Henk Vinken
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Masayuki Deguchi
Editors

NONPROFIT AND CIVIL SOCIETY STUDIES

Civic Engagement in Contemporary Japan

Established and Emerging Repertoires

Civic Engagement in Contemporary Japan

Nonprofit and Civil Society Studies

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Foreword

Civic engagement is a concept of action that has become part of common vocabulary, not only in the West but also in many other regions of the world as well. A growing, yet still small number of scholarly works has recently emerged showing how in Japan citizen activism, volunteering, and social action for a public cause are developing. This present volume is another, and in my view, important addition to the body of knowledge on civic engagement in Japan. The majority of books on related issues in Japan take on the perspective of organized civic life, in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or nonprofit organizations (NPOs): we know quite a number of things about the quantitative trends in these organizations, on their positioning, on their difficulties, and on the institutional contexts in which they have to work. We know relatively little – except for a small number of topical qualitative case studies – on broad issues that relate to civic engagement in Japan, inside or outside these formal organizations. This volume is the first to offer a wide scope of broad variety of forms of civic engagement in contemporary Japan.

The volume is quite forceful in counterbalancing oversimplified ideas on an "ideal" civil society in which state, market, and civil society organizations are independent and at best take on oppositional stances. In Japan and in many European contexts civil society is part of a complex intertwined whole, sometimes even indistinguishable from state and market actors, for instance in providing public services or taking on the role of cooperative in several types of trades. This volume continuously presents us with a reality that is based on interdependencies between the state, business, and civic worlds. This is a reality that requires actors to develop bridging social capital in order to cooperate and construct and reconstruct their common cause, the issues of common concern, the things that are a public affair, and in the end, that what is making up good society in general. The volume shows that people who attain this capital are most successful in defending their cause. In short, a key message of this volume is that civil society in Japan is not mature only if it consists of independently working cells, but if it accepts and strategically works with these interdependencies.

Another one of the key messages of this book and, in my view, one of the main reasons of why this work is a must-read for any student, scholar, and activist interested in civic engagement in Japan is that it is crucial to listen to insiders stories if one wishes to fully understand developments in social action in general and civic

engagement in Japan in particular. It is possible to pull together a collection of Japan observers from wherever they reside, bring them to Japan, and have them conceive a volume on trends in the third sector, civil society, and/or civic engagement. Such a volume would no doubt be very insightful, but it is also likely to miss out a few things: the insight in how things work when confronted with demanding state and market actors; in what kind of resources and forms of human capital activists need to attain in order to successfully reach across lines to other actors that may help them advance their cause; in what to do when younger generations are no longer interested in becoming members, stray from organizational life, and adopt less political strategies. What insiders' stories show are the day-to-day struggles, frustrations, small victories, and, of course, future ambitions of people working on the shop floor of civil society. The authors of this volume do not just give voice to numerous insider-activists, some of them have themselves laid the groundwork for activism, from international cooperation to environmental protection, from community building to alternative culturally creative activism in media or shopping malls.

The rich and overwhelming variety of activism this volume depicts is another argument to take note of this entry into the world of Japanese people who are civically engaged. Well-established forms of civic engagement are presented, forms that especially relate to official community-based organizations and that work toward institutionalization of their causes. The volume includes groups of people who work outside the mainstream of Japanese civil society: the Japanese ex-untouchables, the deaf, and the more radical activists of alternative citizen media. It also depicts forms of activism that are taking shape outside formal civil society organizations. Worldwide, we have little to no robust empirical evidence on how this nonformal type of activism is developing. This volume is one of the first and as regards the Japanese context, the very first to show us how and why newly emerging forms of civic engagement are supported. Key supporters, this volume shows, are younger people, middle-aged women, and foreigners who intentionally aim for creating their own exclusive social and cultural space in Japanese society. Their engagement is lacking serious impacts on the course of state policies or market strategies, which in part is due to their deliberate separation and choice to refrain from being "too political." In part, this is also a rationalization for their marginalized position in the Japanese polity to begin with. In all cases, these forms of civic engagement as well as the more established one are used by younger generations to help them to define their identities and carve out their path through life, including civic life.

The result is that civic engagement in Japan after a period of politicization is now subject to a process of culturalization: among many groups and individuals alike culture plays a dominant role, from TV-shows, deaf manga to ethnic food, in all cases cultural values, symbols, and artifacts are successfully used to win public recognition and support, especially when they have easily recognizable roots in Japanese cultural traditions. At the same time the array of cultural elements helps contemporary Japanese people to escape from the one-dimensional identity of the social activist, or worse, the politician. Being able to escape to cultural contexts and engage in identity-hopping (activist one moment, a consumer/producer culture the

other) also helps to avoid stigmatization and ultimately marginalization in contexts outside activist circles, e.g., in working life. The final chapter of this volume speculates that Japan is perhaps not per se suffering from a dual civil society (many small groups, few large high-impact ones) but from Japanese people with dual civil identities, from people who do not fully engage in the identity of the civic activist alone.

The volume grew out of a major project initiated by Masayuki Deguchi, also one of the editors of this volume. The project is titled Civic Engagement and Globalism In the Postmodern Era (CEGIPE). CEGIPE builds on mobilizing a large network of activists and scholars from various disciplines and various walks of life, all working and living in Japan (see also the next, first chapter). In the *Epilogue*, Deguchi argues that increasing interactions between these people from different sectors, disciplines and languages necessitates a conscious choice of the transactional language, English in the case of CEGIPE, a choice which is unusual in the Japanese academic context but which helped to debate psychologically sensitive and socially controversial issues among participants of the CEGIPE meetings. The project was a laboratory of what Deguchi calls "linguapolitics." There is an important lesson to be learnt for following international projects that include participants from different national and linguistic backgrounds: all those involved should be aware of and reflect on the scholarly consequences of the choice to give one transactional language guiding power.

In the first, introductory chapter the support by Minpaku for CEGIPE and this resulting volume is acknowledged. The large number of activists and cultural creatives that joined the numerous CEGIPE meetings around Japan to tell their insiders stories of civic engagement gave the authors of this volume truly invaluable insight. The first chapter also expresses the gratitude for their contributions. Finally, on behalf of the authors of this volume, I would like to pass on the deepest appreciation of the help the editors received from two anonymous reviewers when they pulled together this book project as well as the warmest thanks to Teresa Krauss and Katherine Chabalko at Springer New York for their continuous support of the book project.

Helmut Anheier

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Yuko Nishimura is a social anthropologist (PhD 1993, LSE, University of London) specialized in gender, kinship, community development, social change, minority studies, civic engagement, and globalization. She started her fieldwork in India in the early 1980s, and now regularly undertakes researches in India, Japan, the United States, and in Asia. She was an Abe Fellow between 1999–2000 serving as a visiting scholar at the University of Washington in Seattle. Between 2002–2005, she organized an international research collaboration titled "How can the local government collaborate effectively with grassroots Nonprofits?: a comparative study between the US and Japan," which was funded by the Center for Global Partnership (The Japan Foundation). Her book based on this research was awarded by Japan NPO Research Association. She is currently working as a professor at Komazawa University in Tokyo, and is working on a grassroots young leadership training project in a southern Indian fishing village funded by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). In Japan, she is studying civic engagements among underprivileged minorities in flophouse districts and ethnically mixed neighborhoods.

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Part I
Introductory Section

Chapter 1
Introduction

Henk Vinken, Yuko Nishimura, and Bruce White

Studying Civic Engagement in Japan

The office windows on the top-floor of the National Museum of Ethnology in the northern outskirts of Osaka, Japan, overlook a giant, beautifully landscaped park. The park surrounds the museum on all sides. Scattered around the park are impressive large-sized remnants of the World Expo held at the park in 1970. In front of the museum, also known as Minpaku, several groups of school children squat on the ground, guarded left or right by their teachers and some of their parents, patiently waiting for what will happen next. Somewhat further away in the park, volunteers carrying colorful headbands enthusiastically prepare for the monthly flee market to be held on the central square the upcoming weekend. To the right, where the park has its garden sections on some modest slopes, groups of photographers band together before heading off into the gardens for their finest moments of flower blossom photography. On a far side of the park, several groups of elderly women in multiple layers of protective clothing are very busy weeding endless rows of flower beds. Inside the museum, the relaxing silence in the exhibition halls sometimes breaks with the sound of softly talking Minpaku Museum Partners as the volunteers at the museum are called. They provide assistance to the visitors and various other services, for instance, in the workshops held at the museum or for schools that plan to visit the museum.

This volume is about these people. Large numbers of people in Japan are active on a daily basis to voluntarily provide services to other people, to make their energy of use in their community, to help out at their local school or community hall, to perhaps even advance a common cause in some nongovernmental organization (NGO). These people act in a public realm that, as theory goes, is separate

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from the state, family or market place, a realm known as civil society. This volume is more about their actions than about the associations and institutions that, in all their different shapes and sizes, underpin civil society. It is concerned with civic engagement, with the art of acting for the common good, for matters of common concern, itself, whether or not these acts are located inside or outside the associations of civil society. There are several arguments to do so. A rather pragmatic one is the fact that most authors have so far focused strongly on the associational and institutional dimensions of civil society. The numeric trends of civic groups, the developments of relationships between state and civil associations, the laws and regulations that set the boundaries for civil society, the ups and downs of business–civil society coalitions, etc., are well-researched, also for the Japanese context. The variety of acts captured in the notion of civic engagement is less widely examined in the wealth of civil society and third sector studies. Another argument is that a focus on civic engagement as a form of behavior allows us to include acts that develop outside organized associational life. They are acts that are strongly related to a common cause or public good, but that are not per se, or – more strongly – per se not part of the repertoires and routines of formal associations, civic groups, NGOs or nonprofit organizations (NPOs). On several pages of this book it is argued that this type of nonorganized civic engagement might well be increasingly important.

It is beyond the scope of this volume to extensively discuss the core characteristics of the notion of "public," a notion which is key in the concept of civic engagement.[1] Civic engagement deals with public affairs, with public discourse and public goods. Civic engagement includes acts and, according to the influential political scientist Norris (2001), also knowledge and trust that refer to issues of public or common concern. The idea of what the "public" exactly means is culturally and historically contingent. Any choice for one or the other definition of what the concept of "public" entails is tenable depending on place and time. A core element in the debate on what is public seems to be based in sociological notion of modernization. What topics are regarded public in late-modern societies are the very same topics over which "church and state authorities had hitherto exercised a virtual monopoly of interpretation" (Schwartz, 2003a: 35). The issues that are public, in other words, are those on which key traditional institutions lost full control due to modernization and secularization processes. Issues that are no longer restricted to the powers-that-be, that are not private, familial, or commercial, but that are part of the portfolio of the public in general.

In line with this thinking, one can argue that public issues are therefore not per se political issues. They refer to wider concerns beyond the polity. As says Wuthnow (1991: 22, 23), a high-profile political scientist:

[1] See Carver et al. (2000) for a review of the notions of the public and civil society in Japanese politics and among elites in a more broader sense.

> public discourse must be thought of in terms broader than those of political debate alone. Its essential concern is with the collective, not necessarily in the sense of the entire society, but with the relationships among individuals, between individuals and communities, and among communities. Public discourse – or what is often referred to as the public sphere – is thus the arena of questions about the desirable in social conduct: How shall we live as a people? What do we hold as priorities? To what ends shall we allocate our time, our energy, our collective resources? Where do we locate hope? How do we envision the good?

These questions are answered by a multitude of civic groups, associations, NGOs and NPOs around the world, including Japan. But also by individuals who do not or only temporarily link up with organized associational life, who work in schools, in neighborhoods, on the streets, in museums, and in parks even. This volume reports on the acts of several samples of these individuals in Japan, inside and outside associational life. It aims to show us a picture of Japan as an example of a vibrant, activist society. A society that is different from many Western societies, also in some aspects of civic engagement, but that also shares many characteristics, including a proportion of active people who care about acting on their notion of what is good for their community, small or large. In some cases that means engaging in a struggle against well-established state and business interests. In other cases it means taking advantage of the opportunities to work in fields that the state and business leave untouched. In most cases, however, it means working with other parties, including state and business organizations, to advance some public cause.

Several chapters in this volume, as will be shown more extensively further on in this introductory chapter, depict the successes and obstacles in working together with these formal powers. Civic engagement in Japan is not just about joining hands in watering flower beds at museum parks. In many cases, it is a serious battle and a hard struggle with the formal powers to defend interests, to fight for civil rights, to raise one's voice, and even to – sometimes with overt anger and despair – protest against injustices that people experience on a day-to-day basis, especially people outside the mainstream and people who suffer economic hardships. Community organizers, leaders of alternative unions, minority activists, new media supporters, lobbyists of all varieties and even anarchists engage in sometimes tough actions in Japan to give voice to their cause – sometimes in confrontation but often also in cooperation with the powerful state and market institutions. Other chapters show how (younger) Japanese people distance themselves from these powers and create an activist and creative circle of their own however temporary and loose that circle may be.

Before introducing the sections and single chapters of this volume, we will shortly dwell on the existing perspectives of civic engagement and, more broadly, civil society in Japan. The next section of this chapter argues that framing the acts of civility of Japanese people and Japanese civil society as a whole in the dichotomy of maturity and immaturity is obsolete. The subsequent section is devoted to another dichotomy, the one of traditional versus emerging forms of engagement.

The key argument is that we have to be attentive to forms of engagement that are more individualized, informal, loosely organized, and lifestyle oriented, in part because, simply put, life has changed for many contemporary Japanese (young) people. This chapter closes with introducing the sections and chapters of this volume on civic engagement in contemporary Japan.

Beyond Maturity and Immaturity

Japan is a peculiar (civil) society, many long-time scholars and casual observers of Japan argue. Home-grown political scientist Inoguchi (2002) specifically takes on the task of describing the maturation and consolidation of political and civic institutions in Japan. He shows a notable increase in the number of associations in the realms of religion, social insurance and welfare (e.g., organizations for the elderly), business and union life, and in academic, cultural, and also political fields (see also Osborne 2003; Schwartz and Pharr 2003; Takao 2007).[2] Similar trends are found in the number of grass-roots private-sector initiatives and the number of more strong government-related NGOs and NPOs (see the next chapters in this volume and see Deguchi 2001, for more details on the diversity of NGOs/NPOs). The overall population active in civic activities is stable at about one quarter since first measured in the early 1980s. Along with the resilient, if not rising civic cultural traditions that in Japan go back for centuries, there is a marked low level of trust in politics, politicians, and their institutions. Part of the explanation for these internationally low and even lowering levels of trust lies in the stereotypical positioning of Japanese politics.[3] Inoguchi (2001) coined the term "karaoke politics" to point to a system in which bureaucrats offer the main menu of political options to politicians whose subsequent actions highly mimic karaoke singing: they simply follow the lyrics and melody that stem from the karaoke/bureaucracy machine.

One consequence is that trust in the world of politics (government, parties, leaders, etc.) is low. Perhaps better, that the world of politics is seen as a world of little relevance, a playground for the "Okami," meaning those who reside above and with whom it is best not to engage too much with (Schwartz 2003b). Vice versa, this world does not easily allow "lesser Gods" to have voice or influence. There is strong evidence that this is institutional: the political institutions in Japan, as Pekkanen (2006) states it, with its very particular regulatory framework, financial

[2] See for somewhat older references the pioneering works of Yamamoto (1998, 1999).

[3] It is not part of the focus of this volume to extensively dwell on the differences in the nature and levels of generalized or other forms of trust in Japan as compared to other (Asian or Western) nations. Numerous authors point out that in Japan trust is narrower and closer, more restricted to smaller groups (family members, colleagues, etc.) and less applicable to an anonymous, generalized other. The radius of trust in the latter, Western form is larger. On definitions and difficulties to measure trust cross-nationally see, among others, Blondel and Inoguchi (2006) or Ikeda (2006).

flows, and political opportunity structure, make it that civil groups and individual people have little influence. We would like to add that it is, in part, not only an institutional but also a cultural matter that people are hesitative to exercise influence. In the Confucian historic context, people are inclined to believe that politics and governance (including civil service) are best left to experts (see for empirical evidence Vinken 2007). The "Okami"-notion is an illustration of this. It is perhaps also a general, across cultures universal issue, that the world of politics is something one does not want to get involved in, that people avoid the public sphere "trying hard not to care about issues that would require too much talking to solve" and instead shrink "their concerns into tasks that they could define as unpolitical" (Eliasoph 1998, on the United States; see also LeBlanc 1999, for Japan).

What is clear is that civic engagement does not take place in a political, institutional, or cultural void. Civic engagement is firmly embedded and best analyzed by taking account of the national history of political, institutional, and cultural factors.[4] Pekkanen (2006), already mentioned above, has perhaps written the most influential book on the institutional framework of Japanese civil society in recent times (see also Pekkanen (2004) and Kingston (2004)). He too notes that Japan enjoys an abundance of local civic groups and local civic activities, yet he is surprised to learn that at the national level there is little advocacy and few well-organized associations. Most are understaffed, underfunded, and politically marginalized, Pekkanen concludes when he compares with advocacy organizations in the United States. He argues that NGOs and NPOs are highly restricted because of harsh legal codes and provisions. Compliance to these very detailed sets of rules is needed before opening a bank account, hiring staff, or receiving donations. The approved organizations are subsequently likely to function as government branches working in the (cheap) supply of public services. Sometimes, they are staffed by retired civil servants. Most of these organizations have (want?) little influence on policy-making at national levels. Vice versa, most agenda-setting, policy- and law-making takes place without consultation of the multitude of organizations concerned; pensioner clubs are not involved in pension reform and antidiscrimination laws are not the result of loudly voiced demands from feminist groups, for instance. In part because of the lacking professionalism of national-level civic groups, which in turn is determined by the restrictive and discouraging regulatory framework. Like Inoguchi and many other Japan watchers, Pekkanen is hopeful about recent (projected) chances in Japan. He sees a Japan that is now rapidly changing, i.e., a Japan that recently is becoming more similar to Western nations and following Western ideals of not a civil society of "members without advocates" or "advocates without members" but a vibrant civil society of "members with advocates."

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[4] As well as factors from global contexts. For instance, Chan-Tiberghien (2004) shows that events such as high-level international conferences and treaties have a catalyst effect on Japanese civil society and policy-making.

There are many possible points of critique when looking at Pekkanen's analysis.[5] Several arguments can be found in the work of other experts on Japanese civil society. Pharr (2003) argues that Japan represents another historic type of civil society with high value in its own right. Japan's civil society is characterized by an activist state (versus permissive state leaving groups free, but giving little support) that aims to monitor, penetrate, steer civil society with a wide range of distinct policy tools targeting different groups or sectors (instead of applying rules broadly to all NPOs equally). "A patchwork quilt of rules permitted some groups while restricting or barring others" and even today "most civil society groups are likely to remain ineligible for… contributions that are the lifeblood of their counterparts in many other advanced industrial democracies" (Pharr 2003: 325, 327). In such an environment civil society groups and civic activism are likely to seek subtle ways to work not against but with the state (and liaison organizations representing the state), to manipulate state control instead of openly confronting it, to accept compromise organizations (that may include retirees from the state), to use silent diplomacy at the right moments instead of making loud public displays, etc. As one of the following chapters shows consumer organizations usually have little chance to impact the regulations and policies that are co-jointly decided upon by government and market parties (MacLachlan 2002; see also Hasegawa in this volume and Hasegawa 2004, 2005). Sometimes, however, in moments of dissension between government and market parties, they are able to form an alliance with either side and impact the policy agenda. In other words, it is highly unlikely and simply ineffective for a Japanese activist club to emphasize its independence and to seek applause on a national level via advocacy strategies that could separate their own particular group or sector from the world of government and business.

In Haddad's strong empirical work on politics and volunteering in Japan we find another argument (Haddad 2004, 2007). Engagement is highest in embedded organizations (organizations with strong ties to government) in a culture with strong ideas of government responsibilities and, similarly, weak ideas of individual responsibilities for caring for society. Japan is an example of such a society. In the United States individual responsibilities are rated higher than collective ones and thus engagement is higher in nonembedded organizations. The debate is about the voluntary aspect of engagement in Japanese embedded organizations. People work for free, but do they also participate voluntarily; is participation in these organizations – such as neighborhood associations, volunteer firefighters, and PTAs – based on spontaneous will or is it compulsory, more regarded a civic duty than a civic responsibility? Whatever the answers are, the analysis of Haddad (2007) underpins the call to take account of the cultural factor. In a similar fashion, Inoguchi (2002: 385) cites Ikegami's notion of "honorific collectivism". In highly bureaucratic Japan care for the collective organization (including the nation) is the basis of a political culture which emphasizes loyalty, diligence, commitment to the welfare of

[5] For a strong comment on the existence of an independent nonprofit or third sector from the perspective of Dutch civil society, see Dekker (2001).

the populace, frugality and fitness to serve the collective cause. Being part of such organizations or at least contributing to them is serving the ideal of collective responsibility. In a (political) culture with such ideals it is unlikely that advocacy and independence are highly regarded phenomena.

Then, there are many examples of associations that have strong influence, usually associations that mix public with business interests such as the Japanese Medical Association or Japan's agricultural unions (*nokyo*), as Pekkanen (2006: 178) himself shows. Hirata (2002) has written a thesis on the rising power of NGOs in aid-development policies in Japan. NGOs that have also gained substantially rising membership. The development NGOs in the fields of education, health care, and environmental protections are successful in building relationships with bureaucracy and legislature, business, and foreign country organizations. Hirata (2002: 154; see also Hirata 2004) also claims that advocacy groups in these fields increasingly make their voices heard via mass media, public seminars, and conferences. The warmer the relationships with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the more effective this advocacy seems to be. Again, the examples from Pekkanen himself and others show us that his version of the dyade of advocacy and independence is an unfamiliar phenomenon.

The core point is that civil society organizations do not have to be entirely independent from the state of business in order to qualify as civil society organizations. The same goes for civic activities or civic engagement as such. The ultimate benchmark is not that they take place in an idealized "public sphere" which is unattached from the interests of government (local or not) or the market. In reality, they are attached and dependent in different shapes and forms. Civil society in Japan and in many Western nations (especially in Europe) is firmly attached to the state and the market place. Moreover, the latter two are most likely dependent on civil society (see the example of public services provided by civil society organizations). Reality is based on interdependencies not on a historically and culturally specific "ideal" of separately operating social, political, and/or economic worlds. One of the finest examples at the level of civic engagement is illustrated by Nakano (2005; see also Nakano 2000, and LeBlanc 1999) who writes about community volunteers. She argues that within cooperative relationships volunteers openly struggle for freedom and the creation of their own values. They do not have direct political influence, but use their volunteer identity to take action, and thus are indirectly also shaping state programs, manipulating the state and mainstream policies according to their own agenda. They, for instance, criticize the lack of adequate resources provided by state for low-income people while organizing and providing aid to these people in their role as volunteers. The voluntary sector, in the eyes of Nakano, is an arena in which social change is enacted in Japan. Volunteers keep a distance from direct political involvement or confrontation, precisely because that enables them to live according to their values and to act compassionately, spontaneously, and flexibly (see also LeBlanc 1999).

In line with these arguments it seems too simplistic and even biased to conceptualize Japan's civil society as immature or mature depending on the extent to which it has achieved a phase in which large memberships organizations are backed

by strong national-level advocacy groups that function fully independently from state or economic interests (see also Tsujinaka 2003). We will have to go beyond the dichotomy of maturity and immaturity and perhaps especially beyond the notion of dependence and independence. A particular civil society is not only mature when it has established professional national-level advocacy groups as can be found in the United States (many of which do not represent organizations with members, as Putnam (2000) shows with great concern) and immature as long as it has not done so. A particular civil society is also not only interesting when it functions independent from other social actors. For us, this means that those acts of civic engagement are particularly interesting if they reveal the tensions, opportunities, and obstacles when civic activists work with people representing other interests. The core business of civic engagement in Japan (and perhaps elsewhere too) includes activities to balance different interests, to construct coalitions, and in the process reconstruct messages on what is of common concern, what is a public affair, and, in the end, what is good society. The central message of this volume is that civic activists do not balance, construct, and reconstruct these phenomena on their own but together with government and business sectors. In Japan, civic engagement is a concerted effort of not only citizens, but also of representatives from outside civil society.

Traditional and Emerging forms of Civic Engagement

In Japan and elsewhere, civic engagement is an effort not only of organized citizens, but also of people who work within associational life and of civic activists who band together in some form of membership-based group. Especially in these times, as we will show below, it would be a miscalculation to focus only on civic engagement in these formal groups, only on volunteering that relates to belonging of an environmental organization, for instance, or only on community involvement that relates to neighborhood associations, or, finally, only on actions for the benefit of developing countries if they relate to official development aid NGOs. The times and the world have changed. As an increasing number of especially political scientists realize, time has come to focus on other nonformal forms of engagement too (Hooghe 2004; O'Toole et al. 2003; Dahlgren 2007). This is not an innocent issue, especially not for specific groups in society, perhaps especially not for younger generations. As complaints rise about younger generations' declining interest in public issues, declining rates of political and civic engagement, declining membership ratio's, the need to look beyond traditional ways to interact with the political system and civil society becomes urgent. Perhaps these younger generations prefer other forms of engagement, forms that mainstream political science and civil society studies are missing.

As argued elsewhere (Ester and Vinken 2003), political scientists analyze longitudinal data that in many cases include only classic indicators of political action. By analyzing these data over time, political scientists did and do a valuable job in

detecting political action trends but are likely to simply miss novel forms of political participation. If one (see e.g. Putnam 2000) finds, for example, that younger generations are less inclined to vote, to write letters to its political leaders, to attend political party meetings, and to sign petitions, does this consequently imply that its political participation is below that of older generations? Framed in these terms, it is. But it may very well be that younger people use *alternative forms* of political action, particularly through the Internet, which they think are better suited to boost political discussions and to influence the political arena. Standard political participation scales as used in mainstream political science survey research do not cover such new forms of political engagement. Bennett (1998: 744) says "[...] what is changing in politics is not a decline in citizen engagement, but a shift away from old forms that is complemented by the emergence of new forms of political interest and engagement." The cultural dynamics of political engagement are simply underrepresented in the toolbox of the average political scientist who is interested in longitudinal data on political action using repeated measures. True, these data pertain to long time periods, some more than two decades. But "compared with earlier decades, by the end of the century [American] citizens may not be joining the Elks or striking in trade unions or demonstrating about civil rights, any more than they are hula-hooping or watching sputnik or going to discos. But they may be engaged in civic life by recycling garbage, mobilizing on the internet, and volunteering at women's shelters or AIDS hospices" (Norris 1999: 258).

These chances are based in wider structural social changes, such as secularization, globalization, and especially individualization (Hooghe 2004). Changes that create a new socialization environment for younger generations. The key notion is that the individual has gained more control on what to do with socialization messages from older generations. Generally speaking, there is no such thing as a one-on-one transition of dispositions, values, attitudes or behaviors from any socialization agent to the socialization subject. Every individual will make its pick from what is offered from socializing agents. In today's paradigm, socialization is as much about the acquisition of political dispositions, values, etc., as it is about shaping these elements within a specific historical (the 2000s, for instance) and cultural (the Japanese for example) context. The historiography of the notion of socialization itself reflects this paradigm shift (Settersten and Owens 2002; Vinken 2005, 2007). It is time to spend a few words on this shift which can be framed in broader notions of the rise of the choice biography and reflexivity.

According to German social scientist Hermann Veith (2002), socialization is changing giving rise to the process of reflexive biographization of the life course. Socialization, he argues, is no longer a matter of *Vergesellschaftung*, meaning individuation by social integration. It is reversed and can only be understood as a process of subjective option-observation by individuals imagining their own path and self-directed route to integrate in society and live the future-life they feel like living. In other words, socialization shifted from developing individuality by taking part in society to, regardless of "real" participation, developing competences to imagine one's own future and to imagine one's personal choices from the seemingly ever growing number of options to participate in society. This shift in socialization

may seem plausible particularly for individualizing societies. For, in these societies classic institutions and their representatives seem unable, or at least highly reluctant in their communications toward younger people, to determine, direct, and control the choices young people (should) make. The emphasis is put on a battery of psychological strongholds, on first developing individuality, building self-esteem and personality, discovering one's true inner self, unraveling one's own unique motives, before making definite choices and especially before making one's that pin people down on a certain irreversible trajectory. The point is not that this is not the whole story and that it denies that people are directed, determined, and controlled by institutions (e.g., the school, church, family, neighborhood), that they undergo true-felt constraints from the real social categorizations they are part of (class, gender, education), and that they are dependent on previous choices they themselves and the ones they interact with have made (the so-called path and other dependencies in the life course). The point is that people, at least in individualizing societies, are increasingly less willing to acknowledge and value these types of outside control, direction, and determination. Interpreting and legitimizing one's choices with this outside dependency perspective is what runs against the culture of individualism (Elchardus 1999).

Veith argues that the consequence of the changing focus of socialization is that the life course undergoes what he terms a "reflexive biographization." People's biography, or their individual paths through life, has become the central theme on which people focus in their life course. Again, not per se participation in society, taking up different roles in life itself, is central, but the projection of one's future biography, one's plans for one's future, the options themselves that one may or may not explore, the consequences as well of choosing any of the multitude of options; these are the themes that take up the bulk of energy people spent today. To put it in modernist dichotomous terms: in late-industrial days people participated in society (got work, got married, got children, etc.) and by doing so they learned to project next steps in life, became aware of the plan of life that revealed itself before their own eyes, and were confronted with the consequences of choices they made or forgot to make. This way they learn what it is they want from life (and what they rather had had from life) and what their own strong and weak points are or what their own individuality in life is. In post-Fordist days people seem to first focus on who they are, or better, who they want to become, to focus on making a list first of both their weak and strong points, to try to predict consequences of choices they want and they not want to make, to explore an overall plan of life, before even participating. Participation (work, marriage, parenthood and citizenship) itself is postponed, in other words, or participation is at best seen as a temporary "challenge" as long as it is of the type that keeps options open to again other, new, yet unimagined forms of participation.

Continuous reflection on the shaping of one's own biography becomes visible in several life domains, including the domain of politics, civil society, citizenship, and civic engagement. What kind of learning experiences do I seek from participating in civil society, what issues and actions show me something new, something I do not know yet, help to keep me moving, match my passion, with which kind of people do

I want to interact, is the public role I would like to play concurring with other roles? These questions are relevant for those generations that, especially since the 1980s, are most strongly confronted with the ideal of the self-directed biography. They, especially, are believed to seek and produce their own path in the domain of civil society, citizenship, and civic engagement. A path that is less institutionally prepared. Moreover, a path that just like their life course, has to be flexible and open in order to be able to respond to new circumstances. A unique and new path preferably, so that one can keep developing one's self and surprise one's self (Vinken 2007). It is likely that new generations create their own socialization contexts, contexts in which older generations play a less dominant role (e.g., Zinnecker 2000).

In contemporary, posttraditional societies, people are more able to construct their own socialization. The domain of politics and civic engagement is not excluded from this monitoring process related to today's quest among late-modern society's young people for their own individual path through life. It is believed that, especially, forms of engagement that allow for flexibility and individuality gain popularity among younger generations in late-modern societies. Platforms (instead of organizations) that underline the value of self-organization, self-confrontation, and even self-destruction (i.e., leaving previously accumulated experiences behind when necessary) do so as well.

Stolle and Hooghe (2005) provide several insights in to the core elements of the alternative civic engagement trend. New participation styles and methods are emerging that replace the old ones. People are willing to participate in politics and civil society, but this does no longer translate into membership of traditional political or civic organizations. Especially young generations are believed to join nonhierarchical and informal networks and preferably respond to lifestyle-related, sporadic mobilization efforts, to prefer engagement in less ideological and more issues-related affairs, and to devote less attention to state level or national policy issues but more to local level "close-to-home" issues. Stolle and Hooghe (2005) built one of the earliest frameworks of analysis for this more fluid type of civic engagement. The framework focuses at four elements: (1) structure, (2) issues, (3) mobilization, and (4) style of involvement. The structure is not formal or bureaucratic, but horizontal and flexible, building on the loose connections that are needed to succeed in today's late-modern society (Wuthnow 1998). This structure also fits efforts to quickly address issues and coordinate (global) actions through e-communications (Bennett 1998). In terms of issues, it is said that new initiatives are less concerned with institutional (party political) or ideological politics. Instead, lifestyle elements are politicized with actions that many do not even call political. In line with this are "subpolitics" or daily decisions, such as shopping, taking on a political meaning (Micheletti 2003; see also Micheletti et al. 2004). Close to home issues, such as waste control, can make people feel connected without the requirement of formal membership or ideological identification, say Stolle and Hooghe (2005: 161). Mobilization, next, is said to be spontaneous, ad hoc, and irregular, with easy entry and easy exit options, and with the danger that the "organization" (a group of organizers or other more loose networks) dissolves very quickly or experiences serious fluctuations in its "membership." Finally, the type of involvement

is less collective or group-oriented. It can be supported by advocacy networks and can have a far-reaching impact on businesses or government, but the act is usually individualized: a purchase decision, forwarding an e-zine, voting on a website. While action may be coordinated collectively, the act is often performed alone.

As Stolle and Hooghe (2005) themselves note, there is little systematic empirical evidence for the emergence, let alone growth of these new forms of engagement. "Often these forms of engagement that range from wearing political signs and logos, making shopping decisions based on political considerations, signing petitions and spontaneously attending rallies or political concerts are not even picked up or acknowledged in mainstream political science research" (Hooghe 2004: 333). The number of (qualitative) studies in the field is growing (see, e.g., the mentions above). Most of these studies, however, take place in Western societies. There is little information on how these forms of engagement develop in non-Western contexts. In this respect, this volume aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on how emerging forms of engagement are developing, in this case in a non-Western, Japanese context.

Outline

This volume consists of several sections. The first, introductory section presents three chapters: this introductory chapter and two chapters that dwell on the historical developments of civil society and civic engagement in the Japanese context. Next, the second section deals with chapters which refer to more traditional, classic forms of engagement, meaning engagement that unequivocally focuses on "old-school" organizational forms to advance their cause: on unions, on movements, on support associations. The third section presents chapters on civic engagement outside the mainstream. People's activism to advance the cause of minorities in Japan, of the deaf, and of people who wish to broadcast their voice in alternative media. The fourth section contains three chapters which build on emerging forms of engagement, in youth culture, in Korean pop culture, and in 1-day anticonsumerist culture. The volume is closed with a fifth and concluding section which includes a concluding chapter and an epilogue (Chap. 14) by Masayuki Deguchi, the key initiator of the project on which this volume builds.[6]

In the course of 2006 and 2007, Masayuki Deguchi, a professor in civil society studies at Minpaku, Osaka, Japan, prepared a project titled Civic Engagement and Globalism In the Postmodern Era (CEGIPE). CEGIPE builds on mobilizing a large network of scholars from various disciplines. All those engaged in studying old or new forms of engagement and willing to join a number of concerted case studies of civic engagement in Japan are welcome to join CEGIPE. It is felt important to

[6]In this volume, we will present Japanese names in a Western style: first name first, family name second.

include scholars in the CEGIPE-team who all live and work in Japan, Japanese nationals or otherwise. The first editor of this volume was thus invited to join the team as a guest of Minpaku, Osaka, Japan, during the November 2007–August 2008 period. Before and during this period several meetings were held in Osaka, in Fukuoka, and in Tokyo. In the meetings, CEGIPE-team members engaged in discussions on the core goal and setup of the project (including establishing this volume) and, later, authors (including some non-CEGIPE-team members) presented drafts of their chapters to the group. It was deliberately chosen to have ample time in most meetings for input from practitioners, people who where civic activists, who worked for the homeless, had joined fellow minority group members in an activism–culture club, etc. This framework of regular meetings and workshops, in authentic settings, with people who can all provide insider-views, with a mix of academics and practitioners, proved to be indispensable for a team whose members wish to reflect the vibrancy and great variety of civic engagement in Japan. Whether we succeed in this mission or not by presenting this volume, we are grateful to Minpaku and to Masayuki Deguchi for providing us with this unique opportunity.

A core member of the CEGIPE-team is Makoto Imada, a long-time scholar and activist, nationwide organizer and senior advocate of civil society in Japan. His chapter, Chap. 2 in this introductory section, provides a thoughtful insider-look of the trends in civil society in Japan. Imada begins by neatly outlining a history of civic engagement in Japan. We quickly see that Japanese society has a long history of associations working for the common good. Even corporate social responsibility has, for Imada, deep roots in Japanese society. The philosophy of Osaka merchants in the mid-nineteenth century, “good for the firm, good for the customer, and good for society,” is a case in point. The political, social, and economic spheres of Japanese life interact to bring war, economic growth and decline and political integration and upheaval. Plotting the course of democracy, social action, and voluntary organizations over the last 150 years, Imada’s chapter sets the scene for understanding that civic engagement, far from being a linear force, is rather subject to periods of growth, decline, and rebirth.

Chapter 3 in this introductory section is by Chimaki Kurokawa, who is an experienced civic activist working in one of the 23 Wards in Tokyo. His chapter reflects on the changing social, political, and economic frameworks of civic engagement in the last century. He shows how the “foreign” notions of civil society and civic engagement have been incorporated and subtly changed to fit the Japanese context.

Charles Weathers, an Osaka-based and US-origin economist, is the author of Chap. 4, which focuses on community unions, an alternative for Japan’s major labor unions and a vehicle for the emergence of an alternative social movement in a broader sense. Major, enterprise-based labor unions so typical for postwar Japan now face waning memberships. At the same time, community unions are on the rise providing tailor-made solutions to workers who seek individual support while facing worsening workplace conditions.

Koichi Hasegawa, a sociologist from Sendai in the middle-northern part of Japan, is both a well-recognized scholar and activist in the field of environmental issues in Japan. Chapter 5 by Hasegawa presents the notion of “collaborative

environmentalism," a framework with which to understand the growingly successful environmental movement in Japan after it shifted from Western-style opposition (and few members) to "new" and "positive" frames to encounter the evident environmental problems in Japan.

Tetsuo Mizukami is a sociologist in Tokyo with extensive scholarly experiences outside Japan. Mizukami is specialized in migration and community studies. His Chap. 6 shows the workings of community groups that defend the interests of immigrants in Tokyo. The different phases of activism, the expansion of work even into research, the shifting focus from labor conditions to livelihood issues, reflect not only the changes in the lifestyles of foreign residents but also the changing interactions between foreigner groups and government bureaucracy.

Yuko Nishimura, one of the editors of this volume and an anthropologist by training, works in Tokyo. Chapter 7 presents the postwar transformations of civic activism by and on behalf of the Burakumin, Japan's ex-untouchables who were once treated as nonhumans although physically undistinguishable from other Japanese. Facing discrimination on a wide scale the activists won significant victories and gained many privileges from their opposition to but also collaboration with government through the years. Still, especially young *buraku* intellectuals rather not identify themselves as *Buraku* and lack pride of what has been achieved.

