²⁹

In the absence of centralised organisational structures or consistent ideological positions, social movements in post-industrial societies reproduce themselves by developing cultural forms, such as rebel music, which are also sometimes taken up by the broader culture. Eyerman and Jamison explain that ‘it is through songs, art and literature—and as ritualized practices and evaluative criteria—that social movements retain their presence in the collective memory in the absence of the particular political platforms and struggles that first brought them into being’.⁶³⁰ The phenomenal chart success of the American rock and roll band Rage Against the Machine in the 1990s, for example, signified the popularity of the ideals behind the alter-globalisation movement. Similarly, the chart success of the *Covers* album suggests that Kiyoshirō’s tackling of political issues such as nuclear power brought the ideas of the mass anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s to a much broader audience. Bringing Kiyoshirō’s music and memory into the Kunitachi demonstrations served to connect these small, local demonstrations with these rebellious musical histories.

Eyerman contrasts this understanding of music as a repository of cultural memory with the way culture is understood in the models of political change rooted in

⁶²⁸ Mōri, Bunka=seiji.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 168.

⁶³⁰ Eyerman and Jamison, *Music and Social Movements*, 10–11.

sociological theories of resource mobilisation and political process theory.⁶³¹ These theories tend to see the cultural forms of social movements as little more than political tools to be utilised instrumentally in order to achieve the clearly-defined goals of rational actors. At best, these theories recognise culture as a ‘frame of meaning’ through which actors understand their activities. Political activists, too, may share the narrow, instrumentalist understandings of culture contained in some sociological theory and see cultural production as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Eyerman argues that we should recognise the intrinsic importance of cultural politics by seeing them as part of the ‘expressive/symbolic dimension’ of social movements which he defines as the ‘spaces/opportunities for political and cultural experimentation and learning’ within movements.

As I will discuss in the next section, instrumentalism within social movement culture was challenged in the 1960s, leading to the innovative cultural and artistic forms of protest which were visible in the Japanese anti-nuclear movement in the 1980s. By invoking the memory of a popular local hero, the Kunitachi demonstrations performed the longer history of anti-nuclear protest in Japan. Music critic Futatsugi Shin suggests that, prior to 3.11 and the re-emergence of Kiyoshirō’s anti-nuclear songs, few young people in Japan were aware of the important role played by musicians in the anti-nuclear ‘new wave’ of the 1980s.⁶³² As a new anti-nuclear movement developed after 3.11, the language of resistance which was developed in earlier waves was re-appropriated and re-purposed. Renditions of Kiyoshirō’s anti-nuclear covers of popular western songs by anti-nuclear protesters helped to construct a cultural imaginary of longstanding and legitimate opposition to nuclear power.

I have already touched on how Bakhtin’s work can help us to read the Kunitachi demonstrations. In his studies of European literature, Bakhtin detected the traces of a

⁶³¹ Ron Eyerman, ‘Music in Movement: Cultural Politics and Old and New Social Movements’, *Qualitative Sociology* 25, no 3 (2002): 445–446.

⁶³² Futatsugi Shin, ‘Ongaku to hangenpatsu demo: tsui ni demo de “saikadō hantai!” to sakenda [Music and the Anti-nuclear Demonstrations: Finally, we Cried out “No Restarts” at the Demonstration]’, in *Datsu genpatsu to demo: soshite, minshubugū [Demonstrations Against Nuclear Power: And Then, Democracy]* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2012), 154.

folk culture of laughter which had bubbled beneath the surface of official culture during the middle ages.⁶³³ Renate Lachmann explains how, for Bakhtin, folk culture is unable to pose a permanent, unified alternative to official culture. Rather, ‘folk culture appears periodically as a culture of laughter by means of an ensemble or rites and symbols, a temporarily existing life-form that enables the carnival to take place’. The culture of laughter offers the prospect of a ‘permanent revolution’ against official authority.⁶³⁴ Eyerman’s conception of the politics of social movements can be compared with this Bakhtinian view. Eyerman values the ‘more invisible aspects [of movements], like those based in collective memories and, more superficially and fleetingly, in networks formed through (sub)cultural symbols and tastes’. The Kunitachi demonstrations can be thought of as a kind of Bakhtinian carnival, an expression of folk resistance to nuclear power and a celebration of the alternative cultural values of opposition to authority. The memory of Kiyoshirō serves to maintain the memory of carnivalesque rebellion across the discontinuities of time and place, providing a way for participants to understand themselves as part of a longer history of resistance to nuclear power. In Kunitachi, that humorous and sometimes grotesque culture is celebrated in the diverse musical sub-cultures which proliferate in the municipality and the broader Tama region. It is to these links between the Kunitachi movements and the festive counter-culture of western Tokyo that I now turn.

Folk, Rock and the Festive Life of Western Tokyo

Kiyoshirō’s music and costume were only one of the ways participants wove cultural memories into their anti-nuclear carnivals. Although the protests were quite small, attracting no more than 150 participants at any one time, these anti-nuclear carnivals contained a kind of bricolage of protest history. For Bakhtin, the mediaeval carnival was ‘the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal’.⁶³⁵ The diverse musical styles present at the demonstration traced the municipality’s political

⁶³³ Bakhtin, ‘Rabelais and His World’, 686.

⁶³⁴ Renate Lachmann, ‘Bakhtin and Carnival: Culture as Counter-Culture’, *Cultural Critique* 11 (1989 1988): 123.

⁶³⁵ Bakhtin, ‘Rabelais and His World’, 686.

and cultural history. The musical traditions of the municipality were central to this ‘feast of becoming, change and renewal’.

The Tama district of western Tokyo is located approximately one hour by train from the central Tokyo districts of Kōenji, Shibuya and Shinjuku where the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations took place. Snaking through the Tama district and giving it its name is the great Tama river, which passes through the district on its journey from the mountains of Okutama to the sea. Parts of the region are still relatively undeveloped. Rice paddies and vegetable plots dotted the banks of the small canal which ran past the house I lived in in the district. This beautiful natural environment attracts artists and musicians. The region is also home to a thriving market in local produce. There were many unmanned stalls where I could purchase fresh vegetables located in easy cycling distance from my house.⁶³⁶ The easy access provided by the Chūō line to live performance venues in the inner city no doubt further added to the appeal of the district for musicians.

Organising meetings for the Kunitachi demonstrations were held in a local Yaho bar and live house which celebrated its 20 year anniversary at the end of 2011. Despite this longstanding connection to the area the owner often jokingly referred to himself as a ‘new resident’ of Kunitachi. While Kunitachi is relatively famous for its active residents’ movements, in this section I discuss the somewhat different lineage of the festive protests organised by the ‘Committee to Hold the Kunitachi Demonstration’.⁶³⁷ The power of these demonstrations derived from their connections to a host of existing networks. These networks embrace music, art, craft and food as well as existing political movements and organisations, all of which found a central gathering point in the demonstration.

⁶³⁶ These unmanned stalls operate on an honour system. The price of the vegetables is indicated and there is a small tin in which one can leave the money. See Cory Doctorow, ‘Tokyo’s “Unmanned Stores” - Honor-System Sheds Where Farmers Sell Their Surplus Produce’, *Boing Boing*, 7 August 2013, accessed 31 May 2015, <http://boingboing.net/2013/08/07/tokyos-unmanned-stores.html>.

⁶³⁷ Kadomatsu, ‘Keikan hogo teki machizukuri to hō no yakuwari: Kunitachi shi manshon funsō o megutte [Community Development for Scenic Preservation and the Role of Law: A Case Study of the Kunitachi High-rise Apartment Dispute]’; Sorensen and Funck, *Living Cities in Japan*, 41–42, 262–264.

The Yaho bar where the meetings took place is named 'Kakekomitei'. The name is taken from the *kakekomi dera* which, in feudal times, provided a refuge for women seeking divorce. The location of the bar in Yaho, not far from the old Kōshūkaidō which connected the capital Edo with the inland city of Kōfu in Tokugawa times, highlights this sense of connection with Japan's folk history. Yet the bar and its philosophy have more recent political origins. On the back of a monthly schedule which lists the bands and other events at Kakekomitei was a short blurb which described the philosophy which underpinned the space. The blurb describes how the bar's owner once worked for the Japan Consumers' Cooperative Union (Seikyō). He provides food whose flavourings and ingredients are produced using organic or low-chemical methods with many of the ingredients being purchased from Seikyō. The menu includes 'simple but healthy food' such as 'brown rice, udon made with local flour and fish and soya bean croquettes'. This description orients the bar owner's philosophy in the Japanese consumer movement.

As Darrell Gene Moen explains, growing concerns about environmental pollution and food safety issues have spurred the development and growth of consumer movements since the 1960s. Seikyō was established in 1951 with the backing of the Japan Communist Party, Japan Socialist Party and leading unions. After the 1970s, however, numerous new consumer cooperatives influenced by the New Left also emerged. There was a growing market for foods which were both safe and whose production benefited the threatened livelihoods of Japanese farmers. Consumer movement organisations have also been active in campaigning around anti-nuclear issues.⁶³⁸ One such movement, the Seikatsu Club (*Seikatsu kurabu*) even formed its own political party, the Citizens Network (*seikatsusha nettowāku*), which has become a political force in some urban municipal councils including Kunitachi.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁸ Darrell Gene Moen, 'Grassroots-Based Organic Foods Distributors, Retailers, and Consumer Cooperatives in Japan: Broadening the Organic Farming Movement', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 32 (2000): 55–76.

⁶³⁹ Carmen Schmidt, 'After the Reform: How Is Japan's Local Democracy?', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 41 (2009): 25–27. Three Citizens Network candidates were elected to the Kunitachi Municipal Council in the April 2011 elections. No Citizens Network candidates were successful in the May 2015 elections, however. See 'Kako ni jisshi sareta senkyo no tōhyō oyobi kaihyō kekkat [Votes Cast in Previous Elections and Ballot Results]', *Kunitachi shi kōshiki bōmu peeji* [Kunitachi City Official Webpage], 20 April 2015, accessed 1 June 2015, <http://www.city.kunitachi.tokyo.jp/senkyo/003599.html>.

Seikyō, like many other consumer co-operatives in Japan, has developed a regime for testing food products for radioactive contaminants.⁶⁴⁰

The text included on the monthly schedule of Kakekomitei promotes the bar's links with the consumer co-operative movements. These movements are, in turn, closely linked to the broader environmental and social movements of the 1980s and 1990s. As a live performance space its connections to the music of the post-1960s counter-culture is even more revealing. A more recent schedule provides another insight into the community which makes up the Kunitachi demonstration. The following list of 'Kakekomitei Keywords' was included in a recent monthly schedule.

Hippie. Reggae. Rock. Film Screening. Aquarium Theatre Group. Harappa Festival. Feminist English Conversation Class. Temple Elementary School. Dameren. No Nukes. Okinawa. 88 Festival of Life. Clown Army. Folk. Student Movement. Yuntaku Takae. Backpacker. Poetry Reading. 'Person with a Disability'. Demonstration. DIY ... etc. In other words, Chaos! Anything is OK! No Violence or Sexual Harassment.

It would be possible to trace the lineage of a number of Japanese political movements which are intimately tied up with the anti-nuclear 'new wave' of the 1980s through these keywords. Here I focus on the words 'Hippie', 'Harappa Festival', 'No Nukes', '88 Festival of Live' and 'Folk'. These words situate Kakekomitei and the Kunitachi anti-nuclear demonstrations in the development of the counter-culture in western Tokyo.

The Festival of Life, which was held in Japan's southern alps in 1988, marked the coming together of Japan's hippie, new age and folk music movements with a growing anti-nuclear consciousness after Chernobyl.⁶⁴¹ It attracted between 6000 and 8000 people over nine days, creating a kind of 'temporary commune' based on the values of the counter-culture. On the inside cover of a commemorative book about the festival published in 1990 is an English language description of the festival.

⁶⁴⁰ 'Shokuhin chū no hōsha sei busshitsu mondai e no Nihon seikyōren no taiō ni tsuite [The Japan Consumer Co-operatives Response to the Problem of Radioactive Contaminants in Food]', *Nihon seikatsu kyōdō kumiai rengōkai [Japanese Consumer Co-operatives Union]*, 23 July 2014, accessed 16 April 2015, <http://jccu.coop/topics/radiation/index.html>.

⁶⁴¹ Futatsugi, 'Ongaku to hangenpatsu demo: tsui ni demo de "saikadō hantai!" to sakenda [Music and the Anti-nuclear Demonstrations: Finally, we Cried out "No Restarts" at the Demonstration]', 154.

One night at a small gathering in a tipi on the slopes of Mt. Yatsugatake the idea for a festival in honour of Gaia: the life of the earth/universe, to be held on the auspicious day of 8/8/88 was born. It would be a festival with music, an all night concert; a 'tribal' campground/village; an outdoor bazaar and restaurants; workshops, symposiums on environmental issues; kids land etc. etc.⁶⁴²

This description evokes the complex interweaving of new-age spirituality, utopian desires and political consciousness which was central to the counter-culture. As Takada Akihiko explains, after the dissolution of the student movement after about 1970 there was a growing trend among those youth who shared the sense of alienation with the student radicals to 'drop-out' from mainstream society. In Japan, as in the United States, communes began to appear which fused hippiedom with Buddhist and Hindu beliefs and values. The counter-culture bore considerable fruit in the fields of drama, music and independent journalism.⁶⁴³ This was the dawn of the post-industrial age, which was already being identified by scholars such as Alain Touraine who studied the student movement in the early 1970s.⁶⁴⁴ The growing chaos in the international situation heralded by the oil price shocks of the early 1970s and a sense that student protest had failed to fundamentally change society led to apathy and ennui among youth. Many such youths joined the counter-culture and challenged the ideals of hard work and economic growth which had been the bedrock of Japan's post-war industrialisation. In the 1980s, the counter-culture embraced a set of beliefs which rejected the ideology of industrial society and embraced the idea that human life and the earth were part of an integrated whole.⁶⁴⁵ These trends can be read in the description of the Festival of Life above. The notion of Gaia, for example, which was popularised in the transnational New Age movement, was a popular symbol of this notion of a conscious connection with the earth.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴² One love jamming, ed., No Nukes one Love: inochi no matsuri '88 Jamming book [No Nukes One Love: Festival of Life '88 Jamming Book] (Purasdo shoten, 1990).

⁶⁴³ Akihiko Takada, 'Contemporary Youth and Youth Culture in Japan', *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* 1, no 1 (1 October 1992): 108–111. The commune movement was an inspiration to the Japanese sociologist Mita Munetsuke whose influential writings under the pseudonym Maki Yūsuke are still popular among intellectuals with an interest in anti-nuclear politics. See Maki, *Kiryū no naru oto: kōkyō suru komyūn* [*The Sound of the Air Flow: The Symphonising Commune*].

⁶⁴⁴ Touraine, *The Post-Industrial Society*.

⁶⁴⁵ Takada, 'Contemporary Youth and Youth Culture in Japan', 112–113.

⁶⁴⁶ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 155–158.

The emergence of the anti-nuclear ‘new wave’ movement in Japan in the 1980s was closely connected to the growth of the counter-culture. In 1988, for example, a series of protest actions were held in Shikoku against the Ikata Nuclear Power Plant. These actions, dubbed ‘Farewell Nuclear Power Memorial Day’, were characterised by the ideas and imagery of the counter-culture. Demonstrators dressed in rabbit and gorilla costumes, beat drums and clapped in time while watching lion dances. This carnivalesque protest style anticipated that of the Genpatsu Yamero and Kunitachi demonstrations.⁶⁴⁷ The spirit of the protests converged in the Festival of Life (*Inochi no matsuri*), which was organised following the demonstrations in Shikoku in August 1988. With its subtitle of ‘No Nukes, One Love’, the event attracted an estimated 8,000 people over 8 days.⁶⁴⁸

The music and values of the counter-culture are alive and well in Kunitachi and the wider Tama region and along the Chūō line. Japan’s first ‘rock café’ was established in Kunitachi’s neighbouring city of Kokubunji in 1968. In Nishiogikubu, half an hour closer to the centre of Tokyo along the Chūō line, a shop called Hobitto Mura (Hobbit Village) was established in 1975 to facilitate the sharing of information within the commune movement which now stretched across the Japanese archipelago from Hokkaido in the north to Okinawa in the far south-west.⁶⁴⁹ Kakekomitei, which was established in 1991, continues this tradition of folk, politics and counter-culture. These values are reflected in the list keywords cited above including ‘hippie’, ‘folk’ and ‘88 Festival of Life’. Similarly, the live house ‘Earth Bar’ near Kunitachi railway station uses counter-cultural images and symbols in their promotional literature and hosts concerts featuring contemporary psychedelic and folk-rock musicians. The ‘Harappa Festival’ mentioned in the keywords is one of a number of outdoor music festivals held in the wider Tama area which keep the counter-culture alive today.

⁶⁴⁷ Suga Hidemi, *Hangenpatsu no shisōshi: reisen kara Fukushima e* [A History of Anti-nuclear thought: From the Cold War to Fukushima] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2012), 277.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., 290–297.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 291–292. As Suga points out, the heady mix of drugs and music in the counter-culture in western Tokyo is encapsulated in the author Murakami Ryū’s Akutagawa prize winning novel *Kagirinaku tōmei ni chikai burū* published in 1976. The novel is available in English as *Almost Transparent Blue*, trans. Nancy Andrew (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1977).