John Maher is a sociolinguist, British by birth, and also working in Tokyo. In his Chap. 8, he takes us on an almost theatrical tour through the ups (many) and downs (few) of civic activism for the deaf community in Japan. The deaf have successfully organized recognition of their special needs. Several turning points in the history of deaf rights campaigning led to significant growth of the number of schools, associations, sign language classes, special comic books (manga), and even theaters for the deaf. The diversification of deaf activity in Japan is tremendous and exemplary.

Gabriele Hadl is a national from Austria and scholar in media and communication studies working in the Osaka-Kobe area. In her Chap. 9 she argues that a media perspective is required if one wishes to understand civic engagement in Japan. Multitudes of noncommercial and nongovernmental media are booming in the highly commercialized Japanese media landscape. The chapter highlights the gains and losses of these media in Japan. It shows how civic groups using these nonmainstream media draw attention to their issues, often against great odds, and cultivate connections to other groups in doing so. The alternative media themselves are highly networked civil society organizations, but while providing a vibrant platform for otherwise marginalized forms of interactions, they are living in the margins in Japan.

Bruce White is British, an anthropologist active in Kyoto, another editor of this volume, and well-known for his studies into younger generations and their youth cultural activities and distinctiveness in Japan. His Chap. 10 takes an anthropological–ethnographic view of civic engagement as a proxy for younger generations to solve issues of identity, place, and intergenerational relationships. By example of the widely popular Reggae scenes in several regions in Japan, he shows that "soft advocacy" instead of hard power play from large organizations

provide young and older generations with insights into alternative (imagined or real) ways of life.

Reiko Ogawa specializes in anthropology and sociology while working in the Kyushu area in the very south of Japan. In Chap. 11, she depicts the cautious changes in the thorny relationship between Japan and Korea. Changes that are led by popular culture, that started with a televised Korean soap series and that culminated in a true Korean Wave or *hanlyu*. Hanlyu is carried forth by middle-aged, married Japanese women who are actively involved in developing a new form of civic engagement. They carry the torch of international solidarity free from political or ideological connotations or classic forms of organization. They fundamentally changed the perception of Korean culture and of Koreans living in Japan.

Henk Vinken is a Dutch sociologist, also an editor of this volume, and after extensive periods of living and working in Japan now based in the Netherlands. His chapter, Chap. 12, deals with anticonsumerist activism in Japan. It seems that consumerism and its side-effects are an issue for civic entrepreneurs and groups of mainly foreigners who take the streets once a year to counterbalance hyper-consumption in Japan in a loosely organized creative event. Those involved in this event resist not only consumerism, but especially civic and political involvement that builds on organized forms.

Henk Vinken and Isabelle Diepstraten are the authors of the concluding chapter, Chap. 13. Isabelle Diepstraten is a sociologist and historian, a Dutch national and now also living in the Netherlands. She is specialized in life courses and participation of younger generations and has also spent numerous periods in Japan working as a scholar at different Japanese universities. The concluding chapter will briefly summarize the key points of the preceding chapters from the perspective of the core focus set out in this introductory chapter: the acts of civic engagement that are exemplary for the Japanese search to balance interests of civil society and those of government and the market place.

Masayuki Deguchi, also one of the editors of this volume, the key initiator of the CEGIPE-project and, in that respect the spiritual father of this volume, can be regarded the pioneer of civil society and third sector studies in Japan. In his *Epilogue* (Chap. 14) to this volume he takes the subject of civic engagement in late-modern societies further by focusing on the increasing interactions between NGOs from different nations and thus different language groups. Deguchi aims to lay the foundations of a new stream of studies built around the notion of what he coins "linguapolitics." He closes with some clarifications on the future of civil society policy-making in Japan in which he is closely involved.

The volume does not pretend to provide an exhaustive overview of all possible forms of civic engagement in early twenty-first century Japan. It aims to present an insiders view of civic engagement in Japan by covering both traditional and emerging forms of civic engagement, by showing what happens inside and outside formal organizations, how activists play with interdependencies and that from different disciplinary perspectives by authors who during completion of this book for most part lived and worked in Japan. We hope this volume will contribute to the growing body of literature on civic engagement in Japan and beyond.

Acknowledgments The editors of this volume wish to express their gratitude to all those who have joined the CEGIPE-meetings during all the last years: scholars, activists, artists, from different parts of Japan, from various corners of Japanese civil society and of all walks of life. Without exception they have provided insights, true understanding and inspiration to the authors of this volume. We also are indebted to Minpaku for assisting and facilitating the meetings and for supporting the authors of this volume. The content of this volume remains the full responsibility of the editors and authors.

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Chapter 2
Civil Society in Japan: Democracy, Voluntary Action, and Philanthropy

Makoto Imada

Introduction

This chapter describes civil society in Japan: its historical contexts, its present state, and the challenges it faces in the twenty-first century. Civil society is translated as "shimin shakai" in Japanese. Shimin means citizen and shakai means society. Shimin is a rather confusing concept because shimin refers primarily to the resident of a city. Of course, when we talk about shimin shakai or civil society, shimin does not mean resident of a city. In this chapter, I define the term "shimin" or citizen as "any people who participate in civic engagement." Civic engagement here means participation in public life. I use the term civil society to express the structure or system of society which allows any person to become civilly engaged.

Public life can be divided into three spheres: the political, economic, and social spheres. I will, among many forms of civic engagement, refer to (1) democracy, (2) liberal capitalism, and (3) voluntary organizations and philanthropy. Democracy can be seen to exist as one system of civic engagement within the political sphere. Here I use the concept of procedural democracy formulated by Joseph Schumpeter (*Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*): "The central procedure of democracy is the selection of leaders through competitive election by the people they govern." A system of civic engagement found within the economic sphere is liberal capitalism. By liberal capitalism I mean capitalism with virtue and ethics not based on market fundamentalism, in other words, capitalism with social responsibility. Lastly, civic engagement exists in the social sphere as carried out by nonprofit voluntary organizations supported by private philanthropy. It is vital for nonprofit organizations to have a voluntary fund source. Philanthropy is an act of voluntary private giving for social causes. Philanthropy is a system of civic engagement operating in the social sphere, facilitated by people in the economic sphere. The economic system which allows philanthropy by corporations, or corporate philanthropy, is liberal capitalism.

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Table 2.1 shows the transitions that civic engagement has gone through within and across the three spheres in the modern history of Japan.

In Japan in the late Edo period, the middle of the nineteenth century, primitive capitalism emerged. The merchants of this Edo period, especially those in Osaka, engaged in commercial activities as well as philanthropic activities. The philosophy of these merchants was expressed as a three-way bottom line, "good for the firm, good for the customer, and good for society." Primitive voluntary organizations emerged during this period. In 1868, Japan experienced the Meiji Restoration and became a nation state. In 1889, the Constitution of the Empire of Japan was proclaimed, a full 22 years after the Restoration. This Constitution opened the way to parliamentary government. Although in a very limited form, democracy was formally established in Japan.

From 1889 till 1938, three spheres of civic engagement coexisted. I call this period "ephemeral" civil society in Japan. From 1938, however, when the National Mobilization Law was enacted, Japanese society became a militaristic centralized bureaucratic country. After World War II, Japan's economic development progressed, largely due to the iron triangle of politicians, economic leaders, and bureaucrats. Economic activities were planned, led, and regulated by bureaucrats. This economic scheme continued until the Plaza Accord of 1985. In this period, voluntary action and organizations were not so active. After the Plaza Accord, however, the Japanese economy was plunged into the global market. Voluntary action became more active. This point in history represents a rebirth of civil society in Japan.

The Kobe Earthquake of 1995 made many people realize the important role that voluntary actions and organizations play, and had a great impact on Japanese society perceptions.[1] Masaaki Honma and Masayuki Deguchi called this phenomenon a "volunteer revolution."[2] This revolution led to the enactment of the NPO Law to

Table 2.1 Three spheres of civic engagement

	Democracy	Liberal capitalism	Voluntary organizations
Before 1868 (Meiji restoration) ~	×	○	○
1868 (Meiji restoration) ~	×	○	○
1889 (Promulgation of constitution) ~	○	○	○
1938 (National mobilization law) ~	×	×	×
1945 (End of the WW II) ~	○	×	×
1965 (Osaka voluntary action center) ~	○	×	○
1985 (Plaza accord) ~	○	○	○
1990 (Philanthropy renaissance) ~	○	○	○
1995.1.17 (Kobe earthquake) (volunteer revolution) ~	○	○	○
1998 (Nonprofit law) ~	○	○	○

[1] Kobe Earthquake took place on 17 January 1995. Its magnitude was 7.2 and more than 6,430 people were killed and over 100,000 houses and buildings were destroyed. Formal denomination of the Earthquake is "Hanshin-Awaji Great Earthquake."

[2] Honma, M. & Deguchi, M (Ed.) (1996). *Borantia Kakumei (Volunteer Revolution)*, Toyo Keizai.

promote voluntary action in 1998. In the twenty-first century, while global economic competition accelerates, enlightened business corporations have become more aware of corporate social responsibility and the collaboration between business corporations and voluntary organizations are being promoted. At the same time, local governments are eager to collaborate with voluntary organizations.

Civic Engagement Before World War II

Democracy

Freedom and Citizenship Movement: Meiji Democracy

Before the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan was under the social class restraint. Social classes were warrior (samurai), farmer, craftsman, and merchant. The Meiji Restoration is carried out by warriors of four powerful "Han's," that is, Satsuma (Kagoshima Prefecture), Choushu (Yamaguchi Prefecture), Tosa (Kochi Prefecture), and Hizen (Saga Prefecture).[3] As a result, the new Meiji government was organized by leaders of four Han's, and among these, the Satsuma and Choushu leaders took initiative. Those who were unsatisfied with this political scheme, former warriors excluded from political power and land owners, began a social movement demanding a democratic constitution. One of the leaders of this movement was Taisuke Itagaki (1837–1919) of Tosa Han. He was a member of the government, but afterward resigned and formed a regional political group, the Aikoku Koto (Public Party of Patriots) in 1874. The Aikoku Koto was the basis for the founding of the Jiyuto (Liberal Party), the first national political party established in 1881. Shigenobu Okuma (1839–1922) of Hizen Han, who was also member of the government, after being forced to resign, formed the Rikken Kaishinto (Constitutional Reform Party) in 1882. This movement, called "Freedom and Citizenship Movement" resulted in the promulgation of the Meiji Imperial Constitution in 1889.

Promulgation of the Imperial Constitution

In February 1889, the Imperial Constitution was promulgated and put in force in November 1889, when the Diet was opened. The Imperial Diet consisted of a House of Representatives and a House of Peers.[4] The House of Representatives was elected by the people, according to the provisions of the Law of Election. A seat in House of Peers was either appointive or hereditary. Thus Japan became a

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[3] Han is domain ruled by lord (daimyo) in feudalistic Japan.

[4] After the Meiji Restoration, in 1889 a new nobility class was created which continued until 1947. They were former court nobles and former daimyo's of feudal lords.

democratic country meeting the criteria of procedural democracy of Schumpeter. However, voting rights were limited to males who paid an annual tax of 15 yen or more. The number of voters was less than 500,000 or 1.5% of the population, although this number grew to 3 million over the next 30 years.

The Imperial Constitution stipulated the freedom of religious belief (Article 28), the liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings and associations (Article 29). Hence it meets the criteria of Robert Dahl.[5] However, freedom of religion was permitted within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and antagonistic to citizens' duties as subjects. The liberty of Article 29 was permitted within the limits of the law. Thus democracy under the Imperial Constitution was a limited democracy under monarchy.

In the 1898 election, The Kenseito (Constitutional Party)[6] won the election and Shigenobu Okuma organized the cabinet and Taisuke Itagaki joined. This was the first cabinet organized by political party. Until this time, prime ministers were oligarchs of Satsuma and Chosyu.

Taisho Democracy

The period between 1905 and 1932 is called the Era of Taisho Democracy. Although the Taisho Era begins in 1912 and ends in 1926, usually the period called Taisho Democracy begins with the riot in Hibiya Park in 1905 and ends with the assassination of Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai (1855–1932) in 1932.

In 1904, the Russo-Japanese War broke out and ended in 1905 with the signature of the Treaty of Portsmouth. Japanese citizens believed that Japan won the War. However in reality Japan could not continue the War anymore. So the war indemnity was much less than citizens expected. Citizens unsatisfied with the Treaty of Portsmouth gathered in Hibiya Park to demonstrate their protest against the signature of the Treaty. Sakuzo Yoshino (1878–1933), political scientist and advocator of democracy, described this incident as the first time that ordinary people expressed their political opinion.

Taisho Democracy is characterized as a cabinet organized by political party. Until then, many cabinet members were not from political parties but from military power or oligarchs from old Han's. The cabinet formed by Takashi Hara (1856–1921) in 1918, was the first viable party cabinet and he was the first prime minister who was not from the nobility class. And from then until 1932, the leaders of major political parties became prime minister.

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[5] Democratic citizens must be free regarding such matters as speech, assembly, and conscience. (Terchek and Conte 2001: 3).

[6] The Kenseito had been formed prior to 1898 election by merger of the Shinpoto (Progressive Party), which was reconstituted from the Rikken Kaishinto in 1896, and the Jiyuto.

In the Taisho Era public interest in political affairs grew and political reform was realized. In July 1922, the Japan Communist Party was established. However it was dissolved by government pressure in 1924. The Universal Manhood Suffrage Law was passed in May 1925, which granted the voting right to all male citizens over the age of 25. With the passage of this law, the number of voters quadrupled. It must be noted that in the same year the Peace Preservation Law was enacted. This notorious repressive law enabled the suppression of radical social actions such as communist, anarchist and leftist labor movements.

In September 1931, Japans' military conquest of Manchuria occurred. This was the beginning of the 15-year war which continued until August 1945. On May 15, 1932 Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai was assassinated by young military officers in a military coup (May 15th Incident). And on February 26, 1936 a military insurrection took place (February 26th Incident). These military officers tried to establish a cabinet led by military power. Democracy was being threatened. In 1938 the National Mobilization Law was enacted, and all materials and human resources were mobilized to pursue the war. In 1940, all political parties were dissolved and absorbed by the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. The fledgling Japanese Democracy had all but been extinguished.

Liberal Capitalism and Philanthropy

In Japan, which had been an agrarian society, the market economy developed in the late Edo period, the mid-nineteenth century, and during this time Japan became a highly modernized and commercialized economy. Again, the business principle of Edo merchants is expressed as "good for three stakeholders", that is, "good for the firm, good for the customer and good for society."

After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan began to develop as a capitalistic modern nation state. The Meiji Government tried to strengthen economic and military power. To strengthen economic power, the Meiji Government promoted industrialization and established national factories managed by the government. These national factories included mining, textile, shipbuilding, or cement works and were sold very cheaply to private merchants closely connected to the government. Later, these merchants formed the zaibatsu (financial and industrial combine) and led the Japanese economy up until World War II.

The management philosophy of business leaders in the Meiji period combined profit making with social responsibility just as was the case with their Edo merchant predecessors. I would say that the capitalism in the Meiji period was a liberal capitalism, as is defined in the introduction of this chapter. Eiichi Shibusawa was a prominent business leader in the Meiji period. He established many business firms during his lifetime and at the same time was a philanthropic leader of the economic sphere. His management philosophy was "Rongo to Soroban" (Confucianism text in one hand, abacus or handy calculator in another hand), that is, profit making with social responsibility. Many successful business firms had a code of conduct proclaiming

the importance of social responsibility. In these firms are included Zaibatsu firms such as Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Sumitomo and others. As is mentioned later, many voluntary organizations in various areas were supported by zaibatsu and other corporations or business executives.

Perhaps the most famous Japanese philanthropist of the period was Magosaburo Ohara (1880–1943).[7] Many Japanese people remember his name as founder of the Ohara Museum of Arts. He said that "my fortune was given by God for philanthropy" and made many contributions to education and social welfare. For example, he supported the Okayama Orphanage by Juji Ishii and founded the Institute of Social Science Research.

Mitsui group companies were active in corporate philanthropy. They established Mitsui Charitable Hospital for low income people in 1906, where wives of executives and employees of Mitsui group companies engaged in volunteer activities. In 1911, companies belonging to the Mitsui group decided to donate 2.5% of their profit to charitable purposes. The Mitsui Foundation (Mitsui Hoon-kai) established in 1934 was the largest grant-making foundation in prewar Japan. Zaibatsu other than Mitsui, such as Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Yasuda, and Okura, made sizable charitable donations. However, with the enactment of the National Mobilization Law in 1938, liberal capitalism disappeared.

Voluntary Organizations

The Meiji government's fundamental policy was "Enrich the Country, Strengthen the Military." As a result, social welfare was largely ignored. Social welfare services were provided by private nonprofit voluntary organizations. The Meiji government was eager to provide elementary level education and higher education. On the other hand, education for the working class and for women was neglected, left to private nonprofit schools.

Legal Framework

In 1896, the Civil Code was stipulated and put into force in 1898. Article 34 of the Civil Code enabled voluntary organizations to be incorporated. Article 34 stipulates that "an association or foundation relating to rites, religion, charity, academic activities, arts and crafts, or otherwise relating to the public interest and not having for its object the acquisition of profit may be a legal person subject to the approval[8]

[7]Magosaburo Ohara was president of Kurashiki Textile Company in Okayama Prefecture.

[8]Approval (kyoka in Japanese) means action at the discretion of the government.

of the competent authorities." Almost all of voluntary organizations and grant-making foundations established before the enactment of Civil Code were incorporated as foundations.

Settlement Houses

In the early stage of Meiji era, settlement houses played an important role in providing various services for low income people and laborers. In Tokyo in 1897, the Christian activist Sen Katyama (1859–1933), founded Japan's first settlement house, where many volunteers participated in teaching laborers. In 1919, foreign Christian women opened a settlement house in Tokyo's old downtown district. This settlement house, Kobo-kan, still nowadays actively provides various social welfare services. The social reformer and evangelist Toyohiko Kagawa[9] (1888–1960) opened settlement houses in Osaka and in other places. Students and professors from Tokyo Imperial University (present-day the University of Tokyo) volunteered for the rescue and relief of victims of the great Kanto Earthquake in 1923.[10] Afterward, they founded a settlement house and engaged in laborer education, medical care, child care, youth programs, and so forth.

Social Services

One of the most famous voluntary organizations in social welfare is the Okayama Orphanage, established by the Christian social worker Juji Ishii (1865–1914) in 1887. In 1899, another Christian, Kosuke Tomeoka (1864–1934) opened a home for delinquent children in Tokyo. Many nursing homes for elderly people were provided by voluntary organizations, such as Ono Yofuen in Kanazawa City in Ishikawa Prefecture, in 1873, or Osaka Nursing Home established by Buddhist Tamijiro Iwata (1869–1954) in 1902.

Medical Services

Many hospitals were established by business firms or business men. Besides Mitsui Charitable Hospital mentioned above, hospitals for needy people were established in Osaka by the textile merchant Gendo Yamaguchi (1863–1937), called the king of donors in the Kyoto-Osaka region, the Nippon Life Insurance Company, and Kotobukiya (present-day Suntory Ltd.).

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[9]Toyohiko Kagawa (1888–1960) was also a great leader of labor movement and cooperative movement.

[10]On September 1, an earthquake of magnitude 7.9 hit Tokyo and Yokohama area and killed 140,000 people.

Schools

Higher education institutions were established by private initiative in the Meiji era. Keio University was launched by Yukich Fukuzawa (1835–1901)[11] in 1868, before the Meiji Restoration. Doshisha was established by Christian Joseph Neesima (Jo Niijiima) (1843–1890) in 1875. Statesman Shigenobu Okuma established Waseda University 1882. Ichizaemon Morimura (1839–1919), founder of the china manufacturer Noritake Co., Ltd., contributed very much to education for women in Japan. The Sumitomo group opened a training school for laborers in 1916. Other characteristic schools were established with the financial support by business leaders.

Grant-Making Foundations

In 1901, the Morimura Homei-kai, the first grant-making foundation in Japan, was established by Ichizaemon Morimura to support mainly education. The above mentioned Mitsui Foundation made grants to social welfare activities, academic research, and especially to research and activities for rural development. Many other grant-making foundations were established by business corporations or business leaders to support researchers of science and technology.

Volunteer Efforts

Some people argue that volunteer activities appeared suddenly when the Kobe Earthquake occurred in 1995. But this is simply not the case. We can see volunteer activities decades before World War II. Volunteer activities in the Meiji era were undertaken mainly by Christians and Christian organizations, such as the Salvation Army. Volunteers were active in settlement houses. Notable volunteer activity before World War II was seen in Tokyo following the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. Taking rescues funds, Toyohiko Kagawa[12] went to Tokyo from Kobe and organized volunteers for rescue activities. As mentioned before, students of Tokyo Imperial University volunteered for the rescue and relief of victims. Many Kwansei Gakuin University students went from Nishinomiya City in Hyogo Prefecture. The Nippon Life Insurance Company sent a rescue crew of doctors and nurses from Osaka. Youth associations and women's associations engaged in volunteer activities for the rescue too.

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[11] Yukichi Fukuzawa was advocator of freedom and citizenship movement. He was great educator and journalist.

[12] See footnote 7.

Community-Based Organizations: Neighborhood Organization

Before the Meiji Restoration, there were neighborhood organizations which served as the administrative body of local government especially in Edo. These neighborhood organizations disappeared after the Meiji Restoration. Instead, new neighborhood organizations of various types were organized voluntarily. In 1940, the Home Ministry ordered that community councils (chonaikai) be organized in city block areas and villages, with mayors, and town and village chiefs as heads. These councils were made of neighborhood associations (tonarigumi) responsible for the policing and welfare of the areas. In 1943, Town and Village Code was revised enabling chonaikai to execute part of the administration of towns or villages. Thus, chonaikai became an administrative body under the National Mobilization Law.

Cooperatives

In the late Edo period, there existed many mutual help associations based on the Houtoku philosophy of Sontoku Ninomiya (1878–1856).[13] Houtoku philosophy or "returning virtue" is the mixture of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Members of association bring in money and this money was lent to needy members. Lent money should be returned in 7 years. After returning money, members who were lent money were asked to contribute one-seventh of the lent money to a social fund to help farmers reconstruct agriculture. When the Civil Code was enacted in 1898, 26 Houtokusha's were incorporated as public-purpose voluntary organizations.

The first Rochdale[14] style cooperative, Kyoritsu Shosha, was established in 1879 by Yuteki Hayashi[15] (1837–1901). However, this cooperative was not successful. The Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) accelerated industrialization in Japan and as the number of laborers began to increase they began to establish unions. In 1898, the first consumer cooperative Kyodosha was established within a labor union. Some other cooperatives were established around the same year. Steel and iron labor unions established consumer cooperatives from 1898–1899. However, cooperatives based on labor movements were banned by the government. Instead the government provided cooperatives law.

Industrial Cooperative Law was inaugurated in 1900. The main purpose of this law was to provide money to farmers through finance cooperatives. Under this law, consumer cooperatives were admitted and many consumer cooperatives were established. Among them, two cooperatives established in Kobe were active and well-known.

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[13] Well-known leader of rural development in late Edo period.

[14] Rochdale is a town near Manchster, England. The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers is established in 1844. It is known as the first successful cooperative.

[15] Yuteki Hayashi was a student of Yukichi Fukuzawa and well-known as the founder of Maruzen bookstore, the first foreign books retailer.

Both of these were established in 1921, and the adviser of these two cooperatives was Toyohiko Kagawa.[16] One is the Kobe Consumer Cooperative, which was planned and launched by the Labor Union of the Kawasaki Shipbuilding Company. Seed money was provided by Kagawa. The second cooperative was established in Sumiyoshi Village, nowadays part of Kobe City. The Nada Consumer Cooperative was established by leaders of big companies in Osaka on the initiative of Zenji Nasu (1865–1938)[17] following the advice of Kagawa. This cooperative was very unique in that it was established by wealthy people and it set up a charitable fund within it.

Social Action

Although after the Meiji Restoration the strict pre-Meiji social class orders were technically removed, there remained people excluded from society. While industrialization advanced, laborers' working conditions were terrible. Although in 1929 universal suffrage was enacted, it was in the form of universal male suffrage only. Women were excluded from politics. Against these circumstances, those concerned undertook social action. Because some of these social actions are described in other chapters, I will only briefly mention women's action for political engagement here. In 1924, Fusae Ichikawa (1893–1981) and others established "Association to Obtain Women's Voting Rights." It declared that women, representing half the nation, should not be left without voting rights. It insisted that it is clear that women should engage in political decision-making both as human beings and as a vital component of the nation. In March 1931, the bill to accord political right to women with some restrictions passed in the House of Representatives but was denied in the House of Peers. It was only after World War II that women were given the right to vote.

Civic Engagement After World War II

New Constitution and Democracy after the War

On August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered and the War ended. On November 3, 1946, the New Japanese Constitution was promulgated and became effective on May 3, 1947. The new Constitution proclaims that sovereign power resides with the people. It guarantees universal adult suffrage. Thus Japan became a procedurally perfect democratic country. In April 1946, the first general election under the new Constitution was held and Shigeru Yoshida, who led the conservative party after the War, organized the cabinet. At this election, the communist party, which had been

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[16] See footnote 7.

[17] Zenji Nasu was successful speculator and made a fortune during the World War I.

illegal till then, got five seats. At the second general election of 1948, the socialist party got the majority and Tetsu Katayama organized the cabinet. Between 1946 and 1955 many new political parties were established and political situations were unstable and disordered.

In 1955, this disorder ended when the Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Socialist Party were formed. Under this 1955 regime, the main political issue was US–Japan Security Treaty and the rearmament of Japan. Economic issues and social issues were left to bureaucrats. Ordinary citizens were satisfied with the bureaucrats led economic and social policies and, except for activists, were not so interested in political engagement.

Capitalism Governed by Bureaucrats

When the War terminated, Japan's economy was completely devastated. To cope with the economic distress, the government adopted the Priority Production Program. This program was a policy to give priority to selected industries and to concentrate assistance. After the fundamental products of these selected industries were secured, these materials were channeled into other industries. Priorities shifted from coal and food in 1946 to iron, steel and fertilizer in 1948. This scheme represented a highly planned economic policy directed and controlled by the government. This policy worked well and was effective in achieving the nation's economic recovery.

In the 1960s, Japan enjoyed tremendous economic growth owing to an iron triangle of politicians, government officials, and big business leaders. Some people argue that this triangle was a very successful socialist system based on planned economic policy. Although ordinary Japanese people were left behind in policy making, they were satisfied with the iron triangle as long as their income increased and their well-being was secured. During the rapid economic growth, corporate philanthropic activities were not so active with some exceptions. Some exceptions were the corporate foundations that provided scholarships for needy students. In the 1960s, new corporate foundations providing grants to researchers in the natural sciences and technology fields were established.

In the 1970s, the fields of interest of grant-making foundations became diversified and many foundations focusing on social welfare fields were established. Major grant-making foundations established in the 1970s, such as the Toyota Foundation (1974), Suntory Foundation (1979) and Nippon Life Insurance Foundation (1979), began to support citizen activities and/or volunteer activities.

Social Reform after the War

Until April 1952, Japan was ruled by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). The American-led occupation brought with it many social changes. The main beneficiaries of postwar reform were farmers and labor unions.

Absentee landlords received nominal compensation for land distributed among the tenant farmers who actually cultivated the soil. The Labor Union Law enacted in 1945 guaranteed the right to establish labor union and to strike. Woman's status was improved tremendously. Article 24 of the new constitution stipulates as follows. "Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes." Under the Civil Code before the World War II, marriage was legally conducted under the *ie* (household) system and the agreement of the heads of the two households was necessary. By the Public Election Law of 1950, women became eligible to vote.

Voluntary Organizations

Legal Framework Reform

During the war, many institutions run by voluntary organizations, especially social welfare institutions, were destroyed by air raids and those which were not destroyed suffered from a financial crisis. It was very difficult to continue providing services. Article 25 of the postwar Constitution declares: "All people shall have the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living." On the basis of this philosophy, the government made efforts to build a welfare state.

What is bothering for voluntary organizations is the article 89 of the Constitution which says that "no public money or other property shall be expended or appropriated for the use, benefit or maintenance of any religious institution or association, or for any charitable, educational, or benevolent enterprises not under the control of public authority." This article prevented the government supporting voluntary organizations independent of the government. Thus it became rather difficult for the voluntary organizations to undertake innovative activities.

After World War II, new laws for voluntary organizations were enacted. Those laws are applied to various areas of voluntary organizations. Thereafter many voluntary organizations incorporated under the Civil Code transformed themselves to new corporations according to their activity areas and new voluntary organizations in the area shown below have to be incorporated based on new laws:

- Private School Law (1949) stipulates the establishment and regulation of private school corporations. It can be established by recognition[18] of the competent authorities.
- Social Welfare Service Law (1951) stipulates the establishment and regulation of social welfare corporations. It can be established by recognition of the competent authorities.

[18] Recognition (ninka in Japanese) means action of the government to see if documents are legally written and business plans conform to the requirement of the law.

- Religious Corporation Law (1951) stipulates the establishment and regulation of religious corporations. It can be established by authentication[19] of the competent authorities.
- Medical Law (1848) stipulates the establishment and regulation of medical corporations. Medical corporations include incorporated associations and foundations. It can be established by recognition of the competent authorities.

Volunteer Activities

After the War, volunteer activities are not so active with some exceptions. In the early 1960s, independent volunteer bureaus were beginning to be established. In 1965, the Osaka Voluntary Action Center was established to promote and coordinate individual volunteer activities. Since then, volunteer activities began growing. In the 1970s, local social welfare councils[20] began to establish volunteer bureaus, or volunteer centers, within the council. In 1975, the government began to provide financial assistance to local volunteer centers affiliated to social welfare councils.

Social Action

Rapid economic growth caused many social problems, particularly environmental problems such as air pollution and water pollution. Residents affected by the pollution and supporters developed nationwide protest movements. Particularly, social action against Minamata's mercury poisoning led to the establishment of the Environment Agency in 1971.

Social actions gradually became global. Against American bombing to North Vietnam in February 1965, many citizens joined the "Citizens Coalition for Peace in Vietnam." In the 1970s, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), dedicated to international cooperation were beginning to be formed. Some of them are SHAPLA NEER (established in 1972 to render aid in Bangladesh), the Shanti Volunteer Association (established in 1980 by the Soto Zen sector to support refugees in Indochina) and the Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) (established in 1980 also to support refugees in Indochina).

[19] Authentication (ninsho in Japanese) means action of the government to see if the documents are legally written.

[20] Social welfare council is an organization to promote welfare in the community. The system of social welfare council is stipulated in the Social Welfare Service Law (present-day Social Welfare Law). It consists of a national council in the capital and a local council at various local levels, and it plays a central role in private welfare activities.

Neighborhood Organizations: Chonaikai

After the end of the War, in January 1947, GHQ ordered the dissolution of chonaikais due to their role in the promotion of the War. However they revived in other forms. Some kind of association was necessary in the confused society after the War. For example, an allocation system was necessary for insufficient food and daily goods. Support for local functions and supplement of public administration were needed. Many neighborhood organizations organized consumer cooperatives. Although no legal status is given to chonaikai, some kind of neighborhood organization exists in almost all communities in Japan nowadays.

Cooperative

In 1948, the Consumers Cooperatives Law was enacted and at the same time Industrial Cooperative Law was abolished. After the enactment of the new Law, many small consumer cooperatives established before the new Law dissolved because of mal management. In the 1970s, consumer cooperatives began to increase and almost all of them operating supermarket type retailing shops. The Seikatsu Club Cooperatives or Daily Life Cooperatives are very unique cooperatives. They do not have shops and stick to a preorder collective purchase system which enables well-planned consumer life as well as well-planned production. They work on problems such as GMOs (genetically modified organisms) and environmental and hormone issues. They engage in international activities outside the arena of their cooperative, becoming involved in political issues such as disarmament and the environment. Members of the Seikatsu Club Cooperatives are forming workers' collectives to create employment opportunities and benefits in the local societies. While cooperative laws for the agriculture industry and fishery industry have been enacted, Japan does not have a law for workers' collectives to be incorporated into the system.

Coming of the Global Age

Democracy

In the 1970s and 1980s, political corruption by Liberal Democratic Party (then ruling conservative party) politicians was repeatedly exposed and caused a great deal of public anger. The LDP failed to carry out political reform and was defeated in the 1993 election. At the same time, the Japan Socialist Party reduced its seats. A coalition of newly established opposition parties formed the cabinet under Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, the head of the Japan New Party. It marked an end to the 1955 regime. The Hosokawa cabinet lasted only 8 months. Political disorder began and continues to this day.

The Japanese bureaucratic system has found adapting to globalization after the Plaza Accord difficult to say the least. Politicians and economic leaders began to think the bureaucratic-heavy system harmful to Japanese society and have been making efforts to weaken the power of bureaucrats. The second Ryutaro Hashimoto cabinet of the LDP began administrative reform in 1996, with very limited success. Japan has found it difficult to weaken the power of bureaucrats and can perhaps be best thought of as a country led by bureaucrats rather than the citizens.

Another big problem about democracy in Japan is decentralization. Although local autonomy is stipulated in the Constitution, this had not been enough. In 1999, 475 laws were amended to bring about decentralization. However politicians and bureaucrats of central government still want to dominate local governments. Sometimes local autonomy is said to be the school for democracy. James Bryce writes that "localized government is the best guarantee for civic freedom" (*The American Common Wealth*). Those laws are, one hopes, a very big step toward building Japan's civil society.

Rebirth of Liberal Capitalism

The Plaza Accord of 1985 brought a rapid appreciation of Yen and Japanese society plunged into global society. Japanese corporations depending on export were obliged to construct factories in the United States. Politicians and economic leaders, through contact with American civil society, understood the importance of civil society and began enhancing civic engagement in Japan.

In September 1988, Keidanren (the Federation of Economic Organizations)[21] sent a study team to America to study corporate citizenship. Keidanren and enlightened business leaders realized the concept of corporate citizenship. In April 1990, the "One Percent Club" similar to the percent clubs in America, was established within the Keidanren. In July 1990, Keidanren organized a committee to promote corporate citizenship activities. In November 1991, Osaka Community Foundation was established, as an initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Osaka.

The year 1990 was the peak of accelerated growth, Japan then entering a period of economic depression in the last decade of the twentieth century. However under the economic depression, corporate citizenship activities continued. In the 1990s, many big companies began to establish special sections to promote corporate citizenship activities and began to support and to collaborate with voluntary organizations. As I mentioned before, Japan has a long history of corporate social responsibility. Thus liberal capitalism can be seen to go through a kind of rebirth in the 1990s.

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[21] Keidanren is a membership organization of large corporations established in 1946. It became Nippon Keidanren in 2002.

Voluntary Organizations

Upsurge of New Voluntary Actions

In the late 1980s, corresponding to growing needs for international cooperation, aggravation of environmental issues, growing number of aged people, insufficient child care, or deterioration of the community, voluntary action became diversified and various kinds of voluntary organizations were established. The first Japan Networkers' Conference (JNC) was held in 1989. This was the first nationwide conference of citizens' organizations endeavoring to "make a difference" through voluntary activities.

After the Kobe Earthquake[22] in 1995, disaster relief became an important voluntary action. In November 1996, the Japan NPO Center was established as an infrastructure support organization for voluntary actions akin to the Independent Sector in America. The Japan NPO Center was established by the initiative of leaders of voluntary organizations. Keidanren cooperated with them and the Economic Planning Agency (present-day Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) supported it. The aim of the Center is to build a civil society that is transparent and just. They thought that for this kind of society to materialize, nonprofit organizations as champions of voluntary activities driven by individual choice, not by business or government, will play a pivotal role. Nowadays, many infrastructure organizations are established all over Japan.

New Legal Framework

It was rather difficult for the above mentioned new voluntary organizations to be incorporated, because many were small scale grassroots organizations and did not meet the criteria of approval or recognition of incorporation. Besides, when they are established under the existing laws, they must be controlled and regulated by the government. Hence, new voluntary organizations began lobbying for new legislation. In November 1994, the Coalition for Legislation to support Citizens' Organizations (C's) was established with the intention of achieving legal and tax benefits for citizens' organizations. In 1998, the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities was enacted. This Law is called NPO Law.

NPO Law enabled small voluntary organizations to be incorporated through authentication when they engage in specified nonprofit activities, more precisely:

1. Promotion of health, medical treatment, or welfare
2. Promotion of social education
3. Promotion of community development
4. Promotion of academic research, culture, the arts, or sports

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[22] See footnote 1.

5. Conversation of the environment
6. Disaster relief
7. Promotion of community safety
8. Protection of human rights or promotion of peace
9. International cooperation
10. Promotion of a society with equal gender participation
11. Sound nurturing of youth
12. Promotion of information technology
13. Promotion of science and technology
14. Promotion of economic activities
15. Development of vocational ability or promotion of employability
16. Consumer protection
17. Administration of organizations that engage in the above activities or provision of liaison, advice, or assistance in connection with the above activities

Challenges in the Twenty-First Century

After the 9.11.2001 incident, the global political situation has dramatically changed. Japan could not be independent of this situation. The Koizumi cabinet inaugurated in April 2001 supported American policies and Japanese society is moving to nationalistic power politics and a fundamentalist market economy. In February 2002, the Japanese economy recovered from the long depression and since then has enjoyed economic growth. However this economic growth at the macro level resulted in the disparity of income among people. It is because the global market competition became so keen that companies have to strengthen their financial stability. After Junichiro Koizumi resigned in September 2006, political disorder revived and continues until now.

Capitalism with CSR

While economic globalization has been accelerated, the new global concept of Corporate Social Responsibility was introduced in the last decade of the twentieth century. There are many definitions of CSR. Among them the definition of CSR by the EU is simple and clear – “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.” In 1994, John Elkington coined the term Triple Bottom Line, which became popular as a new measure of organizational success: economic, environmental, and social.

In 1997, The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) was launched sponsored by the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES) – a coalition of environmental groups, socially responsible investors, and public pension administrators.

It is a multistakeholder international organization undertaking to develop and disseminate globally applicable sustainability reporting guidelines for voluntary use by organizations reporting on the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of their activities, products, and services. In 2002, GRI became a permanent institution. In Japan, "Sustainability Forum Japan" has close relations with GRI to promote CSR.

In January 1999, at the World Economic Forum, Kofi Atta Annan, the then United Nations Secretary-General, proposed the Global Compact, a framework that is committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles. There are some reasons why the new CSR became important. One is the aggravation of environmental issue. In 1997, "Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention to Climate Change" was adopted. Thereafter the global environmental issue has become more important for CSR. Another phase of new CSR is compliance and ethics. After the collapse of communism, the global economy became more and more market oriented. Keen market competition too excessive caused corporate misdeeds and scandals in the United States, Europe and Japan. Of course these revealed misconducts that were criticized and sometimes these corporations were dissolved. Thus, corporations became more conscious of compliance and corporate ethics, which compose an important phase of CSR.