Tsuchikkure is a local band who played regularly at the demonstrations in Kunitachi as well as at larger Genpatsu Yamero and Sayonara Genpatsu demonstrations in central Tokyo. Tsuchikkure is an independent band not signed to a major record label. In their former incarnation Hana to Fenominon, they enjoy a cult status in the festival scene and in the live music circuit in western Tokyo. Performing regularly at Chikyūya, Kakekomitei and other small live houses in the Tama region, members of the group, particularly lead vocalist ‘Hana-chan’, make frequent reference to the anti-nuclear movement and exhort audiences to attend demonstrations and express their anger and frustration about the disaster.⁶⁵⁰ Their music has an idiosyncratic folk-rock style which reflects that of the hippie counter-culture.

Most of Tsuchikkure’s members live and work in the local area and have strong ties to the region. In the 1990s, a number of band members lived in an encampment on the banks of the Tama river. In a special issue of the monthly magazine *Bungei* (Arts) on ‘Street Movements’ published in 1999, Dameren member Ogura Mushitarō interviewed Hana and a fellow riverside dweller. This connection with the Dameren circle, one of the pioneering freeter movement groups which was discussed in Chapter Three, shows the overlapping of political and counter-cultural movements in the 1990s. These longstanding relationships were reflected in the composition of the Kunitachi demonstrations in which many members of the Dameren milieu marched alongside musicians from Tsuchikkure and other folk rock bands. While living on the side of the river in the 1990s, Hana and his fellow campers draw water from a local spring and gathered discarded, out-of-date food from a local supermarket in order to support themselves. At one stage they organised a three-day festival at the encampment which attracted up to 4000 visitors.⁶⁵¹ Along with the obvious influence of the global hippie movement of the 1960s and 1970s, it is tempting to think about the encampment in terms of the Japanese concept of the *kawaramono* (riverside dwellers). During the Middle Ages and into the early modern period, entertainers

⁶⁵⁰ See, for example, the band’s blog, in which they encourage fans to attend the demonstrations. ‘Kunitachi demonsutoreeshon o yarō kai ōen [Support the Committee to Hold the Kunitachi Demonstration]’, Tsuchikkure, 25 February 2013, accessed 11 March 2015, <http://tsuchikkure.blog79.fc2.com/blog-entry-70.html>.

⁶⁵¹ Hana, Tarō, and Ogura Mushitarō, ‘Mainichi ga nichiyōbi, Tamagawa kawara tento seikatsu [Everyday is Sunday, Tent Life on the Banks of the Tama River]’, *Bungei* 38, no 2 (May 1999): 183–187.

often camped on riverbanks as they travelled the country spreading music, news and gossip. After a typhoon and subsequent flooding washed them out, many of the riverside dwellers remained in the area. Kakekomitei, whose name invokes the mediaeval ‘kakekomi dera’ in which travellers and vagrants could spend the night, became a kind of refuge for many of the riverside dwellers who continue to be active in political, musical and artistic activities in the area.

The ecological politics of the ‘new wave’ in the 1980s and the hippie counter-culture play an obvious role in the ideology of the contemporary anti-nuclear movement. One of Tsuchikkure’s signature songs ‘*Inochi kara*’ (From life) celebrates the power of life to create and nurture life. Suga Hidemi argues that a philosophy of ‘life-ism’ (*seimei shugi*) animated the ‘new wave’ of the 1980s. Leading activists in the new wave, such as Ohara Yoshiko, were uninterested in the Cold War ideological divisions which had been a hallmark of Japanese anti-nuclear politics in the 1950s and 1960s. Ohara, like many leading activists in the new wave, was a housewife who rejected the male-dominated politics of earlier social movements. Suga sees the women who led the new wave as a new, more popular manifestation of the feminist politics which had emerged out of the movement for women’s liberation.⁶⁵² This ecological feminism emphasised concepts of nature, life and motherhood.⁶⁵³

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the notion of ‘life’ as a basis for anti-nuclear politics was celebrated by many activists. I attended numerous performances by Tsuchikkure in which the ‘Song of Life’ appeared to function as an ecstatic peak for the emotions building up between audience members and band members during the concert. The song celebrates ‘life’,

There is only one important thing
The joy that exists between different forms of life (*inochi to inochi ga ikiru yorokobi*)

⁶⁵² For a more comprehensive analysis of the feminist politics which underpinned the anti-nuclear ‘new wave’ movement see Wöhr, ‘Gender and Citizenship in the Anti-Nuclear Power Movement in 1970s Japan.’ On the women’s liberation movement in Japan more broadly see Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 144–173; Setsu Shigematsu, *Scream from the Shadows: The Women’s Liberation Movement in Japan* (Univ of Minnesota Press, 2012).

⁶⁵³ Suga, Hangenpatsu no shisōshi: reisen kara Fukushima e, 281–287.

Again, in the chorus, this philosophy of life takes pride of place,

We are born from life (*inochi kara umareta yo*)
We begin with life (*inochi kara hajimaru yo*)

Sabu Kohso has observed the re-emergence of ‘life’ as a basis for politics in the globally connected social movements of the past two decades. He finds evidence of this in the notion of the ‘common’ which underpins many contemporary movements in defence of water, land and air. The notion of the common reflects a growing awareness in environmental movements that all human beings depend upon a set of resources which ought not to be subject to the rule of the market. Kohso writes of how the individual experience of connectedness arises from mutual relationships which are created by ‘body and body, life and life’.⁶⁵⁴ Tsuchikkure’s song about the ‘joy which arises between two living things’ seems to reference a similar understanding of the experience of relatedness.

The use of music, costume and dance at the Kunitachi demonstrations reflected the continuing power of the counter-culture in the Tama region. In Bakhtin’s understanding, folk culture is a kind of subterranean stream which is never subsumed completely within the dominant culture. At the Kunitachi demonstration, traces of the ‘new wave’ anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s, the values of ecofeminism and the continuing power of the counter-culture coalesced. The festive style of the Kunitachi demonstrations resembled that of Genpatsu Yamero but it bore the imprint of the vibrant counter-culture of the Tama region. This was a local demonstration but it was one whose connections extended through time to the legacy of the ‘new wave’ and the counter-culture and across space, drawing transnational connections between their struggle and the anti-nuclear and women’s movement in Europe.

⁶⁵⁴ Kohso, *Atarashii anakizumu no keifugaku*, 167.

Which Side Are You On?

In December 2012, the Committee to Hold the Kunitachi Demonstration held a screening of Beebon Kidron's 1983 documentary *Carry Greenham Home*.⁶⁵⁵ The film records the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, an iconic struggle of the feminist and peace movements in the 1980s and 1990s. In September 1981, a group of women marched from Cardiff in Wales to the Greenham Common United States Air Force base in Berkshire, England. They marched to protest a 1979 NATO decision to deploy U.S. nuclear cruise missiles in Europe. With 100 warheads scheduled to arrive at Greenham, the women demanded a televised debate with the Ministry of Defence over the decision. When this request was not granted they refused to leave and set up an encampment. In 1982, the protesters decided that the camp would be a women-only space. In the following years hundreds of women camped outside the base. The number of supporters often swelled to several thousand. The missiles were removed in 1991 but the encampment remained in place until 2000 when the camp was designated as a memorial site.

The film documents six months in the life of the peace camp, commencing with a 'human chain' action which took place on 12 December 1982 when 30,000 people encircled the base. The film showed the Greenham women's use of creative non-violent direct action. In one scene, for example, the women break into the base singing and proceed to dance on top of the missile silos. Activists at the women's peace camp used music, singing and costume to build their community of protest and to refuse the patriarchal logic of nuclear warfare. In promoting their screening of the film in 2012, the Kunitachi demonstration organisers emphasised the creative tactics employed by the women.

The women suffered a not insignificant amount of violence.
Tragedies happened.
Even so, the women did not give in.
Even while they shouted out 'no' they had fun;
They never forgot their connection with one another.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁵ 'Kunitachi demonsutoreeshon presents Kurisumasu jōeikai [The Kunitachi Demonstration Presents a Christmas Film Screening]', *Demonsutoreeshon in Kunitachi [Demonstration in Kunitachi]*, 20 December 2012, accessed 14 April 2015, http://nonukes-kunitachi.blogspot.jp/2012/12/presents_20.html.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

The December 2012 screening was so successful that a second screening was organised for February 2013. This time the film screening was accompanied by a talk from Kondō Kazuko, a feminist activist and writer who had helped translate the film into Japanese.⁶⁵⁷ In her contribution to the book *Fukushima genpatsu jiko to onna tachi: deai o tsunagu* (Women and the Fukushima Nuclear Accident: Connecting Encounters), Kondō explains that when she first became involved in the anti-nuclear weapons movement in the late 1970s, it was dominated by men.⁶⁵⁸ Kondō notes that women in Japan at that time were increasingly frustrated by their experience of patriarchy not only within the society at large but even within the social movements. The 1970s and 1980s saw a global resurgence of the feminist movement. This was motivated in part by the gender discrimination which many women had experienced within the student and anti-war movements of the 1960s. It was in this context that the women of Greenham decided to make the peace camp a women-only space. *Carry Greenham Home* was shown around the world where it helped to circulate the experience of the Greenham women and create a network of women against nuclear weapons and for peace. In 1984, Hiroko Sumpter, the only Japanese woman known to have lived at the Women's Peace Camp, toured Japan with the film.⁶⁵⁹ The tour, which was organised by Kondō and other women activists, called on women to join the anti-nuclear movement.⁶⁶⁰ Nearly 30 years later, the screenings in Kunitachi showed that the film still had the power to forge transnational commonalities between communities in struggle.

⁶⁵⁷ Jōeikai futatabi! eiga “Guriinamu no onna tachi Carry Greenham Home” jōei kai & tōku [Repeat Film Showing! Screening of the Film “Carry Greenham Home” and Talk], *Demonsutoreeshon in Kunitachi* [Demonstration in Kunitachi], 6 February 2013, accessed 19 March 2015, <http://nonukes-kunitachi.blogspot.com.au/2013/02/carry-greenham-home.html>.

⁶⁵⁸ Kondō Kazuko, ‘Guriinamu no onna tachi kara Fukushima no onna tachi e [From the Women of Greenham to the Women of Fukushima]’, in *Fukushima genpatsu jiko to onna tachi: deai o tsunagu* [The Fukushima Nuclear Accident and Women: Connecting Encounters], ed. Kondō Kazuko, Ōhashi Yukako, and Ōkoshi Kyōko (Nashi no ki sha, 2012), 168–170.

⁶⁵⁹ For a discussion of Hiroko Sumpter and the politics of ethnicity at Greenham see Ulrike Wöhr, ‘Radical Objects: A Photo of Hiroko Sumpter’, *History Workshop Online*, 17 November 2014, accessed 17 April 2015, <http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/radical-objects-a-photo-of-hiro-sumpter>.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 170.

Composing and singing songs was one of the most important cultural practices at Greenham. Well-known feminist musicians such as Peggy Seeger—who composed the song *Carry Greenham Home* which was used as the title track for the film—visited the camp, as did Australian folk singer Judy Small. Following the screenings, members of the Committee to Hold the Kunitachi Demonstration decided to adapt a version of the Greenham song ‘Which side are you on?’ for the March 2013 ‘Dolls Festival’ demonstration. The song was translated by Ochoko, lead singer of local band Kokubunji Experience.⁶⁶¹ Ochoko, along with the lead guitarist of Kokubunji Experience and a number of other demonstration organisers, filmed themselves performing the song while walking down a street in Kunitachi. The film was circulated via YouTube in the lead up to the Dolls Festival demonstration as a means of promoting the event.⁶⁶²

Ochoko did not make a literal translation of the Greenham song. ‘Which side are you on?’ was originally an American union song and was later taken up by the Civil Rights movement. In both these contexts the song was used to target ‘fence-sitters’, people who were seen as members of the working class and later of the black community by protesters and were being asked to join with the movement on the basis of a presumed pre-existing group solidarity. The Greenham version sought to highlight the differences between the protesters and the police.

Which side are you on
 Which side are you on
 are you on the other side from me
 which side are you on?
 Are you on the side of atrocity
 are you on the side of perjury
 are you on the side of misery
 which side are you on?, ...

Later verses highlight the connections between the suppression of the Greenham women, the nuclear arms race and the broader structures of patriarchy. ‘Are you on

⁶⁶¹ ‘Which side are you on? Kunitachi ver. kashi [Which side are you on? Kunitachi version lyrics]’, *Demonsutoreeshon in Kunitachi [Demonstration in Kunitachi]*, 16 February 2013, accessed 14 April 2015, <http://nonukes-kunitachi.blogspot.jp/2013/02/which-side-are-you-on-ver.html>.

⁶⁶² ‘2013.3.3 Hinamatsuri demonsutoreeshon in Kunitachi yokoku Which side are you? [2013.3.3 Dolls Festival Demonstration in Kunitachi Preliminary Announcement Which side are you?]', 25 February 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlXkMqBnevE&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

the side that beats your wife', one line asks, while another says 'are you on the side who calls me cunt'. Kokubunji Experience's version, however, does not ask the listener to choose sides. Instead, it asks the question of what it is that creates divisions between people.

Which side are you on? (repeated 3 times)
You are on that side, I am on this side
Why is it again that we are so divided?
I want to love the world like I love women
I want to protect the world like I protect men

Our two hearts which are currently divided
I walk this road in which they can meet

When you hit me, do you hurt?
When you look away, do you like yourself?
When I attack you, I become smaller
In my small room, I just look at myself

Our two hearts which are currently divided
I walk this road in which they can meet

Do you believe in your truth?
Do you believe in your own words?
Do you believe in my truth?
Do you believe in my words?

Our two hearts which are currently divided
I walk this road in which they can meet

(Repeat first verse)

One blogger described the thinking within the Committee which lay behind this new version.

Originally in the film, it was a song full of sarcasm (*hiniku*) which the women who gathered in opposition to the base sung when they were being forced out by the police (the song which has been sung in many different movements for a long time). After the film screening, someone suggested we compose a version of 'Which side are you on?' which reflected our character (*jibun tachi rashii*). Ochoko had stated that she 'didn't want to make it a song which separated people into enemy and friend.'⁶⁶³

⁶⁶³ 'Which side are you on? Kunitachi version', *Haapii nikki [Haapii's Diary]*, 19 February 2013, accessed 18 April 2015, <http://blog.goo.ne.jp/worldsendsupernova/e/d5925032d2d20b29f328af9a932304c8>.

Of course, while the Greenham version of ‘Which side are you on?’ may have sounded aggressive to the ears of the Kunitachi demonstrators, the purpose of singing at Greenham was very much in the same spirit of creating a feeling of belonging and connectedness among participants.⁶⁶⁴ The song was sung at Greenham when the women were under attack by media crews, police and soldiers, something which the Kunitachi demonstrators have not had to withstand. It may have been a confrontational song, but singing was also seen as a non-violent tactic. Feigenbaum points out that ‘in contrast to shouting or chanting singing is harder to write-off as aggressive or violent, making it highly useful in highly policed and surveyed situations’.⁶⁶⁵ At Greenham, however, while the song was sung in a confrontational mode and directed at police and soldiers, it was really meant as ‘a broader appeal to humanity and our collective belonging to a global community’.⁶⁶⁶

In the section ‘Walking for the Future’ I showed how ‘walking together’ at the Kunitachi demonstration was considered to be more important than the question of whether the protest could bring about immediate policy change. Ochoko’s version suggests a critique of the social divisions upon which the power of the nuclear village depends. This was a common concern for anti-nuclear activists after Fukushima. The lyrics to another popular anti-nuclear song, ‘human Error’ by Kyoto-based band Frying Dutchman highlighted the problem of ‘division’ and ‘separation’ in relation to communities affected by nuclear power.

Power companies get up to a trillion yen (about \$13 billion U.S. dollars) in subsidies from the government to build a nuclear power plant. Once the location is chosen, the power company showers the locals with money. They take the guys to hostess bars and the old people to hot springs. Wine and dine, wine and dine! And they lie to them about the nuclear plant being good for the local economy. They actually have a manual on how to use money to divide the community into supporters and opponents.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁴ Anna Feigenbaum, ‘Tactics and Technology: Cultural Resistance at the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp’ (doctoral dissertation, McGill University, 2008), 235–253; Anna Feigenbaum, “‘Now I’m a Happy Dyke!’: Creating Collective Identity and Queer Community in Greenham Women’s Songs’, *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 22, no 4 (2010): 367–368.

⁶⁶⁵ Feigenbaum, ‘Tactics and Technology’, 252.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁶⁶⁷ ‘humanERROR Lyrics’, *frying dutchman Official Website*, accessed 18 April 2015, <http://fryingdutchman.jp/lyric.php>.

Organisers were already concerned about the possibility that people would not want to participate in the demonstration due to the social pressure they might experience from other community members. The motivations behind the song reveal the Kunitachi demonstration organisers' concern with building community consensus around the anti-nuclear issue and overcoming division. Ochoko and the Kunitachi demonstration organisers created a song which would not exacerbate the existing divisions within the community over the issue of nuclear power. Rather, the song called attention to the way the issue of nuclear power was being used as a form of 'divide and rule'. The chorus line in particular spoke to the notion of 'walking together' which I discussed above. 'Our two hearts which are currently divided / I walk this road in which they can meet'. The song opens up the possibility that even though we may share different views it is possible to find a common ground by 'walking together'. Similarly, while the original song expressed righteous (and justifiable) anger towards the police, the military and patriarchal violence, the Kunitachi version tries to find a way through the division between abuser and abused. The song highlights the structural nature of this relationship. 'When you hit me, do you hurt? / When you look away, do you like yourself?'

Feigenbaum raises concerns over the way Greenham songs have been adapted for mixed-gender groups while neglecting the 'gendered political economic context in which they emerged'. It might be argued that the Kunitachi version of 'Which side are you on?' misinterprets the feminist politics of the Greenham song by attempting to smooth over the gendered social divisions it highlighted in the name of community unity.⁶⁶⁸ It is important to remember, however, that the re-writing of 'Which side are you on?' took place in the context of two screenings of the *Carry Greenham Home* film and extensive discussions between activists on the gender politics of Greenham and the contemporary anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo. Ochoko's lyrics contain their own commentary on the politics of gendered violence. They speak to an understanding of violence as damaging to both victims and perpetrators.

⁶⁶⁸ Feigenbaum, "'Now I'm a Happy Dyke!'", 378.

As Anne Feigenbaum points out, Greenham songs ‘travelled through the larger Greenham network, [where] they helped to create and shape a movement culture that extended far beyond the military base’.⁶⁶⁹ Like the screenings of the film *Carry Greenham Home*, which took place around the world, the songs carried the experiences of the Greenham women across spatial and temporal boundaries. Yet, as I discussed above with regard to Kiyoshirō’s music, for forms of cultural resistance to remain relevant, activists have to interpret historical memories and cultural artefacts through the lens of their own concerns. For Ochoko and the Kunitachi demonstrators, ‘Which side are you on?’ provoked a debate about the merits of dividing people based on their view of nuclear power. Forcing people to choose sides might actually work against the inclusion of the whole community in an anti-nuclear movement. The Kunitachi demonstration organisers paid tribute to the Greenham women’s struggle by adapting their legacy for today’s needs.

In this section I have highlighted the way the history and memory of struggle is performed in the Kunitachi demonstrations. Kondō emphasises the way the showing of *Carry Greenham Home* helped create a global network of women for peace and against nuclear weapons in the 1980s. The screening of the film in Kunitachi, the inclusion of Kondō as a speaker and the attempt to translate the Greenham experience in a way which spoke to the concerns of the Kunitachi demonstrators revealed the powerful role cultural memory plays in the construction of the contemporary anti-nuclear struggle. Like the previous two sections, this one has discussed the important role played by music and musicians in the Kunitachi demonstrations. I now turn to the medium of street theatre to explore another tactic in the repertoire of protest in Kunitachi.

Graduation

Carnavalesque demonstrations are a means of intervening in the everyday life of the city. They transform the urban environment into a theatre of protest, making irregular use of streets and plazas, which are usually coded as places of consumption, and turning them into places for politics. The tactical transformation of urban space into a

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 368.

site for the performance of protest can be traced to the protest movements and avant-garde theatre practices of the 1960s. Peter Eckersall has shown how the urban environment in the 1960s became ‘accessible as an active agent in radical performance and no longer simply an environment in which performance, radical or otherwise, occurred’.⁶⁷⁰ The Kunitachi demonstrations developed a similar tactical use of theatrical performance to turn the streets of the municipality into a theatre of protest.

Some of these were short skits directly related to the festive ‘themes’ of the demonstrations. During the Star Festival demonstration, for example, a mime based on the legend of the Tanabata Star Festival took place on a pedestrian overpass on University Street as the main body of the demonstration passed underneath. The Tanabata Star Festival celebrates the meeting of two lovers, the deities Orihime and Hikoboshi. The lovers are separated by the Milky Way but once a year, on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, they are reunited. During the mime, two costumed performers playing Orihime and Hikoboshi emerged from opposite sides of the overpass to the tune of Whitney Houston’s ‘And I will always love you’. They performed a short dance before finally embracing to the cheers of the crowd below. This skit did not appear to have any particular connection with the anti-nuclear theme. Other skits, however, involved cleverly constructed parodies which spoke directly to the nuclear issue.

At the April Fool’s Day demonstration in April 2012 a ‘Graduation From Nuclear Power Ceremony’—a short piece of street theatre lasting just under five minutes—took place prior to the commencement of the protest march.⁶⁷¹ In order to set the scene for the ‘ceremony’, performers held a red and white banner at the back of the performance space on the grassy verge next to University Avenue. The red and white banner (*kōhaku maku*) is a ubiquitous symbol of celebration used at school graduation ceremonies in Japan. In the centre of the banner was a long sheet of rice

⁶⁷⁰ Eckersall, *Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan: City, Body, Memory*, 6.

⁶⁷¹ A video of the performance is available on Youtube, see Akiyama Rio, ‘Genpatsu sotsugyō shiki - Kunitachi demonsutorēshon yarō kai [Nuclear Power Graduation Ceremony - Committee to Hold the Kunitachi Demonstration]’, 1 April 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-017RQv_heA.

paper brushed with the words ‘*genpatsu sotsugyōshiki*’ (‘Nuclear Power Graduation Ceremony’). Like the red and white banner, a piece of calligraphy like this, with characteristic bold and unambiguous brushstrokes, lends a sense of gravity to graduation ceremonies in Japan.

The skit commenced when a winged master of ceremonies took to the stage in front of the banner. The bright pink of her clown wig and loudhailer provided a brilliant contrast with the formalism of the backdrop. A further juxtaposition was the sash (*tasuki*) worn by the master of ceremonies which was inscribed with the phrase ‘no nukes’ (‘*genpatsu iranai*’). *Tasuki* are not a usual part of the graduation ceremony format. They are more typically worn by politicians on the campaign trail, awarded to the winners of contests or used in the entertainment and sales industries. The master of ceremonies spoke in the highly polite, respectful Japanese known as *keigo* which is used on formal occasions as she called on the ‘guests’ to take their position to the side of the ceremonial ground. With this assortment of mismatched symbols the stage was set for a mockery of the traditional graduation ceremony.

Bakhtin understood the function of the mediaeval European carnival in terms of the ‘turn-about’, the inversion of existing social hierarchies and structures.

The experience [of the carnival] opposed to all that was ready-made and completed, to all pretence at immutability, sought a dynamic expression; it demanded ever changing, playful, undefined forms. All the symbols of the carnival idiom are filled with the pathos of change and renewal, with the sense of the gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities. We find here a characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the ‘inside-out’ (*à l'envers*), of the ‘turn-about’, of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings.⁶⁷²

The ‘Nuclear Power Graduation Ceremony’ involved many of these elements. The juxtaposition of the formal decoration of the ceremonial ground with its *kōhaku maku* banner and calligraphy with the master of ceremonies’ outrageous pink wig created an environment which invited viewers to suspend their disbelief and enter into an alternative reality where nuclear power might already be over. As the

⁶⁷² Bakhtin, ‘Rabelais and His World’, 687.

performance continued, the peculiar logic of the ‘turn-about’ deepened as fantastical and contradictory elements continued to appear on stage.

The ‘guests’, who lined up on one side of the ceremonial ground, each had a sign pinned to the front of their clothes indicating the name of one of the regional power utilities which operates nuclear reactors. The Tokyo Electric Power Company was represented by a man dressed as the marionette Pinocchio. A ‘political fixer’ dressed in a dark suit literally ‘held the strings’ which were attached to TEPCO Pinocchio’s body. The master of ceremonies summoned the ‘Kunitachi Demonstration School Principal’ who moved to the centre of the performance space. He was dressed in the formal black tail coat which is still favoured by school principals in Japan on ceremonial occasions. The performer ‘uncrowned’ the authority figure he was playing, however, by complementing the formal tails with a rainbow coloured helmet and a pair of *jikatabi*, the split-toed heavy cloth shoes worn by tradespeople in Japan. The helmet, which resembled those employed by student radicals during the university struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, inevitably conjures up the violent student protests of the period. In his *Zenkyōto Graffiti*, former Red Army member and journalist Takazawa Kōji includes a picture of 16 different helmets favoured by the various sects involved in the demonstrations. These helmets served to differentiate and divide activists along ideological lines into clearly identifiable groups. Yet the helmets, which originally served to protect the head during skirmishes with the police, increasingly came to be used as a means of self-expression. Students would paint their helmets with a variety of different colours and inscribe them with the names of sects to which they were affiliated.⁶⁷³ The sense of division which was implicit in the colouring of helmets along ideological lines is completely ‘turned upside down’ by the burst of rainbow colours that appears on the principle’s helmet in this performance. We can see the influence of the counter-cultural movements which sprung up in the late 1960s, many of which turned away from the violence of student protest and embraced the values of love, connection with nature and a rejection of the urban rat race. The helmet also recalled Imawano

⁶⁷³ Takazawa Kōji, *Zenkyōtō Guraffiti* (Tokyo: Shinsensha, 1990), 104–105.

Kiyoshirō's side project *Taimaazu* (Timers) whose members performed wearing this style of helmet decorated in outrageous styles.

When the 'principal' summoned 'TEPCO Pinocchio' to receive his 'Graduation Certificate' the marionette resisted going to the centre of the stage. This provided an opportunity for spectators to become participants by pushing and pulling him into position. He continued to defy the 'principal', calling out 'I don't want to graduate'. After some time he reluctantly agreed. As he said the words, 'I will graduate', however, 'Pinocchio' tugged on his nose which was cleverly designed to extend in imitation of the puppet in the original story. People from the audience took the cue and called out 'hey, his nose is getting longer. He must be telling a lie'. The principal then gave TEPCO Pinocchio a stern scolding. 'Hey, you don't even have one reactor in operation' he pointed out, confronting 'TEPCO' with the fact that the last of the company's functioning nuclear reactors had gone offline a few days earlier on 26 March. Finally, a contrite Pinocchio agreed to graduate from nuclear power. The performer retracted his nose and bowed before the principal in supplication. He was then issued with the 'Graduation Certificate' which he held up proudly before the crowd who applaud loudly.

Following TEPCO-Pinocchio's acceptance of the inevitability of 'graduating' from nuclear power, the master of ceremonies called on the crowd to sing the song 'Glow of TEPCO'. This was a parody of the popular song 'Glow of a Firefly' (*Hotaru no hikari*) by Chikai Inagaki which was written during the Meiji period. The song, which is sung to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*, is often used during graduation ceremonies in Japan. It celebrates an industrious student who has endured great hardship in the pursuit of knowledge and the service of his country. 'Glow of TEPCO', which was written for the Kunitachi performance, describes instead the 'glow of TEPCO' and the lies and deceit which the company deployed when that light was extinguished in the 3.11 disaster. The song also contained a line asking that the Tomari nuclear power plant in Hokkaido, the last nuclear power plant which remained in operation at the time of the April Fool's Day demonstration, be stopped. The whole crowd joined in the singing using song sheets which had been distributed prior to the performance.

This theatrical display provided some entertainment to the marchers as they gathered outside Hitotsubashi University and waited for the march to commence. It was also a powerful subversion of the traditional graduation ceremony. Peter Eckersall, drawing on the work of anthropologist Victor Turner,⁶⁷⁴ explains how ritual begins through a process of separation from the daily world through means which may include ceremony. ‘Ritual’, Eckersall observes, is ‘a liminal activity that crosses a threshold into another dimension of human experience’.⁶⁷⁵ He explains that, for Turner,

rituals are alternative playful spaces or scenes where taboos can be expressed, crises enacted, and problems resolved. Such an idea is a therapeutic one, comparable to the ancient idea of theatrical catharsis that likewise features a temporary suspension of classical norms only to conclude with the restoration of a given ‘natural’ order. Turner understands ritual as an almost bacchanalian form of collective social behaviour that temporarily enables a place for generally unacceptable activity.

Yet for Turner, as Eckersall goes on to explain, the opening of ritual space is premised on an eventual return to the established order. What happens, Eckersall asks, ‘what if the return promised in Turner's theory is forever pending and undecided?’⁶⁷⁶

Turner argued that ritual creates a separation from the everyday social world which facilitates transgressive behaviour. Turner believed, however, that once the ritual is complete that the social order is restored. As Peter Eckersall explains, ‘the point for Turner ... is that ritual space, like classical drama, is a temporary suspension of order’.⁶⁷⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin also recognised these limits to the carnival as a means of actually changing the social order. Yet, as Lachmann explains, he recognised that the power of carnivalesque ritual was not in directly overturning the social order but in revealing and reinforcing the potential for an alternative mode of being.

In the carnival, dogma, hegemony, and authority are dispersed through ridicule and laughter. In their stead, change and crisis, which for Bakhtin constitute the primary

⁶⁷⁴ Victor W. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

⁶⁷⁵ Eckersall, *Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan: City, Body, Memory*, 21.

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

factors of life and which represent the consequences of the primordial life/death opposition, become the theme of the laugh act. The spectacle staged by carnivalesque rituals is not actually directed against institutions, whose functions and forms are only usurped for a temporary period of time, but rather against the loss of utopian potential brought about by dogma and authority. The festival, however, which is not aimed at work and production and which produces only itself, also releases this utopian potential.⁶⁷⁸

Eckersall's discussion of the street theatre of 1960s avant-garde performance group *Zero Jigen* (Zero Dimension) suggests a reading of political street theatre as play. Zero Jigen's work, he explains,

is finally about direct action with the aim of making disturbances. The work has no meaning unless the act of participation, as performers or audience members giving themselves over to the ritualised qualities of ambiguity and play, is taken into account. In this way the repetitious nature of Zero Jigen's work iterates a physical transformation of the political landscape of the 1960s. The naked bodies solemnise the performative nature of ritual, but the profane misperformance of this also counters tendencies towards imperialist and spectacular ritual sanctification'.⁶⁷⁹

The performative rituals at the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations served to bind the participants together through a cathartic experiences. Yet they also went beyond this, suggesting through the 'turn-about' that the power of the nuclear village could indeed be checked. Furthermore, in organising these performances, activists focused immense energy on bringing into being the kinds of utopian possibilities they imagined. By creating costumes and props these desires literally 'took shape' in ways which would then be photographed, given away and exhibited to continue the spirit of the performances long after they had taken place.

The Shape of Resistance

Many of the props and costumes utilised in these theatrical demonstrations were exhibited at a small bar in Kunitachi in February 2013 as part of the Shape of Resistance Exhibition (*Teikō no katachi ten*).⁶⁸⁰ A short blurb from the flier which advertised the exhibition explained the motivation behind the exhibition.

⁶⁷⁸ Lachmann, 'Bakhtin and Carnival: Culture as Counter-Culture', 130.

⁶⁷⁹ Eckersall, *Performativity and Event in 1960s Japan: City, Body, Memory*, 36.

⁶⁸⁰ 'Teikō No Katachi Ten [The Shape of Resistance Exhibition]', *Kaigyaku No Kobeya [The Closet of Jest]*, 14 February 2013, accessed 23 April 2015, <http://asobisenn.blogspot.com.au/2013/02/blog-post.html>.

Since 3.11 the year before last, the absurdity of society has become evident
People have begun to raise their voices in resistance.
The number of people who are beginning their own experiments in a unique
resistance which is different from that which has come before has increased.
Kunitachi has become one hypocentre of this trend.
With the contemporaneous (*dōjidai*) art which activists have made with their own
hands
At a snap collaborative ‘Shape of Resistance Exhibition’ in a place for expression
which is known as a public place (*kōkyō kūkan*)
We want to show the various ‘forms’ (*katachi*) of resisting this warped society.

This framing of the exhibition poses a number of questions about how social phenomena ‘take shape’. The ‘absurdity’ of society (*shakai no fujōri*) posited here, for example, is said to have ‘become evident’ (*kenzai ka*) after 3.11. The word *kenzai* has the sense of something which is visible as opposed to being hidden or obscured. The implication is that society was already absurd but that this absurdity has become much more visible. As I have discussed throughout this dissertation, the notion that the Fukushima reactor had exposed the existing fault lines in Japan’s post-industrial society was widely shared by activists and commentators. This exhibition considered the ‘shape’ (*katachi*) of resistance to these deep social inequalities from the point of view of activist art practice.