Japanese corporations are now facing new CSR challenges. Keizai Doyukai (Japan Association of Corporate Executives)[23] and Nippon Keidanren[24] are making efforts to promote CSR.

Voluntary Organizations

After the enactment of NPO Law, more than 35,000 NPOs have been established and are active in various fields. Just 10 years after the enactment of NPO Law, three new laws were enacted. These laws are intended to change the fundamental law for voluntary organizations. As is mentioned above, article 34 of Civil Code stipulates that voluntary organization can be incorporated subject to the approval of the competent authorities. Under the new legal system, starting in December 2008, the establishment of voluntary organizations became much easier than under the present legal system, because the approval of the government is not required. However, to obtain tax benefits, they must proceed to the next stage to be qualified as public interest organizations. The criteria for the qualification are very complicated and difficult to follow.

Existing voluntary organizations established under the Civil Code must move to the corporation under the new laws. For the time being, this new system is not applied to other corporations established under other laws than Civil Code. I cannot foresee the influence of these new laws on voluntary action.

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[23] Keizai Doyukai is an association of rather liberal corporate executives established in 1946.

[24] See footnote 20.

Conclusion

Nowadays, civic engagement in Japan is facing new challenges. The subprime lending problem is one such challenge. In July 2007, the subprime lending scheme failed and the global economy became unstable, Japan being no exception. Under these circumstances, political leadership is weak and political situation is unstable.

To cope with these hardships, business corporations are beginning to fire their employees. The jobless are increasing. Corporations are beginning to have difficulty meeting very important criteria of social responsibility: employment. Liberal capitalism is under threat. Even under current economic situations though, enlightened business corporations are becoming more aware of corporate social responsibility. To meet CSR, corporations seek to collaborate with voluntary organizations because they have more information on social and environmental issues. The collaboration between business corporations and voluntary organizations are being promoted and contact between business corporations and voluntary organizations, especially NPOs, became more frequent and tighter.

Voluntary organizations can also offer a watchdog function. There are two types of watchdog function, one is to criticize corporate behavior from outside corporations and the other one is to evaluate the CSR as a consultant. Unfortunately, there are very few voluntary organizations which can be evaluator or consultant for corporations as yet.

Governments, central and local, are suffering from financial stress. Local governments began to recognize voluntary organizations as public service providers and began to collaborate with them. In providing public services collaborating with local governments voluntary organizations can employ people who were and are excluded from ordinary labor market. Usually local governments collaborate with voluntary organizations on contract basis. However, in many cases, sum contracted is not enough for voluntary organizations to make ends meet.

Voluntary organizations cannot charge enough fees for their service delivery to their clients, because sometimes general public confuse voluntary organizations with volunteer groups and do not think it is necessary to pay for the services delivered. Another reason why voluntary organizations cannot charge enough fees is that they are short of expertise and lack management ability.

On the other hand, private giving is not enough to support them. Thus most voluntary organizations are financially fragile. Some voluntary organizations are aiming at business-oriented social enterprises. Social enterprises are trying to provide job opportunities in solving social problems at the same time. Social enterprise represents civic engagement in social sphere as well as in economic sphere. The role of voluntary organizations is not only in service delivering. Another important role of voluntary organization is advocacy and policy analysis. Such roles illustrate the importance of voluntary organizations in the political sphere.

Against the present social issues, voluntary organizations are becoming more important as a system to promote civic engagement in the social sphere. Voluntary organizations are very important to promote people's quality of life. In this multicultural age, they have a very important role to realize social inclusion.

Therefore, the empowerment of voluntary organizations as a whole is urgent for Japanese society. To empower voluntary organizations, it is necessary for every citizen to have a powerful and independent spirit not depending on government, with the power of logical thinking and a sense of morality. If this can be achieved in the coming years and decades, Japan's long history of community organizations, voluntary organizations, and corporate social responsibility, may at last successfully integrate with a global age offering new challenges and opportunities.

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Chapter 3
Social Frameworks for Civil Society in Japan: In Search for a Japanese Model

Chimaki Kurokawa

Introduction

Civil society in every country has taken different courses of development, and each of them has its own characteristics largely influenced by that country's social frameworks. The main goal of this chapter is to relate the development course of civil society in Japan with the social, political, and economic frameworks of the entire society – to explore the determining and deterrent factors behind the development of civil society in the modern history of Japan. While Japan has undoubtedly become a member of the industrialized nations of the world, there remain many incongruous practices in almost every corner of the society: in administration, politics, business, schools, police service, unions, media etc. They are deeply related to the paternal and authoritative values, embedded in the social systems as the stumbling blocks for development of civil society. In the latter part of this chapter, several major changes addressing such areas of governance since the 1980s are explored such as information disclosure, whistleblower's protection, bid-rigging prevention, privatization of the national enterprises, and delegation of power to local governments. These changes are the forerunners of the political changes being pursued by the Democratic Party Government taking the helm since last september, ousting the notorious **55 Regime** under Liberal Democratic Party.

Sheldon Garon (2003: 42) recognizes "The idea of civil society is rooted in a time and a place. Both are distant from Japan. Its origins are distinctively European, dating back to the classical Greek term *koinonia politike* and the Roman *societas civitis*. For much of European history, civil society referred to self-governing towns or cities. The emphasis was on the word "civil," which connoted a "citizen," or a member of the polity endowed with certain rights to participate in governance."

Civil society was driven by the bourgeoisie who fought for realization of the market economy systems such as freedom of movement of the people, abolishment of heavy taxes inside the nation, freedom of association, and so on. In this context,

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establishment of a nation state was pursued as well. Civil society has developed in close ties with capitalism and the nation state. After examining a vast amount of the discourses on civil society, Schwarz (2003: 28) concludes "it is a truism that civil society and the nation state must be protected from one another, but neither can function effectively without the countervailing force and support provided by the other."

Following the 2008 financial crisis which began in the USA, trust in the market economy has tumbled and the global market has been shrinking drastically. The maxim of capitalism laissez-faire is being put into question when the intervention and protection of the governments is the only recourse even for the giant industrial and financial corporations. In Japan, like other industrialized societies, the employment problem is worsening day by day. For the first time, Work Sharing has become a serious agenda and is being discussed jointly by the unions, employers, and administrations. In devising a solution for these serious new social issues, civil society's approach has a broad set of component focuses, such as humanity, compassion, and innovativeness. Today, civil society is an indispensable tool with which to fill in the various gaps created by the market economy and government which are exhibiting system fatigue, and/or failing to respond to the rapidly shifting social environment of today. "Only a state that is immersed in civil society can devise policies that responds problems perceived by the private actors, have those policies regarded as legitimate and rely on nonstate actors for help with implementation."(Schwarz 2003: 28).

Democracy may also need civil society as a partner functioning as a practical device capable of bringing in innovative approaches through grassroots imagination and dialoging, even under mixed (legally democratic, practically oppressive) regimes. On the other hand, it is essential in nurturing civil society to establish the democratic system in the legal, political, and social domains. Democracy has to be realized in legal forms and be practiced in everyday life. It is often said Japan exhibits some discrepancies between the norms and the practice.

Originating in Western Europe, civil society is sometimes claimed to be the property of Western civilization. In the contemporary world, however, many non-Western countries including Central and Eastern European countries have started accelerating capitalistic development under less democratized governance. The development of their civil societies will have a crucial impact on the future of each society. The issues are no longer just philosophical or cultural, but pivotal in the construction of an accountable and efficient governance. In this regard, Japan's experience seems to provide a unique case study in view of its geographical, cultural, and religious background and its historical experiences as a latecomer to industrialized country status. The fact that Japan started its modern history loaded with an enormous feudalistic legacy and social structure deterred and disturbed the development of civil society in Japan. Under these circumstances, it is noteworthy that a wide range of social and political movements, since the very early days of nation building in the Meiji period, were spontaneously organized by the people to protest to the authorities and protect their rights. Some of these movements took radical forms and spread across the country underneath the very stringent security control imposed by the oppressive government.

Garon maintains "the vision of the society governed by "citizens" (shimin) explicitly challenged the fundamental notion of imperial sovereignty. Put simply, there

were no "citizens" in prewar Japan – only "subjects" of emperor." (Garon 2003: 43) This statement raises a question of "who is citizen?" In view of a wide range of aggressive social movements all through its modern history, there were undeniably tremendous efforts toward establishing civil society in Japan, and those involved may well deserve to be called "citizens" in the Japanese context. These indigenous efforts to promote humane causes and democratic governance structures in non-Western societies provide us with versatile and diverse patterns of civil society development. And it is perhaps through studying these kinds of spontaneous and autonomous movements in the modern history of Japan, that the social capital and assets capable of nurturing civil society in various environments can be envisioned. Leaving the exploration of civil society per se to Imada (this book), this chapter focuses on the social frameworks for civil society in Japan in historical and contemporary perspective.

It will first provide a short historical review. For this purpose, it takes up the five periods in its modern history after the Meiji Restoration in 1986. They are: (1) Meiji (1868–1912), (2) Taisho (1912–1925), (3) Post WWII (1945–1970), (4) Fifty-five regime (1955–); and (5) Continued structural changes in politics and administration (1980s–, Kouzou Kaikaku). In these five periods Japan experienced dynamic social, economic and political changes which have had decisive impacts on the development of civil society in Japan. The war time (1930–1945, when militarism took over the power and civil society was stifled, is skipped in this chapter, although that period has many significant cases relevant to the current conditions of the civil society, such as the behaviors of the intellectuals under the regime. In the second part of this chapter, I will dwell on the quest for Japanese models of civil society. A couple of the recent ventures of Japanese NGOs/NPOs are presented as the new directions for Japanese models of civil society, capable of advocacy and active both in the domestic and international arenas.

Historical review

Meiji Restoration (1868–1912)

Japan was a latecomer to the club of the industrialized countries and has, so far, been the only member of the club from Asia. Many European and North American countries established nation states through revolution and/or wars of independence. In the process of rising capitalism, the bourgeoisie were the major driving force for the revolutions and/or independence wars that set out to build nation states. Japan started its struggle to establish a nation state right after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. At the Restoration, a battle was fought between the Tokugawa Shogunate holding power for more than 250 years versus the alliance of the local feudal governments (han; clan) in the western part of the Islands. Apparently, the leaders of both groups were samurais but the allies of the western clans had acquired enough

modern weapons and formation to wield a decisive impact on the process of the battle. The leaders of the allied clans were not feudal lords or their high-ranking subjects. Almost all the leaders of the allied clans were from the low class of samurai. (Tohyama 1992a: 279–285; see also Tohyama 1992b). The soldiers were newly employed from the peasantry and trained in Western style (Tohyama 1992a: 272–278; Nakamura 1992: 18–20; Tohru 2005: 86–102). They showed great competence in wielding the advanced Western weaponry and defeating the Tokugawa army in the antiquated formation. In procuring the competitive weaponry, the Alliance of the west clans received wide support from the merchants across the islands (Nakamura 1992: 22–25).

The nature of Meiji Restoration had much to do with the development course of civil society in Japan. There are two discourses about the nature of the Meiji Restoration with regard to the state of development of capitalism and the roles of the bourgeoisie at that time. The "Lecturers Faction (Koza-ha)" maintains that the Meiji Restoration led to the absolutist imperial regime with the semifeudal peasantry as its social foundation. Another school, Rouno-ha (Worker–Farmer Faction), insists the Meiji regime was based on a properly capitalist foundation. Therefore from the point of view of Kouza-ha, Japan was a nation of loyal subjects, whereas for Rounou-ha it had already been a society of citizens. (Tohyama 1992a: 7–14; Barshay 2003: 66)

The Meiji Government was controlled by the leaders of the allied clans, mostly from the low class samurai. After establishing the new government they became technocrats of the administration and monopolized the core positions of the Government which was named *Han-batsu Seihu* (Clan Government).

The changes created by the Restoration were drastic and whole economic, political, and social frameworks were turned around to emulate the Western style. In order to quickly catch up with the Western powers, the Meiji Government made every effort to absorb the Western science and technology ("Bunmei-Kaika": Civilization-Enlightenment). The Government itself launched various projects to nurture the industries, such as agriculture, textile, mining, shipping etc. With a view to propagating the industrial development to the public, the International and Domestic Expositions were fully utilized (Sakamoto 1999: 192–197; Kuni 2004: 246–274). On the other hand, serious concerns about losing identity in these drastic changes and stressing the importance to retain the cultural identity of Japan, the slogan "Wakon Yousai" (Japanese Spirit, Western Technology) was widely used. While Japan became flooded with Western cultural and technological products, this slogan reminded that people should not forget the traditional values by putting some distance to the Western values and cultures.

As the consequences of this huge change, the new government had to face with so many uprisings by the samurai class and the insurrections of the peasants in its first 20 years of transition (Ban-no 1996: 76–139). These moves did not succeed to turn over the Clan Government but they set the pace for the political movements seeking for the constitutional governance with the slogan "Jiyuu Minken" (Freedom and People's Rights) in the following decades, which is regarded as the first political advocacy and campaign for civil society in Japan (Katsuhiro 2004; Matsuo 1990).

The Meiji Imperial Constitution promulgated by the Emperor in 1889, and the Diet was called in 1890. Japan established its governance structure as a constitutional monarchy (Ban-no 1996: 374–398). In this regime, many major authorities such as prerogative of supreme command over the army were preserved by the Emperor. Under this constitution, although the rule of law was confirmed, people were the subjects (shinmin) of the Emperor and their rights as the citizens in the political arena were substantially limited. Even after the Diet was opened, the government adopted the policy of neglecting the political parties (Tyouzenshugi), trying to show it was in higher state than the political parties (Mikuriya 2001: 126–130; Sasaki 1992). But the newly born political parties in the House of Representatives fully exercised its authority over the government's budget and they gradually built up the power basis through their activities in the Diet and in the election campaigns, and the absolutist and clan controlled government had to adopt more appeasable strategy toward the political parties to pacify the critical movement of the public, which repeatedly showed disagreement over the governments' policies in the volatile manner.

Japan fought and won in the two crucial wars against China (1894–1895) and Russia (2004–2005). Soon after the war with Russia, people were disappointed by the conditions of peace, and the massive demonstration and rioting in the central part of Tokyo shook the government (Hibiya Yakiuchi Jiken) in September 1905 (Imai 2007: 7–10).

Taisho (1912–1925) Democracy

Around the end of Meiji Era (1912), Japanese society moved into the second phase of development, with its light industries and the military industries growing steadily with the strong demands from overseas. Backed by this economic growth and the accumulated political experiences, people started to express their will more aggressively, sometimes in the radical forms. "GO-Ken-Undou" (Constitution Vindicating Movement) was organized by the opposition parties and journalists in December 1912 in protest against the Army's demand to increase the two divisions for the Korean Peninsula and the unruly intervention in politics by the clan group leaders. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in the major cities of Japan. It is also noteworthy that this Go-ken-Undou was not the intellectuals' fragile movement in the cities. It spread over the wide rural areas and many people participated in fairly organized manner. It gave serious blow to the clan-controlled regime and people kept pressuring for more democratic governance such as popular suffrage in the following years (Imai 2007: 84–99).

It has to be noted that while this movement was aimed at the realization of more constitutional governance and anticlan-regime, it also embraced the nationalistic and colonial demands over China which might be relevant to the emergence of militarism in Showa Era (1925–). Several years later, *Kome-Soudou* (Rice Rioting) broke out in the major cities across the islands in July 1918. The price of rice was

more than doubled in a short period and people organized big rallies in many cities and towns demanding the reduction of rice price all over the country. In some cities, rice merchants were attacked and looted. These moves were quite spontaneously conducted under the tight security control of the police (Tamura et al. 1988).

The ruling class was greatly pressured and confused by these movements of the people and the governments kept changing one after another in every few months (Taishou-no-Seihen; Taishou Welter of Political Strife). In September 1918, the political party with the nonclan background took over the power for the first time. The Prime Minister (PM), Takashi Hara, was nicknamed "Plebian Prime Minister." These moves were followed by more democratic system changes such as the introduction of the populous election and authorization of the labor unions. It is called "Taisho Democracy" (Imada, this book; see also Itou 2002: 107–144).

The Japanese economy enjoyed strong demand during the WWI (1914–1918), and Taisho Democracy was promoted by the newly born industrialists and workers around the cities. The Rice Rioting caused the coal miners in the northern Kyushu to strike for the more humane working conditions. In the wake of WWI, however, the serious recession settled in and the Depression starting from USA in 1929 swept across the world. The continued economic recession drove the society toward fanatic nationalism, imperialism, and expansionism in 1930s. Schwarz concludes "Civic and ethnic nations can be distinguished in theory but they tend to be entangled with in fact, and the twentieth century witnessed the repeated repression of civil society in the name of the popular will as embodied in the nation (or proletariat) (Schwarz 2003: 26).

Postwar Democracy, Enforced but Rooted

In August 1945, almost all the major cities of the Japan Islands had turned to ashes. The two bombs dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki blasted the whole cities. Hundreds of thousands noncombatants were killed by the bombs.

The second wave of cultural challenge from outside to the Japanese society arrived after the defeat in WWII in August 1945 (Sengo Nippon 1995a, 1995b; Dower 1999). General Headquarters of the Allied Forces tried to get rid of all the roots of militarism and democratize every aspect of the Japanese social life. This time not only the prewar systems but also the traditional beliefs underpinning the prewar regimes were targeted and challenged. The divine authority and the supreme powers of Emperor was denied, the Meiji Constitution gave way to the new constitution heralding democracy and peace. Women's right to vote was for the first time realized. Separation of politics and religion was established and Shinto was denied of its national religion status. Labor unions revived, the school system was drastically changed, the farming land was released to the peasantry tenants. The zaibatsu (industrial conglomerates) were dissolved. A number of the government officials and business executives were purged from the public posts. Many oppressive laws such as the Law of Maintenance of Public Order and censorship laws were abolished.

The communists were released from the prisons. The scope of these democratic changes was far beyond what the then leftists expected. The socialists and communists gained strength quite rapidly.

Soon after the end of the World War II, however, the Cold War set in, and the expectation on the roles of Japan as a member of the Western Allies and a fortress in Asia against the Eastern Block rose high and real. Korean War broke out in 1949 and USA Government urged the then PM Shigeru Yoshida to reestablish the national army in spite of the Article 9 of the Constitution. This triggered the return of the conservatives to the front stage of Japanese society, and the prewar establishment started criticizing the enforced Constitution, the democratic reforms and the peace commitments expressed in Article 9.

In this struggle over the Postwar Democracy, the leftwing of Socialist Party and some of the professors, novelists and journalists played the central role to vindicate it. The memories of the disastrous war and the prewar paternal family system drove the women and youths to support the postwar democracy (Takabatake 1995: 7–15). The vindicating group succeeded to secure one third of the seats in the House of the Representatives which enabled them to block the resolution at the House for the referendum to amend the Constitution.

In 1955, the conservative political parties joined together to form the Liberal Democratic Party with a view to promoting conservatism and amendment of Article 9 in particular. This move coincided with the intensified confrontation of the cold war in the international arena, and the concerns that Japan's being woven into the military hegemonic network of USA heightened among those leftist groups. They actively demonstrated their will to vindicate the democratic reforms and protect the Article 9 in 1960s and 1970s, as are elaborated in the following section. Through these serious ideological confrontations, Liberal Democratic Party backed off from the conservative policies. Instead, it managed to expand the Japanese military power in response to the USA's expectation via interpretational method and that was accepted by the public as the realistic approach.

Some of the other Postwar Reforms, such as community police and election of education committee were abolished but all the other major reforms for democracy survived. Michitoshi Takabatake insists that it has to be recognized that many of the postwar democratic reforms had taken root with the people's support, and although those reforms were originally contemplated for the safety and benefits of the winners of WW II, the fundamental and universal components for building stable political structure under the contemporary social and economic conditions were incorporated in them (Takabatake 1995: 15–18). In relation to the evaluation of the Postwar Reforms, Edwin O. Reischauer, a former American ambassador to Japan, left the interesting remarks "Much of what the occupation brought to Japan would probably have been achieved in the long run in any case, though perhaps more slowly and uncertainly. American misconceptions about the unmitigated evils of Japanese society made occupation efforts desirably vigorous and even radical, but their success ultimately depended on the nature of Japanese society and the substantial foundation for democracy and liberalism the Japanese themselves had already established" (Reischauer 2004: 150–151).

Social Movements Against USA's Military Regime and Reviving Conservatism

Against these highly political and ideological backgrounds after WW II, numerous citizens' movements were organized. Unleashed from the yoke of communitarian frameworks of prewar regime, a wide variety of citizen movements flourished in 1960s and 1970s. The most active groups were those seeking for peace.

In 1954, several Japanese fishing boats including Dai-5 Hukuryu-maru were exposed to the atomic radiation from the USA's testing bombs at the Bikini Coral Reef in the Southern Pacific Ocean. At this incidence, a small group of the women in Suginami-ku, Tokyo, initiated the campaign to collect the signatures to ban the nuclear weapons. This turned out a national movement and millions of people signed up to support it. This campaign grew across the borders as the international movement. In August 1955, the first world convention of anti nuclear bombs was held in Hiroshima City. Today this movement was split into several groups in Japan, such as Gensui-kyou (The Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs) and Gensui-kin (Japan Congress Against A- and H-Bombs), the former being close to Communist Party and the latter to Socialist Party. Every year in August, the international gatherings are organized by both groups in collaboration with Hiroshima and Nagasaki cities and the government. The mayors and relevant staff are vocal and active in appealing the abolishment of nuclear weaponry.[1]

The movement opposing the revision and extension of the Japan–USA Security Treaty (ANPO-Jouyaku) stormed around the Diet in Tokyo in 1960. Hundreds of thousands of the ordinary (nonsect) students and the labor union members participated in "demo (mass parade)" in the central parts of Tokyo. The memory of the disastrous WW II was still fresh in the people's minds and they were really concerned about being mobilized for the USA military scheme under the reviving prewar rightists' group represented by the then PM Nobusuke Kishi who returned from Tokyo War Criminal Court. In and out of the university campuses across the Islands, the students rallied and locked out the school buildings as demonstration for peace (against USA military bases in Japan and Asia) and demanding the reforms of the rigid school systems. The leaders of the move were the coalition of the activists from the socialist and communist parties ("sect") and the ordinary conscientious students (nonsect). Osamu Kuno, an active philosopher, pointed "a great number of the ordinary students joined the demonstration not out of any ideological commitment but from their own responsibility as a student." "They showed contempt at the professional agitators shouting from the stage with wry smiles. This fact that the students were motivated to join due to their own consciousness to be responsible to act when they themselves found it necessary reflects the maturity of them and their society" (Kuno 1991: 150–151).

[1] See http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki: "*Gensuibaku Kinshi Nippon Kyougikai," "Gensuibaku Kinshi Nippon Kokumin Kaigi," "Han Kaku Undou"* (Anti Nuclear Movement).

In spite of these harsh opposition movements, the Treaty was revised. It left various impacts on society; First, the conservative side learned the lesson that how serious people are about peace. LDP took back its reactionary policy and concentrated on the economic growth, promoting “Income-Doubling Policy,” trying to attract people’s interests to richer life, averting the direct confrontation with the ideological influence of the leftists which had obtained relatively larger space since the end of WW II. Second, the students and other participants, mostly ordinary people, returned to their everyday life without any tangible achievements. The society as a whole was sympathetic with the students’ activities. The postwar Democracy permeated and accepted as the basic frameworks of Japanese society. Third, the militant New Left groups were mushroomed in the process of the Anpo Struggle. It coincided with those in France, USA etc. These extremists’ groups such as Rengo Sekigun (Federation of Red Army), Nihon Sekigun (Japanese Red Army) conducted a series of violent cases inside and outside Japan.

The military intervention in Vietnam by USA escalated in 1965. The large-scale radical moves opposing the American intervention in Vietnam spread like a bush-fire across the world. In Japan, a group of the authors, professors, and artists formed Beheiren (Peace to Vietnam, Citizens’ Alliance) to protest and block the America’s military operations in Vietnam. It was a nonpartisan, purely voluntary organization highly respecting the individual member’s will. They attracted lots of interests from media and the whole society. Being vocal, visible, and intellectually provocative, it was considered one of the most unique forms of citizens’ engagement in postwar Japan. In the latter stage, the original members quit and the new members helped the American GIs escaping. They received support from KGB in that stage. It dissolved in 1974 when the Vietnam War ended.[2]

Back to the radical movement of the “New Left,” in 1970, the commercial airplane “Yodo-go” of Japan Airline, was hijacked by a group of the activists of the Japanese Red Army Federation. In 1972, another violent case, Asama-Sansou-Jiken (Asama Cottage Case) followed where the group of the five members of the Allied Red Army engaged in the shootings with the police for five days.[3] In the international arena, in May 1972, three members of the Japanese Red Army randomly fired at the innocent people in the Lod Airport in Tel Aviv, Israel. Several high-jacks were committed by them in and outside Japan around that time. These violent cases affected the support levels for socialism and communism among the public, and the Socialist Party and Communist Party considerably reduced their seats in the Diet.

These radical movements in Japan coincided with those in Asia, Europe and USA at that time. While they left enormous cultural and social impacts, most of the activists’ groups engaged in those movements just disappeared in the stabilizing environment in those countries as well as in Japan.

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[2]See http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia: “*Beheiren.*”

[3]See http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/wikipedia: “*Yodo-go haijakku Jiken*” and “*Asama Sandou Jiken.*”

Fifty-Five-Regime: Political and Social Stagnancy in Growing Corporate World

While the modern industries flourished in the urban areas in Japan in the 1970s and 1980s, the farming, forestry, and fishing communities in the rural areas continued to dwindle and tried to survive on the government's subsidies. This enabled the conservative groups led by Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to dominantly stay in power since 1955. This lasting political frame is named "Fifty-Five-Regime," implying the stagnancy and lack of the social dynamism in the Japanese society (Ohtake 1995: 23–57).

Under this Fifty-Five-Regime, the enormous tax revenue from the corporations earned from their worldwide marketing activities was vested in the hands of the conservative political groups and bureaucracy. A great portion of the tax revenue was redistributed to the rural areas to sustain the traditional agricultural, forestry, and fishery communities. The politicians from these rural constituencies could control the huge amount of budget and secure their seats in the Diet for a long time which enabled them to take over the leadership in the national politics as the leaders of Iron Triangle (Imada, this book), the joint syndicate of the interest groups seeking their own benefits with politicians, bureaucrats and businesses on board. Thus LDP became just the coalition of these vested interest groups without the strong leadership capable of devising the grand policies (Iio 2008: 33–48).

One of the major driving forces of this economic success of the Japanese economy was the manufacturing industries. The competitive edges of the Japanese industries inherently contain the communitarian values and practices such as the life time employment, seniority salary system, for-the-team spirit, company-based labor unions. Ezra F. Vogel wrote "Japan as number one" in 1979 urging the American industries to learn these virtues of Japanese industries instead of just lobbying for the higher protection barriers against the Japanese automotives, TVs etc. (Vogel 1979). The employees of the Japanese companies were convinced they could realize "my home dream" by devoting their time and energy to their company life. A political apathy spread across the society.

Toward the end of 1980s, representing the concerns over the aggressive industrial invasion of Japan into the Western markets, Karel van Wolferen, a Dutch journalist, raised his criticism over the Japanese social practices such as company based labor unions, "Keiretsu" (rigid vendor relations or the double structured industry) and the industrial associations for the across-the-industry consensus building in cooperation with the bureaucracy. He specifically pointed that leadership and accountability were absent in the Japanese governance system, and bureaucracy secretly controlled every corner of the social life, stifling the people's initiatives (Van Wolferen 1990, 1994).

Public Hazards and Environment Protection

As the industrial activities expanded in 1960s and 1970s, a series of large-scale public hazard cases were revealed. In many cases the exodus and emission from the metal mining, metal refineries, and the chemical industry were held responsible.

Many of the oil refinery operations built with the first class technology were judged responsible for the asthma and bronchitis diseases in the vicinity areas in the courts. The cases of the damages to the residents' health by the emission from the heavy traffics of the vehicles in Tokyo and Osaka were also disputed in the courts. In these cases, most of the ruling took such a long time and the compensations for the victims tended to be insufficient both in terms of money and its applicability. In many cases, the government itself was indicted for their negligence of administrative duties.

In August 1967, Public Hazard Law was enacted and in July 1971, Environment Protection Agency was established (promoted to Ministry of Environment in January 2001). Many of the public investment in the road, dams, rivers, ports, land reclamations etc. by the administration were indicted by the local groups concerned about the damages on ecology. The experiences of the public hazards made the people sensitive to the large-scale destruction of the natural environment by those public works. The environment protection movements closely followed the public hazard cases.

As we see in the following parts of this chapter, the largest item of the government spending in Japan is the public investments. The major industry in the many rural areas is civic engineering. It is utilized to redistribute the wealth from the big corporations in the urban areas to the sluggish rural areas. Many parliamentarians have their constituencies in those areas. The public construction works by the government became the major targets of objection by the environment protection groups. In these circumstances, it is not easy in Japan to expect government to make up their mind to collaborate with NGOs/NPOs, unless the political (people's) will is expressed more strongly and explicitly. This is an example why Kaikaku (structural changes) is of critical importance to let the administrations change their mindset.

The question is cast why these massive movements and actions failed to leave the well-institutionalized civil society organizations (NPOs/NGOs) like those in the USA. Apparently, lack of government's support was the prime cause, but then why the government didn't provide support to them? Civil society is not the gift from the government. As explained already, the government continually promoted its public construction programs as one of its main policies. The residents began to notice the detrimental impacts of those public works on the natural environment. In Japan, these grassroots groups are the main stakeholders of the environment protection movements. Today, many of them active both in the domestic and international arenas, have built the extensive networks with their counterparts. In the Japanese social climate, the Ministry of Environment itself is struggling to secure the consistent policy under the huge political constraints. The realignment of the government structure and loosening up the rigid bureaucracy through the political will are the essential steps for the more civil-oriented society.

Kaikaku: Structural Changes Through Political Will

While the tense confrontations continued between West and East during the Cold War, Japan enjoyed the enormous economic success in 1960s through 1980s under the Fifty-Five regime. The political and social frameworks based on the authoritative

relations between the government and people continued without being challenged. In 1991, however, the bubble economy burst in Japan and it was the start of the long-lasting recession. Under the gloomy feelings of drifting without the charters, the Japanese society had to look into its fundamental structures and practices with a view to finding a new vision to regain the vitality of the society.

Political System Reforms

Back in 1980s, the reforms of the political system had started due to the repeated money scandals of the politicians. The main targets were twofolds; (a) shifting from the medium-sized to the small constituency and (b) the public financial support to the political parties in conjunction with the stricter regulation of the private (corporate) donation to the individual politicians. These political reforms were precipitated by the repeated bribery scandals of the politicians including the cases of the PMs. In March 1993, Shin Kanamaru, a powerful leader of LDP, was arrested for the bribery and people's criticism on the plutocratic politics by LDP flared up. One of the major reasons of the chronic problems of the politicians taking bribes was, under the Fifty-Five regime, politics per se was expensive because (a) the party faction leaders had to support their members with the subsidies from their pockets, (b) in the medium- sized constituency the politicians had to concentrate on community relationships instead of policy debate. The three critical ammunitions for a candidate to win an election was called "Three Bans: Jiban, Kanban, Kaban (Organized supporters, strong background of a candidate such as labor union, ministry, business association, family etc., and the money in the bag; Iio 2008: 243–247). In 1994, the new electorate law for the House of Representatives was enacted, with 300 from the one representative (small) constituency and 200 (now 180) from the proportionate.

This new electorate system was supposed to facilitate more policy-based competition than the traditional medium electorate where the candidates had to spend time, energy, and money to maintain their platform through cultivating the personal connections in the constituency. Jun Iio emphasizes "the delegation of the power from the people to the politicians shouldn't be a blank check. The outline of the policy direction should be agreed on through the manifest of the party." "Under Fifty-Five Regime, policy was produced by the bureaucrats and the elections were fought in the rural constituencies without paying much attention to the policies. The policies were remote from the electorate" (Iio 2008: 101–105).

No doubt, there were a number of serious social and economic issues at that times as well. And yet, those problems were mostly an extension of what was experienced before, and bureaucracy dealt them quite skillfully. But the issues Japan is facing today are of quite different nature, and the comprehensive and innovative approaches are the prerequisites for inventing a solution. For example, the living conditions of the rural areas are getting worse. Many communities are physically and demographically close to the unsustainable conditions, the roads to be maintained by the Ministry of Land, Traffic, Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism,

health care, and elderly care by Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare. Addressing all these issues one by one won't work. The comprehensive approaches by the local administrations backed by the policy planning committee of the central government should be organized, because the primary causes of this problem are deeply rooted in the sluggish economy represented by the industries of agriculture and forestry.

Transferring the execution competency from the central ministries to the local governments will also create wide spaces for the innovative and practical approaches of NPO/NGO to revitalize these communities. In this environment, it is imperative for the political parties to present their policies to review the power structure between the central and local governments as their policy for the elections.

Administrative Reforms

In parallel with these political system reviews, the administration systems became the target of the public's criticism as inefficient, obsolete, and sectional in dealing with the globalizing issues. Every PM in the 1980s and afterward addressed on Kaikaku under the strong pressure from the constituency to reform the bureaucracy-oriented governance. Kaikaku or Kouzou Kaikaku, which means change or structural change, has become a leading political slogan for all the political parties. Let's look at the major phases of Kaikaku.

When the PM Yasuhiro Nakasone was in power (1982–1987) the targets were set on privatization of the three national enterprises. Nippon Telegram and Telephone Corporation (NTT) and Japan Tobacco Inc. (JT) were reborn as private companies in 1985. The National Railway Service (NRS) was divided into six private companies (JRs) in 1987. The major driving motives for these privatizations were (a) NRS had been badly indebted because of the constant introduction of the local lines due to the political pressure from the Diet members. Severe confrontation with the labor unions was another reason. The consensus was formed to fundamentally reconstruct NRS, through privatization, getting rid of these yokes. (b) NTT and JT were expected to better perform as the private operations in the globalizing background. These three reforms were accomplished rather smoothly largely because they had been operated as the outside units of the ministries and there was not serious infringement of the vested interests of the bureaucracy side.

In 1994, LDP managed to return to the power through building a coalition including the Socialist Party. PM Ryutaro Hashimoto (1996–1998) declared to address the overall reforms of the six areas: administration, budget, finance, education, deregulation and social security. Amongst these, PM himself directly chaired the finance and administration reform committees.

As for the administration reform, Hashimoto pursued a large-scale reshuffle of the central government structure, reducing the number of the ministries from 22 to 13 by 2001. This reform was the first trial to fundamentally review governance structure of Japan since the Meiji Era. *The Japan Research Review* in its issuance of January 1998 said the original targets of this reform were (a) to review the expanded powers of the public sectors and define the focal points for the central agencies thus realizing a

small government; (b) to dissolve the current sectional ministries oriented for protecting the interests of the related industries and rebuild the structure by sorting out the similar functions scattered inconsistently so that a better service for people's livings can be provided; (c) to slim down the execution sections by utilizing the private services, stimulating the markets and local communities (Japan Research Review, 1998). These strategic targets were not achieved by this reform but several critical reforms in conjunction with the financial and budgetary reforms were accomplished. One of them was to break up Okura-sho (Ministry of Finance) into the Zaimu-sho (Ministry of Finance) and Kin-yu-chou (Financial Services Agency, FSA). At that time, Okura-sho, the most powerful ministry, had been exposed to the strong criticism of the public over a series of scandals of its senior staff. As for its financial policy, because of the brilliant track records of nurturing the Japanese financial sector, Okura-sho hesitated to change its financial policy to adapt to the globalizing environment in 1990s. The financial sectors in Japan had been excessively protected and controlled by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). This was named Gosou Sendan Housiki (Escorted Fleet System) which meant to protect even the lowest performing ship.[4] MoF was the most powerful bureaucracy among the ministries and this Escorting System was the symbol of the Japanese administrative guidance (intervention and protection) system which was domestically very powerful but extremely vulnerable in the globalizing circumstances. Newly organized FSA adopted "watch and intervene" policy instead of the paternal "protect and control policy." MoF had to give up the competency to organize the budget, the strongest card to control the other ministries and the clan politicians. It was transferred to the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, with several vocal business leaders on board.

In this reform, privatization of Postal Services (PS) which was directly operated by the then Ministry of Posts and Communications was not agreed on. It was decided to be converted to a public corporation as a compromise. But, in relation to the financial reform, another change in the flow of the funds was realized. PS had three divisions, postal services, postal insurance, and banking, which were handled by about 24,700 post offices deployed all over the country. The total size of the funds deposited with the banking department of PS was greater than the deposit of all the city banks combined in Japan. The funds were compulsorily transferred to Okura-sho where it was invested as Zaitou (financing the public investment). This was the typical case of overpresence of the public sector in the Japanese economy, crowding out the private financial flows. PS banking was competitive because of the guarantee of the government and the subsidy from Okura-sho in the form of an additional interest on the government bond rate. Tax was exempted as well. By this reform, the operation of the gigantic funds in the hands of the government was to be returned to and operated by PS without any guarantee and subsidy (PS should operate the fund on the market at its own risk). This was a big step toward the market-oriented financial operation.[5]

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[4] See http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/wikipedia: "Gosou Sendan Houshiki."

[5] The Asahi Shimbun, January19, 2008: 12. "Zaisei Touyuusi Kaikaku" (Public Investment Finance Reform).

The privatization of PS was a highly political issue. The association of the post office masters was a strong supporter of LDP. And the workers in the urban areas supported Democratic Party. In hindsight, it was a prelude of Yuusei Kaikaku (Complete Privatization of PS) by PM Junichiro Koizumi a few years later.

Expression of Political Will

The financial crisis in 1980s together with the infamous scandals of the senior bureaucrats changed the atmosphere of the society completely. People's trust in bureaucracy faded away. As a consequence, it was argued that the roles of the politicians as the representatives of people and controllers of the bureaucrats should be highlighted and the political will of people should be expressed in the direct manner. As a result, the function of the PM's Office was strengthened and the number of the political appointees in each ministries was increased. In the Diet, where the senior bureaucrats used to explain as the government's representatives, they were replaced by the political appointees (the elected political party members and a few specialists; Iio 2008: 101–110).

In August 1993, Hosokawa Cabinet was formed with the eight political groups in coalition. For the first time since 1955, Liberal Democratic Party stepped down from the power. Although it returned to the power next year, this rotation of power shook the political ground. The long established amalgamation of the LDP politicians and bureaucrats was cracked down. People would not give the blank check to the LDP any more. People claimed to have more access to the political party's grand designs and the detailed road maps to implement them at the elections.