The exhibition featured a wide variety of artefacts from the Kunitachi demonstrations. These included copies of the lyrics of parody songs composed for the Christmas Demonstration in 2011 and costumes from the various themed demonstrations. One wall in the exhibition space was covered in photographs of the demonstrations. In addition to artefacts from the Kunitachi demonstrations, the exhibition featured objects assembled from other anti-nuclear movements in Japan and even badges from various global resistance movements. In one corner of the exhibition was a series of objects relating to the environmental movement pioneer Tanaka Shōzō. Tanaka was a former samurai who was an advocate for the farmers and other members of his native village who were the victims of pollution from the nearby Ashio copper mine.⁶⁸¹ 2013 was the 100th anniversary of Tanaka’s death. The blog for the exhibition described Tanaka as the ‘symbol of resistance in Japan’. The displayed

⁶⁸¹ For a biography of Tanaka see Kenneth Strong, *Ox Against the Storm: A Biography of Tanaka Shōzō – Japan’s Conservationist Pioneer* (Folkestone: Japan Library, 1995).

objects were on loan from ‘a famous grandmother who has been very active in social movements in Kunitachi for many years’. Placing these objects alongside one another in the tiny gallery space at the bar created a kind of three dimensional map of the ‘shape of resistance’ in contemporary Kunitachi, a map which stretched back in time to the origins of the environmental movement in Japan and outward to incorporate global struggles.⁶⁸²

In one corner of the gallery space was an exhibition of objects and costumes from a performance which took place during the April Fool’s Day demonstration in Kunitachi in 2012. The performance was the work of the Tokyo Clown Army, a group of predominantly Kunitachi-based activists and artists who staged frequent performances during a number of anti-nuclear demonstrations in Tokyo. Clowning as a protest tactic has become increasingly popular in European social movements since the mid-2000s. Perhaps the best known clowning group is the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA) which was founded in November 2003 during the anti-Iraq war movement.⁶⁸³ The Clown Army TKO was formed in Tokyo in late 2010 following a visit by a group of European clowns.⁶⁸⁴ A year later the group were holding their own three-day workshops at Kakekomitei in Kunitachi to teach rebel clowning skills.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸² A relatively complete “catalogue” of the exhibits is available on this blog post, “‘Teikō no katachi ten’ o oete [‘The Shape of Resistance Exhibition’ Draws to an End]’, *Kaigyaku no kobeya* [The Closet of Jests], 27 February 2013, accessed 9 October 2014, http://asobisenn.blogspot.com.au/2013/02/blog-post_27.html.

⁶⁸³ Paul Routledge, ‘Sensuous Solidarities: Emotion, Politics and Performance in the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army’, *Antipode* 44, no 2 (1 March 2012): 429.

⁶⁸⁴ For details of these events see ‘2wheels4change No Jitensha Kyōshitsu [Bicycle Workshop With 2wheels4change]’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 15 November 2010, accessed 2 June 2015, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2010/11/2wheels4changes.html>; ‘Anarchist Christmas Parade & Party in Kunitachi’, *IRREGULAR RHYTHM ASYLUM*, 28 December 2010, accessed 2 June 2015, <http://irregularrhythmasylum.blogspot.com.au/2010/12/anarchist-christmas-parade-party-in.html>.

⁶⁸⁵ ‘Dai san kai kuraunāmii wākushoppu sankasha boshū [Call for Participants in the Third Clown Army Workshop]’, *clownarmy TKO*, 21 November 2011, accessed 26 May 2014, <http://clownarmy-tko.blogspot.com.au/2011/11/blog-post.html>.



Figure 8 Packaged ‘Famous Cakes’ from the Shape of Resistance Exhibition.⁶⁸⁶

During the April Fool’s Day demonstration in Kunitachi, the Clown Army group mingled with the crowd on the footpath next to the street in which the main protest march was taking place. There they distributed the mock *meika* (famous cakes) depicted in Figure 8. ‘Famous cakes’ are a class of regional specialty products which are marketed to tourists. The cakes had names like ‘Fuku ichi’ (an abbreviation of the **Fukushima Daiichi** Nuclear Power Plant), ‘Anzen shinwa’ (myth of safety) and *merutodaun* (meltdown). They bore logos and images such as the TEPCO logo, the international radiation symbol and a picture of the devastated landscape of a nuclear fallout zone. The cakes bore the maker’s mark of the fictional manufacturer ‘Genpatsu saikadō’. This is another play on words wherein the suffix ‘dō’, meaning hall but typically used as a grandiose description by large shops of their business, with the phrase ‘restart nuclear power plants’ (*genpatsu saikadō*). On the back of the packages was an ‘ingredient and nutrition information’ label which listed fictional

⁶⁸⁶ ‘Meika “saikadō”: seizō manyuaru no daikōkai [‘Saikadō’ Famous Cakes: Big Opening of the Production Manual]’, *clownarmy TKO*, 19 June 2013, accessed 11 June 2015, http://clownarmy-tko.blogspot.com.au/2013/06/blog-post_19.html.

ingredients such as iodine, caesium, plutonium and strontium. The expiration date for these long-lasting delicacies referred to the half-life of many radioactive elements: ‘they will lose half their flavour in 24,000 years’. The seller was listed as ‘the nuclear village’.

Members of the clown army wove in and out of the demonstration proper, distributing these ‘packaged cakes’ to bystanders and people carrying out their weekend shopping in Kunitachi. With their brightly coloured costumes they were clearly part of the march but by moving in and out and giving passers-by a small token they attempted to disrupt the border between the demonstration and those observing it from the footpath. In a video of the march a young family closely examines the ingredient list of the ‘cake’ they have been given by one of the members.⁶⁸⁷ Attempting to spread the action further, the group even included a ‘how to make Saikadō Famous Sweets’ manual on their website complete with detailed instructions for folding the packages and printing the designs. The manual is accompanied by an encouragement to ‘make lots of them and give them away as presents and souvenirs to people who work for electric power companies and government officials’.⁶⁸⁸ Street theatre, as Brown and Pickerill observe, ‘is used to transcend activist boundaries and create common ground between activists and audiences’.⁶⁸⁹

As the Tokyo group explains on its website, clowning as a protest tactic involves fighting the forms of authority and power which emerge in all kinds of relationships ‘non-violently with humour, pathos, [and] silly actions as our weapons’.⁶⁹⁰ The notion that ‘authority and power’ (*ken’i ya kenryoku*) are located not only in the external ‘nuclear village’ which has been the anti-nuclear movement’s main target but in ‘various relationships’ (*samazama na kankei*) helps explain why for clowns a

⁶⁸⁷ See the scene at 1:53 in ‘4.1 datsu genpatsu demo ’eipuriru fūru demonsutorēshon in Kunitachi [4.1 No Nukes Demonstration “April Fool”s Demonstration in Kunitachi]’, 2 April 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDwT70GfzI&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

⁶⁸⁸ ‘Meika “saikadō”: seizō manyuaru no daikōkai’.

⁶⁸⁹ Gavin Brown and Jenny Pickerill, ‘Space for Emotion in the Spaces of Activism’, *Emotion, Space and Society* 2, no 1 (July 2009): 28.

⁶⁹⁰ ‘Dai san kai kuraunāmii wākushoppu sankasha boshū.’

performative intervention in the performance space itself is important. As I discussed in relation to the Kunitachi version of ‘Which side are you on?’, activists questioned the dominant modes of social relationship which they associated with the undemocratic nature of the nuclear industry. The notion that the relationships of domination are reproduced within movements themselves underpins much of contemporary anarchist thinking in the global justice movements. Hence, for clowns, it is not only an instrumental goal of policy change but an immanent transformation of the relationships between people in urban space that is important.

Clowning practices such as this not only aim to blur the boundaries between demonstrators and participants but also to smooth over possible tensions with police. Clowning is one way of de-escalating relationships between protesters and police. By imitating policemen, clowns can mock these authority figures in a humorous manner, exorcising some of the tensions in the crowd without the use of violence. Clowns nevertheless take their mockery of authority figures to the edge of what is permissible. At a Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Shinjuku in July 2012, for example, I watched the Clown Army group dressed in police uniforms line up alongside the police. They imitated the stance and actions of the police perfectly, no doubt causing a degree of irritation for the police involved. As in the Graduation Ceremony performance, these clowning actions seem to invite a comparison with Bakhtin’s ideas of carnival.

In the carnivalesque game of inverting official values [Bakhtin] sees the anticipation of another, utopian world in which anti-hierarchism, relativity of values, questioning of authority, openness, joyous anarchy, and the ridiculing of dogmas hold sway, a world in which syncretism and a myriad of differing perspectives are permitted.⁶⁹¹

The display of these ‘famous cakes’ at the Shape of Resistance Exhibition invited viewers to recollect and reflect on the protests. Objects produce connections between diverse movement experiences, outlasting the transitory street demonstrations and becoming memory objects which evoke the demonstration long after it has passed. Tamura Takanori has discussed how anti-nuclear activists order their memories by collecting artefacts from demonstrations.

⁶⁹¹ Lachmann, ‘Bakhtin and Carnival: Culture as Counter-Culture’, 118.

Stickers and fliers, voluntarily designed by artists, were not only the expression of protests but also mnemonics for participants to order their memories and create an internally consistent timeline through which they can reflexively create their own identity.⁶⁹²

Placing these objects alongside artefacts of historical social movements in Japan and of contemporary social movements outside the archipelago suggested that resistance ‘takes shape’ across time and space.

Among the exhibits was a ‘Mysterious Okinawa Rail Man’ costume. The Okinawa Rail is an almost flightless bird which is found in the Yanbaru forest of northern Okinawa. The bird’s habitat is threatened by the construction of military helipads at the U.S. Marine Northern Training Area in the region of Takae village in Higashi Son.⁶⁹³ The ‘superhero’ style costume is an example of how the bird has become a symbol of the local resistance to the military base construction. The exhibition website explains that the costume was on loan from an anti-base activist to increase awareness of the struggle going on in Takae village.⁶⁹⁴ Many activists in Kunitachi are involved in the struggle in this remote corner of northern Okinawa. Fundraising concerts have been held at local live music venues, for example, and many local activists have travelled to Okinawa to take part in the residents’ 24-hour sit-in protest outside the construction site. Locating the Okinawan Rail beside Tanaka Shōzō and the famous cakes gives shape to a complex pattern of resistance in modern Japan.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the tactics of an anti-nuclear protest group located in the municipality of Kunitachi in Tokyo’s western Tama region. Like Shirōto no Ran, it is not possible to draw clear boundaries around the Committee to Hold the

⁶⁹² Tamura, ‘The Internet and Personal Narratives in the Post-Disaster Anti-Nuclear Movement’.

⁶⁹³ For a detailed anthropological study of the sit-in protest camp see Mori Keisuke, ‘Hikettei sei kūkan no kenryoku chizu: Okinawa ken Higashi mura Takae ni okeru beigun kichi kensetsu ni hantai suru jyūmin no suwarikomi o tōshite [The Space of Subjugating Power and Undecidable Selves: The Sit-in Protest Against the U.S. Military Base Construction in Okinawa]’ (Masters dissertation, Hitotsubashi University, 2011), internal-pdf://Mori Masters thesis 2011-2636524544/Mori Masters thesis 2011.pdf.

⁶⁹⁴ ‘Kaijin kuina man arawareru no kan [In this Edition the Mysterious Okinwa Rail Man Appears]’, *Kaigyaku no kobeya [The Closet of Jest]*, accessed 11 June 2015, http://asobisenn.blogspot.jp/2013/02/blog-post_472.html.

Kunitachi Demonstration. Some members of the group had connections with Shirōto no Ran and the Nantoka Neighbourhood while others were more embedded in the Tama region and its activist and sub-cultural histories. Being part of a smaller, more intimate community, the Kunitachi demonstration organisers tried to lower the barriers to participation by making their demonstrations as playful and non-confrontational as possible. They emphasised the importance of community relationships for building a sustained anti-nuclear movement. Many of the activists and musicians who took part in the Kunitachi demonstrations had strong ties to the musical history of the Tama region that stretched back to the anti-nuclear ‘new wave’ of the 1980s. They interpreted this cultural legacy, however, in their own way to make it relevant to the contemporary movement. By staging street performances and memorialising these performances in the Shape of Resistance exhibition, activists developed a carnivalesque anti-nuclear culture which enabled them to build a community of protest and imagine post-nuclear futures. In the next chapter I return to central Tokyo to discuss the protests outside Japan’s official prime ministerial residence. The Committee to Hold the Kunitachi Demonstration was part of the Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes which had organisational responsibility for these demonstrations. The Kunitachi protesters brought the tactics of clowning and performance developed in Kunitachi to the mass anti-nuclear protests in Tokyo’s government district which represented the peak of the movement in 2012.

CHAPTER SIX – THE KANTEI MAE

The tent in front of METI has come to be situated at a corner of the global occupy movement. It has become a place of support for people who are fighting as part of the anti-nuke movement in various places across the country, and the centre of media attention where foreign (though mainly Western) journalists frequently visit. Like Liberty Park in New York City, it has become a kind of symbol. By visiting the site, however, I am learning that its significance lies less in the fact that it was occupied than the continuous practice of occupying and making the space alive with the people.

Odawara Rin⁶⁹⁵



Figure 9 Photo of Kantei Mae protest on 29 June 2012 on front cover of *Days Japan* magazine. Photograph by Noda Masaya.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁵ Rin Odawara, 'What Arises from the Small Space', *Japan - Fissures in the Planetary Apparatus*, accessed 25 February 2015, <https://jffissures.wordpress.com/2012/03/30/what-arises-from-the-small-space>. The translation in the original has been modified slightly for clarity.

On Friday 29 June 2012 an estimated one hundred thousand people gathered in front of the Kantei, the official residence of the prime minister of Japan. This ‘*Kantei mae kōdō*’ (literally ‘action in front of the prime minister’s official residence’, referred to hereafter as the Kantei Mae protests) was organised by an umbrella group of anti-nuclear organisations known as the Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes (MCAN). They were protesting against the restart of the Ōi nuclear power plant located in Fukui Prefecture on the Japan Sea coast which was scheduled for the following day. Although protest organisers attempted to obey police directions and restrict participants to a narrow section of the footpath leading up to the Kantei, the sheer number of people attending the demonstration overwhelmed both police and organisers. The crowd overflowed the temporary barriers which had been erected by the police and spilled out onto the road, eventually blocking all traffic.⁶⁹⁷ The following week a similar number of protesters gathered. Once again they crossed police barricades and occupied the street. Over the following months tens and then hundreds of thousands of people gathered outside the Kantei in a weekly ritual of protest which has continued, albeit with reduced numbers, up to the time of writing.⁶⁹⁸

On 5 May 2012 the Tomari nuclear reactor in Hokkaido had been shut down for routine maintenance and Japan was nuclear free for the first time since 1970.⁶⁹⁹ Anti-nuclear activists hailed the temporary shutdown of all of Japan’s nuclear reactors as a great victory. Many people attributed the complete shutdown of the commercial nuclear power industry to the power of the broad anti-nuclear movement. Activist Sugihara Kōji, for example, wrote that ‘although nobody knows exactly how many [anti-nuclear actions] there were it was these efforts by innumerable citizens which

⁶⁹⁶ Noda Masaya, ‘Kansai denryoku Ōi genshiryoku hatsudensho no saikadō ni hantai shite, shushō kantei mae de okonawareta demo no kūsatsu shashin [Aerial Photograph of a Demonstration Outside the Prime Minister’s Official Residence Against the Restart of Kansai Electric Power Company’s Ōi Nuclear Power Plant]’, *Days Japan*, 20 July 2012.

⁶⁹⁷ Piers Williamson, ‘Largest Demonstrations in Half a Century Protest the Restart of Japanese Nuclear Power Plants’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10, no 27.5 (2 July 2012), http://www.japanfocus.org/-Piers_Williamson/3787.

⁶⁹⁸ A detailed summary of all anti-nuclear demonstrations held in Japan between January 2011 and early June 2013 is given in Kinoshita, ‘2011 nen ikō no hangenpatsu demo risuto.’

⁶⁹⁹ ‘Japan Nuke-Free for First Time since ’70’, *The Japan Times Online*, 6 May 2012, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/05/06/national/japan-uke-free-for-first-time-since-70/>.

brought about the current situation'.⁷⁰⁰ Activist group Sayonara Genpatsu held a rally of 5,500 people in Shiba Park on Saturday 5 May to celebrate the occasion. The following day Datsugenpatsu Suginami, a group which included many Genpatsu Yamero organisers, held a grand costume parade through the municipality which attracted 4000 people. The demonstration finished in front of Kōenji station where celebrations continued into the night. The first large anti-nuclear protest after 3.11, which I described in Chapter Two, had been held in Kōenji April 2011. Returning to the place where the movement began, activists were able to celebrate a significant victory.⁷⁰¹ The restart of two reactors at the Ōi nuclear power plant, which threatened to undo this achievement, triggered an outpouring of anti-nuclear sentiment in front of the prime minister's residence.

At the time of the 3.11 disaster Kan Naoto, then leader of the governing Democratic Party of Japan, was prime minister. As the anti-nuclear movement grew in the first few months after 3.11, Kan had shown a degree of support for the anti-nuclear agenda. On 6 May 2011 he requested that Chūbu Electric, the owner of the Hamaoka nuclear power plant in Shizuoka Prefecture, suspend operations at the plant due to a heightened earthquake risk at the site. The particularly risky location of the Hamaoka plant along a major fault line was widely known prior to 3.11 and activists had long campaigned to shut this particular plant.⁷⁰² The demonstration in Shiba Park on 10 April which took place on the same day as the first Genpatsu Yamero demonstration had specifically targeted the Hamaoka plant. As if in response to Kan's action over Hamaoka, the Japan Business Federation Keidanren issued a statement on 11 July 2011 supporting the continued use of nuclear power. It called on the government to

⁷⁰⁰ Sugihara Kōji, '5.5 zen genpatsu teishi kara "genpatsu zero no natsu" e: Ōi genpatsu 3, 4 gouki no saikadō o meguru kōbō no naka de [From the Suspension of Nuclear Power on 5.5 to a "Summer of Zero Nuclear Power": In the Midst of the Struggle Over the Restart of Reactors 3 and 4 at Ōi]', *Impaction* no 185 (10 June 2012): 5–8.