In the Fifty-Five-Regime, the bureaucrats were predominantly the source of the policy drafting. In Japan, there are few policy planning machines outside the government capable of proposing an alternative policy. All of a sudden the Japanese society found out it was surrounded by serious social problems, such as aging and contracting population, huge budgetary deficits of the central and local governments, so many corruption cases of the central and local governments, the systematic misappropriation of the budget inside the local governments and the local headquarters of the police. The whole society had been ignorant of these rapid changes and the defects in the political structure. Apparently, the political leadership was lacking to develop the strategies for these issues arising from the globalization, the internal social changes and the defective structure of governance.

In order to reform this authoritarian- and sectionalism-based governance and develop more strategic approaches, the PM's Office was greatly strengthened. So was the political leadership to get hold of the controlling power over the bureaucracy. In practice, PM Junichiro Koizumi (2001–2006) made full use of these powers to speed up the procrastinated process of Kaikaku. In order to develop the strategic policy for the major issues, several advisory committees have been organized including the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, to directly advise a PM. The members of those committees were chosen mainly from businessmen,

researchers, journalists, NGO activists, minimizing the representation of the bureaucrats. They come to play the roles of the think tanks to draft the strategic policies. The secretariats of the committees are directly controlled by the PM's Office.[6]

Changes on the Ground

Many legal changes closely related to the promotion of the civil society have been being worked out in a wide range of the areas, and the followings are the most important changes to establish the legal frameworks, and facilitate the changes to promote civil society in the Japanese climate.

Whistle Blower Protection

Karel van Wolferen criticized Japanese society as closed and communal society where accountability is lacking to the outside while the members of the associations enjoy the privileges comfortably. This holds true not only with the local communities but also even with the international gigantic companies, not to speak of the bureaucracies. The personnel mobility across the sectors and/or between the companies stays very low. Lifetime working for a big organization is still practiced widely. Under these closed circumstances, transparency and accountability tend to be difficult to secure.

In August 2008, the Education Committee of the Ohita Prefecture in Kyushu announced to fire 21 teachers who were recruited in April 2007. Their points in the hiring test were upgraded because of the bribes arranged by their parents and the staff of the Committee. It was the chronic practice but was never revealed until this summer when a whistle blower notified the police of the practice. This is the typical case of the manipulation in the closed society. In April 2006, the new law, Protection Law of Whistleblower for the Public Interests, was enacted in Japan (Prime Minister's Office 2005). After the enactment of this law, so many scandals were brought to the public attention by the internal informants, most of them being employees of the organizations.

Many local police headquarters and the local governments misappropriated budgets for their internal welfare, and drinking and eating. In the consumer cheating cases, the traders and manufacturers placed false labels of dates, produced place, materials (beef for pork, etc.), etc. As the environment protection regulation was strengthened, whistles were more frequently blown over the dumping of the industrial wastes by

[6] The Asahi, May 30, 2008: 13. "Koizumi Kouzou Kaikaku" (Structural Reform by Koizumi).

the big companies. The group of electric power companies, traditionally respected as the leaders of the industries, neglected the duty to report the leakage of radiation at their atomic power plants. The new law stipulates the responsibility of the informed authority to protect the information of the informant. This is a drastic shift of paradigm for the administration from putting priority on protecting the interests of the big companies and/or other administrations before the broad interest of the public or society in general. In the communitarian climate of Japan, even in the big organizations in Japan "betraying the colleagues" invites displeasure and critical feelings in its organization and the informant, once identified, tend to be severely punished in that organization. In order to create the open society, it is of critical importance to overcome this sentiment which is relevant to the traditional values of keeping harmony in the community even at the expense of the public interest. This new measure encourages an informant to let the outsiders know of the malpractices behind the scene preventing the continuation and expansion of the practice. This is also conducive to make the society aware of the value of the public interest before the harmony and benefits for the insiders.[7]

Strengthening Fair Trade Commission

Japan invested huge money in "Remodeling the Islands" in 1980s and 1990s. That investment had double-edged effect. Firstly, it facilitated more business chances for the rural areas, and secondly, it worked as a channel to redistribute wealth and creating jobs mainly in the form of civil engineering projects (construction of roads, dams, ports, etc.). The huge spending in the public investments has been carried out across the Islands in the hands of the most powerful group of the Iron Triangles, and the construction became "the primary industry" in the rural areas. The politicians and bureaucrats formed the Iron Triangle to secure and maximize the vested interest to enjoy the various benefits such as kickbacks, election campaign support, etc. To make this business more profitable, the bid-rigging or collusion has become a part of the system, and the administrations themselves often took the initiatives for fixing the process. The retirees of the ministry and the local governments parachuted on a number of public and private corporations and many of them played the roles of the coordinators for the bid-riggings. In April 2006, the revised Antitrust Law was implemented, introducing the Leniency system to encourage the companies involved in the consultation to inform the Commission of the bid-rigging. The first informant is exempted of the fine completely and the indictment. The second gets 50% exemption on its fine. In this amendment of the Law, the Fair Trade Commission is also authorized to compulsorily seize the related documents, and it can issue the order of abatement while the case is in litigation to prevent the indicted company from continuing the project they had won in the bid. These amendments substantially strengthen the Commission's power and it is expected to eventually guide the Japanese business climate to more open and fairer one.

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[7]The Asahi, March 29, 2008.

Information Disclosure

The accessibility to the information held in the hands of the governments is one of the critical tools for the civil society. The new Law on the Disclosure of the Information was implemented in April 2003. The similar law for the independent administration agencies which work closely under the control of the ministries was also put into effect in December 2003.[8] The law still holds back a wide range of areas at the discretion of the administrations and a number of cases have been filed with the court by the citizens' groups over the scope of the discretion. Obviously, this law is still far short in promoting accountability and transparency of the administration.

The Network of the Citizen Ombudsmen Japan has released its annual report on the ranking of the information disclosure performance of the local governments (prefectures and major cities) every year since 12 years ago.[9] They use the Information Disclosure Act, the Residents' Claims for the Auditing and the Residents' Litigation systems. They succeeded to enforce the local government staff individually to compensate about 30 billion Yen, in 25 prefectures mostly for the misappropriation over their fictitious business trips and entertaining the Central Government staff.

Disclosure of the government information is vital in promoting civil society in Japan. There is the belief or assumption that the government makes no error at all in Japan. Bureaucracy seems still hanging on this belief and they try to keep their information in secret as long as and as much as possible. Ombudsman groups are trying to bring various cases to the court and let the judges decide the extent of disclosure instead of leaving it at the discretion of the bureaucracy.

Privatization (Deregulation)

After indulging in the miraculous industrial development in 1960s through 1980s, Japanese society was stunned at the gloomy pictures before them. It was obvious they had to take on the social and political issues which have been long neglected in the past. It seems the society wasted time and energy avoiding the challenge to fully actuate the civil society mechanism for addressing the social issues. Particularly, when it comes to the political structure, there is very little strategic vision for building the consensus over the critical issues such as astronomically huge public deficits, increasing burden of the social security, worsening employment and so on. The politicians were devoted to the factional disputes, showing little interest in policy-based strategy. In 2001, PM Junichiro Koizumi was elected with a couple of policy commitments manifesting to privatize the national enterprises and to transfer as much administrative powers to the local governments as possible. He challenged the firmly cemented LDP political system based on the vested interest groups (Iron Triangle) and the factional structure.

[8] See http://ja.wikisource.org/wiki/: "Gyouseikikann no Hoyusuru Jouhou no Koukai ni kansuru Houritsu" (The Law concerning the Information held by the administrations).

[9] (NPO) Zenkoku Shimin Ombudsman Renrakukaigi (Japan Citizen's Ombudsman Association) was established as an NPO in March 2001.

He used the brief messages such as "No Economic Growth without Kaikaku (Change)" and "No Sanctuary for Kaikaku" to illustrate where he wants to lead the country. For the first time, the constituency felt their interests were squarely taken on by the political leadership. The blueprint of "Koizumi Kouzou Kaikaku" (Koizumi Structural Changes) was drafted by a group of the professors of economics and the progressive business executive. Bureaucrats were excluded. Its major pillars were (1) Privatization, (2) Deregulation, and (3) Delegation of Powers to the Local Government.[10]

The first target of the privatization was the Japan Highway Public Corporation. Because of the huge public investment for the construction of highways, a strong coalition of the leading politicians from LDP stood behind the Corporation and persistently objected to the privatization. PM Koizumi called them "Opposition Forces." After a spell of serious internal battles, the president, a symbol of the resistance, of the Corporation was fired in 2003 and the laws to privatize and dissolve it into the four units were passed in June 2004. But the original plan of the highway construction survived intact.[11]

As the main target of Koizumi Kaikaku, privatization of Japan Post (JP, Public Corporation started in April 2003) became the political hot potato. The Asahi Shimbun (Asahi) of May 30, 2008, reports the group of scholars and business leaders drafted the plans for the structural changes to vitalize the Japanese economy which PM Koizumi adopted as one of the pillar of his policies. The main purpose of the privatizing JP was rationalization and vitalization of the economy by releasing the huge monetary resources to the market mechanism. It was expected to increase efficiency by introducing the private business's vitality, and know-how, and in the wake of privatization, the huge financial assets of the banking and insurance operations of PS would be unleashed from the rigid public control, choosing the investment targets freely, thus stimulating the market. The privatization bill was resolved by the House of the Representatives (HR) with the narrow margin and sent to the House of the Councilors where it was rejected. PM Koizumi readily decided to dissolve the HR and went for election, directly seeking the support of the people. In this election, he won the absolute majority (more seats than the two thirds) of HR. The law was enacted in October 2005. This case gave a strong impact on the Japanese politics illustrating the definitive preference of the constituency to the policy-oriented politics (Iio 2008: 150–161).

Transfer of Power to the Local Governments

Japanese society is tightly controlled by the Central Government or more precisely by the central bureaucracy. Many administrative powers over the everyday life matters are held by the ministries of the Central Government. This has created inefficiency

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[10] The Asahi, May 30, 2008: 13. "A Plot to Draft the Blueprint without Bureaucrats." See also Takenaka 2008.

[11] The Asahi, May 10, 2008. "Privatization of the Japan Highway Public Corporation," and the editorial of 12 August, 2006 "The Highways Sprawling, the Nation Collapsing."

through duplication with the local governments' services. In these services, the integral view points as the local residents should be far more effective than those of the remote central office. Shifting these services to the local administrations would not only reduce the inefficiency but also produce enormous business chances and lead to revitalize the local communities.

Most of the Japanese local areas have been suffering from waves of imports, such as most of the food, and timber from abroad. The small- and medium-sized local manufacturing industries such as textile and cutlets were taken over by the imports. In line with the polarization of economy, the emigration of the young population to the urban areas continuously reduced the vitality of the local community.

With a view to vitalizing the local communities, the Cabinet has decided to organize the Center for Vitalizing the Rural Areas, which presides the existing four centers; (a) Revitalization Center for the Cities, (b) Center for Promotion of Kaikaku Model Area, (c) Center for Area Revitalization, (d) Center for Revitalization of the Main streets of the Local Cities in October 2007 (Odagiri 2009).

In parallel to these efforts to help the rural areas regain the vitality, the promotion of the transfer of the administrative powers from the Central Government to the local governments was launched by the newly organized Committee of Power Transfer to the Local Governments which was stipulated by the Kaikaku Law of Transferring Power to the Local Governments enacted in December 2006. While the central bureaucracies are fiercely resisting to these changes, the Committee set the main target on the branch operations of the central ministries which manage the resources of 73,000 staff and the annual budget of 11 billion Yen. In December 2008, the Committee released its interim report proposing to transfer all these operations to the local governments. To facilitate the transfer of the powers, the supporting arrangement in terms of budgetary sources and personnel for the local governments is critical. However, The Asahi (Mar 20, 2009) reported, to our great disappointment, the final roadmap by the Government to implement these plans would not commit to the major critical targets such as the number of the staff to be either transferred or reduced, neglecting the Committee's recommendation.[12]

Uichiro Niwa, Chairman of the Committee, in his interview in "Sekai (World)" August 2008, explained "The first target of the 1st Recommendation (Mar 2008) was to change the people's mindset, overcoming the subjectivity depending on the rulers, and cultivate the spirit of independence in the face of the two high waves of Globalization and the contracting and aging population. The second target is the role sharing between the local and central governments, based on the principles of proximity and supplement. The local governments closer to the people in the community should be responsible and have authority over whatever they can handle. The central government should supplement the local governments over what they can not deal with" (The Dialogue 2008: 100–110).

Since the Meiji Restoration, Japanese society has built its governance structure attuned to the centralized governance. It was consistently fortified since Meiji Restoration through the War time in 1930s till 1945. A greater portion of that

[12] The Asahi, March 20, 2009: 4. "Rationalization of Branches to be Mutilated."

governance structure stayed intact until today. Through these structural changes of power, not only the efficiency of governance but also the awareness for civic engagement is expected to rise and the success of these Kaikaku projects will have enormous impact on the development of civil society in Japan.

Agenda for Civil Society in Japan

In Pursuit for Japanese Models

One of the critical indices to measure the development of civil society is the development of the private associations. Yutaka Tsujinaka observes that Japanese society seems to enjoy both a quantitative and qualitative development of private associations. Many sizable private associations are incorporated and employing good number of full-time staff in the traditional social service areas such as education, health, care of elderly and handicapped, religion, industry and commerce associations, local community association (jichikai), and so on. While Japan saw this generally vibrant associational development – the newly born NPOs and NGOs, which are more relevant to the contemporary issues such as environment protection, international cooperation, emergency aid, peacebuilding, gender, etc. still stay small and not well-institutionalized yet – Tsujinaka predicts the associations on those themes will grow in the next decades reflecting the maturity of civil society in Japan (Tsujinaka 2003).

These characteristics of the Japanese civil society are defined by Pekkanen (2006) as "Dual Civil Society" and "Members without Advocates." He exemplified the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in the United States. It has over 35 million members, 1,837 employees and the annual budget of $689 million in 2003. It conducts lobbying actively through its dozens of registered lobbyists. On the other hand, Japanese old people's clubs are associational groups without professional staff and stay away from the political arena even when the social security issues very relevant to their livelihoods were debated in the Diet. Lobbying is peculiar to the American political climate where people have to organize and contest to advance and/or protect their own interests aggressively. That is not a normal political process in many other countries including Japan. According to the Japanese NPO Law enacted in 1998, NPO/NGO has to work for the public interests with the specified themes, not for the interest of its members. The new law for the private foundations and member associations was put in effect in December 2008. It adopts the two tiered structure: the organizations to promote the public interest and those for member servicing, etc. In the process of enacting those laws authorizing the civil society organizations, namely, the private foundations, member associations and NPO/NGO to some legal and tax rights, the term of civil society was not accepted by the conservative Diet members. It was a realistic compromise to use the public interest in place for civil society. In the Japanese society, it is still a reality that the civil society is not fully recognized as a social actor. NPOs/NGOs have to continue to work to expand their space by demonstrating their competency as a bearer of the public interest roles.

The processes of promoting these laws per se were the first experience of lobbying for the Japanese civil society sector dialoging and negotiating with the politicians.[13]

In closing this chapter, I would like to look at a model for civil society in Japan. First, what for NPOs/NGOs are there? For whom they are supposed to work? They are spontaneous, voluntary organizations without any certifying procedure from the public such as election for politicians or competition on the market for companies. Although the legal systems for civil society have made a considerable development in the last decade, civil society in Japan is still under fairly stringent regulatory framework. In Japan NPOs/NGOs and the public-interest foundations have to work for the specified themes designated as public interest areas.

Simultaneously, the holistic social changes as Kaikaku are being promoted. They are deregulation, privatization, and transfer of power to the local governments and disclosure of information. These structural changes are to create tremendous chances for the local communities and grassroots groups. There will be more chances for NPOs/NGOs to collaborate with the local governments as the delegation of the powers and privatization move further. In turn, there would be more danger of NPOs/NGOs becoming either a subcontractor or an intimate business partner of the local administrations. Through these partnerships with the local governments, NPOs/NGOs will have to establish the rational partnership with the local governments as civil society agents.

As for advocacy, it is an important function for NPOs/NGOs to develop more democratic society. As Robert Pekkanen pointed out, the majority of the Japanese NGOs/NPOs are devoted to the servicing works on the ground. They are small and not well equipped to conduct advocacy. The public is generally interested in their hands-on works but not so much in their advocacy. Civil society has yet to convince the public in Japan that they can help to develop a better social vision. USA is a fairly matured society as far as the social capital for the civil society is concerned, and the business and political systems are more open and easily available for NPOs and NGOs. A number of the think tanks, research institutes, labor unions, political parties, federal and local governments and consultants are always ready to collaborate with NPOs/NGOs with their professional expertise. In fact, American NPOs have to be competitive and increase and maintain their visibility by lobbying and campaigning all the time. This is particularly true with the membership organizations such as AARP.

2008 G8 Summit NGO Forum

Just before 2008 G8 Summit in Japan, the *Asahi* on the top corner of its July 5th, 2008 evening paper carried the report “Can the voices of NGOs from the world reach them?” It was a great surprise for the society and media to see the Forum formed by the Japanese NGOs/NPOs. At the previous Summit in Okinawa, Japan in 2000, Japanese NGOs/NPOs could not form the coalition. But this time the coalition across

[13] The Asahi, January 2, 2008: 15.

the themes of development, environment, human rights, and peace-building was organized with 141 member organizations on board. Each of the three divisions of the Forum drafted the position papers and presented them to the G8 Summit and the Japanese Government. A wide range of events, seminars, gathering with the local citizens, meetings with the officials, etc. were organized. The media coverage was exceptionally extensive. It is a remarkable achievement of the Japanese NGOs described as small and not well-institutionalized (professionalized).

The *Sekai* (World) in its 2008 August issue spared a considerable space to the reports from the Forum entitled "Alternative vision for Sustainable World." Masaaki O-hashi said they could agree the Forum members would create a rational proposal as the solution of the global issues in the nonviolent way to the governments. The formation of the Forum attracted great interest of the Japanese Government and the international civil society. He quoted Masako Hoshino, Representative of the Forum, saying "the Forum commemorates the initiation of advocacy by the Japanese NGOs."

This choice of Japanese NGOs, which tended to be overly contentious and could not build consensus easily, finally succeeded to build the Forum. But O-hashi added cautiously that "the Forum is not representing the entire NGOs of Japan. There is always the danger of NGOs being trapped by the government through their collaboration with the government." The Forum collaborated with other active NGO groups who stayed outside the Forum wherever possible. This reflects not the maturity of the Japanese civil society, but its ever-continuing construction and reconstruction of its own position over against government and struggle for business sectors the other stakeholders, governments and business in particular.

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Part II
Established Forms of Engagement

Chapter 4
The Rising Voice of Japan's Community Unions

Charles Weathers

Civic Engagement in Community Unions

Japan's major unions are the most cooperative in the democratic world. Their economic pragmatism has contributed to the nation's rapid economic growth, but a high price has been paid in the neglect of work conditions as well as the interests of female, nonregular, and small-firm workers. Community unions challenge the cooperative approach of major unions by representing low-wage workers while emphasizing social justice and equality. They have enjoyed considerable success in helping individuals and small groups of workers, and occasionally scored larger successes in legal disputes, but they have not been able to generate a broad-based movement capable of maintaining effective campaigns for labor reform.

However, the deterioration of Japan's employment conditions since 1990 has steadily altered the environment for labor activism. The number of ill-treated workers has risen steadily, bringing stronger desire for representation. The economic crisis that erupted in late 2008 has brought even more drastic change, turning the long-festering problem of nonregular employees into a full-fledged social crisis, as tens of thousands of low-status workers suddenly have found themselves jobless, and often homeless as well. By creating demand for more assertive, less cooperative unionism, the crisis could portend a major role for community unions in reshaping Japan's labor practices. Furthermore, community unions have been developing new strategies, helping to raise their profile as unofficial voices of disfavored workers. The rising prominence of community unions and similar "individual-affiliate unions" has led

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[1] Community unions are in fact themselves individual-affiliate unions, but the media often uses the latter term to refer to individual-affiliate unions supported by the communist-influenced national labor federation Zenroren, or to all unions, including community unions, that allow individuals to join. Few Japanese either know or care about the difference. This chapter will, unscientifically, use the term community union to refer to all small individual-affiliate unions.

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observers such as Igarashi Jin (2008a, b) and Kinoshita Takeo (2008) to view them as the best hope for sparking a revitalization of Japan's union movement.[1]

This chapter examines the activities of community unions, emphasizing their evolving capacities for civic engagement. The findings draw on several years of research on union activities in Japan, including formal interviews with officials and members from approximately 14 community unions. Many of the interviews had as their main purpose investigating conditions of female and nonregular workers from the perspective of alternative labor associations rather than mainstream unions or government officials. In fact, the provision of information from an alternative perspective is one of the valuable functions of community unions. Further, they were developing more dynamic strategies to mobilize public opinion even before deteriorating employment conditions began to strengthen their appeal. As a result, community unions have a greater possibility of helping to create or participate in a broad-based movement for labor rights – yet they must still contend with a workplace environment placing greater emphasis on economic growth than on individual worker rights.

Characteristics of Community Unions

Community unions first emerged in the early 1980s. Left-wing labor leaders, especially in the labor federation, Sohyo, provided support, hoping that they would help bolster the declining union membership and influence by recruiting part-time workers and small-firm employees. In 1989, however, Sohyo dissolved into Rengo, Japan's leading labor federation, and this source of support was lost.[2] As a result, many community unions collapsed; others made the transition to self-sustaining organization, while new ones were born.

Community unions are organizationally weak. They include at most an estimated 30,000 members, accounting for less than 1% of total union membership. Total union membership is itself low, as Japanese unions included only 18.1% of the work force in 2008, the third lowest share in the OECD after France and the United States. Most community unions closely match the "four smalls" – small membership, small numbers of professional staff, small budgets, and operating in a small local area – observed by Robert Pekkanen (2006) as characteristic of Japan's civil society groups. A 2006 survey indicated that the average membership was 208, and the median 85 (cited in Suzuki 2008: 500). Consequently, only a few generate enough income from dues to maintain a properly paid staff. A typical organization has a single full-time official (whose salary is likely to be bare subsistence level), and relies heavily on volunteer staff. Many community union officials support themselves working part time. However, these characteristics are not unique to Japan. Similarly, a typical alternative union or labor association in the United States has a small but strongly committed staff, represents the most downtrodden workers,

[2] Good general sources on community unions include Suzuki (2008) and Nagamine (2003).

and uses distinctive strategies to operate effectively in areas that mainstream unions either neglect or do not perform well in (Heckscher and Carré 2006).

Most members of Japan's community union are persons who contact the union for assistance with employment problems, the most common being illegal dismissal and wage problems (including nonpayment of wages); for women, sexual harassment is a common complaint. Generally, community union officials dispense advice free of charge, but require workers to become dues-paying members before providing direct support. Unfortunately for the unions, members usually drop out soon after their problems are settled. Another factor undermining retention is that many members, especially nonregular workers and many small-firm employees, have little job security, and people who lose jobs usually drop out rather than continue paying union dues.

Japan's community unions have a relatively high profile belying their low membership. Newspapers and other news venues often cite their officials as knowledgeable or expert sources on labor problems, especially regarding low-income workers and problems such as excess work hours. Community unions provide the press with a great deal of news-ready material. They regularly conduct surveys and operate telephone hotlines, partly in order to generate buzz for the media. In addition, despite their modest resources, they occasionally participate in high-profile campaigns, such as recent efforts to curb unpaid overtime (described below). Finally, community unions have established a reputation as innovators of labor strategies and models of progressive Japanese-style unionism, an attractive contrast to mainstream unions, which rarely engage in the dynamic activities such as demonstrations or strikes, and which regularly endure criticism for ineffectiveness or even collusion with managers.

Civil society groups in Japan tend to be vulnerable to at least partial capture by the state (Pekkanen 2006), but community unions are highly independent, as embodied in their decidedly left-wing culture. Many community unionists become serious campaigners as a result of their own labor problems, and a subsequent desire to pursue social justice, and are accordingly little tempted by governmental inducements. They stand strongly opposed to Japan's well entrenched corporate hierarchy, and view the state and its agencies – particularly the notoriously passive Labor Standards Offices – as unfriendly (e.g., Nakamura 2007: 40; *Shokuba no jinken* 2008b). Similarly, Rengo unions are scorned for their alleged lack of concern about work conditions or marginal workers (Nakamura 2007: 40–41; *Shokuba no jinken* 2008c: 39). Also important, Japanese labor law requires just two workers to form a union, and obligates companies to negotiate with even one worker who wishes to bargain over compensation or grievances. Hence, disgruntled or strongly motivated workers can form unions with ease, practically ensuring the continued existence of at least a small community union movement; building the movement has been a different matter.

Community unions not only partner regularly with left-leaning social movements, but often engage intensively in advocacy as well as traditional labor activities themselves, blurring differences between unions and other civil society groups (Suzuki 2008: 505, 511–513). The organizations most likely to engage actively in advocacy are those emphasizing particular sectors of the work force, notably women, young and nonregular workers, and foreigners. This reflects in part the

situation that activists can easily form unions, yet unions cannot exert much influence on the labor market, leading them to conduct broader campaigns to demand stronger worker rights, such as equal opportunity for women or abolition of agency temporary work, the bête noire of the Japanese left. However, the impact of joint campaigns between community unions and social movements has been limited, partly because Japan's civil society groups, while active, are too weak and fragmented to provide strong social partners (Pekkanen 2006; Sasaki-Uemura 2001).

Another reason for the limited impact of community unions and labor-related social movements is that Japan simply presents difficult terrain for labor activism. As demonstrated by Andrew Gordon (1998), corporations enjoyed great success in instilling strong productivity consciousness among workers, and even among the general population, during the 1950s and 1960s. Compounding this success was the disastrous failure in November 1975 of the *suto ken suto* (Strike for the Right to Strike). The strike was an all-out effort by Sohyo's public sector unions to pressure the government to restore full labor rights to public sector workers and unions.[3] However, the public was angered by the disruption, and Sohyo suffered severe damage to its image and influence. Arguably, disruptive striking or activism was discredited in the eyes of much of the public as well; certainly, Japan has experienced no truly major strike since the disastrous Strike for the Fight to Strike.

New Environment

A strong economy helped to legitimize highly cooperative labor relations in Japan, especially during the 1980s, when the employment rate was far below Europe's, but since 1991 job security has steadily weakened under the pressures of intense global competition and labor market liberalization. Employers have slashed costs by hiring ever larger numbers of nonregular workers, including part timers, agency temporary workers, contract workers, and subcontract workers (Kobayashi 2007). They typically earn on average about half of what regular workers earn on an hourly basis, and generally lack social insurance coverage or opportunities for skill and career development.

Furthermore, general work conditions have clearly worsened. First, work hours remain much longer than in the West, and much of the overtime is unpaid (Morioka 2005). Work has become more stressful for many as well, in large because of growing use of quota and pay-for-performance systems. In addition, the past decade has seen the emergence of what critics of the employment system call marginal regular workers (*shuhen-teki seishain*) (Endo et al. 2009). These are people who are nominally regular employees, but their actual employment conditions and security are so

[3] Strike and collective bargaining rights were rescinded in 1947 in order to weaken left-wing unions. This undemocratic situation persists despite regular complaints from the International Labor Organization.

poor they may have little livelihood security (Kobayashi 2008; Tokyo Kanrishoku Union 2008). Examples include store managers forced to meet onerous performance standards. The mainstream media began to report intensively on deteriorating work conditions in late 2005, making terms like *kakusa* (inequality) and *waakingu pua* (working poor) into household terms. Community unions have naturally provided much of their raw material. Cases presented in magazine or newspapers (especially left-leaning papers like Asahi shinbun) typically depict the cases of workers who have suffered mistreatment and been assisted by community unions.

Community union activists became frustrated by their lack of policymaking influence, especially their inability to prevent passage of the despised Revised Temporary Worker Law (which took effect in 1999). Consequently, in 2003, six leading community unions formed the Japan Community Union Federation (JCUF) for the purpose of affiliating to Rengo, the national federation. Affiliation with Rengo provides the community unions representation in the nation's labor-related *shingikai* (policy deliberation councils), where labor policies are formulated before being presented to the Diet, because the government recognizes only Rengo unions as legitimate representatives for labor. Both sides had to overcome considerable misgivings to enter into this partnership, which remains experimental.[4] Creation of the JCUF has helped its president, Kamo Momoyo, to emerge as a prominent spokesperson for disadvantaged workers. However, various sources agree that the partnership has not yet brought important results. Furthermore, the shingikai generate little media coverage, and have never proved an effective means of enlightening or mobilizing the public.

Core Activities

My interviews and discussions, along with various written sources, indicate the following main patterns of labor-related activity. Sometimes community union officers can resolve issues simply by contacting managers or asserting their presence, though this situation probably exists mainly in relatively rural areas where local authority figures continue to command respect.[5] Community union officials often buttress their informal authority by developing ties to progressive politicians or supporting union-supporting politicians. Some observers believe that community unions exert a deterrent effect, as the possibility of intervention encourages managers to adopt good (or forego exploitative) practices (e.g., Oh 2008). This point is, of course, difficult to verify.

[4] Hokusetsu Chiiki Yunion official Yasuyama Yoshio (interview, August 2, 2006, Osaka) and Tokyo Kanrishoku Union official Abe Makoto (presentation, May 7, 2008, Tokyo).

[5] *Shokuba no jinken* (2008a). Interview, Tachibanaki Mitsuo, chairperson of Toyama-ken Chiiki Godo Rodo Kumiai (interview, June 1, 2006, Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture).

When informal interventions fail, officers negotiate grievances with managers. Community union officials commonly state that knowledge of labor law is important to obtaining a satisfactory resolution. Most disputes are resolved through negotiations, but if necessary a case will move to a governmental labor committee, at which labor and management present their arguments. In 2005, labor committees took up 294 cases of unfair labor practices; of these 146 (50% of the total) were brought up by community unions, reflecting their willingness to confront recalcitrant managers (Oh 2008: 18). The committees also took up 559 labor dispute cases, of which 333 (60%) involved community unions.

As noted above, community unions frequently seek to raise public awareness, typically by holding demonstrations, conducting surveys, and operating hotlines for workers with problems. Some community unions provide various social support services in addition to traditional union services. Support services are especially important for community unions that assist foreign workers. As noted by Urano and Stewart, they are in this regard similar to the US worker centers (Fine 2006).

The everyday activities of community unions generally emphasize resolving the problems of particular individuals. One of Japan's most successful community unions is Rengo Fukuoka Union, founded in 1996 from several associations that previously had ties to Sohyo, the left-wing labor center that dissolved in 1989. The number of consultations handled by the union reached a 3-year peak of 816, 842, and 928 in 2001–2003, and fell steadily to 568 in 2007. The reason for the decline is not clear, but even that considerably shrunken figure amounts to about two consultations daily for just two full-time officials. In addition, of course, officials conduct grievance negotiations.[6] Nonregular workers account for upward of 35% of Rengo Fukuoka Union's consultations, roughly in line with their share of total employment (officially estimated at 37.8% in 2008). Illegal dismissal has accounted for about 70% of consultations over the past 12 years, followed by unpaid wages (16.7%).

Another well-established community union is Mukogawa Union, located in Amagasaki, a former center of heavy industry between Osaka and Kobe (Suzuki 2008: 506–511). Like Rengo Fukuoka Union, Mukogawa Union was created from labor organizations with ties to Sohyo. Main founder Konishi Jun'ichiro believed that a community union was necessary to continue the organization of small firm and part-time workers in the area. The union's first core task, following its official establishment, was operating a hotline for part-time workers. In 1992, Mukogawa Union gained some useful publicity by a operating a hotline for the badly exploited Peruvian workers in Amagasaki. The union received more attention following the 1995 Hanshin earthquake when it assisted numerous workers protesting illegal dismissals. The favorable media coverage gained helped the union to attract more members. In 2007, Mukogawa Union included 360 workers, 44% of them women, and was conducting around 200 consultations a year.

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[6] Note that these negotiations, like wage bargaining, are termed *dantai kosho* (collective bargaining), sometimes creating confusion for Western observers.

Action and Advocacy

Agency Temporary Workers

This section examines the activities of unions that deal with more specific issues or work force sectors. Tokyo Union is especially prominent for representing temporary workers, and its officials have among Japan's most cited labor representatives for several years. Like a number of other community unions, Tokyo Union doubles as an important advocacy organization, frequently partnering with prominent activist-lawyer Nakano Mami in championing the rights of temporary workers through its web-based organization, Haken Net.

Until a few years ago, most temporary workers were women doing data entry and other semi-skilled office work, but the Diet ended the prohibition on hiring them for manufacturing work in 2004, leading to a huge increase of temporaries on factory floors (though many were simply converted from subcontract employee status). The law also opened the way to the employment of hiyatoi haken rodosha (daily agency temporary workers), unskilled laborers hired by the day. One Tokyo Union official subsequently took a job as a day laborer in order to document abuses in the day workers dispatch industry. This and other exposes of abuses helped make the mistreatment of these workers common knowledge, and led the media to demand strengthening of regulation. So far, however, conservative politicians have blocked revision of the concerned labor laws.

Advocacy for Women

There are around a dozen women-only unions in Japan. As in other countries, women's unions in Japan tend to form in order to avoid the domination of male-dominated organizations and to raise women's consciousness (Broadbent 2005; Broadbent 2007). Forming a loose network, Japan's women's unions have ties to Rengo's Gender Equality Department and also support Kinto Taigu, probably the country's leading equal opportunity organization.

Onna Rodo Kumiai (Women's Labor Union) became Japan's first women-only union when it was established in 1990 (Broadbent 2007). Onna Kumiai's most important recent activity was to support Yakabi Fumiko in an important wage discrimination case against Kyoto Gas Company (Yakabi 2007a, b). Yakabi and Onna Rodo Kumiai had to contend with the firm's enterprise unions *as well as managers*, unfortunately a situation commonly faced by individuals pursuing labor rights against large firms in Japan. Nevertheless, the trial ended in an initial success when the Osaka Supreme Court pressed a "plaintiff-victory" *wakai* (compromise settlement) on the sides in December 2005. However, Yakabi, supported by Community Union Kansai Net (a network that includes Onna Rodo Kumiai) and Kinto Taigu Action 21 Kyoto, a women's rights group, has continued to conduct aggressive

collective bargaining to press the initial victory into a wage settlement that would actually erase differentials inside the firm.

The most prominent women's union is Women's Union Tokyo, established in 1995 (*Kotani* 2002). Like Tokyo Union, Women's Union Tokyo was widely cited in the media in the first half of the 2000s, but has recently struggled with finances and declining membership. Membership, long steady at around 250, fell to around 170 in early 2007. In addition to representing individuals, the union's core activities include training women to develop assertiveness and communications skills. Many persons coming for consultations for problems are so beaten down that then cannot articulate their problems, according to officers, so the union helps them learn to analyze their situations in order to better understand how they are being harassed. Recently, the union has increased its focus more toward advocacy of equality and empowerment for women. It is the main supporter of Action Center for Working Women, an NPO that aims to nurture female leaders and break down gender barriers.[7]

Work Hours

Excess work hours are one of Japan's most serious labor-related problems, and two recent high-profile trials have dramatically raised public awareness of the problem. The first arose from a *karoshi* (death from overwork) lawsuit against Toyota, settled out of court in the plaintiff's favor in November 2007. Death from overwork is so common in Japan that it has spawned one of the country's most determined and effective social movements.[8] A community union assisted the plaintiff side in the Toyota case, but its role was secondary because of the existence of a well-developed anti-karoshi social movement able to perform specialized tasks, such as providing psychological support for survivors.

Tokyo Kanrishoku Union played a more central role in a case against McDonald's revolving around excess work hours.[9] Founded in 1993 especially to assist white-collar workers, Tokyo Kanrishoku Union selected its name to counter the widely held, but incorrect, assumption that *kanrishoku* (midlevel managers) do not have the right to join unions. Since its members are largely white-collar employees (about half of them kanrishoku) with relatively high incomes, Tokyo Kanrishoku Union enjoys an unusually strong financial base among community unions. Two other "kanrishoku unions,"

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[7] The recent information on Women's Union Tokyo draws on interviews of March 14, 2006 and March 30, 2007, and on materials received from Action Center for Working Women.

[8] *Shokuba no jinken* (2008b).

[9] *Shokuba no jinken* (2006); Tokyo Kanrishoku Union (2008); interview, Tokyo Kanrishoku Union official Abe Makoto (November 18, 2005); and author interviews with Takano Hiroshi and with members of officers in McDonald's Union in July 2008. McDonald's Union, established by Rengo's Tokyo branch, Rengo Tokyo. It attempted to assist the plaintiff side, though with limited success.

Kansai Kanrishoku Union, based in Osaka, and Nagoya Kanrishoku Union, in Nagoya, are similarly secure. Kansai Kanrishoku Union established and now supports Haken-Paato Kansai Rodo Kumiai (Temporary-Part-timer Kansai Labor Union), which supports nonregular workers.

Tokyo Kanrishoku Union represented Takano Hiroshi, a McDonald's store manager, after he suffered a mild stroke in April 2005, the consequences of compiling hundreds of hours of overtime, mostly unpaid, in the preceding 18 months. During negotiations, the union fairly easily persuaded management to start paying part-time staff for all time worked, and even to pay 3 years compensation for unpaid work. However, managers took a hard line on Takano's case, insisting that he was a *kanri kantokusha* (supervising manager), an employee whose high authority, status, and pay exempts him/her from overtime rules. The court ruled decisively in the Takano's favor in January 2008, agreeing with the plaintiff that classification as a managing supervisor was unjustified.

These two cases played an important role in heightening public awareness of the problems of excess work time and misclassification of employees. One reason for their importance is that dozens of other karoshi and unpaid overtime cases have helped draw media attention to the issues. Community unions are often involved, particularly in unpaid overtime and misclassification cases. Other than McDonald's, the most important such case was at clothing retail chain Konaka, where a community union helped disgruntled workers win concessions from management (*Asahi shinbun*, October 22, 2007 (evening): 1); Tokyo Kanrishoku Union 2008: 70–85). At present, the Konaka union (formed with support from other community unions) is still negotiating with managers in an effort to reform personnel practices. The publicity from these cases, especially the McDonald's case, has made the term nabakari kanrishoku (manager in name only) a national buzzword.

The Toyota and McDonald's cases demonstrate how community unions and other civil society groups often play complementary or interchangeable roles. Community unions helped procure evidence in both cases, and in the McDonald's case, Tokyo Kanrishoku Union provided crucial personal support to Takano, the plaintiff, by putting him in touch with other mistreated workers, a task performed by the anti-karoshi network in the Toyota case. The personal support was critical in enabling Takano to withstand pressure from managers and even co-workers to drop his lawsuit (Tokyo Kanrishoku Union 2008: 10–11). During the trials, the unions conducted constant study groups and gathered supporters to conduct demonstrations, seeking to raise public awareness and perhaps provide moral support to the defendants.