⁷⁰¹ Iwakami Yasumi, '5 gatsu 6 nichi Datsu genpatsu Suginami "Iwai! Genpatsu zero parēdo" [6 May No Nukes Suginami "Celebrate! Zero Nuclear Power Plants Parade"]', *IWJ Independent Web Journal*, 6 May 2012, accessed 11 September 2014, <http://iwj.co.jp/wj/open/archives/14191>.

⁷⁰² The Hamaoka nuclear power plant is located over the subduction zone near the junction of two tectonic plates in the centre of the Tōkai region of south-east Japan. Based on the regularity of recorded large-scale earthquakes in the Tōkai region seismologists predict that a major earthquake in the vicinity of the reactor might be overdue. See Leuren Moret, 'Japan's Deadly Game of Nuclear Roulette', *The Japan Times Online*, 23 May 2004, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2004/05/23/to-be-sorted/japans-deadly-game-of-nuclear-roulette/>.

restart those reactors which had completed their scheduled maintenance checks as quickly as possible.⁷⁰³ The following day, however, Kan hardened his anti-nuclear stance. He called a press conference where he suggested that Japan's energy policy ought to 'aim for a society which does not rely upon nuclear power' by gradually reducing and finally eliminating the society's dependence on the technology.⁷⁰⁴ He imposed new and more stringent 'stress tests' on Japan's nuclear reactor fleet. During the course of their normal operation, nuclear reactors are periodically taken offline for routine safety and maintenance inspections. The new stress tests were to be carried out during these routine inspections. Nuclear reactors would not be able to be switched back on until they had been certified as safe by a new procedure.⁷⁰⁵ It was the implementation of these tests and the failure of the electric power companies to meet the new safety requirements which eventually led to the shutdown of Japan's entire reactor fleet by May 2012.

Kan's apparently sympathetic stance towards the anti-nuclear movement earned him the ire of the nuclear village who began to fight back.⁷⁰⁶ Major publications such as the *Yomiuri* newspaper, Japan's largest circulation daily, began carrying articles condemning Kan's handling of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters. On 1 June 2011 three opposition parties tabled a motion of no-confidence in Kan's government. In order to head off the motion Kan announced the following day that he would step down, but only once post-disaster reconstruction was under way. Just two months later, however, on 26 August, Kan announced that his preconditions for resignation had been met and he would resign. He was succeeded as DPJ leader and prime minister on 2 September by his Finance Minister Noda Yoshihiko.⁷⁰⁷ The

⁷⁰³ “‘Genpatsu hikitsuzuki jūyō’: Keidanren ga teigen e, ante kyōkyū e kōteihiyō [‘It is Important to Continue Using Nuclear Power’: Federation of Economic Organisations Makes a Statement, Demand a Five Year Plan on Stable Supply]”, *Nihon keizai shimbun*, 12 July 2011, accessed 16 September 2014, http://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXNASFS1103A_R10C11A7EE1000/.

⁷⁰⁴ ‘Kan shushō kisha kaiken (yōshi) [Prime Minister Kan Press Conference (Summary)]’, *Asahi Shimbun*, 14 July 2011, Morning edition, sec. General.

⁷⁰⁵ ‘Japan Nuke-Free for First Time since ’70.’

⁷⁰⁶ Jeff Kingston, ‘Ousting Kan Naoto: The Politics of Nuclear Crisis and Renewable Energy in Japan’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 9, no 39.5 (26 September 2011), <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Jeff-Kingston/3610>.

⁷⁰⁷ Dominic Al-Badri, ‘Unity and Fragmentation: Japanese Politics Post-Fukushima’, in *After the Great East Japan Earthquake: Political and Policy Change in Post-Fukushima Japan*, ed. Dominic Al-Badri and Gijs Berends, 2013, 52–53.

election of Noda marked a shift in the DPJ government's attitude towards nuclear power. As he announced his new cabinet, he asserted that his government 'would proceed with restarts of those reactors which, after having been subject to rigorous checks, are found to be suitable for restarting'.⁷⁰⁸ This announcement set Noda on a collision course with the growing anti-nuclear movement.

I begin this chapter by examining the 'Tent Plaza' outside the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). In addition to maintaining a 24-hour sit-in, the Tent Plaza hosted regular anti-nuclear events. Protests outside the METI building were an important precursor of the mass rallies in front of the Prime Minister's residence in June, July and August with which I opened this chapter. The building continues to be a focus of anti-nuclear protest at the time of writing. The Tent Plaza also served as a base for monitoring the implementation of the stress tests which had to be approved by METI officials before reactor restarts could proceed. I then turn to the Kantei Mae protests themselves. Unlike Genpatsu Yamero, the Kantei Mae protests directly addressed the official institutions of representative democracy. In doing so, they opened up spaces for dissent in the streets and they exacerbated the existing divisions between the local and national governments and within the ruling DPJ. The success of the MCAN demonstrations in attracting large crowds to the government district ultimately led to a number of MCAN representatives entering the Kantei to meet with the prime minister. I discuss the way this meeting highlighted the ambiguities of representation and participation in Japanese democracy. In the final two sections I return once more to the notion of *hiroba*. The Kantei Mae protests produced a space for political expression and community-building in the streets outside the Kantei and the Diet. The location of the protests explicitly addressed the existing institutions of representative democracy. In the *hiroba* outside the Kantei, the National Diet and the METI building, however, the MCAN protests went beyond merely petitioning the state to enact a more participatory form of democracy. In the final sections of this chapter I analyse some of the theoretical questions which these projects raised about the nature of democracy in Japan today.

⁷⁰⁸ 'Noda naikaku hossoku, tōnai yūwa ni hairyo "Fukkō to genpatsu, saiyūsen" [The Inauguration of Noda's Cabinet, With Consideration of Party Harmony and 'First Priority to Reconstruction and Nuclear Power]', *Asahi shinbun*, 3 September 2011, Morning edition.

The Tent Plaza: Confronting the Nuclear Village in Kasumigaseki

With the executive branch of government once more leading the charge to restart Japan's nuclear reactor fleet, anti-nuclear activists increasingly shifted their focus to the parliamentary and administrative districts of Nagatachō and Kasumigaseki, both located in Chiyoda ward. On 11 September 2011, while Genpatsu Yamero activists were protesting in Shinjuku, 2,000 people gathered in a separate anti-nuclear protest in Tokyo's Hibiya Park. Hibiya Park is located in Chiyoda ward near the Imperial Palace. Hibiya Park is a short walk from the Japanese National Diet and the Kantei in Nagatachō and the cabinet ministry offices in neighbouring Kasumigaseki. With its convenient location close to the seat of government, Hibiya Park has played host to both state-sponsored events and political protests since it first became a public park in 1903.⁷⁰⁹ On 11 September 2011, anti-nuclear protesters marched from the park to TEPCO headquarters in Shinbashi and then on to the nearby Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) building in Kasumigaseki. METI contains the key agencies responsible for the development of the nuclear power industry and for safety regulation.

Outside METI the activists staged a number of protests. At 3:40 p.m. they created a 'human chain' surrounding the METI building. A few hours later one group of protesters commenced a 10 day hunger strike.⁷¹⁰ Another group took advantage of the spectacle to erect a tent on the grounds of the METI building. The activists then commenced a 24-hour occupation of the tent which they named the 'METI Tent Plaza' (*Keisanshō mae tento hiroba*). As at No Nukes Plaza, the activists outside METI deployed the term '*hiroba*' in order to assert their right to occupy public space and transform it into a place for participatory democracy. Fuchigami Tarō, an activist with the Tent Plaza and a member of a group called the Committee to Prevent the Revision of Article 9 of the Constitution (*Kyūjō kaiken bōshi no kai*) explained that the tent would serve as 'a place for popular discussion about nuclear power'. In the face of demands from Ministry officials that the tent be removed, he defended the

⁷⁰⁹ Hoyt J. Long, *On Uneven Ground: Miyazawa Kenji and the Making of Place in Modern Japan* / Hoyt Long (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2012), 141.

⁷¹⁰ 'Shashin sokuhō: 9.11 Keisanshō hōi kōdō to Shinjuku saundo demo [Photographic Bulletin: The 9.11 Encirclement of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Shinjuku Sound Demonstration]', *LaborNet Japan* (12 September 2011), http://www.labornetjp.org/news/2011/0911shasin/newsitem_view.

Tent Plaza activists' right to occupy the space on the basis that 'originally, METI and the land which it manages belong to the people'. The Tent Plaza countered that METI ought to 'provide this place to us as place 'for a people's discussion on nuclear power'''.⁷¹¹

As discussed in Chapter One, the powerful Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry played an important role in the development of Japan's nuclear energy policy. The Ministry was charged with developing policy and encouraging utility companies to build nuclear power plants. Yet the Ministry was also responsible for overseeing safety standards in the industry. Many anti-nuclear activists saw these two roles as contradictory. Satō Eisaku, former Governor of Fukushima Prefecture, hit out at the Ministry in an article published in the weekly *Shūkan Asahi* a few weeks after the Fukushima accident. He recalled how, during his time as Governor from 1988 to 2006 he had, 'fought hard against METI, demanding a transparency guarantee on accident information and working to secure the prefectural government's rights with regard to where nuclear plants are built'. The establishment of the tent on the grounds of the METI building made a statement about the locus of power behind the nuclear industry. It constituted a critique of the Ministry's continuing role in supporting nuclear power after the Fukushima accident by insisting that nuclear power was 'safe' and for working to promote reactor restarts in spite of growing public opposition.⁷¹²

As feminist scholar Odawara Rin points out, the first event at the METI Tent Plaza to attract national attention took place approximately six weeks after the establishment of the tent when a group of women from Fukushima staged a three day sit-in protest which began on 27 October 2011.⁷¹³ The action was organised by a group of women who called themselves the 'Fukushima Women Who Don't Want Nuclear Power' (*Genpatsu iranai Fukushima no onna tachi*). The group issued a list of demands which included the immediate cessation of all nuclear power plants and their

⁷¹¹ Fuchigami Tarō, 'Keisanshō mae no tento to wa nani ka! [What is The Tent Outside the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry]', *Jōkyō dai san ki [Situation Third Series]* 2, no 15 (October 2011): 6–9.

⁷¹² 'Genpatsu, isoida anzen sengen [Rush to Confirm Nuclear Safety]', *Asahi shimbun*, 19 June 2011, Morning edition, sec. General.

⁷¹³ Odawara, 'What Arises from the Small Space.'

decommissioning; not restarting any of the reactors which were offline due to either maintenance checks or incidents; that the state take responsibility for the evacuation of all children and provide compensation payments to all those residents who had already evacuated; and the repeal of the ‘Three Nuclear Power Laws’ which make local municipalities dependent on subsidies and impede their independence.

Inspired by this action, women from all over Japan organised a second seven day sit-in protest which followed immediately after the Fukushima women’s protest. Like some of the other *hiroba* actions which I have discussed in this thesis the women’s sit-in at the Tent Plaza provided an opportunity for intercourse between activists from different generations, activist backgrounds and genders. Odawara describes how ‘young mothers whom I met at the sit-in ... were collecting petitions, submitting them to local governments, organising study groups and making networks with similar groups in neighbouring townships’. I visited the METI Tent Plaza during the women’s sit-in where I too noted the great diversity of groups represented among the participants. In addition to various pieces of paper from the sit-in organisers themselves I was given fliers and other material from a group in Hokkaido who were organising a summer camp for children from Fukushima. I also received an advertisement for a calendar memorialising the 26 year anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster containing photographs and artworks by children from the affected region which gave an address in Shinjuku. For Odawara, the diversity of participants was evidence that

the anti-nuke movement in Japan shows an unprecedented expansion, mostly, by the people who throw themselves into social movement for the first time, by young people and young women who have been previously keeping distance from it. As I speak with the people in demos and in the tent, I am always struck by the large diversity of their jobs and careers.⁷¹⁴

Occupying such a visible location in the centre of the administrative district of Kasumigaseki the Tent Plaza was frequently visited by activists and journalists from

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

overseas who were looking to cover the anti-nuclear movement in Japan.⁷¹⁵ At the Global Conference for a Nuclear Power Free World in Yokohama, I assisted anti-nuclear activists from Australia with handing out material and collecting signatures opposing uranium mining in Australia. I escorted a number of these activists to the Tent Plaza where they were able to meet the women from Fukushima who were staging a second, longer sit-in protest. I then wrote about this experience for an activist newspaper in Australia.⁷¹⁶

Activist Sugihara Kōji, writing in May 2012, felt that the Tent Plaza had established its presence as ‘a base for transmission and intercourse’.⁷¹⁷ Fuchigami, too, insisted that, while the tent was established initially by the Committee to Prevent the Revision of Article 9 of the Constitution, it had been supported by a wide variety of people. ‘The tent has awakened the sympathies of many ordinary people and citizens ... it has become a place for collective debates, a plaza which is visited by people with various positions’.⁷¹⁸ Judith Butler points out that when movements occupy public space the publicness of the space is not given. ‘Collective actions collect the space itself’, she observes, ‘they gather the pavement, and animate and organize the architecture’.⁷¹⁹ People lay claim to the publicness of a space through the act of occupation. The METI Tent Plaza was established on the grounds of the Ministry building without authorisation. Participants nevertheless staked their claim to legitimacy on the basis that METI and its officials are actually supposed to serve the people. They transformed a small corner on the grounds of this powerful Ministry into a *hiroba* where anti-nuclear activists from across Japan and around the world could participate in the debate on nuclear power. In the next section I discuss how Tent Plaza activists tried to extend the space of participatory democracy into the METI building itself.

⁷¹⁵ Gavin Blair, ‘Japan’s Anti-Nuclear Protesters Find the Going Tough, despite Fukushima Disaster’, *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 November 2011, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2011/1123/Japan-s-anti-nuclear-protesters-find-the-going-tough-despite-Fukushima-disaster>.

⁷¹⁶ Alexander Brown, ‘Japan: Australian Activists Address Global Anti-Nuclear Conference’, *Green Left Weekly*, 4 February 2012, <https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/49928>.

⁷¹⁷ Sugihara, ‘5.5 zen genpatsu teishi kara “genpatsu zero no natsu” e’, 7.

⁷¹⁸ Fuchigami Tarō, ‘Keisanshō mae tento hiroba no kōbō’, *Jōkyō dai san ki [Situation Third Series]* 1, no 2 (March 2013): 23.

⁷¹⁹ Butler, ‘Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street.’

Witnessing as a Democratic Praxis

In the background to the establishment of the Tent Plaza in September 2011 were widely held concerns that the restart of nuclear reactors which had been shut down for safety checks might be imminent.⁷²⁰ Activists were wary of the fact that Noda had signalled his willingness to countenance nuclear reactor restarts and the signals coming from METI indicated that such restarts were about to proceed. In early 2012, the struggle against reactor restarts coalesced around the possible restart of two nuclear reactors at the Ōi nuclear power plant in Fukui Prefecture.

Under the guidelines implemented by Prime Minister Kan prior to his resignation, nuclear reactors which went offline for routine maintenance checks after 3.11 had to pass new stress tests before they could be restarted. The results of these tests then had to be reviewed by an expert committee before final approval for the restarts could be given. On 18 January 2012 the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) held its first public hearing into the results of first stage stress tests conducted by the Kansai Electric Power Company (KEPCO) on the No 3 and No 4 reactors at the Ōi plant. The meeting, which was scheduled for 4 o'clock, was delayed for several hours. A group of anti-nuclear protesters attended the public hearing. On arrival at the METI building, however, they were not permitted to enter the room where the hearing was to take place and were instead consigned to a separate room connected via a video link. When they objected to being excluded from the hearing room the police were called to eject the protesters.⁷²¹ Panel members were led to a separate room where they approved the test results. Two of the panel members, however, objecting to the exclusion of the public from the hearing room, refused to take part in the panel.⁷²² Protesters from the Tent Plaza outside the METI building objected to the closed nature of the hearing and to the

⁷²⁰ Fuchigami, 'Keisanshō mae no tento to wa nani ka! [What is The Tent Outside the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry]', 6.