Foreign Workers

Foreign workers have become central to union revitalization efforts in the United States. Many are strongly motivated to gain decent wages and basic respect. Further, they often possess sense of community that often helps to create strong unionists.

Foreign workers, relatively few in Japan, are primarily Latin Americans or non-Japanese Asians performing unskilled low-wage work, especially in factories. Although the Latin Americans tend to be of Japanese descent, most know little Japanese and suffer discrimination.

The lack of assimilation means that foreign workers need a wide range of services. Udagawa Masahiro, president of Edogawa Union, observed that the content of his numerous consultations with foreign workers had changed considerably over 15 years (interview, February 15, 2007). In the mid-1990s about half of his consultations with foreigners regarded labor issues, but 90% now regard nonlabor matters, including visa or political status.

One community union, Zentoitsu, serves as the most important advocate for improving conditions for kenshusei, foreigners (mostly Chinese) who officially enter Japan as trainees in manufacturing industry, but are in reality usually exploited as low-wage workers (Kazama 2007: 103–120; Yamahara and General Union 2007: 102–104). But probably the most important union representing primarily foreigners is Kanagawa City Union (Urano and Stewart 2007). Originally established as a community union for Japanese workers, Kanagawa City Union's membership of 600 or so has for several years been primarily Latin American. Networking extensively with NGOs, religious groups, and other unions inside Japan and abroad, Kanagawa City Union is now a prominent advocate of strengthening foreign workers' rights. In addition to the usual labor issues (dismissals and nonpayment of wages), it deals livelihood issues ranging from housing and visa problems to traffic accidents and racially motivated violence.[10]

Kanagawa City Union's signature activity is the Day Long Action, which it conducts 50–60 times a year in support of its negotiations. One long demonstration per week is a high pace, but the union says it reflects the large volume of disputes it handles. Like other community unions, Kanagawa City Union's most difficult challenge has been to turn members into active participants rather than passive recipients of union services, so the Day Long Actions serve in part to create a sense of active membership. For the same reason, the union also requires members to provide unpaid help in the office (Urano and Stewart 2007: 513).

Another community union that has found itself deeply involved with foreign workers is the 650-member Union Mie (*Shokuba no jinken* 2008c). Its intensive involvement with foreigners began in 2003 when it helped six Brazilian-Japanese workers to receive severance allowances after large-scale layoffs at their factory (originally only the Japanese workers had received severance allowances). In 2004, Union Mie engaged in a heated struggle with Sharp at the company's cutting-edge liquid-crystal manufacturing plant in Kameyama City, and for several months from late 2007, the union tangled with parts maker Hikari Seiko. Pressure from the union forced Hikari Seiko to shift 320 workers from subcontract to regular employee

[10] Although Latin Americans of Japanese dissent can work legally in Japan, many Latin Americans in Japan have illegal or unverifiable documentation. Managers often prefer to hire the illegals, who tend to be more compliant.

status.[11] To prevent the company from converting them into agency temporary workers (which would have enabled the company to dismiss them through nonrenewal of contract), the union followed up with a series of furious strikes and demonstrations. This commitment encouraged Brazilian, Peruvian, and Bolivian workers to begin joining in large numbers (Shokuba no jinken 2008c: 27).

While most of Japan's foreign workers are Latin Americans and Asians doing low-status manual and factory work, some community unions, notably General Union in Osaka and Tokyo Nanbu in Tokyo, represent primarily Western English teachers.[12] Bolstered by relatively loyal members and reliable funding, these unions' importance lies in their active organizing of new members (to offset large losses among teachers returning to home countries) and willingness to take aggressive (by Japanese standards) action. General Union has picketed the Osaka Labor Standards Inspection Office over that agency's well-known reluctance to press employers to follow labor laws. Both unions are presently engaged in disputes against firms attempting to shift workers to independent contractor status (*Japan Times*, February 17, 2009). In addition, General Union began to represent Japanese-Brazilian workers in 2007, and union officials believe that in 10 years the union could represent mainly nonwhite foreign manual workers. Similarly, Mukogawa Union, described above, has steadily expanded its representation among largely Brazilian and Peruvian workers.

While the recruitment of foreign workers holds out some promise of bolstering unionism, turning them into active union participants has so far proven difficult. General Union's organizer for foreign factory workers is unhappy that most quit after their cases are settled (like Japanese workers).[13] Union Mie's Ono similarly believes that foreign workers do not necessarily adhere strongly to unions. However, he does feel that while Japanese workers fear joining a union will hurt job chances in another company, foreign workers do not, creating stronger potential for union recruitment (Shokuba no jinken 2008c: 43).

Zenroren

Zenroren, Japan's left-wing labor federation and rival to Rengo, supports a number of individual-affiliate unions. These perform functions similar to those of community unions, but support from the federation greatly relieves financial pressures.

[11] The union brought pressure by detailing illegal, but widely used, personnel practices, especially inappropriately designating workers as subcontract workers, which reduces the company's responsibilities toward them. Community unions often use evidence of such violations to wrest concessions from employers or to force government agencies to take action. Simply understanding labor laws are thus crucial to their activities.

[12] Sources on these two unions include interviews with General Union officials on September 2, 2008, personal contacts with members in both unions, and Yamahara and General Union (2007). General Union includes about 350 members and Nanbu around 300.

[13] This information draws on discussions with General Union members between September 2008 and February 2009.

Support generally takes the form of office facilities and wages for organizers. Some of Zenroren's individual-affiliate unions have established reputations for innovative strategies for recruiting members and generating publicity. However, most Zenroren activists and organizations have little contact with either Rengo unions or community unions, undermining the potential for solidaristic action.

One active Zenroren organization is Japan Metalworking and Information Union (JMIU), an industrial union organizing workers in manufacturing, electronics, and information technology firms (Ito 2007, 2009; see also "Shinbun Akahata" Nichiyouban Shuzai Chiimu 2007). Though not large (membership is estimated at up to 10,000 members), JMIU has local unions at numerous companies, including IBM Japan and Isuzu. Since many of these unions' members are agency temporary or subcontracted workers, JMIU unions often support them in efforts (occasionally successful) to obtain regular employee status (Ito 2009: 45–47).

Presently the most prominent Zenroren-affiliated union is the colorful 300-member Shutoken Seinen Yunion (Tokyo Young Contingent Workers Union).[14] Founded in 2000, the union targets primarily young nonregular workers. The public face of the union is Kawazoe Makoto, who has established himself alongside JFCU President Kamo and officials of Tokyo Union and Tokyo Kanrishoku Union as one of the union activists regularly cited in the mainstream media.

Tokyo Young Contingent Workers Union has established itself as an important player largely because its officials are effective at generating publicity. The union's signature activity is the impromptu outdoor meeting. Just prior to conducting grievance negotiations, union officials often call members to outdoors meetings, held nearby or even in front of the target company. The assembled workers then seek to participate en masse in the bargaining sessions. Kawazoe stated in an interview that up to around 15 union members have participated in bargaining sessions at one time. The practice saves money (eliminating the costs of coffee shops) and encourages solidarity. While it is common for community unions to encourage members to attend other members' bargaining sessions, probably no other organizations' members do so in large numbers. The union also holds dinner parties and other events appealing especially to young people to build a solidaristic union culture.

Another of Tokyo Young Contingent Workers Union signature activities is its Supporter System, which includes several hundred dues-paying members. Soliciting contributions is common practice (the author regularly contributes to at least five labor-related organizations), but Tokyo Young Contingent Workers Union does it more systematically than other organizations, commanding a rather high ¥6,000 annual fee and regularly mailing information packets to Supporter System members.

[14] Sources include an interview with Kawazoe Makaoto (April 3, 2007, Tokyo); *Ekonomisuto* (November 8, 2005: 90–92); *Mainichi shinbun* (April 28, 2008); and literature from the union's support network.

Emerging Trends: Youth and Nonregular Workers

Like Tokyo Young Contingent Workers Union, many labor-related organizations and movement represent primarily young workers or nonregular workers, or on young nonregular workers. Of these, FullCast Union has perhaps garnered the most media coverage. FullCast Corporation had routinely deducted "fees" from worker pay for dubious "administrative costs," but FullCast Union forced management to cease the practice (Asahi shinbun, October 22, 2007 (evening): 1). The union also forced the company to compensate workers for large amounts of unpaid overtime work. Founded with the assistance of Tokyo Union, FullCast Union's reports of shady deductions and various kickbacks helped generate strong media censure of firms operating in the exploitative day temporary worker industry.

Newly arising groups increasingly blur the distinction between unions and civil society groups; two of the most prominent are Gaten-kei Rentai and Posse (Kinoshita 2007: 164–167). Both are essentially liaison groups linking networks of individual-affiliate unions and supporters, including academics and lawyers. Gaten-kei Rentai was established in October 2006 by two young men, Ikeda Ikkei and Wada Yoshimitsu, while working at Hino, the Toyota-operated truck manufacturer, via the large worker subcontracting firm Nikken Sogyo.[15] Ikeda and Wada had previously founded a union, Nikken Sogyo Union, and used it to negotiate a modest pay increase. Other individual-affiliate unions soon joined Nikken Sogyo Union in Gaten-kei Rentai, as did a number of NPOs representing freeters (young persons working low-paid insecure jobs). Gaten-kei Rentai's webpage, which describes its purpose as "building friendships and exchanging information," is obviously targeted especially at young people. Posse conducts similar liaison and public relations activities, and publishes a magazine dedicated to young workers' problems. Posse and Gaten-kei Rentai try to encourage solidarity, and to avoid the weaknesses of community and individual-affiliate unions, by encouraging members to remain members even if they lose jobs.

Growing Partnership?

As noted previously, community unions and Zenroren organizations have generally had chilly relations. While both camps are strongly left-leaning and occupied with similar concerns, Zenroren's communist leanings are probably an important barrier to active collaboration. However, community unions do find allies among like-minded social movement groups and activists in Jichiro, the Rengo-affiliated local civil servants union. At the national community union convention in September 2008,

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[15]Manufacturing firms in Japan often use subcontract and agency temporary workers to avoid the legal obligations of hiring workers directly. *Gaten-kei* is a slangy Japanese term for workers doing unskilled manufacturing and other low-status manual work; *rentai* means solidarity.

roughly 30% of the participants (by my estimate) were Jichiro activists. Their main concern is improving treatment of some half-million nonregular workers in the public sector (Shiraishi 2008). With nearly a million members, Jichiro, once a staunchly left-wing pillar of Sohyo, constitutes a potentially powerful ally for community unions. Recently, a progressive Jichiro local union teamed with Mukogawa Union to launch an ambitious living wage campaign in Amagasaki City that may serve as a model for future progressive initiatives (Obata 2008; Konishi 2008). At present, however, the activists are a minority in Jichiro, whose leaders and core members are reluctant to undertake difficult campaigns for nonregular workers in an era of declining budgets.

Left-wing activists scored a major advance in efforts both to enhance unity and to shape public opinion during Japan's 2009 New Year's holiday by operating Haken Mura, a "tent village" for homeless unemployed workers (Shinoda 2009). Strategically situated in Tokyo's Hibiya Park, Haken Mura was adjacent to the major national ministries, particularly the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW).[16] Around 500 workers eventually stayed in the village, receiving food, job-search help, and medical attention. The publicity badly embarrassed the government, and put pressure on the Democratic Party, the leading opposition party but notoriously ambivalent on labor issues, to clearly espouse reform.

Haken Mura was originally conceived mainly by lawyers and NGO officials involved in a national antipoverty network, with community union representatives and other activists joining the planning in December 2008 (Endo 2009). The organizers excluded the major unions and the opposition political parties from core participation, largely because many are ambivalent (or even hostile to) labor law reform (they did, however, serve as official sponsors once the event was underway, from December 31, 2008 through January 4, helping to command more publicity). Like the McDonald's trial, Haken Mura inspired follow-up media coverage for weeks, and encouraged activists elsewhere to conduct similar events, including Sodan mura Kansai (Counseling Village Kansai) in Osaka in March (Japan Times, March 1, 2009). There are hopeful signs through early 2009 that the wider pro-labor reform partnerships are holding firm (*Asahi shinbun*, May 15, 2009: 7).

Conclusion

Community unions and individual-affiliate unions have greatly raised their profile over the past several years. Apart from their own diligence, this owes largely to deteriorating workplace conditions. Furthermore, many nonregular workers feel

[16] The name Haken Mura, literally Dispatch Village, refers to *haken rodosha* (dispatch or agency temporary workers). Haken rodosha have long served as a flashpoint in controversies about labor practices. Tens of thousands of agency temporaries have been summarily dismissed (often in midcontract) since October 2008, further angering activists.

growing resentment about inequality, whether it occurs in terms of low wages and benefits, or disrespect. The Gaten-kei Rentai founders, for example, claim on the organization's website that the scorn of regular workers was the strongest motivation for founding their organization.

Since 2005, there has been a surge of reporting by the mainstream media on employment problems, and therefore a need to consult labor leaders with first-hand knowledge of the issues. As a result, alternative union movement leaders such as Kamo and Kawazoe have become familiar names. Their activities are steadily blending with those of other activists, notably antipoverty NPOs. The relative centralization of Japan, including concentration of the media, probably helps in raising the community union/individual-affiliate union profile. Some of the nation's five national newspapers regularly cite community union activists, who also strengthen their credentials and generate further publicity by writing or contributing to books (e.g., Tokyo Kanrishoku Union 2008, and Endo et al. 2009).

Despite the recently heightened profile of community unions, however, there is no hard evidence that membership is increasing significantly, or that they will fulfill hopes that they spearhead a strong labor rights campaign.[17] As before, there is a paucity of strong potential social partners, despite some strengthening of social movements struggling for causes such as reducing poverty. The affiliation of the leading community unions to national federation Rengo provides one potential means of strengthening influence, but has yet to yield important results. The gap between influencing public opinion and encouraging substantial reform is indicated by the situation of daily temporary workers. As noted above, media coverage encouraged and assisted by community unions in 2008 brought calls to fix the obviously exploitative daily temporary worker system, as well as creating a major embarrassment for the government, yet business and political elites have so far forestalled serious efforts to establish regulatory safeguards for the workers.

Japan's community unions are recognized for their effectiveness both in assisting individual workers and small groups, and in helping shape public discourse. They have shown increasing ability to use campaigns, notably against McDonald's, to galvanize public opinion and support broader campaigns. However, they are yet to build strong organizations or find the broad-based social partners necessary to bring about meaningful labor reforms. The steady growth of an underclass of young workers since the 1990s has encouraged the emergence of more intense labor activism, and the sudden economic crisis has created new opportunities for activists to command public support. The challenge for community unions and their likely partners will be to take advantage of these conditions.

[17] There have been reports of recent surges in membership in some unions because of the economic crisis, though it is unclear whether such persons are likely to become reliable union members.

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Chapter 5
Collaborative Environmentalism in Japan

Koichi Hasegawa

Environmental NGO/NPOs in Japan: Their Status and Problems

After the 1998 NPO law was enacted, Japan experienced a kind of "NPO boom" and an estimated 37,000 NPOs were recognized as legal bodies by the end of March 2009.[1] Among them, 29% of NPOs or more than 10,000 organizations have aims and major activities related to environmental issues.[2] This ratio is the seventh largest. The first is the realm of welfare, the second social education, the third intermediary of organizational management, the fourth urban policy, the fifth childcare and nursing, and the sixth culture, art, and sports. While we have more than 10,000 environmental NPOs according to government statistics, it is my estimation that in spite of an increasing number of environmental NGOs/NPOs, their influence on national and local governmental policy, mass media, and public opinion is very limited in Japan.

In part, this is because the numbers of membership of major environmental NGOs are very small in international comparison. For example, in the Netherlands, Greenpeace has more than 600,000 members, equivalent to 4% of the whole population and WWF has more than 830,000 members, a share of 5% of the Dutch. In Germany, Greenpeace has more than 550,000 or less than 1% of the German population, WWF has more than 360,000, around 0.4%, and BUND has 250,000 members, some 0.3%. How about Japan? While Japan has a 128 million population and the second largest economy, Greenpeace Japan has only 5,000 members and

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[1] I discussed the political and social background of the 1998 NPO law using the concept of "social expectation." See Hasegawa et al. (2007).

[2] Visit the web site of the Cabinet Office of the Japanese government (http://www.npo-homepage.go.jp/data/bunnya.html, Accessed April 30, 2009). Each organization may appear in multiple activity categories.

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WWF Japan has 40,000 members. In Japan, paying a membership fee, let alone joining an environmental NGO/NPO is very unusual.

Limited membership of environmental NGO/NPOs also means small budgets, small staffs, and finally small influences. Moreover, donating money is also a very unusual custom in Japan. Recently, welfare NGO/NPOs are into some kind of business by providing welfare services paid by elderly care insurance. Very few environmental NGO/NPOs have a chance to involve in small business, except, for instance, by providing recycle services and so on. Most environmental NGO/NPOs do not produce and do not receive large fund; they just spend. Japan's NGO/NPOs face the problems of insufficient funding and a lack of human resources, especially people who can staff offices full time. Insufficient human resources is an, especially, acute problem. Few very able persons tend to work at one or multiple NGO/NPOs.

In Japan, there is no large national environmental organization comparable, for instance, to the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM) or the Taiwan Environmental Protection Union (TEPU). KFEM, founded in 1993, with 47 local branches and 85,000 members, is the biggest and the most influential NGO in South Korea. It is also Korean's largest environmental organization (see Kim and McNeal 2005). TEPU, with 11 local chapters and about 1,000 members, was founded in 1987 and is the leading environmental organization in Taiwan. Under the former Presidency of Mr. Chen (2000–2008), TEPU has a strong influence on environmental policy and a very close relationship with Mr. Chen and his party, the Democratic Progressive Party (see Hsiao 2005). Both organizations cover general areas of environmental issues. Some Japanese environmental organizations are well-known worldwide, but their activities are more specific (e.g., nuclear issues, global warming, bird protection). Their membership size is usually small (less than 10,000) and their influence on national environmental policy is quite limited (see Hasegawa 2005).

The Wild Bird Society of Japan, the largest environmental NGO in Japan with 44,147 members and 88 local branches (at the end of March, 2008) and the oldest one founded in 1935, is mainly focusing on bird protection. WWF Japan is the second largest environmental NGO in Japan with 40,000 members, as I described above. NACS-J, the Nature Conservation of Japan is the third largest environmental NGO in Japan with 22,964 members (at the end of March, 2008) and the second oldest one founded in 1951. It is mainly focusing on forest conservation and animal protection. The Wild Bird Society of Japan and NACS-J both do not have an English version of their website (at the end of April, 2009) which shows their very domestic orientation.

While environmental NGO/NPOs in western countries, Korea and Taiwan, are currently rather pragmatic and very influential, Japan's environmental NGO/NPOs and environmental movements have kept strong puritanical tendencies and specific self-expressive orientations. To some degree it indicates their limited links to government and business. There is also a danger that with these strong links NGO/NPOs and citizen activities could end up serving as a cozy club lacking a critical perspective from within as well as constructive criticism from without, which could lead them to stagnate and alienate from their original social mission. The emotional ties among members and the continued existence of the organization could become ends in themselves.

Collaboration and Collaborative Environmentalism

Is there a next step for environmental NGO/NPOs in Japan to further develop and escape from what can be seen as a dead end? I would like to pay attention to what I call "collaborative environmentalism." Environmental NGO/NPOs could shift to more collaborative strategies that lead to direct participation in shaping policy, working with authorities and businesses while still maintaining a critical position. This might be a real substantial transformation of civil society organizations in Japan.

"Collaboration" is a key element in the fluid-network-oriented contemporary societies. Collaboration is a commonly used word in English, meaning "working together." According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it tends to especially refer to "work in combination for a particular purpose with those with little direct connection." Simply "working together" or "a working relationship" is not sufficient. When you work together with your boss as usual, it is a regular cooperation between boss and staff. In case that you work together temporally to achieve a specific goal with some persons beyond a direct connection, from a rival company, a government office or a university, we could earmark this as a collaboration. For example, in artistic performances, a Kabuki player Bando Tamasaburo played together with ballet dancers as a collaborative performance. For Jazz music, an uncommon experimental ensemble with a special guest player might be called "collaboration." In business, to develop new products or campaign special advertising, a company engages in "collaboration" when it hires a famous guest designer from abroad.

Since 1996, from a sociological point of view I have argued that the word should be defined as "ad hoc coalition or partnership of equal partners under a limited purpose." A collaboration must have (1) an equal partnership or horizontal relationship stressing "equality," (2) an aspiration to achieve shared targets, (3) interorganizational/sectoral and interdisciplinary participants, and (4) a specific purpose. Collaboration is an interorganizational/sectoral and interdisciplinary coalition in which people from different occupations, different places, and different groups work together in a nonroutine manner. It overrides long-standing social norms of clear institutional boundaries between businesses, NGOs and government bureaucracies. Whereas a partnership, like a married couple, tends to mean an enduring relationship, in collaboration, participants freely join together in a nonbinding relationship to achieve common goals, each assessing the achievements and merits of the relationship independently and on their own terms. A collaborative strategy, we argue, is especially useful and suggestive for NGO/NPOs in the Japanese context today, where the government policy structures still remain closed and rigid (Schwartz and Pharr 2003). Meeting and working with "others" can stimulate creative and lateral solutions to the problems being addressed. Collaboration is a model of governance for a decision-making process with greater citizens' participation in a more open system, which creates opportunities for the development of trust between the different parties pursuing different agendas. Collaboration only works where there is mutual desire and commitment to finding common ground. A society's capacity to expand its network orientation is also a prerequisite, where mutual trust can develop through networking, exchanging and socializing.

In order to illustrate the key features of collaborative strategies in contemporary civic engagement related to the environment, I introduce some examples of collaborative environmentalism in Japan based on my own case studies. The first case is a successful anti-nuclear power plant construction movement by public referendum in Niigata prefecture (see Hasegawa 2004). The second case is the citizen's communal wind power projects started in Hokkaido (see also Hasegawa 2004). The third case is climate change actions at the local level.

Public Referendum and the Collaborative Strategies in Antinuclear Movement

On 4 August 1996 in Maki Machi (since May 2005 merged to a part of Niigata City), Niigata Prefecture, the populace voted on the planned nuclear power plant in the nation's first referendum based on a local ordinance. The turnout was 88% of eligible voters with 61% voting "No." Although the results of the referendum were not legally binding, this clearly marked the end of this particular nuclear power plant project. Finally, Tohoku Electric Company announced their abandonment of this project on 24 December 2003. The referendum results proved to be the first direct step toward this decision. The referendum in Maki Machi sparked a series of referendums in other parts of the country. Between the Maki Machi referendum and the end of 2003, there were 12 officially sanctioned referendums on controversial issues in Japan (except cases of proposed municipal merger plans): three involved nuclear power plants, two concerned US military bases, five involved industrial waste dumps, one was about the construction of a weir, and the other was about a stone quarry. In all three referendums concerning nuclear power proposals, clear majorities have opposed the projects and successfully prevented further development. Many other calls for regional legislatures to sanction referendums have been rejected, but attempting to hold a referendum has nevertheless become a principal strategy for social movements since the mid 1990s. Numerous residents' opposition movements have received wide publicity in Japan from reports in media about their demands for referendums concerning large public works projects. Referendums have become a significant mode of gaging residents' opinions about the introduction of dangerous or nuisance facilities and public works that may have detrimental environmental effects. Referendums have generally been initiated by residents who oppose the proposal, but some have been organized by the elected leaders of local authorities. Although regional referendums are not legally binding, their political significance cannot be ignored. That is, they are to some extent "politically binding" for the elected leaders of regional authorities.

The increasing number of referenda has a particular social and political background. There is clearly a growing demand for self-determination throughout Japan. In a representative democracy where voters occasionally elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf, referendums provide a means through which the electorate can directly express its opinion on a particular issue.

The system is not perfect, since various residents (such as foreign citizens) are excluded from voting, but it is nevertheless open to all eligible voters and thus a relatively direct form of democratic decision making. Although a regional referendum is not legally binding, it can be held if the local ordinance to implement it is passed in the local council.

Initiating and pursuing a referendum has numerous effects for the social movement itself. First, in the campaign for a referendum, objectives, strategies, time-schedules, and issues become clearly defined. Second, to initiate a referendum requires broad support from the general public. It is therefore essential to build a grand coalition and collaboration of people from across the political spectrum. People of the "left," for example, must set aside their political differences to join with conservatives and minorities in a campaign over a single issue. Once established, this coalition and collaborative process must be sustained until voting day. Initiating a referendum is thus in many ways an avenue for a social movement to mature. Third, at the same time, a referendum is a learning opportunity for the residents. The referendum was clearly a learning experience for the residents of Maki Machi. It inspired them to seek more information, and as they became more knowledgeable they discussed the issue with friends, family, and acquaintances, while at the same time altering their lifestyles to reduce their own waste production and recycle more.

Holding a referendum can be likened to throwing the ball back to the elected officials, requiring them to review and alter their policies in accordance with the expressed will of the people.

The biggest turning point of anticonstruction of nuclear power plant movement was the formation of the "Group to bring about a local referendum" in October 1994. The group was formed by residents who had not previously been involved in the antinuclear movement in this town. It opted for a different approach and won the support of many of the people who the existing movement had failed to attract. The group staged an unofficial referendum, in early 1995. With a turnout of 45% of eligible voters, and 95% of them voting "No" to the planned power plant, the opposition movement began to gain strong momentum – after 25 years of "defeats" and with only two supporting members of the town council versus 20 opponents. The unofficial referendum was followed by a tremendous victory in the town council elections held in April, with 12 out of 22 elected assembly members opposing the proposed nuclear plant and supporting an official referendum. When it became public that Mayor Sato had attempted to rush through the land sale after the independent referendum, the new council commenced moves to officially recall him from office. He resigned on 15 December 1995, just 7 days after the Monju incident, which questioned the security of nuclear facilities, and before the recall signature verification process was completed. The tide had dramatically turned. Residents who had reservations about the nuclear power plant were gradually provided with political opportunities to express their concerns, and the opposition movement successfully seized the majority of the residents.

The "Group to bring about a local referendum" arose as a new movement initiated by independent business owners and local leaders who were not far removed from

the core political power structures in the town. The main opposition movement had been initiated by the "usual suspects" – the labor unions and the political left. Before the mayoral election of August 1994, the movement was well-aware of the problem of their limited support base, but had little success in expanding it. The new "Group to bring about a local referendum," however, succeeded in drawing support for the anti-Maki nuclear reactor cause from the town's more conservative residents.

The movement opposing the nuclear power plant at Maki Machi had abundant human, network, and information resources. As the county seat of Nishi Kanbara Gun, and with its close proximity to the prefectural capital, Maki Machi has long been prosperous. Substantial resources were therefore available to the opposition movement.

As a regional center, Maki Machi has four public high schools, three sake breweries and the branch office of a regional newspaper. More recently it has become a "satellite-dormitory suburb" for the city of Niigata, especially since the openings of the Joetsu bullet train line and the Kan'etsu and Hokuriku freeways. These local peculiarities provided an important backdrop to the mobilization of public opinion against the proposed nuclear power plant. The primary actors in the "Group to bring about the local referendum" were local self-employed business leaders, largely from the first baby boomer generation. Local high school teachers, lawyers, doctors, dentists, university lecturers and other professionals, generally of the same generation, played pivotal roles in the movement. This is significant, because in other areas where there has been opposition to nuclear facilities or other public works, the professionals involved in the movements are generally "outsiders" who reside in a capital city of the prefecture or distant metropolitan areas. At Maki Machi, however, these participants were, for the most part, born and raised locally. Its proximity to the prefectural capital, with its population of half a million and a national (Niigata) university, helped to keep the dispute in the public eye. For example, Maki Machi residents were able to enlist the help of a law professor of Niigata University for drafting the local referendum ordinance. Many self-employed professionals living and working in Niigata City and nearby, including a group of doctors and dentists, also contributed significantly to the Maki Machi movement.

One of the difficulties that anti-nuclear power movements have in attracting wider support from the community can be attributed to the problem of creating new and "positive" frames to counter their inherently oppositional and critical images – to demonstrate that they represent something more than simply opposing or rejecting "development" and "progress."

Maki Machi's antinuclear movement entered a new stage in the lead up to the mayoral election in March 1994 with an "origami crane campaign" initiated by the town's women. By May, 80,000 origami cranes had been given to Mayor Sato as signifiers of the women's concerns. These traditional symbols of peace framed the opposition to the horrifying risks of nuclear power in terms of ordinary citizens, especially women, who were seeking alternatives to the society being created by the pro-nuclear government–industry alliance. At the same time, folding a piece of paper into an origami crane was something that anyone could do, and through

which they could anonymously express their opposition to the proposed nuclear power plant. It was also relatively easy to persuade friends and family members to join. The "origami crane campaign" preceded the August 1994 mayoral election, and eventually culminated in a remarkable achievement in April 1995 when three women antinuclear candidates topped the local council elections. The "origami crane campaign" proved to be an ideal frame for attracting women to join the movement and build collaborative relationship.

The push for a "regional referendum" also became a new frame for the movement and collaborative processes. The referendum allowed people to express their opposition anonymously, and yet made the size of the opposition movement apparent for all to see. The "Group to bring about a local referendum" had taken care to differentiate themselves from the older antinuclear movement and avoided frames such as "opposition to the nuclear power plant" or "the campaign to halt construction." Instead, adopting a set of scales for the group's logo, they concentrated on maintaining an image of neutrality while facilitating the official referendum, in order to maximize voter participation, and to build and to maintain collaborative process. They did not reveal the group's true position on the plant until the referendum was finalized. Their neutral image effectively avoided tainting the campaign with old and tired political colors, and helped to ensure the referendum's legitimacy as a democratic means of enabling people to determine their futures for themselves. Although the referendum was not legally binding, its advocates were well aware that its political influence was highly dependent upon the voter participation rate. As we have seen, their strategic framing and collaboration proved very effective, with a much larger voter turnout in the official referendum (as said 88%) than expected.

Another potent framing activity began 2 months before the official referendum in June 1996. Mrs. A and others began a new campaign, called the "tree of happiness." Handkerchiefs with antinuclear messages were tied to ropes and hung from the tops of posts. People freely wrote their thoughts about the nuclear power plant on the handkerchiefs. This campaign clearly demonstrated the growing support for the opposition movement both within and outside of the town, as the first "trees of happiness" in town continued to grow with more ropes and more handkerchiefs, and additional "trees of happiness" were created around the community. Handkerchiefs thus provided a frame and a symbol of collaborative environmentalism representing grassroots opposition to technology and the nuclear power plant.

The Citizen's Communal Wind Power Projects and the Collaborative Processes

Another example of collaborative environmentalism can be found in the successful installment of the Hokkaido Green Fund, a fund related to alternative energy. Prompted by the threat of global warming, another "energy revolution" is presently underway worldwide. Reducing demand has been given the highest priority. Where energy must be used, its most efficient use is considered. Instead of oil, coal, or

nuclear fuels, the more benign natural gas is increasingly being used. Smaller and more decentralized generating facilities are becoming more common, employing cogeneration and renewable resources such as solar, wind, and biomass. More environmentally friendly automobiles are being developed, using natural gas or electricity or a combination of fuels (so-called hybrid cars). In many regions there have been marked changes in transport policy from automobiles to public transport (for example, new light rail tram services). The force driving this energy revolution comes from collaborations between environmental NGOs, electric utilities, the business sector, and government bodies.

In the United States, numerous solar and wind power projects are developing through various collaborations between the US Department of Energy, state governments, utilities, and NGOs. In Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands – the world's leaders in policies to reduce energy demand and to promote the use of alternative energy sources – progress has been, and continues to be, made through multilayered collaborations involving regional governments, utilities, private research institutes and environmental organizations. In Japan too, more and more wind farms are being constructed through collaborations between regional governments, local groups, scholars, businesses, and financial institutions, since 1996 when wind turbines started to operate as the first commercial business in Tachikawa Machi, Yamagata prefecture.

Businesses, environmental NGOs, consumers, and governments have common interests in nurturing environmental businesses. These shared values and objectives provide the basis for future collaborations among these groups. The institutional barriers between the government, commercial, and citizens' sectors have been more rapidly overcome in the EU countries, enabling greater interpenetration of these sectors.

For the government sector, collaboration with the environmental movement means involving them in the policy-making processes. It has become increasingly apparent that the most effective way to educate the public about the government's existing and proposed environmental policies is to enlist the environmental movements to the cause. This, however, requires that the policies being promoted are acceptable to the environmentalists, which in turn requires that the policy-making processes are open to the political ideals and ideas of the environmentalists.

For the environmentalists, collaboration means that they can no longer adopt "outsiders" position of simple criticism and opposition to government and business development proposals. Instead they must pursue alternative development objectives of their own, collaborating with government and business where possible while maintaining their independence. This "insiders" approach appears to be the only practicable means of realizing alternative ideals through policy and concrete measures. The activists' alternative ideals will only be deeply inscribed in their society when they have been endorsed and validated by incorporation in government and industry policy. Demonstrating the public demand for these alternatives by successfully marketing them through business enterprises is one of the most effective means of convincing the policy-makers to change in this direction.

At the same time, environmental movements that have become large international NGOs must invest enormous amounts of energy into their own financial wellbeing. Organizations such as the WWF and Greenpeace therefore operate a number of businesses toward financing their core activities. Greenpeace Germany, for example, owns and operates an independent electricity wholesaler of green power products for private and corporate customers.

The success of the Hokkaido Green Fund was a major turning point in Japan – the movements' initiatives became official policy and various new enterprises were born. For the business sector, as consumers become increasingly eco-conscious, an eco-friendly public image is almost a necessity and, as mentioned, new business opportunities and markets are opening in environmental fields. Large corporations such as Sony and Asahi Brewery do not purchase "green power certificates" only to be doing their duty as global corporate citizens but to be seen to be environmentally conscious and thus enhance their public image. In some respects then, business and movement objectives are at least in part beginning to overlap, and some parts of the business sector are becoming significant parts of the environmental movement. Of course, there are still very powerful conservative strongholds in the business sector, such as the Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren), one of Japan's peak business bodies, and the oil industry which generally oppose the environmental movement.

Japan's first citizen's communal wind power project was introduced by the Seikatsu Club Hokkaido consumers' co-op. The Seikatsu Club consumers' co-op was established in 1965 in the Setagaya district of Tokyo. Its initial aim was to purchase good quality safe milk. Since then the co-op has promoted many safe and healthy agricultural products, processed foods, and other consumer goods (see also Chap. 12 in this volume).

The Seikatsu Club Hokkaido co-op was established in 1982 and currently has 13,000 members. It is one of the most active affiliates of the Seikatsu Club in terms of energy issues in general and nuclear power in particular. This particular focus of their activism was triggered in 1987 by the discovery of radiation in their pesticide-free tea products, presumably caused by the fallout from the Chernobyl accident the previous year. This discovery ignited a prefecturewide campaign in 1988–1989, demanding a referendum over the commencement of the operation of the nearly finished Nos. 1 and 2 nuclear reactors at the Tomari power station. The campaign was primarily conducted by the co-op's female members and the local trade unions who circulated petitions, aiming to collect 1 million signatures. Although they surpassed this target by 30,000, the 110-seat Prefectural Assembly nevertheless rejected the referendum ordinance by two votes.

Since 1990, about 50 co-op members have taken part in a summer camp each year in Horonobe Cho, where it was feared that a high-level radioactive waste dump site was to be built. Their mission is to go door knocking in the town and the surrounding area to inform the local people about potential safety problems and other negative impacts of the project. The Tomari power station and Horonobe facility are typical of the disputes about nuclear energy in Hokkaido.

When it became apparent in July 1996 that Hokkaido Electric was planning to build a third reactor at the Tomari station, the female members of the co-op began an opposition campaign – a new petition, this time seeking only 100,000 signatures.[3] During this part of the campaign, I was invited to speak at a public meeting on 15 October 1996. My discussion was entitled “What citizens can do to foster renewable energy with an extra 10%: An introduction to the green power scheme.” I began by outlining the green power scheme in the United States which I studied, and then discussed various problems with Japan’s nuclear power policies. I suggested that a new consumer movement should be launched, in which citizens would pay a 10% surcharge on their electricity bills toward a fund to foster renewable energy. The surcharge, I suggested, could be offset by the consumers’ efforts to reduce their personal/household energy consumption, and hence their power bills. ‘Beginning with milk, your club has promoted safe and healthy commodities. Hereafter you can promote safe, healthy and favorable electricity by the communal efforts of paying a small amount – the equivalent of two cups of coffee in the tea room’ (see Hokkaido Shimbun, 2 November 1996).

My suggestion was well received by the participants in Hokkaido, who felt that they were not making apparent or effective progress with the usual opposition movement strategies and tactics. A new idea of green power scheme was launched in March 1999 after 30 months of preparation. By this time it was normal for the Seikatsu Club members to settle their monthly accounts through direct debit transactions from their banks. In the new green power scheme, the participating members would pay their electricity bills plus a 5% surcharge to the co-op instead of directly to the power company. The surcharge was to be put into a trust account held by the Hokkaido Green Fund, a newly established nonprofit organization. Hence, with one bank authorization, any member could participate in the scheme “conveniently, without difficulty, and with a little power saving.” Non co-op members can also participate in the scheme by contributing money directly to the Fund. In a sense, then, the scheme is a means of fundraising that links donations to an existing direct debit system.

Two different ways of calculating donations were considered: a fixed payment or a fixed rate. Paying a fixed amount, say, 400 yen per month or 5,000 yen annually, would be more convenient, but offers no incentive to reduce power usage to offset the extra cost. Paying a percentage of one’s power bill, in contrast, provides a strong incentive to reduce power usage, as the contribution to the scheme increases or decreases directly according to consumption levels. A fixed rate system is therefore more readily interlinked with a general power reduction campaign. To make the scheme work in this case required close cooperation between the utility, the co-op, and the HGF, since the utility had to notify the Fund of participating customers’ power charges each month. Fortunately, the director of the sales department of Hokkaido Electric at the time was agreeable and cooperative in making the necessary arrangements for individual power bills to be sent to the Green Fund.

[3] The third reactor is now under construction and the trial operation will start in December 2009.

The scheme initially aimed for 1,000 participants in the first 12 months. In April 2000, 13 months after its launch, there were slightly more than 800, climbing to 1,300 by the end of October 2002. The scheme raised approximately 4 million yen in fiscal year 2000. The first citizen-owned power plants in Japan began operating in 1994, beginning with a solar power plant. However, solar has proven to have a higher cost:output ratio, and is therefore less financially viable. In contrast, wind power is an established commercial business around the world.

Since 1997, a growing number of plans for large-scale wind farms have been realized in Hokkaido. But most of the wind farms planned for Hokkaido were profit-driven. The wind in the sky is a "public" resource that does not exclusively belong to any individual and should not be used solely for profit. The board of the HGF concluded that a nonprofit organization such as its own should therefore become actively involved in power generation as a community enterprise, and decided that this was the best way to invest the funds that had so far been and were continuing to be raised.

After considering various potential locations, the HGF selected a site in Hamatonbetsu Cho on the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk, not far from Horonobe, the site of the aforementioned nuclear facility dispute. Many leading members of the HGF had long histories of commitment to the area. The site was selected primarily for its wind capacity. Another favorable condition is that Tomen Power Japan (since October 2002 Eurus Energy Holdings Corporation) could be subcontracted to construct, maintain and run the plant. Tomen Power was highly experienced in the wind farming business nationally and internationally. Subcontracting the entire project to them offered reduced financial costs and provided management expertise (thus reducing risk) for the first attempt of a citizen's communal wind power generating project.

A 60 m 1,000-kW turbine was selected at a cost of 200 million yen. A campaign aiming to raise 60 million yen at 500,000 yen/share began in mid-December 2000, with the remainder to be borrowed. The campaign generated an overwhelming response – with more than 100 million yen raised in the first 6 weeks. In the end, 141.5 million yen was raised through the sale of 249 shares to some 200 individuals (124.5 million yen) plus donations from various groups. "Hokkaido citizens" wind electric power generation' was then incorporated, owned by the citizen/shareholders. This was the first company of small share holding by citizens in Japan under a new law.

Construction began in March 2001 and power generation began on 15 September 2001. The turbine is expected to generate 2.66 million kW/year operating at 30% of its rated capacity. This is equivalent to the power consumed by 900 households, or 32 million yen worth of electricity. Achieving an output of 30% of rated capacity is high by international standards. Nevertheless, in the second year until the end of March 2003, the new facility came close to this target, achieving 29.2%. The second year dividend of 19,969 yen per unit (500,000 yen), interest of almost 4% a year (0.5% on 5 year fixed term deposits) was paid to the shareholders from the sale of electricity for the 12 months ending March 2003.

The importance of the citizen's communal wind power plant, set up by the Hokkaido Green Fund is that it links the movement and community business through small investments and small share holdings by citizens. The Hokkaido Green Fund's

achievement was widely reported throughout the country in newspapers, television, and other media, receiving general acclaim. It was awarded the second annual "Environment for Tomorrow Award" sponsored by the Asahi Shimbun in May 2001, and in October, the Environment Minister's annual award for the prevention of global warming. It was also cited in the annual "Environmental White Paper" for 2002.

The Hokkaido Green Fund's model of using a nonprofit organization to appeal widely to citizens for donations and investment to set up a citizens' communal power plant has since been adopted throughout Japan including solar and biomass projects. By the end of April 2009, based on the similar scheme, more than ten communal wind generators are operating in Hokkaido, Aomori, Akita, Ibaragi, Chiba, Kanagawa and Shizuoka, and other prefectures. The Hokkaido Green Fund is directly involved in many of the projects, supporting local NPOs and other citizens.

From global eyes, the scheme of Japan's citizen's communal wind power project is very unique and there is no equivalent to the US project except Toronto's "Windshare project" in Canada.[4] The name of citizen's communal wind power has come from *Bürgerwindpark* in Denmark and Germany meaning "communal, local citizen-owned operators." Japanese projects are mainly urban-based. Indeed most wind turbines are located in rural area, but almost all citizen investors are living in urban area. In case of Toronto's "Windshare project," investors were limited to residents in Toronto and for Denmark's and Germany's Bürgerwindpark, traditionally investors used to be limited to residents in neighborhood area. But in case of Japan's citizen's communal wind power projects, investors came from nationwide including metropolitan area.

The name of Hokkaido Green Fund reveals a secret of its success: Hokkaido is a symbol of locality for founded members, Green means ecological, idealistic, and related to movement, antinuclear and global warming protection and Fund means money, economy, and its function. Japan's citizen's communal wind power projects succeeded in linking local projects and urban residents' worrying about nuclear issues and global warming protection.

Actors and Collaborative Networks for Climate Change Actions

In Japan, the accomplishment of global warming protection in these 9 years into the new millennium is getting much more serious year by year. Already the emission level increase in Japan went up to 7% and more, although in the Kyoto Protocol the Japanese government promised a reduction of 6% compared to 1990 level. So Japan must decrease totally 14% of green gas emission within 5 years from 2008 onward. It looks like the targets will be very hard to meet. In 1998, right after the Kyoto conference, Japanese government passed a new law to promote global warming protection (the 1998 GWP law).

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[4] Visit the website of the Windshare (http://www.windshare.ca/, Accessed June, 30, 2008).

A voluntary independent NGO networks Kiko (Weather) Forum was founded as an umbrella organization in 1997 for the Kyoto Conference. It was working very effectively in the conference. The national government, especially the Environmental Agency, now Ministry of Environment, acknowledged "the power of citizens and NGOs" as stressed in the 1992 Rio Summit. Antipollution groups nationwide, other national and international environmental NGOs, such as WWF Japan and Greenpeace Japan, joined together and created this umbrella. After the Kyoto Conference, Kiko Forum changed the name to Kiko Network. It is still active, especially observing UN conferences related to global warming issues, and gathering data and information worldwide. It has kept its critical stance toward the national government, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and economic centers as Keidanren. It has urged Ministry of Environment to take stronger positions as regards global warming.

Most prefectural government offices have local action plans to protect their prefecture from global warming in line with the national action plan. The plans include a specified section and a specified committee consisted of a variety of stakeholders. The same holds for some major municipal government offices like Yokohama, Kawasaki, etc. They too have local action plans building on committees in which positions of various stakeholders are represented.

Under the 1998 GWP law each prefectural government was encouraged to nominate a prefectural center for climate change actions. Currently, 45 of the total of 47 prefectures have such center. Half of these centers are a kind of extra-government body, Gaikaku Dantai of prefectural government, and another half are independent specified NGO/NPOs. Both types are supported by the Ministry of Environment, National Institute of Environmental Study, and JCCCA (Japan Center for Climate Change Actions), a government affiliated body. These centers form the nuclei of the policy network and collaboration formation related to global warming protection at the local level. The first type of extra-government body generally has stable financial and human resources and some retired or loaned prefectural officials who keep close relationships with the former section of the prefectural office.

In case of my prefecture, Miyagi prefecture, a local environmental NGO, MELON, Miyagi Environment Life Out-reach Network was founded in 1993 right after the Rio Summit. The Miyagi Center for Climate Change Actions as a branch of MELON was nominated by Miyagi prefectural government in 2000. This center is completely independent from the prefectural government. It has kept a sense of social movement and an independent position. But at the same time it has a small budget and staffs receive little support from the prefectural government. Moreover, there are tensions with the prefectural government. The role of leaders and staffs is critical and the relationship with local media is also critical. We have a national liaison network of these prefectural centers. And myself, I am a head of the Miyagi center since 2003 and also former chair of this national liaison for 2 years until July 2008. The following is based on "just" my own participatory observation.

The centers perform a lot of tasks including outreaching, education, supporting local or community-level activities, consulting, research activities, collecting data, and so on. One of the most interesting tasks is educating and training volunteers,

named "initiators for climate change actions" (action initiators). The Miyagi center has 64 initiators nominated by prefectural government. Nationwide we have a total of 5,221 initiators (end of June 2008). They are talking about climate change in their own way while volunteering in elementary schools, junior high schools, and local meetings. They are like local "Al Gores" to us and we do call them local Al Gores or sometimes "community Al Gores." Who are these action initiators? The major characteristics can be described as follows. They are mainly men (64%), retired or almost near retire age, they have typical job careers, for example, they have energy-related jobs, are employees of oil companies, or electric utilities, and they have a special interest in natural science and global warming issue. They almost all had college graduation which contrasts sharply with female volunteer in other area, who mainly serve as welfare service providers for the elderly.

The Kyoto Protocol brought Japan a hard target to meet, created strong debates, and split politics into supporters and opponents. In spite of the reluctance of METI and Keidanren, and a lack of national political leadership, some local governments, civil society groups, and individuals are very eager to promote climate change actions. One proof of enthusiasm in local actions in which several parties collaborate (local governments, prefectural centers, a national center JCCCA, action initiators, scholars and media) results from the national and the prefectural "One village, One action" competition for climate change actions held in the fiscal year 2007 and 2008. The winner of each prefectural competition has a chance to present their particular activity at the national competition. Total 1,073 actions for the first year competition and 1,130 actions for the second year one were applied nationwide. There were a variety of stimulating and innovative actions related to energy conservation, reducing wastes and recycling, promoting renewable energy resources, encouraging use of public transportation, encouraging bicycle use, promoting use of local foods and local products, environmental education in schools and communities, and so on. The applicants included all kinds of local governments, companies, groups, students at all levels of elementary, junior, high schools and universities, housewives, and individuals and so on. The prefectural centers organized the prefectural competition and encouraged adoption of the competition in each prefecture.

While in 1997 Kiko Forum was the major key player in civic engagement related to global warming issues, under the 1998 GWP law the major actors at the local level shifted to the prefectural centers for climate change actions. The centers are strong proof of how collaborative environmentalism or close collaboration of several government and nongovernment parties as regards the environment – in this case global warming protection – is institutionalized in Japan.

Conclusions

The three forms of collaborative environmentalism in Japan show us some fine examples of civic engagement. As regards the referendum against nuclear power plant construction in Maki Machi, as concerns a communal fund for harvesting

alternative energy in Hokkaido, and as far as nationwide networking goes to help protection from global warming, all the key features of collaborative environmentalism can be discerned: (1) equal partnership, (2) common aspirations, (3) cross-organizational/sectoral and cross-disciplinary participants, and (4) a common goal. Success is not always around the corner: it always builds on hard and demanding work of a dedicated few. This especially goes for the efforts to gain support from the masses and from parties that represent vested interests. Sometimes it seems helpful to be focused on a single, clearly defined, and local issue (see the activism in Maki Machi and Hokkaido). It is always helpful to invest in "bridging social capital," in building ties, in other words, with very differently situated groups either from the government, business, or finance sector, and in thus acquiring resources and information that help to advance one's case. Collaborative environmentalism does not seem to be just about "bonding," about building relationships with equals who already share your point of view, lifestyle or social positions. Being able to cross the line to other parties seems just as important. What is particularly helpful in the collaborative form of civic engagement presented in this chapter is – paradoxically – the creation of new and positive symbols that at the same time strongly refer to old traditions. The paper cranes and the tree of happiness in the Maki Machi campaign are the ultimate examples in this case. Examples that have a high appeal to citizens who seem to distrust strongly voiced political actions. The creation of the Hokkaido Green Fund also allows ordinary citizens to conveniently participate without having to indulge in an overt political identity of some sort or the other. The competitive approach to global warming activism with its nationwide competitions, furthermore, appeals to relatively high values placed on achievement, ambition, and successfulness in Japan. The better the bridge between different parties and between new and traditional modes of civic engagement, the higher the probability, so it seems, that these specific collaborative forms of engagement are successful and start institutionalizing.

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Chapter 6
A New Epoch of Immigration for Japan: Directional Shift in Civic Organizational Support for Newcomer Settlement

Tetsuo Mizukami

Introduction

In the contemporary world various metropolitan centres, whether in highly industrialized countries or newly industrializing economies, are now readily absorbing sub-populations of foreign residential minorities. Japanese urban communities have naturally been involved in the globalization of human mobility, especially since the mid-1980s, and this can be seen in the increasing ethnic diversity of the large population centres, particularly in some inner-city areas. The major streams of newly arrived foreigners have been from neighbouring Asian countries, but since the early 1990s, another stream has come to the fore – those of Japanese descent from Central and South America. In Japan, the feasibility of Japanese and non-Japanese people "living together" has been widely disputed and the massive inflow of foreigners into urban communities since the late-1980s has provided much fuel for debate. When compared with Western Europe, North America, and Australia, the proportion of immigrant populations are not so large, but the impact of migrant inflow in Japan was quite strong and it has led to heated debate and given rise to many sociological concerns.

Japan had been a notable nation of emigrants from the late nineteenth century to the first quarter of twentieth, and this persisted after the Second World War; it has produced many agrarian labourers for Central and South America. However, Japan has changed its character and has progressively become a nation with its own immigrant population, embracing an inflow of "migrant workers." A major difference, in terms of post-Second World War economic development between, Japan and other industrially developed countries such as West Europe, North America, and Australia is seen in the intake of foreign labour force. When North America, Australia, and Western Europe nations accepted a large-scale worker intake from foreign countries for their post-war economic growth, Japan also necessitated a large-scale labour force for the infrastructure construction and maintenance of metropolitan

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areas under the support of the governments' development policy. But in Japan, especially in the 1960s, domestic population movements from agrarian villages to metropolitan centres provided this indispensable labour for rapid urbanization. The influx of new settlers from Hokkaido to Kyushu gravitating to the Tokyo metropolitan area, which is contiguous to the prefectures of Kanagawa, Saitama, and Chiba (Okuda 1993: 229), ended with the oil crisis of 1973–1974. In periods of high economic growth, some inner areas of Tokyo attracted a number of single dwellers from the provinces, such as students and impoverished single workers. These areas have convenient terminal railway stations nearby, and sufficient low-priced, if poor quality, accommodation. After the oil crisis of 1973–1974, Japan experienced stable economic growth, and the domestic human mobilization *en masse* halted. With the development of suburbanization, various inner areas in Tokyo encountered problems associated with inner-city decay and an ageing population.

But in the 1980s, a new pipeline of human movement has appeared from neighbouring Asian countries (Okuda and Tajima 1991). In fact, since the late-1980s, the presence of foreigners has become a quite feasible and visible aspect in several inner cities. The attraction of these inner areas for newcomers from foreign lands lies in the development of businesses which offer numerous jobs in service industries. Furthermore, advanced shopping facilities and low-priced, if somewhat dilapidated, accommodation opportunities are also located in these areas. Additionally, the increasing numbers of foreign residents are drawn by the convenience of these areas and as well it affords an atmosphere of anonymity where local residents are not overly concerned about the identity of the city's newcomers (ibid.). Even though contemporary Japanese families are not usually fond of these dilapidated tenements, many foreigners, mainly from some Asian countries, have continued to reside in them owing to their convenience and low prices.[1] And correspondingly, there has been a gradual sprawl of these newly arrived foreigners into adjacent areas. The major focus for this chapter is upon one civic organization for supporting foreigners' settlement. In the middle and late 1980s, some notable associations for foreign residents as "newcomers" were established. This chapter takes account of the directional changes of a particular organization, designated Asian People's Friendship Society (APFS), which gained media attention several times due to its activities, and received the Annual *Toben* (The Tokyo Bar Association) Human Rights Award in December 1994. Their directional changes correspond to Japan's social changes and foreigners' social conditions in Japan. This organization (APFS) aimed at supporting the settlement of newly arrived foreigners and this included visa-over-stayers. In this chapter, the organization's activities are divided into a few particular phases that can be identified with the significant changes relating to societal changes.

[1] For example, before the Second World War, the eastern part of Ikebukuro, in Toshima Ward, was characterized as a vulgar fringe-land where streets were inhabited by indigents in the vicinity of the Tokyo prison. Immediately after the war, this city was revived by the black markets in a wide stretch of burnt ruins and the image of vulgarity still remains to some extent (Okuda and Tajima 1991).

The Establishment of New Civic Organizations

The first stage for the new social movements which supported the settlement of newcomers in Japan was the establishment period of new civic organizations. In the context of international labour mobilization, migrant workers tend to be positioned by their under-privileged status as they are not easily supported in socio-political ways by the host societies (Cohen 1987).[2] Many of these newcomers confronted difficulties, such as searching for proper accommodation and secure work conditions, and having to combat prejudice from within the host Japanese community. Then, various civic organizations were established to meet these difficulties and assist in their settlement in Japan.

In the contemporary situation, it is obvious that some are not merely migrant workers, they are also "community residents" which term more accurately captures the status of many whose lives have become rooted in Japanese society (Mizukami 2008). In fact, during the late 1980s, the initial settlement stage of the vast majority of newcomers with foreign nationality, they were considered to be transient migrant workers, who would go back home in the near future. However, these newcomers came to adopt various forms of settlement. Some have re-migrated to their home countries or have re-migrated to a third country, while others have extended their stay and formed families in the host Japanese community. Recent sociological research has revealed that there are some transnational migrants who live in Japan while at the same time keeping strong bonds with their country of origin.[3] But before designating the structure of the contemporary situation, the social backgrounds of these incoming "newcomers" and the support of these new civic organizations, have to be explained.

The Inflow of Newcomers from Foreign Lands

One of the major reasons for the labour mobilization since the mid-1980s is ascribed to Japan's "Bubble Economy" after the Plaza Accord of 1985, held at the Plaza Hotel in New York, where the Group of Five (United States of America, Britain, Germany, France, and Japan) agreed to correct the disproportion of the balance of trade which centred on the accumulating trade deficit of the United States. It also dealt with the exchange rate of the US dollar which had in no small part helped cause the deficit. In the following year, the exchange rate against the US dollar advanced from almost 240–120 yen. The number of foreign labourers

[2] As for the situation of the early 1990s in Japan, see Kiyono (1992) and Takayama (1992).

[3] Transnational migrants indicates that "persons who, having migrated from one nation-state to another, live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation state" (Glick-Schiller 2003:105).

also increased in several inner-city areas in Japanese metropolises, especially in Tokyo, because they relieved labour shortage problems for areas with an ageing population.

The advancement of technology, relating to communication and transportation has also activated extended and complicated international migration since the 1980s.[4] The increase in foreign population, including a number of undocumented migrants and over-stayers, led to an amendment of the Immigration Act in June 1990. Japan's migration policy has been led by *jus sanguinis* rather than *jus soli*. A child of non-Japanese parents, born and residing in Japan, cannot automatically qualify for Japanese citizenship.[5] It is the Japanese blood relation principle which, according to the new Act, opens a door for those of Japanese descent in south-central American countries such as Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina. With the exception of the World War II period, these countries embraced a number of Japanese immigrants from the beginning of the twentieth century up until the 1950s. However, the Act rigidly restricts unskilled labour migration except for the above mentioned Japanese descendants. Various problems have emerged among non-Japanese residents owing to insufficient public support for their settlement. In Japan, these two types of arrivals, many from the Asian countries since the mid-1980s, and Japanese descendants from Central and South America since the early 1990s, have generally been classified with the sociological term, "newcomers."

Emergence of New Type of Social Movements

In responding to the increase in these newcomers, the Japanese government's directions have not been favourable to them. In 1989, with the increase in Pakistani and Bangladeshi migrant workers, the mutual visa exemption agreement with Pakistan and Bangladesh was nullified by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "In 1991, some 36,275 foreigners were deported. This was the highest number of deportations on record. In 1992, the number of foreigners who were deported reached 66,892 (*Homusho*, 1994). Moreover, in 1986, some 2,751 foreigners were denied entry into Japan and this number grew nearly ten times by 1991, with some 27,137 rejected applications (*Homusho* 1993)" (cited from Mizukami 1998: 358–359). In 1993, however, the number of "illegal foreign residents" in Japan reached its peak of almost 300,000.

[4] Castles and Miller (1994: 3–4) indicated, "international migration has grown in volume and significance since 1945 and most particularly since the mid-1980s."

[5] According to Brubaker (1992: 81), "as throughout Continental Europe, citizenship is ascribed to children of citizens. In Britain and the Americans, by contrast, citizenship is ascribed to all persons born in the territory, following the principle of *jus soli*."

The rapid increase of the foreign population of Japan's metropolises was a major media concern. Although the public in Japan tended to form the image that since Japan is an affluent society, it would attract foreign workers, in November 1987 a shocking news report announced, "A young Bangladeshi man dead from starvation." It turned out that he was about to enter Japanese language school, but confronted by serious poverty, and suffering from dystrophy, had died in the Saitama prefecture next to Tokyo (Asahi Shinbun 1987). In fact, various migrant workers, some of whom were also students at Japanese language schools, were confronting serious social conditions in their host community, largely due to insufficient public resources for their settlement. At best they were considered marginal, but usually viewed as outsiders, as far as local services and social security protection was concerned.

Although in the late 1980s, some local governments extended their international department, opening consultation sections for the dissemination of information contained in a guidebook in foreign languages, the Japanese governmental assistance for the problems faced by foreign residents were clearly insufficient. Various civic organizations have been established across Japan since the mid-1980s to address these settlement issues for newcomers in local communities (Mizukami 1998). For example, in April 1986, *Kyofukai* – Japan Christian Women's Organization – established HELP (House in Emergency of Love and Peace) in the Shinjuku area of central Tokyo. It provides a shelter for women and children who face difficulties with life in Japan. In Yokohama, *Karabaw no kai* was formed in May 1987 for protecting the human rights of migrant workers, and other foreign residents.[6] In December 1987, an organization, designated the "Bangladesh-Japan People's Friendship Society" was established by several Japanese citizens and about 20 foreigners (ibid.). This establishment was somewhat related to the above news regarding the death by starvation of a student in Japan.

The aim of the "Bangladesh-Japan People's Friendship Society" was to promote a mutual aid system and foster interchange between compatriots who have similar backgrounds, namely foreign students and workers (Yoshinari 1993: 61–62). At the initial stage, the majority of members of the Society had been Bangladeshis and Japanese, but the membership has extended to people from some other countries as well and they have since changed its name to "Asian People's Friendship Society (APFS)." Its office is located in a shopping mall in Oyama, Itabashi Ward where, in the late 1980s, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis clustered. The reasons for foreigners settling in this Ward can be ascribed to the many dilapidated wooden apartments with low-rent and the many small business offices and factories, such as small printing shops, which provide job opportunities for manual labourers (Mizukami 1998). According to some members of the Society, the Ward, when compared to other areas in Tokyo, provides more favourable housing opportunities and is more convenient because of proximity to the terminal railway stations in Tokyo.

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[6] The meaning of Karabaw is a water buffalo in the Tagalog language.

The Organization's Social Roles

Although the initial purposes of the Society included the promotion of a mutual aid system and social interaction, their activities have gradually been extended. For example, a political focus has been included in the organization's stated goals and they aim to uphold living rights in human settlement issues. They also have conducted research into the actual living conditions for the newcomers and organize regular symposia, involving several sociologists. The Society provides various other services. Their significant activities include organizing events related to local communities, the implementation of research, seminars, publishing of books related to Japanese immigration and the submission of proposals to government (ibid.).

Extension in Their Activities

Since its foundation, the major routine activity has been consultation. In addition to counselling – with respect to work and life issues – it has directed its efforts to solve problems that arise at Japanese language institutions and technical schools or at work places, as well as assisting with advocacy with the Immigration Bureau. The number of consultees drawn to the Society during this time were as follows: 297 in 1988, 247 in 1989, 789 in 1990, and 800 in 1991. Nearly 70% of the visitors for consultation were Bangladeshis (Yoshinari 1993: 62). Indeed, newly arrived foreigners from Bangladesh were readily included in their activities, not only for consultation-visits, but also for get-together occasions and other supportive activities for newcomers.

The vast majority of Bangladeshi workers were employed by industries concerned with metal processing, printing and publication, and rubber, the factories and construction sites of which were particularly prone to accidents (Mahmood 1994, 514). Some serious accidents at work places were reported, such as sprains, fractures, and finger amputations. A considerable number of these accidents occurred during mechanical press work in the steel industry. The cited causes of the accidents frequently drew attention to the absence of security notices, inadequate work environments and insufficient security systems (Mizukami 1998). When, since the end of Japan's "Bubble Economy" in the early 1990s, and with the onset of economic recession, the numbers of dismissals and unemployment among foreign workers in small businesses have obviously increased. Until the early 1990s, "consultation about accidents at work tended to occur one or two years after the event. However, due to the dissemination of information regarding how to cope with work-place accidents, consultations began to take place immediately after accidents occurred or upon release from the hospital. In many instances, when Society members sought consultation and made claims against the companies they were then awarded compensation for the accidents, consolation money or other insurance reimbursement" (Mizukami 1998: 363).

In addition to consultation services, the Society has engaged in research into the newcomers' living conditions, and submitted agenda items to local governments for

their consideration and action. Against the general direction of central government policy, which is not favourable to newcomers, APFS started to make appeals on the basis of "living rights." The APFS organizes a May Day event for migrant workers in Japan every year to exchange opinions and discuss their problems. On 29 April 1992, an agenda, "foreign worker declaration of human rights" was reported at the third APFS pre-May Day event for foreign workers (Japan Times). At this event, about 200 people who have come to Japan from eight countries – such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, and the Philippines – demanded that the Japanese government secure the fundamental human rights of foreigners. The statement insists upon the rights of such people to "live at ease, and work," "to be housed and receive medical treatment," and "to marry and live as Japanese families" and so on. The APFS staff started a petition campaign with several meetings with other organizations supporting foreigners. "On December 21, 1992, four Japanese and seven foreign staff of the Society discussed foreign workers unequal treatment with several government officials, submitting a declaration of the migrant workers' rights with nearly 900 signatures collected (APFS 1994b)" (cited from Mizukami 1998: 365).

In fact, their activities and roles have been extended by the changes in the host community's attitudes that have coincided with the growth in the numbers of newcomers settling in Japan. Besides the above consultation services, the Society also provides various other services. For example, they organize recreational activities, such as parties and concerts by the Bangladesh band. Excursions are also organized. In addition, "they participate in local festivals such as the *Bon* dance festival or those held at the local shopping centre near to where the office is located. Several other significant activities are organised" (Mizukami 1998: 364). But the movement for "human rights for migrant workers" and the "rights for residency" have become the major policy successes for the group, assisting and extending the stays of many "newcomers." The Society has also supported many unregistered residents without valid visas.

New Phase of Actions and Movements

The APFS symposium, "Living together in local community," was held in 1993. This coincided with a new phase of organized action in the mid-1990s. The number of consultations reached a peak in 1993, when the office received over 2,000 requests, nearly a threefold increase from the 700 recorded in 1992. Consultation about unpaid salaries and worker accidents was still a major issue.[7] By the

[7] "In 1993 there were 161 workplace accident consultations, which number includes both in-person office visits and telephone consultation (APFS 1994a). Many consultees were from Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Ghana, and India. Consultations regarding unpaid salaries and dismissals totalled 135 and 110 respectively in 1993 (APFS 1994a). In the case of unpaid salaries, the workers generally belonged to small businesses with less than 10 employees. In dismissal problems, more than half were sudden dismissals and thus the office started negotiating with proprietors, in accordance with the consultees' appeal. In nearly 30% of those cases, they succeeded in getting the dismissal retracted" (Mizukami 1998: 362–363).

mid-1990s, as a result of Japan's recession, dismissals and unemployment became serious problems. "The number of cases of foreign residents establishing entrepreneurial businesses rose because of the expansion in the length of settlement by foreign residents. Some cases involved those who had already established trading and food companies. The Society assisted several people in launching their companies. In some cases, foreign workers came to the office with their employers inquiring about how to officially invite employees who had overstayed, most notably in the trainee category" (Mizukami 1998: 362). But the counselling content became more diverse and complicated. When the statutory limit of a newcomer's stay was extended, one of the major foci of APFS activity became family matters, including international marriages and children's education. This was a major change in the role of the Society. And so these foreign residents, including many visa-over-stayers, consulted APFS with regard to schooling needs as well as for help with establishing businesses. In addition, APFS became quite active in a public sense, launching appeals and approaching governments for assistance.

Family Matters

As the community of foreign newcomers expanded from around 1990, so also marriage consultation emerged. Foreign spouses of Japanese citizens do not automatically receive permanent residency, especially if they have overstayed their visas, and thus this form of consultation is now regularly associated with efforts to obtain permanent visas. "In 1990, the number of cases for marriage consultation was only two and in 1991 the number was four. In 1992 it rose sharply to 46 and by 1993 the number was 85. If telephone inquiries were included, the estimated number would be over 800 (APFS 1994a). In response to the rapid increase in the demand for this kind of consultation, on 24–25 July 1993, the Society established a hot line for international marriage consultation. Within 2 days, 167 residents, both foreigners and Japanese, used the telephone service (APFS 1994b; and Tsukuba and APFS 1995)" (cited from Mizukami 1998: 363). Afterwards, the consultations continued for several days. Besides the telephone service, in 1993 some 85 people visited the office to consult about their international marriages.[8] Apart from marriage matters, in 1993 the Society offered free health examinations in the months of February and December. Since then, they have continued this health check every year.

[8] Classification of these 85 visitors by nationality was as follows: Pakistan (29), Bangladesh (18), Iran (9), Philippines (8), Thailand (5), Nigeria (3), Korea (2), China (2), one each for Malaysia, Togo, Ghana, Nepal, Brazil, Burma (Myanmar) and Mali, and two unknown (APFS 1994a: 17). In 1994, the number of marriages between Japanese men and women from Philippines, Thailand, and Korea increased remarkably and the consultees' nationalities extended to over 30 countries (Tsukuba and APFS, 1995: 107).

In fact, international marriages in Japan rapidly increased since the mid-1980s. According to statistics of *Koseirodosho* (2006, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare), the number of international marriages in Japan was only 4,000 in the mid-1960s, but in 1983 the number was over 10,000, in 1989 it exceeded to 20,000, and in 1999 it was over 30,000. In 2005, it reached 41,481 consisting of 33,116 Japanese husband and foreign wife and 8,365 Japanese wife and foreign husband couples. As the total of marriages in Japan was 714,265, in 2005 the proportion of international marriages was 5.81%. In Tokyo, the proportion of international marriages occupied 9.17% (7,827 out of a total of 85,382 couples).

"As the official certification of marriage varies according to each country's regulations, the APFS has gathered information from the embassies and consulates in Japan to disseminate information regarding procedures and the documents that are necessary for the official Japanese Government approval of marriages. In 1995 the Society worked out a scheme for a book, entitled *Kokusaikekkon no kisochishiki (A Handbook on International Marriage)*, which contains information about the government's procedure for granting special permission to residents and gives attention to the official registration of marriages from more than 40 countries" (Mizukami 1998: 364). This Handbook was revised with an updating of data in 2001. The support activities for foreign residents have developed to assist groups who are socially disadvantaged and need human rights protection, and thus not only ethnic minorities but also some Japanese have become their clients, such as those involved in international marriage.

Political Actions and Public Appeals

In response to the many needs of the foreign residents which were investigated as a result of the consultations, the Society's activities have been expanding. In order to ascertain the actual living conditions of foreign newcomers, the Society undertook research work.[9] Through this research, the Society was able to identify many of the problems faced by foreign residents, and could introduce their profiles and communicate their demands to the government. "On 19 May 1993 the representatives of the Society conferred with the mayor of Itabashi Ward and put forward the proposal. The Society resolved to urge the government to improve welfare programmes for foreigners. The proposal coincided with the establishment of an institution for mutual communication between foreigners and Japanese, involving the education of real estate agents to eradicate the prejudice against foreigners renting

[9] The Society conducted research from November 1992 to February 1993 and the outcome of 163 samples was provided in 1993 (APFS 1993a). For instance, the research disclosed that informants (foreign residents mainly in Itabashi Ward) clustered around a particular age group, with more than 90 per cent in the 20s to mid-30s age range (Ibid., 8). Their educational backgrounds were quite high, with over 95% being senior high school graduates and more than 30% university graduates or postgraduates (ibid., 10).

living accommodation, and lobbying the government to set aside public funds to enable foreign workers to join the national health insurance system and livelihood protection scheme" (Mizukami 1998). With these proposals, the research report of the actual living conditions of foreign residents was submitted to the government seeking its recognition of the true situation facing these people. In December 1993, the Society opened a public symposium entitled "living together in local community," which attracted approximately 130 participants. "The purpose for organising the symposium was to offer opportunities to develop communication between community residents. Presentations were offered by some members including the president of the Society, a university lecturer, some volunteer staff (both Japanese and non-Japanese), and a government official. The discussants debated the possibility of co-existence between Japanese and foreign residents" (ibid., 365). Afterwards, they have organized subsequent symposia and open meetings on a yearly basis.

Through their varied consultations and their public presence, the membership of APFS has kept on growing since its establishment of 1987, and by January 2007 the cumulative total had reached over 3,300. But this number is not an accurate indication of active membership. It is an accumulation from APFS records, and some of them have already returned to their home countries, while others have not appeared again after receiving help for their personal problems. Thus the number includes many bogus members, who do not participate in their major activities. For example, when a client had come to consult the matters which one encountered difficulty, he/she became a member, but after his/her problem was solved or could not attain a solution, he/she has not appeared since then. Indeed, some are in vulnerable positions threatened by deportation and inadequate or insecure employment.

Notable Demonstrations for Permanent Residency

As there have been many visa-over-stayers in the membership, the effort to gain a legal right to their residency has been a major concern of the APFS. Office bearers of the Society have tendered to cluster around the Tokyo district, and some are commuters from adjacent areas, but the clients have started coming from beyond the Tokyo district. As the APFS is now well-known as an expert resource for gaining special permission for permanent residency, its services are regularly consulted by persons living much further away. In other words, the Society's continued efforts in the fight for residential rights have become known among those who are concerned with permanent residency in Japan. In many cases, related to the special conditions that need to be met for permanent residence, such "newcomers" have already lived in Japan for many years.

During the 1990s, many of the major activities of the APFS were initiated as responses to demands of newcomers about their settlement. But by the end of 1990s, the Society's action had come to public attention. A notable incident occurred on 1 September 1999, when almost 50 people, consisting of 21 foreign residents from seven households (including two persons who live alone) and their

Japanese supporters, converged on the Japanese Immigration Office in Tokyo to claim their living rights. This group action was supported by the APFS. These requests came from those who did not have legal residency, who had stayed for several years, even up to over a decade, without an up-to-date visa. It was the first group action by any undocumented group of over-stayers, most of whom had overstayed their visas from the early 1990s. The composition of this first group (1 September 1999) was four Iranian families (two families had a daughter born in Japan); one male Iranian; one male Bangladeshi; and one Burmese (Myanmarese) family, whose daughter was born in Japan (Yamaguchi 2002: 96–106). They were foreign families fighting for permanent residency within the host Japanese community. The media highlighted their action: newspapers and television news reported that illegal migrants had demonstrated at the Immigration Bureau of Tokyo. Although there were significant Japanese supporters present, including a group of lawyers, these foreigners exposed themselves to the threat of arrest or being taken into custody as over-stayers.

From this group, and as of February 2000, some 16 over-stayers from four families had received permission from the Minister of Justice to reside permanently in Japan, whilst five residents had their applications turned down in February 2000.

At the end of that same year (i.e. 27 December 1999), a second group of over-stayers from five Iranian families took similar action. This group consisted of five families, all of whom had overstayed their visas since the early 1990s, and four of these families have a Japan-born child (Yamaguchi 2002: 96–106). Only one in five families gained permission in June 2000. Subsequently, a third group, consisting of 8 families from the Philippines, Peru, Burma (Myanmar), Iran , Columbia, China, and Bangladesh took action in 2000 (on 12–13 July 2000), most of whose visa over-staying was also from the early 1990s, while one family was from the mid-1980s. By February 2002, one of them had permission to stay. By March 2002, two more had received permission. In the case of one Chinese family in the third group, the father was denied permission to remain in Japan, while the daughter was permitted to stay with a student visa. Afterwards, in these groups, some received special permission to remain, and a few were taken into custody and deported. Some court cases have resulted.

Before these actions were taken, some member couples had successfully obtained permission from *Homusho* (the Ministry of Justice) to stay on a permanent basis. However, the criteria for examining permission of residents and their applications have not been clearly defined. Among members of the Society there have been significant variations in the length of time required for receiving permission. Some had taken 8 months, others over 2 years, while many others were pending and had not yet obtained permission (APFS 1994a: 15). After this demonstration, the situation has changed. According to the members of the Society, this was because of an increase in public concern, and now the Immigration Bureau is under pressure to act.

There seems to have been uncertainty in the decision making of the Ministry of Justice, which emphasizes that there may not be any legal grounds for granting such special permission. It appeared that the government is most likely to accept the residency of over-stayers and grant permission for permanency at the point of application

when the family had already been in Japan for longer than 10 years, with additional conditions relating to children at junior-high schools (Yoshinari 2002: 23). In such circumstances, it did not seem likely that the government will reject any over-stayer applications for permanency. It was thus plausible that the Ministry of Justice judges by the following criteria: 10 years of residence and a junior high school child in the family (ibid.). Thus, it appeared that when a child is still at elementary school, and not yet in high school, the chances are higher that they will return and adjust to the country of their parents, and so the tendency seemed to indicate a rejection of the application on those grounds.

The actions of foreigners over-staying their visas appeared to prod the Ministry of Justice to set guidelines for granting applications for permanent residence in Japan. Amongst the total population of "illegal stayers," foreign families with school-age children who grew up in Japan tend to have an advantage in gaining official permission for residency, whilst applications of single persons, or families without children were likely to be at a disadvantage (ibid.). Then, on 31 March 2006, the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice announced guidelines for permission for legal requirements for permanent residency in Japan as below:[10]

1. The applicant's behaviour must be above reproach.
2. The applicant owns sufficient property to allow his/her financial independence.
3. The applicant's permanent settlement would be to Japan's benefit: (a) principally, one has lived in Japan for 10 years or more, but during this period, he/she has lived for 5 years or more with his/her qualifications for work or residence; (b) an applicant must not have received fines or prison sentences, etc., and fulfils public obligations, including tax payment and the like; (c) A period of one's residential qualification must be valid according to Immigration Control and Refugee Law enforcement; and (d) the favourable decision does not seem likely to increase public health risks (*Homusho Nyukokukanrikyoku* 2006).

In the context of prevailing globalization, the above incident demonstrates that the initial debate about migrant workers, including many undocumented foreign residents, has, in less than a decade, changed from an industrial matter to a broadly human settlement matter focused upon family policy. Concomitantly, the Society has changed its roles, focusing more upon the political arena in giving its support to foreign residents.

Conclusion: Changes in Governmental Directions and in Membership

This kind of organizational action taken up by APFS reflects changes in the life-style of foreign residents in Japan as well as significant changes in attitudes towards such residents in the host Japanese communities. Although many

[10] This document was translated from Japanese into English by the author.

migrant workers have been single males at the initial stage of their settlement, some have formed marriages and others have been re-united with their families. Japan has for some time experienced massive inflows of newcomers, but not all have been migrant workers, which have been decreasing in number. As for the Bangladeshis, many have already returned, a few have become successful businessmen, and others are married in Japan. In the contemporary situation "community residents" more accurately capture their status since their lives have developed within the context of socio-economic relations within Japanese society, while at the same time they have become separated from the basis of their livelihood in their countries of origin, though a few successful cases have become transnational migrants who keep networks alive between the two nations. Another significant fact that should be kept in mind is that almost two-thirds of those who had ever been members have already returned to their home countries.[11] In recent years, for events such as general meetings and festivals, the number of attendees has ranged from 100 to 150, whereas, compared to its peak, there were over 300 participants. Currently, Filipino people have become a major group in the Society, and the last general meeting of 2008, of a total of roughly 60 participants, nearly 80% were representing foreign resident families from the Philippines, while Bangladeshi attendance accounted for only five or so members.