⁷²¹ 'Sutoresu tesuto shinsa: shimin o shimeshite kyōkō [Stress Test Hearings: Forced Through as Citizens are Kicked Out]', 19 January 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIRqDsHJ3OY&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

⁷²² 'Ōi genpatsu no taisei "datō" 3, 4 gōki, hoanin ga hatsu shinsa sōtei agareba yoyū teika', *Asahi shimbun*, 19 January 2012, Morning edition; 'Slow and Rude Awakening of Japanese Citizens Over the Nuclear Crisis', accessed 16 September 2014, <http://margotbworldnews.com/News/Jan/Jan19/JapaneseCitizens.html>.

presence of a number of experts on the panel who were known to have received large sums of money from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. The company manufactures nuclear reactors and had also conducted stress tests on behalf of the electric power companies. The protesters regarded the hearing as a mere rubber stamp intended to pave the way for the restarts at Ōi.⁷²³ Their suspicions were confirmed when the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency approved the tests in February and submitted its recommendation to restart reactors 3 and 4 at Ōi to the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC) of Japan, located in the Cabinet Office.⁷²⁴

The Tent Plaza protests were unable to stop the approval process but their actions did shine a light on the shadowy world of the nuclear village. They bore witness to the fact that several members of the committee charged with assessing the safety of nuclear reactors were in fact receiving money from companies who stood to profit from the nuclear power industry. The protests made public the collusive nature of the nuclear village. The DPJ government could not entirely ignore the growing public scrutiny. In April, for example, Chief Cabinet Secretary Edano Yukio publically forbade former METI officials, including those in NISA and the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, from taking jobs in electric power companies upon retirement.⁷²⁵ This pronouncement occurred in the context of widespread condemnation of the practice of *amakudari* ('descent from heaven') described in Chapter One. In the case of METI, many former officials, including members of NISA, had obtained jobs as advisors to the electric power companies.

Ending the widespread practice of *amakudari* was a key policy platform for the Democratic Party of Japan government when they were elected in 2009. The promise of *'seiji yūsen'* (politics in command) was one of the campaign slogans the DPJ had

⁷²³ "Tento nisshi 1/17 (ka): keisanshō to no hibi no semegiai [Tent Diary 1/17 (Tues.): Daily Conflict with METI]', *Keisanshō mae tento biroba [METI Tent Plaza]*, 17 January 2012, accessed 17 September 2014, <http://tentohiroba.tumblr.com/post/16112527333/1-17>.

⁷²⁴ Minoru Matsutani, 'Ōi Reactor Stress Tests Approved by NISA', *The Japan Times Online*, 14 February 2012, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/02/14/national/oi-reactor-stress-tests-approved-by-nisa/>.

⁷²⁵ Natsuko Fukue, 'METI Hit for "amakudari" Habits That Put Retirees in Tepco', *The Japan Times Online*, 19 April 2011, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2011/04/19/business/eti-hit-for-amakudari-habits-that-put-retirees-in-tepco/>.

used to contrast itself with the LDP which was seen as hopelessly entangled with the bureaucracy and big business.⁷²⁶ Following the election victory in 2009, however, incoming Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio locked horns with powerful bureaucrats in the Defence Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over the issues of American military bases in Okinawa. Hatoyama's administration had promised to review the terms of an earlier agreement with the United States to relocate the Futenma air base, a major U.S. Marine Corps facility in Okinawa, to a less populated part of Okinawa island. The DPJ insisted instead that the base be moved outside Okinawa, which already bears the largest burden of United States military bases in Japan. The United States government reacted angrily to the suggestion that the agreement might be reviewed.⁷²⁷ Enormous pressure was brought to bear on Hatoyama's government both from the United States and the ministries of defence and foreign affairs. By June 2010 Hatoyama had resigned, citing as a reason his inability to close the Futenma base and ensure its relocation outside of Okinawa. Edano's instructions to METI and other ministerial officials not to engage in *amakudari* were a continuation of this struggle between the DPJ and the powerful LDP-dominated ministries.

Commenting on the protests inside METI against the closure of the public hearings on the stress tests Sugihara suggested that 'witnessing is the last 'safety net' for democracy'. He noted that the incident on 18 January had revealed the slipshod approvals process for reactor restarts which was taking place at METI. The protests also delayed the hearing for 20 days. While the number of citizens inside the hearings may have been small, they had been able to confront the 'nuclear village' in their own voices and the many people who had rushed to the METI building to protest what was going on inside were also able to express their opinion.⁷²⁸

⁷²⁶ Ichiyō Mutō, 'Is Japan Changing after the Fall of the LDP? Hatoyama and the DPJ's New "Politics in Command"', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 11, no 1 (2010): 103.

⁷²⁷ Gavan McCormack, 'Ampo's Troubled 50th: Hatoyama's Abortive Rebellion, Okinawa's Mounting Resistance and the US-Japan Relationship - Part 2', *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 22, no 4.10 (31 May 2010), <http://japanfocus.org/-Gavan-McCormack/3366/article.html>; Jitsuro Terashima, 'The US-Japan Alliance Must Evolve: The Futenma Flip-Flop, the Hatoyama Failure, and the Future', *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 32, no 4.10 (9 August 2010), <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Jitsuro-Terashima/3398>.

⁷²⁸ Sugihara, '5.5 zen genpatsu teishi kara "genpatsu zero no natsu" e', 6.

Inside and Outside the Kantei

In October 2011 a group of activists from different anti-nuclear groups in the Tokyo metropolitan area came together under the umbrella of the Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes (MCAN). The group was originally conceived as a clearing house for the organisers of anti-nuclear demonstrations in the Tokyo region so that they could avoid schedule clashes between different demonstrations on the same day and to facilitate information sharing.⁷²⁹ That participants felt the need to establish such a group gives some indication of the breadth of anti-nuclear organising which took place in the metropolitan region in 2011. Kinoshita Chigaya tabulated the anti-nuclear demonstrations in Tokyo. He recorded ten separate anti-nuclear protest actions in April, fifteen in May, five in June, eight in July, twelve in September, eight in October, ten in November and twelve in December of 2011.⁷³⁰ As most of these demonstrations took place on weekends to enable working people to participate the potential for significant scheduling clashes is clearly apparent.

MCAN organised its first protest as part of the Global Conference for a Nuclear Power Free World (*Datsu genpatsu sekai kaigi*) which had been organised by a number of large non-governmental organisations such as Peaceboat and Greenpeace Japan in Yokohama in January 2012.⁷³¹ The march attracted an impressive 4500 people. The Kantei Mae actions began later in the year with a small protest of 300 people on Friday 29 March 2012. From then on the protests took place every Friday evening between six and eight o'clock. The organising group asked citizens to gather on the footpath, express their opposition to reactor restarts peacefully and demand an end to nuclear power. The actions started out small but they continued to grow during April and May. When the government's decision to restart the Ōi reactor seemed certain the numbers began to swell. Some 40,000 people gathered in protest on 22 June.⁷³²

⁷²⁹ Oguma, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito*, 226.

⁷³⁰ Kinoshita, '2011 nen ikō no hangenpatsu demo risuto.'

⁷³¹ For some reflections on the Global Conference see Alexander Brown, 'Attending the Global Conference for a Nuclear Free World in Yokohama', *Disaster, Infrastructure and Society: Learning from the 2011 Earthquake in Japan* no 2 (June 2012): 40–45.

⁷³² 'Ōi Genpatsu Kadō Tekkai Motomeru: Kantei Mae de "4 Man Nin" Kōgi [Calling for the Scrapping of the Restart of the Ōi Nuclear Power Plant: "40,000 Person" Action Outside the Official Prime Ministerial

Although the number of protesters who attended the Kantei Mae protests had already swelled to the thousands by May, they did not attract significant attention from the mainstream media until the numbers reached the hundreds of thousands. In the absence of mainstream media coverage independent media played an important role in communicating information about the protests. The helicopter from which Noda Masaya's photograph in Figure 9 was taken did not belong to a major news organisation. It was hired with funds raised by a citizens' campaign initiated by anti-nuclear activist Hirose Takeshi. The group hoped to compensate for the lack of attention given to the growing protest movement by the mainstream media.⁷³³ Independent media, in particular the Independent Web Journal edited by Iwakami Yasumi, played an important role in spreading the word about the Kantei Mae protests.⁷³⁴

In April 2012 Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry Edano Yukio conceded that no nuclear reactor restarts would be possible prior to the 5 May shutdown of the Tomari reactor. He began lobbying local politicians, including Fukui Prefectural Governor Nishikawa Issei, to give their assent to the restarts at Ōi. The DPJ government of Noda Yoshihiko faced stiff opposition to its plans from local leaders in the Kansai region of western Japan. Governor Nishikawa demanded that Noda 'gain the understanding' of other Kansai leaders like Osaka Mayor Hashimoto Tōru who had previously voiced their opposition to the restart.⁷³⁵

The Kansai leaders were organised into an alliance of nine local governments including seven prefectures – Shiga, Osaka, Kyoto, Hyōgo, Wakayama, Tokushima

Residence]', *Asahi Newspaper Online*, 22 June 2012, <http://www.asahi.com/national/update/0622/TKY201206220491.html?tr=pc>.

⁷³³ The fundraising body was called the “*Tadashii hōdō heri no kai*” (Committee for a Helicopter to Report Truthfully). For a discussion of the making of this photograph see ‘Ano kiji no sono go o otsutae shimasu. Days Japan forō appu [We Explain What Happened After That Article. Days Japan Follow-up]’, *Days Japan*, August 2012.

⁷³⁴ ‘IWJ Independent Web Journal’, *IWJ Independent Web Journal*, accessed 3 June 2015, <http://iwj.co.jp/>.

⁷³⁵ ‘Keisanshō “Genpatsu isshun zero ni”: 5 gatsu 6 nichi ikō saikadō ma ni awazu [Economy, Trade and Industry Minister says “no nukes for a time”: From 6 May Restarts will not occur in time]’, *Tōkyō shimbun*, 16 April 2012, Tokyo.

and Tottori – and two cities – Osaka and Sakai. Under pressure from the regional electric power utility Kansai Electric Power Company (KEPCO) and the Kansai Economic Federation headed by KEPCO chairman Mori Shōsuke, however, by early June the leaders had softened their opposition to the plan. KEPCO and the central government had threatened that rolling blackouts would be implemented in the Kansai region if the restarts were not approved. As the *Japan Times* reported, local leaders were worried that they would be held responsible were this to occur. On 15 May the Ōi town assembly approved the restart of the reactors. With half of its municipal budget dependent on nuclear power-related subsidies and tax revenues this was more or less a foregone conclusion.⁷³⁶

The Governor of Fukui Prefecture requested that the prime minister justify his decision to re-start the Ōi reactor to the nation. On 8 June Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko responded to this request in a televised speech from inside the Kantei in which he defended his decision to authorise the restart of two reactors at the Ōi plant. Noda assumed personal responsibility as prime minister for authorising the restart at Ōi, justifying the decision by saying that he was ‘protecting the livelihood of the people’ both by ensuring that safety standards at the plant were adequate and by guaranteeing electricity supplies to the Kansai region.⁷³⁷ While Noda gave his speech some 2,000 to 4,000 people were lined up along the pavement outside the Kantei chanting ‘*Saikadō hantai*’ (‘No Restarts’). The speech was meant to ‘explain’ Noda’s decision to the public but it had little effect in changing public opinion concerning the restarts at Ōi. Polls showed a majority of people continued to oppose the restarts even after his television appearance.⁷³⁸ Nevertheless, as the *New York Times* reported, the speech was ‘seen as a victory for the still-powerful nuclear industry and its backers in the business world, whose political support has been crucial to the otherwise unpopular Mr. Noda’.⁷³⁹ Opposition to the restarts was

⁷³⁶ ‘Quickstep to Restarting Reactors’, *Japan Times*, 3 June 2012, online edition, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2012/06/03/editorials/quickstep-to-restarting-reactors/>.

⁷³⁷ Williamson, ‘Largest Demonstrations in Half a Century Protest the Restart of Japanese Nuclear Power Plants.’

⁷³⁸ Martin Fackler, ‘Japan public still divided as 2 reactors to be opened’, *New York Times Online*, 16 June 2012, accessed 17 June 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/17/world/asia/japans-prime-minister-orders-restart-of-2-nuclear-reactors.html?_r=1&ref=world.

⁷³⁹ Fackler, *NYT*, 16 June 2012.

accompanied by widespread condemnation of the prime minister himself and cries of ‘*Noda yamero*’ (‘Noda, Quit’) joined the repertoire of anti-nuclear slogans.

The Kantei Mae protest continued to grow throughout June 2012. On Friday 15 June, organisers estimated that 12,000 people joined the protest outside the Kantei. On 16 June Noda’s government formally announced that it would order the restarts. The plant’s operator, KEPCO announced on 25 June that they would restart reactors 3 and 4 at the Ōi plant on 1 July.⁷⁴⁰ The following day the government gave its official approval to the restart of the Ōi reactors. Shirōto no Ran responded by organising a ‘Genpatsu Yamero, Noda Yamero’ protest in Shinjuku on 1 July. This was the first Genpatsu Yamero protest organised by the group since the arrests in September 2011.⁷⁴¹ The anti-nuclear mood, which under Kan had enjoyed a degree of support from the political leadership, now took a distinctly anti-government turn.

Many participants were particularly concerned that Noda’s actions seemed to pay no regard to the ‘will of the people’ (*min’i*). A 33 year old participant from western Tokyo, for example, told the *Tōkyō Shimbun* ‘I want to show the Noda administration, who aren’t looking at the people (*kokumin*), the will of the people (*min’i*)’.⁷⁴² The newspaper reported the organisers’ estimate of 7000 participants, who marched from Shinjuku central park through heavy rain to the east exit of Shinjuku station. On arrival the organisers held a ‘No Nukes Plaza’ action with music, singing and dancing which lasted into the night. On 6 July, amid heavy rain, more than one hundred thousand people returned to the Kantei Mae to protest the Ōi restart. Once again the press of the crowd flowed out from the footpath and onto the road in front of the Kantei, completely blocking it to passing traffic. The demonstration continued along the footpath for hundreds of metres. A 44-year old company employee from nearby Kanagawa prefecture told the *Tōkyō Shimbun* ‘I’m

⁷⁴⁰ Williamson, ‘Largest Demonstrations in Half a Century Protest the Restart of Japanese Nuclear Power Plants.’

⁷⁴¹ ‘Genpatsu yamero demo Noda yamero demo!!!! [No Nukes Demo No Noda Demo!!!!]’, accessed 18 September 2014, <http://nodayamerodemo.tumblr.com/?og=1>.

⁷⁴² ‘Shutoken demo “datsu genpatsu” uttae [Demonstrations in the Capital Demand “No Nukes”], *Tōkyō shimbun*, 2 July 2012, Morning edition, sec. Shakai [Society], Tokyo.

really shocked that the voices of so many people were not heard and the restart of the Ōi nuclear plant went ahead'.⁷⁴³

Meanwhile, inside the Kantei, the *Tōkyō Shimbun*'s reporter noted that as Noda walked across the grounds of the compound on 29 June he remarked to the Security Police officer on duty 'it's a big noise isn't it' before heading into his residential quarters. Earlier, on 25 June, he had remarked to the parliament that he 'could hear the chanting very clearly' but the protests seemed to have little outward effect on the prime minister's stance.⁷⁴⁴ On 6 July, however, he was forced to at least acknowledge their impact. In response to a question from a journalist about the protests Noda said 'I've received many voices, all sorts of voices'. When asked directly whether he had acknowledged the voices of protest he silently nodded. The prime minister could not afford to be too cavalier in his disregard for the protesters. Support for the anti-nuclear movement inside the Diet was growing.⁷⁴⁵ Earlier in the week former DPJ leader Ozawa Ichirō had left the party. His resignation, which took 48 of his supporters with him, was primarily prompted by Noda's passage of a consumption tax increase. Ozawa also cited, however, the government's support for nuclear power as a reason for leaving the party. Along with 48 supporters he formed a new party which cited opposition to nuclear power as one of its policy goals. On 6 July Ozawa added his name to a petition of 117 Diet members opposing nuclear power.⁷⁴⁶ As the consensus between local and central politicians and the bureaucracy which had been secured during the period of LDP-dominance began to unravel, new spaces for dissent opened up both in the streets outside the official government buildings but also within.

⁷⁴³ 'Kantei mae de hangenpatsu: Ōi unten saikai go hajimete no demo [No Nukes Outside the Kantei: First Demonstration Since the Reactor Restart at Ōi]', *Tōkyō shimbun*, 7 July 2012, morning edition.

⁷⁴⁴ 'Fukureagaru saikadō hantai: Kantei mae demo', *Tōkyō shimbun*, 30 June 2012, Morning edition.

⁷⁴⁵ Sekiguchi Katsumi, 'Saikadō hantai demo "koe todoiteiru" [Demonstrations Against the Restarts - "The Voices Are Being Heard"]', *Tōkyō shimbun*, 7 July 2012, Morning edition, sec. Sōgō.

⁷⁴⁶ 'Datsu genpatsu kokkai de kakudai [No Nukes Grows at the National Diet]', *Tōkyō shimbun*, 7 July 2012, Morning edition, sec. sōgō.

Meeting Noda

On 22 August the voices of the Kantei Mae protesters were most certainly heard by the prime minister when he met with 11 representatives from the Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes. Sociologist Oguma Eiji, though not an official member of MCAN, facilitated the meeting along with former prime minister Kan Naoto. Towards the end of July Oguma learnt that MCAN was trying to organise a meeting with the prime minister with little success. Having met Kan while giving a lecture on post-war Japanese history earlier that year Oguma offered to contact the former prime minister and see if he could organise a meeting with Noda. Oguma later explained how he had told the former prime minister that ‘it wouldn’t be good for Japan’s democracy if there was no response from government to such an outpouring of the voice of the people’. Kan agreed to use his remaining influence in the party to insist that his successor meet with the protest group.⁷⁴⁷

While Noda made no specific promises to the MCAN representatives who met with him at the Kantei, Oguma argued that the meeting was of great historical significance. In his view the meeting established an important precedent for future citizens’ movements to be able to meet with the prime minister and other cabinet ministers.⁷⁴⁸ The meeting was not welcomed, however, by some in the conservative media establishment. The weekly magazine *Shūkan Bunshun* (Weekly Bunshun) published a sensationalist account of the meeting in which it targeted the MCAN representatives with personal smears.⁷⁴⁹ The weekly designated Misao Redwolf as the ‘leader’ of MCAN, although the group has no official leader. It dwelt on the activist’s colourful past traveling and working in the United States where, the magazine alleged, she had spent some time as an exotic dancer. The weekly even tracked down Redwolf’s family in Hiroshima, extracting poignant quotes from her father who described his estranged daughter as ‘a bit of a strange child’. By lavishing

⁷⁴⁷ Oguma Eiji and Kan Naoto, ‘Kan Naoto interviewed by Oguma Eiji. Kantei no naka kara no shōgen [Testimony from Inside the Kantei]’, in *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito: 3.11 kara kantei mae made* [People Who Stop Nuclear Power Plants: From 3.11 to the Prime Minister’s Residence] (Tokyo: Bungei shunjū, 2013), 182–184.

⁷⁴⁸ Oguma, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito*, 19.

⁷⁴⁹ “‘Hangenpatsu demo’ Noda kantei ni norikonda katsudōka 11 nin no shōtai: shisei sutorippā, ‘Beheiren’ raisan gakusha, pankurokkā ... [‘Anti-nuclear Demonstration. The True Face of the 11 Activists Who Entered Noda’s Prime Ministerial Residence: A Tattooed Stripper, A Scholar Who Worships Beheiren, A Punkrocker ...]’, *Shūkan bunshun*, 6 September 2012.

attention on the details of Redwolf's personal life the weekly article worked to discredit the anti-nuclear movement. The article also tried to insinuate a connection between the Kantei Mae protests and the violence of New Left protest in the 1960s and 1970s. It did so by painting Oguma, who as an historical sociologist has written extensively on the New Left,⁷⁵⁰ as an apologist for the violence of these movements.

Shūkan Bunshun's personal smearing of the MCAN representatives seemed to be little more than cover for a broader attack on Noda himself. Beyond this immediate political targeting of Noda, however, lay a deeper anxiety. The weekly carried an opinion from sociologist Hashizume Daisaburō which compared the effect demonstrations can have on politics with terrorism. In appealing to the prime minister directly and circumventing the Diet, Hashizume compared the actions of the Kantei Mae protesters with those of a group of young army officers who carried out a number of assassinations of senior government officials during the 26 February Incident on 1936 in an attempt to force the Emperor to assume direct command of the government.⁷⁵¹

Alongside the smear piece was a commentary by far-right conservative writer Sakurai Yoshiko.⁷⁵² As an historical revisionist, Sakurai was very conscious of the parallels between the Kantei Mae protests and the 1960 Anpo struggle. The protests held outside the prime minister's official residence and the National Diet in the summer of 2012 consistently attracted tens of thousands of people. On at least three occasions the crowd exceeded one hundred thousand. Demonstrations of this size have not been seen in Japan since protests against the signing of the Anpo security treaty with the United States in 1960. Sakurai's ultra-conservative vision of democracy is worthy of analysis because it throws into relief the issues at stake in the Kantei Mae protests. By meeting with the demonstrators, Sakurai argues, Noda created 'an enormous problem in terms of protecting the health of Japan's democratic government'. She makes a number of arguments to support this

⁷⁵⁰ For Oguma's detailed work on the New Left see *1968*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 2009).

⁷⁵¹ 'The True Colours of the 11 Activists Who Entered Noda's Prime Ministerial Residence', 26–27.

⁷⁵² Sakurai Yoshiko, 'Noda shshō yo, naze demo tai ni kusshita no ka [Hey Noda, Why Have You Buckled Before the Demonstrators?]', *Shūkan bunshun*, 6 September 2012.

contention. Firstly, she questions ‘whether the 11 who entered the Prime Ministerial residence really represent the will of the people (*min’i*)’. This argument raises an important question about whether the amorphous ‘will of the people’ can in fact be represented. Secondly, Sakurai argues that the prime minister, as Japan’s ‘supreme power’ (*saikō kenryokusha*), should ‘always focus on the big picture and take the course of action which will bring about the greatest benefit for the national interest, to adjust oneself to the immediate pressure in front of you is absurd’. This argument suggests that in a representative democracy political leaders should in fact ignore the stated ‘will of the people’, however it is expressed, if it conflicts with a ‘national interest’ which they are somehow uniquely able to determine. Finally Sakurai takes a cheap shot at Noda for taking time to meet with demonstrators rather than dealing with territorial disputes with China, Korea and Russia which she considers to be of greater significance.⁷⁵³ While this third argument is not worthy of consideration here the first two points raise important issues about the nature of democratic participation.

The basis of Sakurai’s understanding of the prime minister’s office as the ‘supreme power’ (*saikō kenryokusha*) within the Japanese polity is at odds with Japan’s constitution. The constitution makes no reference to an ‘ultimate power’ resting in the prime minister. It does, however, refer to the notion of ‘sovereignty’ (*shuken*) which, it states, resides not in the prime minister or even the emperor but in ‘the people’ (*kokumin*). According to the constitution, a duly elected government derives its authority (*ken’i*) from the people and the people’s representatives then exercise that power (*kenryoku*). The only ‘power’ (*kenryoku*) mentioned is not a ‘supreme power’ emanating from the leader of the executive government but a delegated authority derived from the people.⁷⁵⁴

The real question, therefore, is how is the authority of ‘the people’ delegated to their elected representatives. Sakurai argues that, as Japan has a representative democratic system, the only appropriate place for people to show their displeasure with an elected government is at the ballot box. To attempt to influence a duly elected

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁴ ‘Nihon Koku Kenpō [Constitution of Japan]’, *E-Gov: Denshi Seifu No Sōgō Madoguchi [e-Gov: Portal to the Electronic Government]*, 1946, accessed 12 June 2015, <http://law.e-gov.go.jp/htmldata/S21/S21KE000.html>.

government in between elections is, in this reading, a contravention of the principles of democracy. The Kantei Mae protests, by contrast, clearly embodied a notion of democracy in which citizens' participate in decisions which affect them. These contrasting views have been at the centre of struggles for democracy in Japan since the end of the Asia-Pacific War in 1945 and the proclamation of the new constitution. The most famous incident which tested the limits of citizen participation in democratic government in post-war Japan was the Anpo struggle of 1960.

The Anpo struggle of 1960 brought hundreds of thousands of people into the streets around Nagatachō and Kasumigaseki in protest at the LDP government's attempt to ratify the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty (*Anpo*). For many observers in 2012, particularly those who were familiar with the history of the Anpo struggle of 1960, scenes of hundreds of thousands gathering outside the prime ministerial residence drew inevitable parallels. Nor were these comparisons lost on conservatives like Sakurai. For many citizen protesters at the time, the Anpo struggle became a test of Japan's post-war democracy and its new constitution. Would a new democracy based on citizen-participation in politics be possible or would the elites who had led Japan into the Asia-Pacific War be able to continue to rule unchecked? When the government of Kishi Nobusuke forced the Security Treaty through the Diet in defiance of the mass protests and sustained opposition from the Socialist and Communist parties within the Diet, many citizens felt that democracy had been defeated. Kishi ignored the protesters and deployed riot police to control the demonstrations, ultimately resulting in the death of one young demonstrator Kamba Michiko. In an essay written at the time Maruyama Masao wrote:

up until now, in the post-war, the issues which came up separately and at different times in the form of protecting the constitution, military bases, the teacher evaluation problem, etcetera. Those issues which sporadically appeared as problems have now cohered into one effort. Up until right this moment, all of the individual, fragmentary ways in which the Kishi government has tried to trample on the constitution and democracy appeared in a concentrated form on that night [the night that Anpo was forced through the parliament].⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵⁵ Maruyama Masao, 'Sentaku no toki [Time to Choose]', in *Maruyama Masao shū [Works of Maruyama Masao]*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996), 350.

In Sakurai's revisionist historiography, however, the defeat of the citizen movement during the Anpo struggle exemplifies the triumph of democracy. Sakurai compares Kishi's actions favourably with those of Noda. 'Kishi did not do anything like meet with the demonstrators', she writes. Instead, he maintained that 'everything is as usual in the Ginza and at Kōrakuen Stadium. I can hear the 'voice of the voiceless''.⁷⁵⁶

In regard to *min'i*, it is worth thinking about how the internal contradictions of the Kantei Mae demonstrations actually play into these criticisms. Because they are actually based on a similar understanding of *min'i* being something representable. Demonstrators argued that their collective actions were representative of the true *min'i*. Sakurai on the other hand, seemed to think she could divine the *min'i* of the 'voiceless voices', much like Kishi had claimed in 1960. The question remains, however, as to whether the opinions of more than one hundred million people are really 'representable' in any meaningful way, whether through demonstrations or elections. Democracy requires participation precisely because representation is impossible. The *hiroba* created in anti-nuclear protests in Tokyo were an example of how democracy might look beyond representation when people engage directly in the decisions which affect their lives.

A Hiroba in the Centre of the Government District

When Oguma attended the weekly Kantei Mae protests he noted that, although there were some people at the demonstrations wearing suits, the uniform of full-time Japanese 'salarymen', the majority wore a 'free' style of dress.⁷⁵⁷ He speculated that the presence of a large numbers of casually dressed men and women in their 30s and 40s who appeared to be without children and were able to attend a demonstration at six o'clock on a Friday evening indicates something about how Japanese society has changed in the post-industrial period. This is the generation which embodies the growth in single-person households, the 'liberalisation' of the labour market, Japan's declining fertility rate and a tendency to put off marriage until later in life. For

⁷⁵⁶ Sakurai, 'Noda shshō yo, naze demo tai ni kusshita no ka.'

⁷⁵⁷ Oguma, *Shakai o kaeru ni wa* [To Change Society], 176–177.

Oguma, the presence of this layer of Japanese society in the streets holds a significance that goes beyond the issue of nuclear power itself. Their presence indicates the composition of a social layer that is prepared to demonstrate.⁷⁵⁸

Oguma argues that the weekly protests held in the political centre of Japan created the ‘most free ‘plaza’ (*hiroba*) in contemporary Japan’. While the number of participants varied week to week, by maintaining the protests at a regular time and place MCAN created a ‘receptacle’ (*ukezara*) where larger mobilisations could occur when particular problems arose.⁷⁵⁹ In Chapter Four I discussed the way Genpatsu Yamero organisers tried to create a *hiroba* by appropriating for political activity those places in the city which were usually given over to consumption. Their strategy was based on a vision of democracy in which people participate directly in politics rather than electing representatives to make decisions affecting the polity on their behalf. In some ways, the Kantei Mae protests embodied a more traditional understanding of political power as located in the organs of government. By doing so, however, they were able to bear witness to the undemocratic processes whereby the restart of the Japanese nuclear industry was being planned and executed by the administrative and executive branches of government. They highlighted the collusive nature of the nuclear village with its connections between private electric power utilities and the organs of representative government. Furthermore, by providing a space in which people could gather, the protests created a kind of ‘people’s parliament’ or assembly in which free discussion on the many issues of concern to participants could take place.

Once the crush of the mass protests in June, July and August subsided, the weekly gathering took on the shape of a village. MCAN organised a number of different areas in which people could protest. On the footpath outside the Kantei, protesters continued primarily to chant ‘No Restarts’ (*saikadō hantai*) and other slogans. Designated speech and family areas were established in front of the Diet Building. A group of drummers occupied a space downhill from the Diet Building’s main gate. At the intersection of the Metropolitan Expressway between the Kantei and the

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid., 177.

⁷⁵⁹ Oguma, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito*, 248.

METI building MCAN established a refreshments area where they provided coffee and *amazake*⁷⁶⁰ and collected donations. Thus the geography of the protests was defined by dividing the space outside METI, the Kantei and the National Diet into particular areas which were designated for different activities. While MCAN took primary responsibility for organising the protests, the permanent occupation camp outside METI and the ongoing actions by protesters in front of the nearby TEPCO headquarters in Shinbashi gave further definition to the physical geography of the protests.

Next to the speech and family areas outside the main gate of the National Diet building a number of independent groups established their own small protests. There were groups singing songs and groups which laid out caricature artworks on the side of the footpath. A number of cyclists decked out their bicycles with placards or donned outrageous costumes and cycled around the Diet, extending the space of protest to the road without having to apply for a formal permit. A drumming group did the rounds of the ministerial and government office buildings stopping outside each one to drum out their protest. A group of fans of the rock musician Imawano Kiyoshirō set up photographs of the singer and played recordings of his music through small speakers set up on the pavement. A small ‘guerrilla café’ served sandwiches and hot drinks to passers-by for a small donation. Oguma describes the café space as a place for participants who had come to recognise each other through participating in the protests to talk and make jokes.⁷⁶¹

The ‘free space’ which existed every Friday night in the government district was a place where ‘anyone could easily realise whatever comes into his or her mind, anyone could support that activity and conversations were possible even between strangers. Introductions and being introduced were frequent. At the end of March [2013] the cherry blossoms bloomed and everybody had a *hanami* party’.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶⁰ *Amazake* is a hot drink made from fermented rice which is often consumed in Japan during the colder months.

⁷⁶¹ Oguma, *Genpatsu o tomeru hitobito*, 247.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*

Beyond Representation

The *Tōkyō Shimbun* of Sunday 17 June made its opposition to the decision to restart Ōi clear. The front page headline screamed '*Min'i mushi okashii*' ('Ignoring the Will of the People is Strange'). Featured below the headlines were photographs and interviews with activists who explained how they were working to assert their own voices in politics. One such activist was Fukushima Yumiko from the group Project 99%. She explained to the *Tōkyō Shimbun*'s reporter that, in her view, 'the decision to restart the Ōi nuclear plant has been made in spite of the opposition of the majority of the people (*kokumin*). Democracy is being overturned from its foundations. This is dictatorship'.

The article went on to explain how Fukushima had formed the Project 99% network with people she had met at anti-nuclear demonstrations since March that year. The reference to 99% draws on the language of the Occupy Wall Street movement which attempted to encapsulate the growing inequalities in contemporary society in terms of an opposition between the '1%' who own the majority of the world's wealth and the 99% who have little power and control. The group aims to support those politicians who agree with the group's core aims. By organising voters in support of these politicians outside of traditional party political structures they hoped thereby to overcome the disproportionate influence the nuclear village has over elected politicians. The problem Fukushima's group recognised certainly had a major impact on how politicians acted on energy policy. Kan Naoto explained to Oguma Eiji how the intervention of particular members of the Democratic Party of Japan who depended on the electoral support of the electric power company workers' unions had scuppered the party's plan to change energy policy to reduce Japan's dependence on nuclear power plants.⁷⁶³

A second interview published in the *Tōkyō Shimbun* on 17 June was with a group of young people working to increase the participation of youth in politics by reforming legislation which restricts online campaigning in national elections. Like Fukushima, 22 year-old university student Kita Nobusuke told the paper he was particularly

⁷⁶³ Oguma and Kan, 'Kan Naoto interviewed by Oguma Eiji. Kantei no naka kara no shōgen [Testimony from Inside the Kantei]', 184.

concerned that the decision to restart the Ōi plant was made despite a majority of Japanese people being opposed to it.⁷⁶⁴ Both Fukushima and Kita expressed an understanding of the failure of democracy based on the lack of accountability of elected representatives. They lacked the radical perspective of participatory democracy as an alternative to representative democracy which was more visible in the Genpatsu Yamero demonstrations. Nevertheless, their critique recognised that the way the system currently operates ultimately serves not the interests of people but those of the powerful electric utility companies. For some organisers of the Kantei Mae demonstrations, it was precisely this more ‘reasonable’ and mainstream orientation which drove them to organise independently of Genpatsu Yamero and to adopt a very different relationship with the police.

As Fukushima Yumiko’s group’s adoption of the slogan ‘99%’ indicates, the protests taking place in June 2012 continued to display an awareness of the broader global struggles of 2011. On 22 June the Friday protest reached 45,000 people and signs appeared bearing the words ‘Hydrangea Revolution’. June is summer in Japan and the time of year when the hydrangeas come into bloom. This nomenclature reflected the desire of some participants to connect the popular ‘revolution’ taking place in Japan with the Arab Spring which had begun with the Tunisian ‘Jasmine Revolution’ in late 2010.⁷⁶⁵ One contributor to LaborNet Japan, a web-based independent media organisation, described the ‘hydrangea revolution’ as ‘a revolution that fully realises the true will of the people, hopes not only to reverse the restarting of the [Ōi] reactors but to develop up to the decommissioning of all nuclear reactors’.⁷⁶⁶

On 29 June, the day before the scheduled restart of the reactors at Ōi, an unprecedented 200,000 people gathered outside the Kantei. They crammed into the footpath in front of the residence for several blocks with the crowd stretching as far

⁷⁶⁴ ‘Shimin ga kaeru, seiji to no “zure”’, *Tōkyō shimbun*, 17 June 2012, Morning edition.