The Bangladeshi part of the movement, since the inauguration of the APFS, has now significantly declined, and now they seek their prospects wider a-field in the Japanese "mainstream." In general, Japan's community residents' movements have been organized by inhabitants who live within the same concrete geographic and political boundaries. However, this new type of civic movement activity has been organized by both Japanese and non-Japanese, chiefly with Bangladeshi members. Despite the fact that the initial major activities were supported by not only Japanese volunteers but also by the Bangladeshis themselves, there has been a dramatic decrease in the actual numbers of Bangladeshis. This has been due to several reasons. After the end of the "Bubble Economy" in the early 1990s, Japan's recession resulted in a decrease in job opportunities. Additionally, on 18 February 2000, the revised Immigration Control Act was introduced. Various inquiries regarding the interpretation of this Act were made to the Society, since many unregistered foreigners were anxious about possible prosecution. "The new crime category of 'Unlawful residence' involved new penal regulations for foreigners who enter the country by an irregular method of entry. An irregular method of entry might be, for example, entering from South Korea by fishing boat without Immigration Bureau permission; using the name of a foreigner who has already entered the country; entering by means of a counterfeit passport. As a result of this new law, such irregular arrivals are subject to imprisonment to a maximum of 3 years or a fine up to

[11] In the interview with Mr. Yoshinari on 16 June 2008, he estimates roughly two-thirds of members have already gone back.

300,000 yen" (APFS 1999). Furthermore, on 17 October 2003, *Homusho* (The Ministry of Justice), Tokyo Municipality, and *Keishicho* (Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department) made a joint declaration that "The number of illegal residents will be reduced by half in five years time" (Asahi Shinbun 2003). They have initiated strict prosecutions. In particular, half of these "illegal residents" are estimated to cluster around Tokyo. But the number of "illegal residents" has decreased from its peak of about 300,000 in 1993 to almost 149,000 in 2008.

The demand for the Society's activities may not dramatically decrease because its ability to help with the settlement of immigrants has been remarkable; the number of those residing with special permission is now almost 10,000 a year. The APFS is now known as an organization which specializes in gaining "special permission for permanent residency." As for labour consultation, from the support organization's point of view, the host Japanese community itself has been in transition. In 2007, the APFS established a Labour Union within its body to conduct the collective bargaining with employers on behalf of foreign workers and their problems. The employers' attitudes towards them are different from those of past periods, since employers have now learnt the benefits of APFS consultation. The report of APFS activities mentions that the number of workers' accidents has dramatically decreased, and the content of consultations with the APFS Union has gravitated towards unpaid salaries or work conditions.[12] Today, not only foreigners but also some Japanese come to the APFS office to consult about problems in their work places, but the number of consultations in this regards has apparently decreased to less than 50 a year. From the foundation of the Union in September 2007 until August 2008, no visa-over-stayer has come forward to consult about work place problems. But a new trend manifests itself when both employers and employees are from non-Japanese background.

As Japan faces its serious labour shortage with a rapidly ageing population and a low birth rate, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's Secretary General, Mr. Hidenao Nakagawa, has suggested the establishment of an immigration agency and a new immigration policy. His group of lawmakers in his party made a proposal on 12 June 2008, indicating, "to raise the ratio of immigrants in Japan to about 10% over the next 50 years" (Ito and Kamiya 2008). He also suggested establishing a new Ministry of Immigration. Although the above proposal has not become feasible yet, the governmental directions have changed since the initial massive waves of arriving newcomers. Furthermore, at this stage, we cannot predict whether or not the APFS will contribute to the government policies by utilizing their expertise in immigration policies. This Society stands at the crossroads for many, assisting these newcomers and enhancing their prospects for an active and productive future in Japan, which also stands at a crossroads for its immigration policies.

[12] Mr. Yamaguchi's interview was conducted on 1 September 2008.

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Part III
Engagement Outside the Mainstream

Chapter 7
Civic Engagement and Community Development Among Japan's Burakumin

Yuko Nishimura

Introduction: Visible and Invisible

In Japan, government policies generally don't recognize the country's ethnic or minority diversity, preferring to view Japan as homogenous. In the words of Prime Minister Taro Aso, Japan is "one nation, one civilization, one language, one culture, and one race."[1] However, Japan is, in fact, a multiethnic country where there are ancient ethnic minorities such as Ainus and Okinawans. There are also resident Koreans and Chinese, many of whom were forcibly relocated to Japan during Japan's colonial era, and, there are recent immigrants of Japanese heritage whose grand and great-grand parents emigrated to Latin and South America in the early twentieth century. Although they are not racially different from the rest of Japanese, Japan's ex-Untouchables, the *Burakumin* are another "ethnic" minority.[2] Living on the fringe of society in segregated neighborhoods and hamlets called "*buraku*," they were treated, beginning with the Tokugawa era, as "nonhuman" and "pollutants." Today, Burakumin status is comparable to other Asian minorities such as Korea's Pak-chee and India's Scheduled Castes (ex-Untouchables).

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[1]Aso, made Prime Minister in September, 2008, had made the statement in 2005 as Foreign Minister (The Japan Times 2005).

[2]Ethnicity is a loose term which represents social groups with a shared history, sense of identity, geography, and cultural roots. And according to Geertz (1973), "culture is a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (p. 89). In this chapter, ethnicity is understood as a much smaller category of culture in which people share strong emotional experiences and historically transmitted pattern of meanings expressed in daily lives.

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Visitors to Japan, including serious students of Japan, are usually unaware of "Japan's Invisible Race" (DeVos and Wagatsuma 1973). The Japanese people themselves are only dimly aware of the Buraku and are fearful of touching upon this issue. Yet the Buraku have been trying hard to uplift their status and challenge the social injustices of many centuries. In the early twentieth century, Buraku leaders created the Levelers' Association (Suiheisha) to combat discrimination and achieve equality. Significantly, the Levelers' Declaration of Establishment is prominently quoted in Japanese school textbooks as an example of a Japanese civic movement in search of social justice, equality, and autonomy.

The Buraku Liberation League (BLL), which succeeded the Levelers' Association after World War II, achieved a great political triumph by negotiating with the government for passage of the Special Measurement Law which supported their efforts to build community infrastructure, educate their children, get jobs in local governments, and educate children of non-Buraku origin about Buraku discrimination. After 33 years of law-enforcement and the spending of 15 trillion yen for public projects in Buraku neighborhoods, the law was allowed to expire in 1992 with the assumption that the Law's goals had been reached.

However, as this chapter will show, discrimination continues.[3] In addition, the contradiction of an "invisible" Burakumin community faced with ongoing and entrenched discrimination is an artifact created in large part by reaction to the public denunciation tactics of Buraku civic organizations, particularly the BLL. These tactics, often employed against those supporting their cause, but not hewing exactly to the BLL political line, have made the media, academia, and educators fearful of even discussing the existence of Burakumin, thus limiting discussion of Buraku issues mainly to the people of Buraku origin themselves.[4] Paradoxically, the denunciation tactics seemed neither to end discrimination nor to create a positive identity within the community.

There is, however, another side to the story. It is the story of successful community-building activities (in Japanese, *machizukuri*) by many Buraku leaders, some of whom will be highlighted in this chapter. Their stories need to be told because like so many other positive stories from the Buraku, they have not been shared with those outside of the Buraku. For example, the model for today's popular *machizukuri* movement is widely attributed to the community building activities of a working-class neighborhood in Kobe (Watanabe 2007). In fact, the efforts of that neighborhood were preceded by unacknowledged, but larger and more holistic efforts in several Buraku neighborhoods throughout Japan.

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[3] It is still difficult for Burakumin to intermarry. According to BLHRRI data, in 1993 Kyoto, 33.3% who married someone from non-Buraku faced opposition from their parents or relatives (70% of such opposition came from non-Buraku parents). However, another data shows the increase of intermarriages particularly in the age group below 40 and less, and among the couples who are below 30, more than 67% are intermarriages. That shows that people marry in spite of oppositions from family members (see http://blhrri.org/nyumon/jittai/nyumon_jittai_kekkon_1.htm).

[4] Thus, the many academic papers and books that have been written on the history of Buraku, the discrimination against them and their political liberation movements are largely ignored, or at least not discussed, by other academics or the media.

The Scary Burakumin

In 1987, an ambitious but controversial book titled *Dowa wa kowai-kou* (*Why the Dowa are scary*) was published.[5] Collaborating with Buraku-born activist Muichi Maekawa, Keiichi Fujita tried to answer this question. The fear, they said, is partly created from the ignorance of outsiders and, in part, from some Burakumin who take advantage of the fear to extort money. They describe how the negative images of Burakumin created from both inside and outside the Buraku hinder efforts by Burakumin to create a positive identity about themselves. Questioning the attitude of some Burakumin who claim that every disadvantage in the Buraku is caused by outsiders, Fujita and Maekawa argue that whether a particular action by an outsider is discriminatory or not should be judged by outsiders as well as by Burakumin. The refusal to accept criticism from outside puts the community in the position of being a permanent victim, which is harmful to the advancement of the Buraku community as a whole. Both Maekawa and Fujita also criticize the indifference of some Burakumin toward other minorities, particularly to those who are poorer and more destitute than them, quoting the statement of one Buraku woman who said that the Kamagasaki day laborers were jobless because they had no will to work while Burakumin had a will to work, but could not find work because of discrimination (Fujita 1987: 65).[6]

Fujita believed the passage of the "Special Measures Law" by the Diet in 1969 had a largely deleterious effect on the Buraku community by "hardening their hearts" against others. Perhaps this is true, but the Law also provided the BLL with a notable triumph by forcing the central and local governments to work on improving the living conditions of the Buraku people who remained in segregated and destitute neighborhoods. As a result, community infrastructures were improved, many Burakumin were given stable jobs, and children could go to school.

On the negative side, by the time the Special Measures Law (SML) expired in 1992 Buraku civic organizations had become dependent on the SML subsidies. Moreover, the organizations were opaque in their management and in the late 1990s charges of corruption involving the BLL and local governments began to surface. For the most part, the allegedly corrupt neighborhood leaders have been replaced by new leaders who promise to operate the organizations in a more transparent manner. Until the expiration of the SML, the media seldom reported on such corruption or on the political battles inside the community.

Who Are the Burakumin?

Burakumin literally means "hamlet people" in Japanese and refers to those who lived in hamlets separated from the villages and townships of the "common people." The history textbooks maintain that, as far back as the sixteenth to seventeenth

[5] *Dowa* is a shortened form for district which is benefited from assimilation policy (*dowa seisaku*), and is often used as a synonym of Buraku.

[6] Kamagasaki (in Osaka) is one of the most famous flop-house districts in Japan.

century Japan's population was divided into four broad categories: *samurais* (warriors), farmers, craftsmen and merchants. However, there were also people living on margins of society considered untouchables, i.e. *eta* (pollutants) and *hinin* (nonhumans). Segregated in *buraku* hamlets, they were considered to be below, or even "outside" of the four recognized categories. While the current number of Burakumin is hard to determine, one researcher claims there are now at least 6,000 Buraku districts throughout Japan and the number of Burakumin is close to 3 million.[7]

Although the history is cloudy, most school text books maintain that *eta* and *hinin* were poor landless peasants and wanderers who had been forced by financial necessity to work in the areas which were polluting or dangerous: street scavenging; removal of animal carcasses, human corpses and excreta; maintaining cremation grounds; skinning animals; leather tanning and crafts; meat curing; and so on. As government servants, they were charged with the apprehension of criminals and with executions. Some worked as street entertainers, laborers, hunters, fishermen, peddlers and gamblers, night watchmen, boatmen, and in convoys of long distances. Other Buraku were connected to the traditional entertainment and arts fields such as Noh, Kabuki, and Bun-raku (puppet shows). Some were even involved in the creation of the artistic rock gardens in Kyoto temples.[8] Yet their status was considered to be low, and Burakumin were forbidden to marry outside of the Buraku community and as a marginalized people they were despised and disdained. The status of Burakumin remained unchanged until the end of the Tokugawa era.

In 1871, the new Meiji Government promulgated the Emancipation Edict. The Edict "outlawed" the Burakumin status of untouchablity and announced that Burakumin would henceforth be known as *shin heimin* or "new commoners." However the Edict did not include any concrete measures to eliminate discrimination and in some ways, their status was made worse off than before. As "*new*"commoners they were still labeled, even as they lost their monopoly on profitable leather and tanning crafts as well as on lower categories of police jobs. Moreover, learning of the Burakumin's elevation to "new-commoners" status, "traditional" commoners and peasants felt threatened and sometimes attacked Buraku hamlets (Harada 1975: 194–195).

In 1872, just a year after "emancipation," the government initiated a family registration system and a census of the Japanese people. In order to distinguish between nobility (*kazoku*), samurai (*shizoku*), and commoners (*heimin*), this *jinshin koseki* included a column to record the status of the family. Burakumin were not recorded simply as *heimin* (commoners) but as *shin heimin* or "new commoners." This label became a synonym for Burakumin and a stigma from which they could not escape.

[7] According to 1993 census, the population is said to be around 3 million (BLHRRI 1997) yet this does not include those who live outside the hamlets.

[8] Although these performers and craftsmen were originally from Buraku communities, they were able to leave the Buraku hamlets in the seventeenth and eighteenth century and merge into the lower strata of "commoners." (Harada 1975: 65–67).

The emancipation also aroused hostility among the peasantry who feared that their status could be reduced to the same low status as *eta*. Out of hostility, numerous anti-*eta* liberation riots occurred between 1868 and 1878 (Hane 1982: 144) and the authorities in Oita prefecture burned down a Buraku hamlet claiming it was a nest of criminals and drifters (Hane 1982: 146). Thus, even in the "modern" Meiji era, Burakumin were not allowed to participate as equals in village affairs or in the village festivals of the "commoners."

Meiji Era "Hamlet People" and Discrimination

Although some liberals and philanthropists worked to see Burakumin treated as "true" commoners, government policies remained semi-feudalistic, confused, and oppressive. For instance, some authorities made plans to send Burakumin as emigrants to foreign countries – particularly to China (Asano 2007), while others supported efforts to provide token budgets for education. Still other bureaucratic measures involving the *yuwa* (reconciliation) movement insisted that discrimination was actually the fault of the Buraku themselves and, therefore, they should correct their manners and behaviors to become good commoners (Asaji 2008: 82).

Faced with discrimination, heavy taxation, illiteracy, and a lack of capital, many rural Buraku people moved to segregated urban Buraku neighborhoods where they worked the toughest jobs as coal miners, port workers, and unskilled day-laborers or became peddlers and gamblers. Offered few other choices, some became *yakuza* (Japanese gangsters). Treated like "animals," deprived of education, left without a decent physical environment and denied respect as human beings, Burakumin became modern Japan's underclass.[9]

Social Protest Movements for Human Rights

Japan's outcastes and underprivileged have a long history of protest. Between the fifteenth and sixteenth century, monks from *ikko-shu*, a famous Buddhist religious sect, aggressively recruited the underprivileged and frequently challenged the authorities. Researchers of *ikko-shu* also maintain that there were a considerable number of Burakumin in this rebellious sect. Although it did lose power eventually, *ikko-shu* actually took political control away from some *samurai*-dominated regional governments. Recent research has also uncovered centuries of protest in the form of *ikki* (peasant riots) when peasants were faced with famine or unjust taxes.[10]

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[9] As a derogatory usage, Buraku people are often called "*yotsu*" (four-legged animals).

[10] *Ikko-ikki* riot led by *ikko-shu* is famous for its strong resistance against the Toyotomi government. *ikko-shu* is also known to have been aggressively propagating among *etas* and *hinins.* And according to Teraki (1996) and Ishige (1983), many rebellious *ikki* peasants were reduced to *eta* status by the government as a way to teach them a lesson and give warning to others.

The modern era also saw periods of social unrest, especially following the popular Russo-Japan War (1904–1905) in which Japan was victorious. The postwar period brought unemployment, low-wages, commodity shortages, inflation, and riots, the most famous of which were the Rice Riots (*kome sodo*) of 1918. The riots started in a fishing hamlet in Toyama prefecture as a small protest organized by fishermen's wives who attempted to stop the export of grain in the face of inflated prices. But the unrest spread quickly throughout the nation, involving thousands of peasants and commoners, and a considerable number of Burakumin.

The government tried to pacify Burakumin discontent by co-opting the *Yuwa* conciliation project (established in 1903) by providing significant financial help to the organization and through which the government gave small amounts of funds for improved education and housing (Siddle 1996: 120). When other Burakumin leaders made plans to start a new and independent organization, the government promised to include them in the government if they would drop the idea. However, in 1922, influenced by leftist thought and Christian principles, young Burakumin intellectuals based in Kyoto formed *Suiheisha* (The Levelers' Association). The militant Suiheisha forged links with other radical organizations to campaign against discrimination. Their ideology was left-wing and their tactics aggressive. Neary (1997) maintains that two strategies made Suiheisha unique. First, the leaders were determined to emancipate themselves through their own efforts and self-respect without depending on outside help from non-Burakumin. Secondly, they rejected the idea that the *buraku* "problem" existed within Burakumin themselves and that it was social attitudes by the majority that needed to be changed.

In 1942, following the outlawing of socialist and communist parties, the wartime government forced Suiheisha to dissolve. However, one of the founding members, Matshumoto Jiichiro, remained in the Diet and, in 1946, after Japan's defeat in World War II, Matshumoto and his followers quickly resurrected the association, renaming it the National Committee for Buraku Liberation (NCBL). In 1950 it became simply the Buraku Liberation League (BLL).

The BLL and Denunciation Tactics

The denunciation tactics developed by prewar Suiheisha were unique and powerful. Suiheisha monitored discrimination against Burakumin and as soon as its members heard of an incident, they would confront the "guilty" party and demand a public apology. The tactic was employed on a larger (and sometimes more aggressive) scale by the postwar BLL, but the original intention was to end discrimination through public education.

Even though the denunciation tactics were a legitimate expression of anger against social injustice, the results were often a violent reaction by police or the public against Burakumin and their Suiheisha leaders. In counter-response, Buraku youth, sometimes *yakuza* members who were sympathizers of Suiheisha, took it upon themselves to fight back. Thus, Suiheisha became perceived by the public as

an aggressive and violent organization.[11] Regardless, the militant campaign against social prejudice did shake the government and cause it to reconsider the inadequacies of its policies toward Burakumin.

In 1951, a story titled *Tokushu Buraku* (special hamlet), and describing the ghetto-like hamlets of the Buraku as inhuman, crime ridden, and *yakuza* controlled appeared in a pulp fiction magazine called *All Romance*. Written by a Kyoto city employee, the story accurately described Buraku neighborhoods as being without tap water, sewers, or even electricity, but full of crime and gangsters.[12] Although the short story intensified the negative image of Buraku neighborhoods, the BLL quickly turned the "incident" to their advantage, challenging Kyoto city government authorities and demanding that they rectify the lack of infrastructure in Buraku neighborhoods (Harada 1975: 365). In a public denunciation meeting, Kyoto authorities had to admit that Buraku neighborhoods lacked even the minimum standards of living for human beings and the authorities had little choice but to create a budget for the improvement of Buraku areas. That was the first incident to make the local government take serious steps to improve the *Buraku* neighborhood.

The Special Measures Law

Years later, at the national level, with strong political backing of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), a special commission on Buraku was created within the Prime Ministers' Office. The commission released the Dowa (Assimilation) Policies in 1965; in1969 the Diet passed the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects (SML).

The SML, a 10-year plan extended several times, shaped Burakumin life for more than three decades. SML projects improved the physical environment of Buraku neighborhoods and included social welfare programs providing financial aid, educational scholarships, and subsidized public housing. There were also attempts to change attitudes through public school antidiscrimination programs in Osaka, Kyoto and Nara, areas where large populations of Burakumin resided. Finally implementation of the SML through local governments gave the BLL a strong financial foundation for their projects for decades.

[11] According to Miyazaki (2006, 2008), there were a considerable number of Yakuzas who participated in the 1918 Kobe rice riots (2008: 179). Miyazaki, himself born into a family of Burakumin and Yakuza, persuasively argues that traditional yakuza organizations served as a refuge and protector of Burakumin. Inoue and Watanabe (1960) also discuss the ambivalent political roles of prewar yakuzas. Some were sympathizers of the left other of the right. During the rice riots, some led the riots and were arrested while others, particularly after the rice riots, served the interests of the ruling class and the government.

[12] The *buraku* described in this novel was in fact a Korean *buraku* yet this fact was hardly touched by BLL members when they were negotiating with the local government.

The Yata Incident and the Court Ruling

The BLL also changed its militant political strategy and started working with mainstream policy makers and the government. Following its establishment in the late 1940s, the BLL had maintained a strong alliance with the Japan Communist Party (JCP), as well as the JSP. However, the alliance with the JCP became strained when the BLL began to develop an alliance with the mainstream LDP. The JCP, objected to the LDP alliance but more importantly, disagreed with the policy of limiting SML privileges to Burakumin and the government subsidies only for the BLL. The JCP had as its goal the "liberation" of all workers and its focus was on universal emancipation. The JCP regarded Burakumin issues as culture specific, an artifact of feudalism that would be removed once universal emancipation took place. This attitude created a strain between JCP and BLL and as the relationship became strained, the JCP created its own Buraku support organization called *zenkairen*. Through the 1970s and 1980s, conflict between the JCP and the BLL escalated culminating in the "Yata incident."

In 1969 in Yata, a Buraku district in Osaka, middle-school teachers supporting the election of JCP candidates distributed an anti-BLL pamphlet. A subsequent BLL "denunciation action" turned violent, with the teachers being held for over 10 h by BLL members and badly beaten. The BLL attackers were charged with a crime but were acquitted in court. The court ruling not only found the defendants innocent, but expressed strong sympathy for their denunciation tactics (Rohlen 1976).

There were other such incidents and sympathetic rulings by courts which encouraged the BLL to continue its use of denunciation tactics, often targeting organizations and corporations as well as individuals. Denunciation targets included corporations that bought underground lists of Buraku neighborhoods (*chimei sokan*) in order to identify, and thus not hire, Buraku youth.[13]

The Decline of the BLL

Though controversial, the denunciation tactics often won significant victories for the BLL. For instance, the campaign against Buraku name lists targeted the Ministry of Justice, forcing the ministry to make the *koseki* (birth registration) record of birth place confidential information. However, the BLL did not capitalize on this victory by seeking equality for other minorities, nor did it seek alliance with other minority organizations such as those representing resident Koreans or

[13] The debate about whether former Buraku neighborhoods should be publically acknowledged continues. Recently (2009) Google Earth added Japanese historical "overlay" maps to its online collection. One of the feudal-era overlays included Tokyo and Osaka neighborhoods designated as *eta* village. Learning of the online map, an Osaka leader of the BLL filed a complaint with the Justice Ministry and demanded an 'accountability session with Google. However, a Tokyo based BLL leader said removing the map "…is like saying those people didn't exist." Google temporarily removed the offending *eta* designation and, as of this writing, is "reviewing" the matter (Alabaster 2009).

non-Japanese migrant workers, or even with the women's groups.[14] Significantly, the BLL did not extend the government benefits it acquired to low-income non-Burakumin residing in Buraku neighborhoods.

Discriminatory practices by the BLL were not limited to non-Burakumin. The BLL sometimes denounced other Burakumin who by virtue of education or other means became "middle class" and did not identify themselves as exclusively Buraku. Upham (1987) maintains that although both the BLL and the government provided some level of economic security to Burakumin as a group, they denied individual Burakumin the freedom to merge into mainstream society.

Nevertheless, many young Burakumin, given the opportunity, moved out of Buraku neighborhoods, leaving behind an aging and dwindling population and a BLL without a base. With the expiration of the SML in 1992, the BLL also lost its main source of financial support. And, to compound matters, a wave of media reports on government corruption focused on the BLL and the misuse of local government funds (Johnston 2006a, b, 2008).

Despite this gloomy outlook, there is much to be learned from the BLL period of grassroots community development. Indeed, Buraku neighborhoods are where grassroots level machizukuri or community development has been the most successful in Japan. Yuzo Uchida, a renowned architect and town planner involved in Buraku community building for over 30 years, maintains that one of the Japanese models of community-oriented *machizukuri* was started in the Buraku and that the Buraku model is more holistic and of a larger scale than the better-known efforts in Japanese *machizukuri* movement in post-World War II Japan.[15]

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[14] The Japanese *koseki* system remains highly paternalistic. The registration system requires that every Japanese citizen belong to a *koseki* headed by a male. As a rule, a woman must give up her own surname after marriage and take that of her husband. This often creates problems for working or divorced women as well as their children. Children born out of wedlock are labeled as such unless the father legally recognizes the child as his own. Adoptions are also openly registered in *koseki*, stigmatizing some children. Had the BLL also supported other efforts to end the *koseki* system of unequal treatment for women and children, the organization might have gained wider support and sympathy at least from women's rights organizations.

[15] According to Yuzo Uchida's unpublished notes, some successful Buraku neighborhood improvement cases are: (1) Yata neighborhood in Osaka city: Building schools based on community needs. Active educational programs. (2) Sumiyoshi neighborhood, Osaka city: Low-rise, neighborhood-communication friendly apartment buildings. Wheelchair friendly neighborhood. (3) Asaka neighborhood, Osaka city: Workers collectives, Collaborative project with nearby non-Buraku commercial neighborhood. (4) Hinode neighborhood, Osaka city: Cooperative housing, using leaseholds (from the local government). (5) Nishinari District, Osaka city: Health care for the elderly; Revitalization of local commercial area; Revitalization of local culture. (6) Kita Shiba District in Mino City, Osaka prefecture: Involving citizens through many workshops; Microcredit service through community fund. (7) Senbon District, Kyoto city: Landscaping coordinating with adjacent neighborhoods; Active involvement of citizens to build new user-friendly public housing. (8) Kitakata District, Kita Kyushu city: Revived the neighborhood plaza; Built a user-friendly public apartment; Large-scale community development project, collaborating with the local government. (9) Shitami District, Tsukuchino city: Involvement of the residents through many workshops; Combination of small-scale neighborhood improvement project and large scale town-planning method. (10) Kora Town Kuretake District: A neighborhood improvement committee organized by residents; Publicized the good points of the neighborhood to appeal to outsiders; Created small parks with streams. (11) Shima District, Gobo City: Long-term collaborative efforts with local government officials to realize user friendly cooperative housing.

The "old" 1919 City Planning Law (*toshi keikaku ho*), together with the Urban Building Law (*shigaichi kenchikubutsu ho*), centralized urban planning (Watanabe 2007: 46). A "New Law" was introduced in 1968 (the year SML was enacted) but it kept the top-down principle of the Old Law; city planning had to be done in accordance with the various national and regional plans of the central government. Thus, the law gave priority to large-scale planning over community-based planning and allowed for the implementation of the quick and efficient central government plans. It accelerated rapid economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s (Watanabe 2007: 47). However, there was little space for local citizens to participate in the planning of their own neighborhood.

In the "activist" 1960s, the "movement" for more participatory planning gathered steam but it was not until 1981 that first local ordinance spelling out the role of local citizens in town planning was adopted by Kobe City. The Kobe *machizukuri* ordinance included three important "inventions": (1) A *machizukuri* council representative of the residents was established in small area improvement districts; (2) the "expert dispatch system" provided *machizukuri* councils with professional consultants; and (3) a partnership system was established between the local government and the community to facilitate the small area improvements. The Kobe ordinance became a model and was copied by many local governments. (Watanabe 2007: 51) However, the "model" did not include financial assistance from the central government. Thus, most of *machizukuri* plans were implemented on a limited scale, and mostly in the nonphysical field.

On the other hand, the SML passed in 1968 provided local governments working with community-based Buraku organizations (particularly BLL branches) with the ample financial backing from the national government (up to 80% of the budget for each project was backed by the central government). With such a big financial backing, both physical and nonphysical community development projects were possible in Dowa projects. As Uchida (2006) points out, Buraku *machizukuri* could therefore be viewed as leading examples of post-World War II community development.

Uchida stresses that the good public housing with reasonably priced rent was built with intensive participation of the residents in the Buraku. The civic participation model of Dowa project involving the neighborhood could be a model for low-income neighborhoods in general (personal communication with Uchida in October, 2008).

Machizukuri and Buraku

From 1950 through the 1990s, BLL grassroots organizations worked with Buraku neighborhoods, particularly in Western Japan, to improve the quality of life and environment for Burakumin. These efforts of BLL community building have been mostly overlooked by researchers of Japanese *machizukuri* and seldom acknowledged by "mainstream" *machizukuri* leaders. The following Asaka neighborhood project is one of the typical Dowa *machizukuri* projects which are regarded as most successful.

The Asaka Neighborhood Project

Asaka is a typical Buraku neighborhood in western Osaka city. Prior to the 1960s, over 200 of the neighborhood's households were located on a dry riverbed that periodically flooded. Homes had neither tap water nor sewer connections; residents were forced to use public water taps and common toilets. Access to the neighborhood was blocked on the south by the Yamato River, the west by the Osaka City University campus and the east by the Tennoji-Abiko railway. Roads in and into the neighborhood were so narrow that motor vehicles could not pass and fire engines could not enter.

To compound matters, in 1957 the Osaka city government made plans to build a subway depot on the north side of the neighborhood. Ignoring neighborhood protests, the city went ahead with the project in 1960 and Asaka became an island, totally isolated from the rest of the city with only a single road built to serve the depot providing access to the neighborhood. The morale of the community plummeted and the people, already poor, felt even more destitute and powerless. Change came gradually from the ground up. In 1976 the rail station issue was again taken up. It was then that the Asaka *chonaikai* (neighborhood association) helped establish a branch of the BLL. Working with the local parent teachers association and workers organizations (including the labor union representing the depot workers), the BLL-*chonaikai* began a campaign to remove the station. The struggle took another two decades, but the depot was eventually removed and the 28 acres on which it stood turned over to the neighborhood for redevelopment.

Under BLL leadership, Asaka neighborhood developed an alliance with the adjacent working-class neighborhood of Sumiyoshi to develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan. The plan was drafted and implemented by the residents: they built parks, a community sports ground, a community pubic bath, a center for disabled people, a primary school, a junior high school, and attractive public apartments. By most accounts, Yoshihiko Yamamoto was the key leader and catalyst for the transformation.

A Buraku Community Leader and His Tactics

Yoshihiko Yamamoto, now 60 years old, is an extraordinary community leader and director of the Asaka Neighborhood BLL.[16] He views the Asaka neighborhood empowerment process as having four stages: (1) 1950s–1970s – the battle for decent public housing; (2) 1970–1975 – organizing youth and women's groups, the battle against juvenile delinquency and low school grades; (3) 1975–1980 – removal of the subway depot and the involvement of residents in community planning; (4) 1988 – launching of the Asaka Community Development Council.

[16]This part about Yamamoto is based on the interview conducted in October, 2008.

Yamamoto's career as an organizer began in the late 1960s. His family life was typical for Buraku at that time. They were extremely poor, and he was semiliterate without a stable job. Yamamoto recalls:

> We were living in a public apartment built in 1967. We got it through negotiation with the Osaka government. The apartment construction split the community because the government promised both the *chonaikai* (the neighborhood association) and the BLL control. Learning of the duplicity, the organizations began to fight with each other. Eventually, the government gave 70 blocks to the BLL and 30 to the chonaikai. My mother came to Asaka and got housing from *chonaikai*. Because of this, BLL members shouted at us from outside denouncing my mother as a traitor. She had been suffering from heart problems and I was very angry at that time.

In the small residents' meeting of ten families in his apartment block, he was appointed as the representative to negotiate with the Osaka city officials for further improvement of the neighborhood. He didn't know what he was supposed to do, so he sought a mentor from the BLL in nearby Yata neighborhood. Yata was renowned as an active Buraku neighborhood for its political engagement. Out of seven national leaders of the BLL, three came from Yata. His new mentor from Yata told him to study reading and writing by attending an evening literacy class in the neighborhood. After the class was finished, with the help of a dictionary, he spent a year reading a book that had been given to him. "It was Chairman Mao's book about the technique of involving the masses in political movements," he told me. Out of this study, he learned to focus on the issues of day-to-day life. "I did not want to talk about general politics or ideology, as Buraku people were not interested."

> I also decided to focus on the community as a whole. Not private interests. We had serious fights between the *chonaikai* (*the more conservative pro-government neighborhood*) and BLL based organizations. We hated each other while fighting for public housing. This taught me a lesson that we should find a common goal which no one can contest.

After losing the battle against the construction of subway depot, in 1960, Yamamoto helped organize the Asaka Neighborhood Housing Demand Association. In 1969, Yamamoto and this group revived a moribund youth group of the Asaka BLL. The youth group tackled the poor school performance of Buraku kids. At the time, juvenile delinquency was rampant and most kids had grades inadequate to advance to a public high school. Students indulged in cigarette smoking, glue sniffing, and playing hooky from class. The youth group began a program dubbed Education Safeguard. Yamamoto explains:

> When we went to school, the teachers used to say that Buraku kids do not study and hence have low performance. But how can they study well if their parents do not know how to read and write? Their family background was such that kids did not have any incentive to study. So we implemented a 70 day study camp, with sympathetic school teachers and the Buraku youth group. We worked with 13 kids who were about to take the entrance exam for high school. All 13 students passed the exam which was previously said to be too difficult for Buraku kids. This gave us enormous trust from Buraku parents as everyone wanted their kids to go to a good school. They knew education was important to break the chain of poverty. But they did not know how.

> When we started a BLL Asaka branch in 1965, people were only thinking about their housing and jobs. They did not know what was necessary for the community, but I thought we need to put the community first and not the individual needs since that would stop the fighting.

Community Empowerment

Asaka residents were mostly junk dealers, day laborers and peddlers of various kinds. They used hand trolleys to carry junk and old materials; none had a driver's license. On the other hand, at Yata, the nearby Buraku, there was a driver's license circle which taught people how to drive and how to get a license. Yamamoto felt Yata was far more advanced at providing job training to residents.

> When a man from Asaka went to Yata asking to join the circle, they suggested we start our own. They said, "if you are silent and do nothing, you remain ignorant. Why don't you empower the entire neighborhood by starting your own license circle at Asaka? We can help you starting up." So we started the Asaka driving license circle.

> Next, there was job training. Some women at Asaka noticed that there were cooking staff working for primary and secondary schools. They asked me how they could become one of those, as they admired the full time job. I told them that you have to get a license to be a cook for schools. In order to be a licensed cook, you have to pass the national exam. So you need to know how to read and write. They understood what they had to do. We started a course to study for the exam in addition to literacy classes. Seventy people wanted to study. So we invited an instructor and taught them at the BLL neighborhood hall. For a year, three days a week at night, they studied and passed the exam and got the job. Of course, they were very happy.

The literacy movement initiated by the BLL groups like Yamamoto's had an enormous impact on the Buraku people who were still mostly illiterate in the 1950–1960s. Although prior to World War II, Japan claimed to be nearly 100% literate, there were still illiterate people at the bottom of society and most of them were either Burakumin or resident Koreans who were brought to Japan during World War II. In the literacy class, teachers were mostly BLL leaders or non-Buraku supporters who got involved in the Buraku community movement.[17]

Yamamoto's life was typical of Buraku youth in the 1960s: he had dropped out of primary school in the third grade since he could neither pay the school lunch fees nor do the homework. As he describes it:

> At five, I started working helping my mother, my aunt, and my grandmother. I helped my mother early in the morning before going to school, worked with my aunt after school until

[17]Many of those who came to the class were women in their 50s and 60s; they started to write about their histories which vividly illustrated how they felt about emancipation through learning (Yamamoto 2002).

> seven o'clock. Then I helped my grandmother at night until 11 o'clock. I could not buy school textbooks nor study at home. I never did the homework. In those days, a school lunch cost 435 yen per month. But our family of five survived with 300 yen per day, buying five cups of rice with that money. We mostly ate rice gruel. How can a child of such a family pay 435 yen per month for school meals?

His teachers accused him of not doing homework and not paying the meal fees. So he stopped eating the meals.

> So I didn't eat lunch. But one day, one of my classmates accused me for stealing money which I never did. I was so angry that I quit school there and then.

His parents were peddlers of groceries who would walk long distances selling vegetables from house to house. When he was 11, they split up and his mother and he had to work in Yata for several years as his father had "sold" them to pay for his gambling debt. He understands the destitute feeling of his father and was never critical. Several years after the split, his mother and his siblings moved to Asaka where she was able to get a welfare subsidy and move into a public apartment.

He believes the weakness of his father was derived from poverty and discrimination.

> My mother used to denounce him as a poor provider since he started losing his grocery customers. He tried hard to be a good seller, and he learned in the vegetable market how to check the freshness and quality by tapping the vegetables. I think he tried to be a good merchant but some people told his customers that he was a Buraku. That stopped them buying from him. They would say, "how can one buy vegetables from a pollutant"? And my father lost his customers.[18]

Removal of the Depot and Redevelopment of the Neighborhood

Yamamoto's years of organizing paid off with the removal of the train depot in 1988 and the vacant land being turned over to the community for development. But, that struggle alone took over 10 years. In 1976, the Asaka neighborhood comprehensive planning committee was launched. The committee conducted a door-to-door survey of the entire neighborhood; out of 928 households, the survey questionnaires were answered by 89%. This was done with the full support of the City University academics and architectural groups.

> We persuaded Osaka City University to help us conduct an intensive survey of the neighborhood to see the reality of our neighborhood. Before, the university did nothing good to us and student radicals once burned down our apartment! Now, we persuaded them to do common good.

The questionnaire design group included public officials, teachers, and neighborhood residents. This helped the outside collaborators understand the reality

[18] In fact, vegetable sales were one of the traditional jobs of peddlers who were mostly from Buraku in Tokugawa period.

of discrimination. After spending 18 months analyzing the data, the figures were released to the public. Education, jobs, and marriages were still discriminatory and the Buraku people lived with enormous constraints and difficulty. The survey helped unite the neighborhood and win allies from the subway depot employees and the staff of local schools. Using the data to support their arguments, the group began negotiations with the city which eventually agreed to demolish the depot. According to Yamamoto:

> The concrete data showed how we were disadvantaged: early school drop-outs were 27 times the Osaka regional average; high divorce rates; single motherhood; high unemployment rates; higher health risks; no coverage by medical insurance; and, three times the number of disabled people than average because of the poor hygienic environment and the hard labor that ruined health. Wage rates for Asaka residents were only about 60 percent of the Osaka average. The public housing was so poor that five or six members were living in small two-room apartments of six *tatami* mats.[19]
>
> We worked on the data analysis for one and a half years, and I spent two weeks memorizing it before the negotiation. I knew every individual mentioned in the report and when I argued, I substantiated our demands with the data. They asked why we needed 500 public housing units. I said there are 944 families and 2800 people. I used to go to the harbor late at night and read the data and memorized it because I did not want others to worry about the meeting. So I read the data all alone.