⁷⁶⁵ Manuel Yang, ‘Hydrangea Revolution’, *Japan - Fissures in the Planetary Apparatus*, 23 June 2012, accessed 15 October 2014, <http://jfissures.wordpress.com/2012/06/23/hydrangea-revolution/>; Amamiya Karin, ‘Aisai kakumei!! no kan [The Hydrangea Revolution!! Edition]’, *Magajin 9 [Magazine 9]*, 27 June 2012, accessed 15 October 2014, <http://www.magazine9.jp/karin/120627/>.

⁷⁶⁶ Matsumoto Chie, ‘Shashin sokuhō: saikadō tekkai! kantei mae ni kūzen no 4 man 5 sen nin’, *LaborNet Japan*, 23 June 2012. Accessed 23 June 2012, <http://www.labornetjp.org/news/2012/0622shasin>. Translation is my own.

as the Ministry of Finance some 700 metres away. I attended the Kantei Mae protest on that day. The atmosphere was electric. As the crowd grew people became more and more impatient with being kept back from the Kantei and began to surge forward. At some point the movement of people towards the Kantei reached a critical mass and the barricades which had been erected by the police to keep people off the road collapsed. A wave of humanity surged into the street.⁷⁶⁷ The front page of the following day's *Tōkyō Shimbun* described the scene.

There were company employees and students and women with children, a wide range of ages. Among the crowd were people beating drums and people riding bicycles decked out with anti-nuclear designs.

A female 41 year old marriage counsellor from Tokyo's Edogawa ward, told the *Tōkyō Shimbun* her reasons for joining the protest.

I'm dissatisfied that the members of parliament don't understand the will of the people (*min'i*) and so I started demonstrating last week. I used to think that participating in demonstrations was bad. I thought that opposition was how conflict started and that leads to war. But after the [3.11] accident I learned that politicians had been able to do whatever they wanted because we were indifferent and I repented. I was one of the 'ignorant people' (*gumin*). How do we stop them from doing whatever they want? Clearly we have to take an interest and express our feelings.⁷⁶⁸

This interviewee expressed her view of the Kantei Mae protests as a means of 'expressing her feelings' (*ishi hyōshi*) and exercising some control over the actions of elected politicians. When the representative system is not expressing the 'will of the people', she surmises, the people must participate directly in politics. A second interviewee, a 34 year old company employee from Sumida ward also expressed this sense that politicians do not express the popular will. 'Prime Minister Noda, who decided on the restarts, has a completely different point of view from the people (*kokumin*)'.⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁷ Martin Fackler, 'In Tokyo, Thousands Protest the Restarting of a Nuclear Power Plant', *New York Times Online*, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/30/world/asia/thousands-in-tokyo-protest-the-restarting-of-a-nuclear-plant.html?_r=2&hwpw.

⁷⁶⁸ Nakasato Takako, 'Koko kara teiten kansoku, kokkai mae: Seiji mkukanshin o aratameru', *Tōkyō shimbun*, 30 June 2012, Morning edition, sec. Society.

⁷⁶⁹ 'Fukureagaru saikadō hantai: Kantei mae demo.'

The global wave of protests for democracy in 2010, 2011 and 2012 had mixed outcomes in their diverse local contexts. Yet all of these struggles raised problems with the existing structures of representation, particularly with the susceptibility of these structures to subversion by the undemocratic power of money. Yet the crisis of representation has, as yet, not produced any clear alternative forms via which people might exercise democratic power directly. Participants in the Kantei Mae protests seemed to be striving for alternative forms of democratic power. Situated in the government districts of Nagatachō and Kasumigaseki the Kantei Mae protests do engage in a dialogue with existing forms of power invested in the constitutional state.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the way the focus of the anti-nuclear movement shifted to the government and administrative districts of Kasumigaseki and Nagatachō in 2012. The change of leadership inside the ruling Democratic Party of Japan shifted the relationship between anti-nuclear demonstrators and their elected representatives. While Kan had indicated a degree of support for the objectives of the anti-nuclear movement, Noda's stance was much more clearly pro-nuclear. Nevertheless, the continuing pressure which protests placed on politicians exacerbated the splits inside the party and between central and local government leaders. By targeting the Ministry with the greatest responsibility for nuclear power issues, the METI Tent Plaza activists bore witness to the formal reactor restart hearings and exposed the collusion between experts and companies which stood to gain from nuclear power. By creating a *hiroba* outside METI, they created a place where activists from all over Japan and around the world could gather to participate in the debate on energy policy. When MCAN began to organise their weekly protest actions outside the Kantei, the METI Tent Plaza became one node in the 'most free plaza in Japan' where an ever larger number of people began to participate in and develop their critiques of the political process. The protests caused many people to ponder the nature of contemporary Japanese democracy. Both virulent opponents of the anti-nuclear movement and participants themselves took part in debates on democracy and the respective roles of representation and participation. The *hiroba* in the Nagatachō and Kasumigaseki districts suggested the potential for a kind of

citizen-led democracy which had been crushed during the Anpo protests of 1960 but now seemed once more to offer an alternative to the increasingly moribund structures of representative democracy in Japan.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I set out to examine the strategies and tactics of the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo after 3.11. I proposed that this would constitute a contemporary version of the ‘workers’ inquiries’ carried out by intellectuals associated with the perspective of autonomy. I argued that the anti-nuclear movement had a significance which went beyond the nuclear issue itself to encompass many of the contradictions of post-industrial Japan. Precarity and anti-nuclear activist Amamiya Karin concurred with this understanding that the anti-nuclear movement had taken on a broader, anti-systemic significance. In September 2012 she wrote that

the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident have revealed the contradictions of a society in which the population is aging, fleeing the regions, shopping streets are being transformed into ‘shuttered cities’ as the neoliberal major chains law empties the centre of rural towns and metropolitan centres concentrating consumption in large chain stores located on major highways. This is a structure in which a very few get rich while the rest are forced to settle for radioactive labours in the nuclear power plants in order to guarantee a stable livelihood.

Nuclear power contains all of the contradictions of this country. It condenses everything to do with the post-war Liberal Democratic Party government. It threw up all of these enormous contradictions and many people rose up.⁷⁷⁰

The threat posed by climate change as well as broader environmental concerns are quickly becoming the most important social issues of our times. Activist and author Naomi Klein has argued that, as the environmental crisis deepens, it is increasingly taking on the shape of a systemic crisis of the capitalist system.⁷⁷¹ The example of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan demonstrates the inseparability of environmental issues from the broader political economy.

As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, the activist response to the disaster emerged out of existing strands of social activism. I have focused in particular on the role of freeter activism and the way issues of social precarity were accentuated by the

⁷⁷⁰ Amamiya, ‘Demo no aru ikizurakunai machi’, 147–148.

⁷⁷¹ Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014).

compound disaster. In Chapter Two, for example, I described the April 2011 Genpatsu Yamero demonstration. I showed how the Genpatsu Yamero movement originated in the freeter activism which developed in Tokyo in the 1990s and 2000s. Then in Chapter Three I discussed the role of the Nantoka Neighbourhood in the anti-nuclear movement and its connection with the precarity movement. It is clear that the strategies and tactics of freeter activism had a powerful influence on the development of the anti-nuclear movement. The structural relationship between the nuclear industry and the broader political economy of the Japanese archipelago was echoed by the relationship between anti-nuclear activism and other political struggles related to the broader process of post-industrialisation, including the precarisation of work.

In this thesis I have brought the thought of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri and the broader autonomist current in which they are situated into dialogue with the anti-nuclear movement. In doing so I have followed the example of numerous scholars writing in Japanese but I have helped to fill a significant gap in the Anglophone autonomist literature. The perspective of autonomy has helped me to trace the connections between anti-nuclear activism in Japan and that ‘broad tendency’ which Sabu Kohso has detected in the globally interconnected social movements he calls the ‘new anarchism’. Significantly, the movements which have emerged in Japan after 3.11 are closely connected with these broader global tendencies. Hardt and Negri have suggested that it is the apparently contradictory synthesis of commonality and singularity which characterises the ‘multitude’ of social movements which are challenging contemporary forms of capitalist power. As I discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four in particular, activists have physically travelled to protest camps and university lecture theatres to share their experiences and try to find commonality with one another.

As a ‘workers’ inquiry’ this thesis describes the vibrant cultural life of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan after 3.11. I showed how festive street demonstrations, activist spaces, square occupations, music, theatre and film were woven together as movement participants sought to articulate their critique of the nuclear industry and their desires for a nuclear free world. In Chapter Three I turned from the protests in

the streets to the organisation of an autonomous community of resistance in the network of underground cafes, bars and bookshops which participants refer to as the Nantoka Neighbourhood. Members of the Neighbourhood were key organisers of anti-nuclear protest after Fukushima. They made use of the existing infrastructure of radical spaces which they had built up over varying periods of time for anti-nuclear activism.

Throughout this thesis I have developed my discussion of the strategy and tactics of the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo with relation to the dimensions of space and time. In Chapter One I discussed the way precarity tends to blur the distinction between work and non-work time to create a generalised condition of uncertainty and instability. In response, precarity activists have developed strategies of resistance which prioritise the satisfaction of their immediate needs and desires over long-term goals. As I discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four, precarity activism is characterised by prefigurative strategies whereby activists seek to realise in the here and now the kinds of alternative spaces and times they desire. I discussed the politics of ‘festive noise’ as a tactic which draws attention to the nuclear crisis and resists the silencing of dissent. In joking that demonstrating ‘saves electricity’, Matsumoto articulated his desire for the anti-nuclear protests to serve as a broader critique of the consumerism for which Tokyo is so well known. The tactical deployment of festive noise refused the instrumental rationality of consumer capitalism with a scream of opposition which encompassed affects of both anger and joy. In Chapter Five I discussed street theatre as a form of protest where activists literally ‘act out’ the futures they desire. In Chapter Six, too, I discussed the role of a democratic *hiroba* in providing a means of expression for people who felt their voices were not being represented within the formal institutions of government.

My concern with the precarity of time also extended to the role of history and memory in the contemporary anti-nuclear movement. I showed how strands of freeter activism were woven together with still other, older activist cultures such as the cultural history of the peasant *ikki* discussed in Chapter Two and the feminist and anti-nuclear ‘new wave’ movement of the 1970s and 1980s discussed in Chapter Five. I discussed the way Kunitachi’s city’s musical culture reflects the living

legacies of the counter-culture. The memories of protest which are recorded in music gave the Kunitachi demonstrators a repertoire from which to draw as they developed their own anti-nuclear soundtrack. In Chapter Six I discussed the historical precedent of the Anpo protests and how they both inspired contemporary activists and spooked a conservative commentator. While activists at times sought to distance themselves from the legacies of past activism they often drew on these histories for inspiration and ideas which were transmitted through music, political thought, film and protest style.

Urban space has also been a key concern in this thesis. The Genpatsu Yamero protests made subversive use of the city. By holding their first Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in Kōenji, Shirōto no Ran activists tapped into the networks they had developed in seven years of activism in the region. After Fukushima, the activists who located themselves in these radical spaces drew connections between the issues which had concerned them previously and the issue of nuclear power. In Chapter Three I discussed how members of the Nantoka Neighbourhood created ‘alternative spaces’ so as to construct a kind of ‘asylum’ for the precariat who are often excluded from the spaces of family life, work and education. By tactically locating activism and everyday life in the same spaces they developed the ‘the place of everyday life’ (*seikatsu no ba*) as a place for politics.

In Chapter Four I followed the Genpatsu Yamero movement into the centre of the city to explore the notion of *hiroba* as a spatial practice within the anti-nuclear movement. Activists used longstanding conceptions of urban space as a site of conviviality and democratic citizenship to carve out sites of encounter between anti-nuclear protesters at No Nukes Plaza. They created temporarily liberated zones in places which are usually subject to heavy policing. Despite participants’ desires for an open *hiroba*, however, they were challenged from within and without to define the limits of the *hiroba*. The debates which erupted over the inclusion of right-wing anti-nuclear activists in the *hiroba* forced organisers to recognise that even protest spaces are riven by hierarchies based on gender, ethnicity and class. The arrest of 11 participants at a Genpatsu Yamero demonstration in September 2011 further complicated the creation of the *hiroba* but also united participants in defence of their

rights to freedom and assembly. In this chapter I also discussed the globalised nature of contemporary anti-nuclear protest. I showed how participants in No Nukes Plaza, for example, engaged in dialogue with activists carrying out occupations in public spaces in other parts of the world. I continued this discussion in Chapter Six where I outlined the Kantei Mae protests in the centre of Japan's government and administrative district. I showed how the hundreds of thousands of people who gathered outside official government buildings like the Prime Minister's Residence engaged in a kind of grand experiment in popular democracy which had a discernible impact on the political process. Activists created a *hiroba* outside METI where people from across Japan and around the world could participate in the debate on nuclear power. The potential for participatory democracy to challenge the existing parliamentary system worried conservatives and prompted debates on the limits of representation. Yet most activists still preferred to work to reform the representative system rather than calling for a radical overhaul. Activists used a range of tactics to intervene in urban space. Taken collectively, these tactics suggest a broader strategic vision of the city as a place for protest, participation and carnival.

During a symposium which I attended at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in 2012, activist and writer Rebecca Solnit argued that, following disasters, 'civil society often succeeds where institutions fail in the first minutes, hours, and days, and sometimes people find in that newly visible, powerful civil society a new sense of identity, belonging and possibility. In this disasters can be a little like revolutions—not in the consequences of the revolution, but in the moment of rupture when nothing is certain and everything is possible'. Solnit's studies of post-disaster situations have led her to a profoundly optimistic vision.

What else I learned when I opened that door onto that great landscape of insurrectionary human nature is that utopia and the revolution are not in the future. They are all around us in a thousand ways, and when we invent that new language we will name each one of those ways. For after all, the relationships between friends, between parents and children, the myriad acts of generosity through non-profits, NGOs, activism, religious and voluntary groups are not capitalism but the kindness and generosity that counterbalance and clean up after capitalism. These are around us all the time, another economy, an economy of altruism and love, an economy

against money and capital, and this too I learned to see when I began to look at disaster.⁷⁷²

The 3.11 disaster visited enormous tragedy on people in the Tōhoku region of Japan, thousands of whom lost their lives in the earthquake and tsunami. By triggering a major nuclear accident, the disaster may well have even more profound consequences in the longer term. Nevertheless, in the midst of the post-disaster situation people in Tokyo came together to support their neighbours in the northeast and to protest the inadequate response of government and corporate leaders.

My contemporary ‘workers’ inquiry’ into the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo has painted a detailed picture of the grassroots response to the 3.11 disasters. By examining the movement through the lens of autonomist thought I have identified commonalities and connections between it and the globally connected social movements of 2011 and 2012. By focusing on the dimensions of space and time I have tried to bring out the everydayness of anti-nuclear protest culture. I have suggested that the overall strategic direction of the movement goes beyond instrumental demands to question more broadly the culture of capitalist developmentalism which gave birth to the nuclear industry.

Activists use two slogans with slightly different meanings to refer to the struggle against nuclear power. The first, ‘*han genpatsu*’ can be translated as ‘against nuclear power’ or ‘no nuclear power’. This slogan seems to express the negative moment of the movement, the rejection of nuclear technology and of the undemocratic power of the nuclear village on which it depends. A second slogan, which is more widely used, is ‘*datsu genpatsu*’, which is a little more difficult to translate. When used as a prefix, the Chinese character ‘*datsu*’, corresponds to the English prefix ‘de-’ meaning to reverse or remove. The character is also used in the verb ‘*nugu*’, for example, which means ‘to take off’, as in ‘to take off one’s clothing’. ‘*Datsu genpatsu*’ might therefore be taken to imply a more thoroughgoing process of ‘removing’ nuclear power from Japanese society. A liberal translation might be to ‘de-nuclearise’

⁷⁷² For the full text of Solnit’s speech, see Rebecca Solnit, ‘Shinsai ni mukatte, tobira o hiraku [Facing the Disaster, Opening the Door]’, trans. Odawara Rin, *At purasu* [*At Plus*] 12 (May 2012): 76–87.

Japanese society. In this thesis I have mapped some of the widespread and diverse forms which the movements to 'de-nuclearise' Japan has assumed in Tokyo.

At the time of writing the future of the nuclear industry in the archipelago is unclear. After three years doggedly pursuing the restart of Japan's idled nuclear reactor fleet, the Liberal Democratic Party government of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō recently achieved the first step towards its declared objective of restarting the Japanese nuclear industry. On 11 August 2015, two reactors at the Sendai nuclear power plant in the south-western island of Kyushu went back online. Another 23 applications for reactor restart are awaiting approval by the government. All face continuing opposition from anti-nuclear activists.⁷⁷³ There can be little doubt that anti-nuclear activism in Tokyo has played an important role in disrupting the nuclear village and hindering the re-establishment of the Japanese nuclear industry. Whether further restarts take place remains to be seen. Whatever the future may hold, the multitude of strategies and tactics adopted by the anti-nuclear movement in Tokyo have created the potential to 'de-nuclearise' time and space in a decaying post-industrial city.

⁷⁷³ 'Japan Restarts First Nuclear Power Plant Since Fukushima', *BBC News Online*, 11 August 2015, accessed 26 August 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-33858350>.

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