As they began negotiating with the government for the purchase of the Buraku's riverbed homes, there was an economic bubble and the price shot up about ten times. Some residents were attracted by the money offered and wanted to sell immediately.

> But we patiently persuaded every household in the riverbed to work together so that every household would get the same amount. It took us five years to complete the deal but every one was given the same price.
>
> When the government was buying the land of 202 households on the riverbed, there were 74 resident Korean households. They were illiterate but they owned the land, they insisted. I asked them if they had a sales bond. They said no, but said they had paid the money to such and such a person in the Buraku. I questioned the Buraku land owners, and they claimed they had not sold the land or received any money. Without a receipt, it is hard to prove ownership, but I trusted the Korean people since they must not have forgotten the money they paid. I told the Buraku guys who took the money, "those Korean people saved money out of hard labour and bought the land. Five-hundred thousand yen is a big amount of money.[20] So you would not have forgotten. Do not cheat them." They denied it but eventually they acknowledged that they did sell. I could not let them cheat.

Through Yamamoto's efforts, the land owned by the Korean residents was purchased by the government and special arrangements were made to admit them

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[19] In Japan, rooms are measured by the dimensions of a *tatami* mat. Made of rice straw, the dimensions of a *tatami* are standardized at 90 by 180 cm – 3×6 ft (1.62 m^2).

[20] At the current exchange rate, 500,000 yen would be about $5,000.

into the Buraku neighborhood public apartments, after the completion. That was the first case in Osaka which allowed non-Burakumin to use a Buraku facility (Yamamoto 2002: 112).

The depot was closed down in 1987 and after that, the huge site was left open for the community to develop. Working over a 5-year period, in cooperation with nearby non-Buraku neighborhoods, the Buraku community built an overseas engineer training center, a medical clinic, a middle school, an assisted nursing home, a day-care service center, and numerous community gardens with streams and landscaping. There are also job training centers and community business companies which hire the Buraku people and people with disabilities.

Buraku Culture and Identity

In spite of the remarkable community building histories of their community, Yamamoto and other leaders feel many problems remain even as new ones arise. For instance, the increase of intermarriages with non-Buraku, does not bring real integration since so many of the Buraku hide their identity and often don't inform their children of their family histories which creates a considerable amount of stress and isolation for the adults and confusion for children. There is an issue of not being able to find any positive cultural identity attached to Buraku particularly among the youths. Since the 1980s, some BLL leaders like Yamamoto have been exchanging ideas with Japan's other indigenous minorities, the Ainu and the Okinawan.[21] Yamamoto strongly admires their cultural integrity and ethnic identity:

> We went to Nibudani in Hokkaido where there are still Ainu *kotan* (hamlets). Inspired by us, they organized Ainu Liberation League and since then, we have had a long-term relationship with them. They actually are ahead of us in appreciating their own culture by teaching Ainu language, dancing and singing. Outside Hokkaido, they do not get any subsidies even if they do such activities. But they do it at their own expense. They do not talk much about the discrimination they suffer from, but they teach their cultural heritage quietly.
>
> There is a young artist called Bikki Sunagawa who left the community and went to the US, where he encountered reggae. He reflected on his own identity and came back to Hokkaido. Now he plays *pongoli*, the Ainu guitar, and has become a proud Ainu artist. I also admire the young Ainu Rebels who are creating the young Ainu culture even though their music is hip-hop.[22] "When youngsters and middle class Buraku families leave Buraku, the BLL denounces them and spits on them, saying "never come back." They never accept them

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[21] There have been international cultural and strategy exchanges with Asian minorities and slum dwellers as well. For instance, the Asaka BLL branch has networked with ACHR (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights), a nonprofit social justice organization headquartered in Thailand.

[22] The Ainu Rebels can be viewed on YouTube.

> even when they want to come back. But Ainu people leave their door open and welcome anyone who comes back." "I also admire Okinawans. Tokushin Yamamoto, for example is an Okinawan leader who revived Okinawan history and made it "trendy" in order to attract many mainland Japanese to his small village of Yoshitani. There, the villagers challenged authorities who wanted to destroy Okinawan culture: not with violence, but with cultural power. Every year, 100,000 people from all over Japan are drawn to Yoshitani for their cultural festival. As a result, a lot of Japanese youngsters love Okinawa and they study Okinawan dance and music. But, what about us the Burakumin? We are severed from our cultural heritage. The BLL did not value our culture and Buraku youth did not hear any positive stories from their parents or grandparents. So, Buraku youth have nothing to be proud of. We have many pop singers and TV actors from Buraku but they hide their identity. When becoming famous, resident Koreans come out and declare their identity. Buraku stars do not.

Born in 1968 to Buraku parents, Nobuhiko Kadooka, a freelance journalist, does not remember any incident in which he was discriminated against for being Burakumin, perhaps because his father worked as a sales clerk in a department store and lived in a company dorm for many years. However, he was careful not to mention his Buraku ancestry when being interviewed for his first position as newspaper reporter, nor did he mention his interest in studying Buraku issues in college. Although he got the job, he left for a career as a freelance journalist after a few years partly because he was disappointed with the narrow mindedness of the media which viewed the Buraku community as a single entity while ignoring its diversity. He maintains that there are different Burakus with different histories from east to west. There are varieties of traditional occupations and livelihoods pursued by different communities and local cultures were rich in diversity. Yet they were now viewed as a single category of "Buraku." His two years of intensive interviews with more than 100 Buraku youths were published as a 1999 book titled *The Youth in the Discriminated Hamlets* (Kadooka 1999). The book illustrates how Buraku youths have diverse views about their own identity and how the relationship between them and their communities is complex.

Self-Conscious Inquiry and Renewal of Buraku Identity

The Buraku-born freelance writer Yoshiho Uehara is much younger than Kadooka. He finds his community food original and unique. Born in 1973, he aggressively takes in his Buraku identity and cherishes his memories of having "special Buraku food" as the topic of study (Uehara 2005). Although Buraku food invokes nostalgia to Buraku-origin people, they could not mention it outside Buraku for fear of being known to be a Burakumin. He set out on a 2-year world trip researching the "soul foods" of the world, trying to share the feeling of his "soul food" with other depressed minorities. Visiting the most discriminated minorities such as Romas in Europe and the ex-Untouchables in India, he eats their food and shares their history and experience of persecution.

His childhood memories of Buraku food are also associated with memories of discrimination. Not so much that he was discriminated against, but more as he saw his fellow Buraku people being afraid of revealing their identities and hiding the nostalgia of the Buraku food they were used to. Foods such as *saiboshi* (dried horse meat), *aburakasu* (intestinal sausage made from left-over beef and pork), *kogori* (cooked animal giblets in gelatin), or *chagayu* (rice gruel cooked in tea).

During his travels, Uehara finds that many famous ethnic menus were derived from the poor and the deprived: American fried chicken originated in the kitchens of African-American slaves; *feijoada*, the famous ethnic food of Brazil also originated from the kitchens of African slaves. Calling this "soul food" and sharing the history of poverty and discrimination, his narratives lead to a transformation of the Buraku cultural paradigm from a negative view to a positive one. The very notion of taboos involving ritual pollution, which puts them at the bottom of the social hierarchy, can be thrown away once their food is positively appreciated for its cultural uniqueness.

Discussing *habitus* as the "durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations," Bourdieu (1977: 78) argues culture as the accumulation of *habitus* as the power to create culture. Repetition of day-to-day activities such as eating food, smelling the leaves, and listening to dialects create what you are and shared experiences accumulate the emotion of being in the same "ethnic" community (see also Karner 2007). Ethnicity has been a fundamental source of meaning and social differentiation yet their manifestations are deeply altered by the recent globalization. Ethnicity is being specified as a source of meaning and identity to be melted not with other ethnicities but under broader principles of cultural self-definition such as religion, nation and gender (Castells 2004: 57).

An emerging trend in Japan's urban subculture gives a positive spin to "ethnic food" and to ethnic minority's unique history.[23] Thus, Korean, Okinawan, Ainu, South American born Niseis second generation, and Buraku subculture can all be appreciated. Discussing reflexivity as the key to recreate one's identity, Giddens (1984, 1991) explains it both as a subjective process of the individual's self-conscious inquiry and an inquiry about one's relationship with other social groups. Reflexivity creates a new identity for the individual, and can ultimately lead to the transformation of the ethnic identity.

The BLL as an organization brought about a big socio-economic improvement for the community. Yet its denunciation tactics and blaming of the outside world for everything did not give answers to the individuals' search for a new and positive identity. The younger Buraku generation is still struggling, continuing the inquiry about oneself and about the community. This inquiry requires interactions with outsiders to assist in the creation of newly formed mirror images on Buraku culture, images from which new ethnic and community identities can be conceived.

[23] There are many web sites showing how to cook such menus. *Saiboshi* is now sold in some big department stores as one of typical "Osaka food," and there are some restaurants which provide Buraku menu. *Chagayu* and *kogori* are even served in the top-end Japanese restaurants.

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Chapter 8
"I'm Deaf. This is Sign. Get Used to It." Sign Language in Japan: The Vision and the Struggle

John C. Maher

Shuwa = Te de hanasu koto (talking with the hands)
Kenkyusha Japanese Dictionary 2007

Vision

> We have a goal and it is crystal clear: to remove barriers across society, and education, in particular (Fukushima 2008: 5).

When Satoru Fukushima, a well-known deaf blind advocate for the rights of the deafblind and a specialist in "barrier-free theory" became the first deafblind full-time university professor in Japan he articulated a simple but compelling civic vision. This vision of the Deaf Community in Japan consists of values, hopes, and aspirations but it is the vision of a society where Deaf people 聾 *Rou* (or *choukakushogaisha* "the hearing impaired") who use sign language will enjoy the same rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and quality of life as every other person. The Deaf movement has a successful history: a voice directed at the state, skillfully making use of the stipulation of rights as well as a civic movement that has also achieved an astounding level of institutionalization.

Social progress is fitful but real nonetheless. The application of social constraints on a speech community as a direct result of linguistic difference (sic. "handicap") is a familiar territory in the sociology of the deaf (Neisser 1983). Progress occurs, typically, as a result of conflict or "watershed" incidents. Two such news items are the following:

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1. A University hospital in downtown Tokyo opens an Outpatients Clinic (all specialities) for Deaf patients and two new nursing homes for the Deaf are opened by local authorities in Tokyo.
2. Controversy in the Deaf Community over the portrayal of the Japanese Deaf in the Hollywood film "Babel" (Alejandro González Iñárritu 2006) and ensuing events during the film's distribution in Japan. In Babel, a despairing and confused deaf teenager whose mother recently committed suicide experiences such rage and frustration that she causes her volleyball team to lose a match, yanks her underwear off and begins exposing herself to boys in a crowded restaurant. Chieko's hearing father struggles unsuccessfully to bridge the emotional distance which separates him and his daughter. The resulting controversy was twofold: (a) here we go again – western film-maker reworks "crazy, slutty Japanese high-school girl" cliché with the added twist that "the gal's deaf" (i.e., social frustration among young deaf finds its outlet in promiscuous rage), (b) the Deaf community were forced to launch a campaign against the distributors who did not/would not issue a Japanese-language subtitled version for the Japanese language section of the film, i.e., to enable deaf to watch the Japanese language section of the film.

As the doors of the Deaf Outpatients in Showa university hospital opened and more civic and governmental action swings in to work with the Japanese Deaf community, there is no lack of struggle and controversy in the Deaf community in Japan.

Such is the vitality of the Deaf scene in Japan where it is increasingly viewed as a bone fide "minority language" (Saito 2007) where the Deaf community has succeeded in persuading the government to fund a National Centre for Sign Language Education. Located in Kyoto the centre involves the training of sign language interpreters, training courses on Sign, a wide range of research and pedagogical activity and serves as a locus also for NPO and other civic activity.

Nakamura has described the civic action in the Deaf community and its relations with state power as "resistance and co-optation" (Nakamura 2002a, b). Specifically, "The main organization of the deaf in Japan has not only been able to work within a civil law environment designed largely to promote the interests of the state and quell social protest, but has been able to succeed in manipulating the system to its own benefit. It has shown remarkable organizational flexibility by subdividing in an amoeba-like fashion to avoid political control." (Preface.)

The Cognitive Wattage

The juridical structures of language and politics confluence against nonmainstream languages in society. Everywhere. The existence of Other languages takes getting used to. Everywhere. These are relations of the closet (Sedgwick 1990). The unknown and the unknown. And the first task of all men and women of good will,

in order to redeem a language by redemptive strategy (Kimura and Ichida 1995, 2000), is to up the cognitive wattage: an issue of language awareness.

Language awareness is high vis-a-vis Deaf Sign. If "Babel" was merely another example of "appalling Hollywood," it served as a call for attention as well being a brilliant metaphor for the language webs in which people live and speak in the Mexican desert or multilingual Tokyo. There are more languages in Japan than we think or care to think and, with the exercise of imagination we are led to the fact of the languages of the deaf. Around the time of the film's release, I was riding an airport train in Tokyo. Facing me, a T-shirt, of considerable interest, communicated the following:

> I'm Deaf.
> This is Sign.
> Get Used to it!

The wearer was a young man and partner. They were signing in a (Tokyo) dialectal Traditional JSL (*dentoteki shuwa*). I introduced myself in Inter-JSL (*chukangata shuwa*); a combinatory form involving the traditional sign lexicon and (more or less) the grammar of Japanese. The couple was off to Saipan for a holiday. The young man had bought the T-shirt through a (Deaf) shopping website the Internet.

Getting people used to the language of the deaf is a major goal of Deaf organizations that are active in education and the social services. There is an explosion of Internet sites by Deaf individuals, groups and large organizations. There is dedicated TV: Aii - Deaf TV Japan. There are places where the Deaf hang out: coffee shops and izakaya, pubs and bars. Some owned and run by Deaf. The Deaf arts are active. Deaf theatre thrives. Theatre companies perform throughout Japan. Deaf *manzai* (stand-up comic) Rakugo (sit-down comic story-telling) has been in vogue since the 1970s. A vigorous gender action community exists (e.g. "Japan Rainbow Deaf Community" established in 1993) for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and other transgender types.

Do younger Deaf prefer some or other organizations to represent them? In Japan's deaf politics, there is a canonical split between organizations and their members. Some resonate with the radical D-Pro (established 1993) which espouses "big D" *Defu* deafness (cultural deafness) with a somewhat separatist agenda influenced by the American deaf movement ("JSL is different, we are a minority group, our culture is different, deafness is a cultural attribute not a medical condition") whilst others adhere to the more inclusive JFD (Japan Federation of the Deaf established 1947) which has campaigned – on a welfare platform of traditional activism – for equal rights and the elimination of discrimination.

In her comprehensive discussion of the politics of deafness, Nakamura starkly characterizes the generational issue as follows: "the younger generation has fragmented, with half attracted to radical forms of identity politics, while the other half reject the notion of deaf identity altogether and assimilate" (Nakamura 2006:190). Given this dichotomy, the culturalization of the Deaf community (Deaf civil society channeled through media, theatre, manga, etc.) is less the result of generational change but more the effect of cultural forces and affiliations. Different from away the

1960s/1970s style of protest or cooptation activism but rather the promotion (sic. celebration) of Deaf cultural space. The space can be physical like the "Deaf café" that sprang up in urban areas in the 1990s generated by youth Deaf net (works) and the force of *kuchikomi* (word of mouth). Thus, patrons of Kobe Deaf Café remark like a young woman: "I communicate with my co-workers through writing. It's not enough. I have wanted a chance to talk freely in JSL, which actually is not easy. I took a day off and hung out at the Deaf café" (Deafnet blogspot – lifestyle, 2008. 2.5.).

The Problems Are Legion. There Are Walls to Climb

There are problems in achieving this vision and they are legion. These are some key problems that keep the organizations busy. There are walls to climb.

1. Japanese sign language is not recognized as an official language by the Japanese government. This is not unusual since most sign languages around the world do not received official status as a national language. The legal recognition of sign languages is a major concern of the international Deaf community (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deaf). While there is no standard way in which such a recognition can be formally or legally extended and while symbolic recognition is no guarantee for an effective improvement of the life of sign language (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sign_language) users it is worth noting the (EU) European Parliament's pro-active Resolution on National Sign Languages (1988-06-17), which calls upon all Member States to recognize their national sign languages as official languages in order to bring better linguistic rights and protection for sign language users especially the deaf users of sign language. There is no comparable move in legal circles in Japan.
2. The idea of deaf bilingualism – native sign language of the deaf + the (written) language of the spoken community – has not taken off in Japan. Teachers in the 107 schools for deaf children are hearing. They cannot sign – although there are a small number of deaf teaching helpers. They cannot communicate with their pupils in sign. Deaf schoolchildren, forced into lip-reading (*kowa* = the oral method), struggle and fall behind. Illiteracy is a problem. Surprising?
3. In a later section, I stress the importance of the media in successfully increasing the profile of the deaf in Japan. However, it must be said that deaf actors and journalists are not employed in mainstream media and entertainment. It's worse. Hearing actors are employed when it comes to play deaf persons.
4. The unemployment rate for the Deaf is disproportionately high. Compare 32% employment rate of deaf persons over the age of 15 with 2% in the general population (Inoue 2005).

Deaf organizations are working to solve these problems. What are the organizations, what are they achieving and in what manner? The key approach in this regard is civic action with sustained effect.

Civic Action for a Sustainable Vision

The underlying principles of action by the Deaf in Japan are connectivity and sustainability: how can we combine and showcase the efforts of *rosha* and supporters and how can effort be made long lasting. If the imposing problems listed in Sect. 3 seem to derive from a maw of darkness and ignorance consider other examples of serious advances by the Deaf community in Japan.

The Discriminatory "Deaf Disqualification Laws" Were Abolished in 2005

This was a result of a vigorous campaign by the Deaf and their supporters nationwide. The much reviled laws prevented the deaf from working in a range of occupation: "persons who are designated in the regulations of government ministries as those who cannot conduct certain specific work appropriately due to his/her disability, are not eligible to obtain licenses"[for civil service, medical professions, etc.].

A vigorous nationwide campaign was conducted among the (mostly) hearing population by the deaf community: lobbying 1,030 local assemblies (49 prefecture, 359 cities and wards, 515 towns, 110 villages) and a collection of two and half million signatures through Deaf networks, street petition, Shuwa circles (in educational and public local institutions such as volunteer centres). "This created a large impact on Japanese society" (Japan Federation of the Deaf 2008). The impact implied is that raising of public awareness about the Deaf.

Deaf Schools Are Implementing JSL

Some not all: at the preschool and elementary school level. This educational revolution is the result of direct action and pressure by Japan Deaf Children and Parents Association. In 2004, deaf children and their parents submitted a petition to the Japan Federation of Bar Associations in which they claimed that their children's right to education was being infringed upon because school lessons are not given in Japanese sign language. Schools for the hearing-impaired mainly conduct lessons using an aural-oral approach, in which students wear special hearing aids and listen to teachers speaking Japanese. Children who are totally deaf, or near that level, however, are effectively stymied by this approach. Children with partial hearing impairments also often have difficulty understanding what their teachers are saying, even with the hearing aids, and thus it is cruel to subject deaf children, or those who are essentially deaf, to the same means of communication applied to students who are able to hear. The petition demanded that the education ministry make sign language the main means

of communication and classroom instruction at schools and train teachers to carry this out. Japan Deaf Children and Parents Association (http://www.hat.hi-ho.ne.jp/at_home/2008) declares the following:

- Our children are deaf.
- Deaf children will become deaf adults in the future.
- The mother tongue of deaf children and deaf adults is Japanese sign language.
- We secure the mother tongue environment of our children and their right to be educated using their mother tongue.
- We promote bilingual education that sets written Japanese as the second language.
- We want to bring up deaf children as deaf children.
- We want them to appreciate their dignity as a human being and as a deaf person.
- We understand that there is deaf culture of deaf children and deaf adults.
- "Being unable to hear" does not mean unhappiness. We protect deaf children's human rights.

Deaf Associations in Japan

Deaf associations in Japan have increased dramatically since the 1960s. Here are some.

1. All Japan Association of Hard of Hearing People (*Zennancho*): "We believe it is absolutely necessary to include persons with hearing disability in all the deliberations and discussions on the revision of the Ministerial ordinances. It is also important to check local ordinances, such as regulations for civil-service examinations." (See http://www.zennancho.or.jp/.)
2. Japan Deaf Student Association (JDSA): Committed to solving problems that stand in the way of Deaf students, especially problems related to information–communication support systems. JDSA endeavors to establish an "environment that enables Deaf students to realize their dreams."
3. National Liaison Council of Deaf Teachers: "Movements to establish support system for Deaf students, who are trying to acquire qualifications, are necessary. The support system includes information–communication guarantee during lectures. We will continue to strive toward the realization of education in which Deaf students can learn to be independent in society and foster their dreams."
4. National Federation of Organizations of Parents of Children with Hearing Disabilities: We supported the movement by lobbying local governments, collecting signatures and awareness-raising activities aimed at society under the initiative of local headquarters located in each prefecture. Strengthening lateral ties with interested organizations was one of significant achievements.
5. National Federation of Parent–Teacher Associations of Schools for the Deaf: Deaf education in Japan is confronted with a time of change from "special

education" to "special support education." In adapting to this change, we would like to contribute to the development of Japanese Deaf education by playing our role as PTA to establish a desirable environment for Deaf students. See also the "Japan Deaf Children and Parents Association" described above.
6. National Research Association for Sign Language Interpretation: Our local branches made collective efforts with local headquarters for signature collection, fund-raising, and petition activities. We presented a theoretical validation of the movement to abolish discriminative laws in our journal "Research Journal on the Problems of Sign Interpretation" and succeeded in deepening an understanding of the issue.
7. Specified Nonprofit Cooperation National Research Association for Note-Taking: The revised laws are pointless as long as a discriminatory environment in the process of acquiring qualifications under law exists within society. We will continue our efforts to realize a total elimination of discrimination in a true sense together with friends whom we met through the movement.
8. Japanese Association of Sign Linguistics: Formed to promote linguistic research in the area of Japanese Sign Language by means of publication, workshops, and annual conferences.

What caused the number of organizations to mushroom? Unsurprisingly, the increase is due to the increased activism and confidence within the Deaf community as well as greater public awareness of deaf issues. The Deaf demand "D'ya hear me?" is receiving a greater measure of public response. However, the question arises not why there are so many different types of organization. Is there not one overarching response by the Deaf Community? There is an important organization, the Japan Federation of the Deaf, with whom government and bureaucracy regularly interact. It may be pointed out also that, after all, specific needs require specific forms of action. It is indicative of the wellness of Deaf civil society that people can and do start their own organizations.

Turning Points in Deaf Action: D'ya Hear Me?

The Rights Movement of the 1960s–1970s

The turbulent 1960s were characterized by the politicization of many minority groups (Korean, Ainu, Burakumin) and the demand for rights (*kenri*). In particular, student revolted, boycotted classes and critiqued the inadequacies of the postwar education system. Students at the Kyoto School for the Deaf – the oldest in the country – went on strike in 1965 to demand radical change in the education setup. Nakamura (2003: 220) well notes that many deaf who were active in the resistance movement stayed on in deaf schools and were catalysts for change: "They took positions as adjunct teachers, and their presence played an important role in ensuring continuity within the school system (and making sure their coworkers learned at least a few signs) – even though their placement was limited teaching woodwork,

beautician skills, sewing physical education, or other noncore courses. These deaf teachers played a critical role in stabilizing the community and ensuring a more uniform sign language system both within the schools and in Japan itself."

International Handicap Year and the 1980s

Gaiatsu or "foreign pressure" is a term invoked by western commentators to describe how aspects of socio-economic change effected in Japan: "things get done (only) with foreign pressure." *Gaiatsu* presents a picture of a reactive or passive rather than dynamic model of change in Japan and is too crude a concept to describe the proactive learning in the field of welfare that has taken place in Japan in the last few decades. Designated in 1981, the "International Year of Disabled Persons" (IYDP) is a case in point.

The IYDP called for a plan of action at the national, regional, and international levels, with an emphasis on equalization of opportunities, rehabilitation, and prevention of disabilities. The theme of IYDP was "full participation and equality," defined as the right of persons with disabilities to take part fully in the life and development of their societies, enjoy living conditions equal to those of other citizens, and have an equal share in improved conditions resulting from socio-economic development.

In Japan, the Deaf Federation (Japan Federation of the Deaf, 1984) called for a new push for increasing public awareness; understanding and acceptance of the deaf and encouraging deaf to participate in organizations through which they could express their views and promote action to improve their situation. The IYDP presaged the International Decade of Disabled Persons ran from 1983 to 1993. A major lesson of the IYDP activity in Japan was that the image of persons with disabilities depends to an important extent on social attitudes; these are a major barrier to the realization of the goal of full participation and equality in society by persons with disabilities.

The Kitashiro Baseball Incident

Here is an example. In 1979, the Kitashiro School for the Deaf in Okinawa applied to enter the annual high school baseball tournament, which is held annually with much national fanfare at Koshien Stadium, Osaka. The school was emboldened by the fact that 1979 was the International Year of the Handicapped. The High School Baseball league rejected the application and this provoked a large debate nationally on the nature of Sign and on the Deaf community's role in Japanese society. The incident was a watershed in the deaf community as it moved toward a new era of social action and confidence. The Kitashiro Baseball incident was described in the book Harukanaru *Koshien* "Distant Koshien" 1981 by the deaf writer Ryoya Tobe.

The Media and Deaf Sign: A Star Is Born

There is ongoing media interest in Sign language and in the deaf community in Japan. Is this cause or effect of Deaf activity and public awareness? What is meant here is (a) efforts by the Deaf Community to raise its profile as culturally distinctive entity and (b) heightened civic awareness in the community-at-large that the Deaf are here, real, and contribute to the cultural diversity of the community. The chicken-and-egg question is not easy to calibrate. What can be stated, however, is that the empire of the media senses does what it will with Deaf issues.

Films are prone to romanticize silence. In many films about the deaf, “deaf” characters do not sign but move about in silence and exquisite visual mist. In this way, filmmakers can employ well-known hearing actors who cannot and do not need to sign. In the “Beat” (Takano) Takeshi movie of (1991) *Ano Natsu Ichiban Shizuka na Umi* (A Scene of the Sea) the lives of a young, hearing-impaired and gloomy couple are changed after the boy develops a passion for surfboarding. Unlike most adolescent deaf on a date who will sign fast and furious this couple do not sign.

By contrast, *Kimi no te ga sasayaite iru (2003)* looks every bit the family drama: a loving husband who marries his deaf wife. Showing the challenges they face and the love they have for each other. The two have a child and show the challenges mother and child face due to her disability.

In the writer Kitagawa Eriko’s *Orange Days* (TBS 2004), love, friendship, unemployment, and deaf are the key themes. Satoshi Tsumabuki played a college senior who is searching for a job but instead discovers a mysterious music student, played by Ko Shibasaki. Kitagawa was the creator of some of the best romantic dramas of the last decade, including the mega hit *Beautiful Life*, which featured a physically handicapped character. In the drama, frequently rebroadcast on satellite TV, the opening scene shows Toyokawa, a hearing-impaired artist/violinist who smokes, can sign in both the Kanto and Kansai dialects and enjoys making shockingly outrageous X-rated sign language statements. We learn the violinist, now bitter and wary, lost her hearing 4 years ago through an illness, when she looks at a bird, she wonders what happened to its voice before she remembers it is she who cannot hear it. The hero comes into contact with the deaf girl’s private side. Deaf issues are stock in trade in glittering youth drama as a variety of films and TV dramas dealing with the deaf and deaf issues have emerged over the last decade

1995 *Hoshi no kinka* The golden coin of stars (TV)
1995 *Aishiteiru*. Tell me you love me (TV)
1996 *Hoshi* part 2 (TV)
1997 *Hoshi* final (TV)
1997 *Kimi no te ga sasayaite iru* (TV)
1997 *Donguri no ie. The Chestnut House* (Film)
1998 *Kaze no koe kikitai* (film)
1998 *Kimi no te* #2 (TV)
1999 *Kimi no te* #3 (TV)
1999 *I Love You* (Film)
2001 *I Love Friends* (Film)
2003 *I Love Peace* (Film)

Stories related to disability have become very popular over the recent years in Japan. The reason might be as much to increasing awareness of Deaf matters as to the fact that the media have found new and fertile territory for soap opera. Deaf drama provokes sympathy from the audience with its touching story lines. *Die Sterntaler* (first aired in Japan in 1995) is an example of this type of story. The story speaks of Noriko starring a hearing impaired woman who works in a hospital. Eventually, the plot thickens into several love triangles and a harsh play of fate upon all the characters. For this series, all actors and actresses were required to learn sign language since the main character could only communicate with the usage of signs.

The "Hoshi no Kinka" series focuses on scriptwriter Hoshino Mari's character Mahiru Morita who is an abused deaf girl from the Okinawa area (and also abandoned by her mother at the age of 5) who moves to Tokyo in search for her real mother. She meets Kazuki, a college student who tells her a tale of a young girl showered with coins from heaven for her pure heart.

The increasing profile of Shuwa in the media and public eye (films, TV drama, newspaper reports, sign language classes, textbooks) has signaled that Shuwa is cool. However, the social worker Nakano (1998) has alerted media watchers to two enduring stereotypes of the deaf. One: they are strong-willed "gamanzuyoi." Film and TV tend to ignore the everyday life and banalities of the deaf and the deaf community. Only those occasions when "they do something out of the ordinary" are they highlighted. The *gamanzuyoi* media portrayal also tends to foster the belief that disabilities can be (should be) overcome by will power, by a person's sincere effort as in earlier programmes such as Hoshi *no Kinka* and *Ai shite iru to itte kure*.

The increasing visibility or participation of the deaf themselves in these productions is of significance. In *Kimi no te ga sasayaiteiru* (1997–1999) there were two deaf signers and the sign was checked by a native. In *Kaze no Uta ga Kikitai* (1998) the deaf community was first shown. Also one of the main characters was not the usual object of pity but an impish rock n roller. All the dialog was subtitled.

The Kobe Film Festival Award Winning *I love You* went further. It was a collaboration of the deaf and hearing. Two directors (deaf and hearing): Yutaka Osawa and Akihiro Yonayama. The plot centers on the family's response to their hearing daughter's being bullied at school for having a Deaf mother. Her deaf mother joins a Deaf acting troupe, including her daughter as they prepare to perform a play for a local cultural festival. Through this work, both mother and daughter find each other. Various aspects of Deaf culture are addressed: a Deaf woman's frustrations with isolation from her deaf community by her Hearing parents, Hearing prejudices against the Deaf marrying, and Deaf prejudices toward the Hearing community.

Thus, improvements in deaf participation was made step by step. Productions display the typical flaws. For example:

- Only one sign language variety is used (Sim-Com).
- Poor facial expression of the actors made it unrealistic for native signers.
- Characters are usually portrayed as socially isolated and totally dependent upon the hearing community. There is no deaf community shown. It doesn't exist.

Ohtsuki (1996) has documented that many dramas about the deaf have been made. However, typically the first showing of *Hoshi no Kinka* had no subtitles, which effectively excluded the deaf as viewers. Deaf viewers protested. The second showing included subs. Right of access to the media. Right of representation. Again, the Deaf demonstrated their rights.

Manga

Deaf Manga refers to comics that deal with Deaf themes. Manga interest in issues of the handicapped is well-represented by the work of Kei Nogami and Kimie Shiga but it was not until the serialization of Harukanaru Koshien by Osamu Yamamoto. There are other well-known narratives in the deaf manga genre many published enthusiastically in the magazine *Young Champion* whose specialty, ironically, is sleaze of all varieties. Deaf manga is, in one sense, an already familiar medium of deaf literature, Japanese deaf glossaries and dictionaries being normally preferring manga than photograph. Deaf activists, in fact, founded Kyoto's only manga library.

The critic Cassim (1991) has pointed out that a characteristic of Deaf manga is its rather "filmic" character with a balance between speech, image, narrative, and facial expression. It appears to adopt the restraint and pictorial balance of Hayao Miyazaki (*Tonari no Totoro*, *Majo no Takkyubin*) and consciously avoids exaggerated gesture, characterization, and exploding graphics, which the novice might rather expect to be foregrounded. Deaf manga provides information and critique of social issues like the banning of JSL in schools for the deaf in Japan vs. the Osaka Metropolitan School whose headmaster promoted JSL as a valid, independent language (viz. *Waga Yubi no Orchestra* "The orchestra of our Fingers" based on the book Shikotsu "Fingerbone" by Yoriko Kawaguchi).

Deaf manga assists also in the historicization of the JSL community providing people with heroes and heritage. For example, one manga theme taken up the story of Issaku Toda, a deaf child and illiterate non-signer, of the Taisho period who is tormented by other village children. In 1914, he becomes the first pupil of Kiyoshi Takahashi, a pioneer of deaf liberation and JSL education in Japan.

Learning Shuwa

Over the years, changes in the public "profile" of sign language have occurred. NHK television network has JSL simultaneous translation for some of its programs (mainly news programs) and since 1990 there has been the acclaimed JSL course (*Minasan no Shuwa* "Everybody's Sign Language") on NHK Channel 3 television. In 1989, a qualification test for sign language interpreters was initiated by the government and there has been an increasing number of publications introducing subspecialty signs for economics, medicine, law, political science, etc.

The first television broadcast specifically for deaf children in Japan, a weekly magazine-news programme called *Kodomo Shuwa Weekly* (Children's JSL Weekly) was introduced by NHK in 1998.

Attitudes to Sign and the Deaf have changed over the years. Consider this anecdote told by TV signer. A NHK TV Producer reprimanded deaf advocate and TV journalist/interpreter Harumi Kimura (Asahi Shimbun, February 18, 1998) after she inserted Traditional JSL forms, departing from the usual Japanese-based forms in the TV broadcast "Mina no Shuwa" (1990):

Rosha niwa wakarinikui. ittai dare ni nani o tsutaeru tsumori na no ka.

(Deaf people can't understand this. What the hell are you trying to say with this and to whom?)

Eight years later:

Rosha no koto ga yoyaku wakatta. Anata no kotoba de yatte kudasai.

(I've finally grasped what deaf people are about. Okay do it with your own language). NHK TV producer to Harumi Kimura 1998.

Conclusion: Diversification of Deaf Issues

The central point in an assessment of the situation of Deaf in Japan is that significant attitudinal change is taking place. Despite government's ignorance (a worldwide phenomenon) about Deaf issues and Deaf languages in particular it can be demonstrated, unequivocally, that Japan's Deaf linguistic community is here to stay. Waves of social action have been made: in the field of language, education, the media and in civil law which has traditionally discriminated against them.

Deaf persons live in big cities and small towns and villages. As the Deaf in the media and film are increasingly portrayed as real individuals, the idea of a monolithic Deaf entity is also undergoing change. There is no reason to suppose that the experience of all deaf persons in Japan is homogenous any more than say the linguistic experience of a Japanese speakers living in a big city. Consider the *gengo seikatsu* (language life) of a "Kyoko" 22-year-old deaf woman in Mitaka-city, Tokyo. Kyoko:

- Plays forward in Angels F.C., the local girls soccer team.
- Attends a (JSL) signed mass at a local Catholic Church on Sunday.
- Works full-time in a computer game-software company.
- Likes foreign travel with hearing and deaf friends.
- Is learning Italian.

Kyoko's life "just because she's deaf" does not entail identicality with a deaf woman who lives in the next street. There are some deaf persons actively involved in society as bilingual-bicultural individuals. These persons are likely to have a high degree of social awareness about their role in society. There may also be a life-experience problem among persons whose feet, as a result of a combination of

factors, are placed neither in the hearing community nor in the deaf community. Consider the following report of a hearing person and JSL signer and who has deaf relatives living in a small town in a country area north of Tokyo:

> My deaf uncle
>
> I was invited to my uncle's home in Tochigi. Although my uncle is the first son, his younger brother has succeeded the family in Tochigi. There are now six people in the family, but none of them is actually able to use JSL. Moreover, they do not seem to feel the need for JSL at all in communicating with my uncle and aunt; they look quite satisfied with the present situation. In fact, my uncle himself is fluent neither in JSL nor Japanese, and this may be a reflection of Japanese deaf education. In most deaf schools in Japan, pupils have been encouraged to learn Japanese by lipreading and vocalizing sounds, while JSL has been strictly prohibited as a means of communication, even though many of them have used it outside school. The controversy between such an educational method and the opposing view, which insists on the use of JSL in schools, has long been the central issue of deaf education. The difference between teaching methods is caused by the different views as to what is the in the best interests of deaf adults. In other words, there are different philosophies of viewing deafness. At any rate, like many Japanese deaf people my uncle has never had education in JSL. Moreover, he is an extremely shy and nervous person, and he dislikes talking with people other than his wife. He seems to be upset when he is surrounded by those whom he has never seen before; he is almost friendless. In addition, his family in Tochigi treats him as handicapped and therefore gives him special care but they do not talk to him much. It is usual for him to play alone in the storehouse, in which he keeps a huge collection of model trains, or to enjoy a jigsaw puzzle of a waterfall. Such self-confined personality may have interfered with his language learning independently of the sort of education he has had.
>
> My two-day stay in Tochigi has made me realize that my uncle is, in a sense, unable to adjust fully and comfortably to life: neither in the hearing community nor in the deaf community. My aunt, on the other hand, is a good example of those who have the benefit of both deaf and hearing cultures; she is very active taking part in many events, seeing deaf and hearing friends, and teaching JSL to hearing people on Saturdays. Therefore, she must have been a very important person, more than a good wife, to my uncle in his life
>
> (Kimoto 1992: 64–65).

The uncle described here is living between two worlds or, more accurately, unable to live fully in either of the two worlds of the hearing and the deaf. His likewise deaf but JSL-fluent and socially engaged wife does not share this unfortunate situation, however. We have no details here of the aunt's education. The life of deaf persons in a house in Tochigi might therefore seem to be due to a combination of factors rather than a simple coordinate: individual personality, educational opportunity, the cooperation and interest of family members in deaf-sign and the importance of social interaction.

The most enduring problem is the stereotype-that-never-ends: that people with disabilities are childlike and innocent. The hearing must protect the Deaf. This reality problem speaks to the issue of how the general public perceives the disabled (in a general sense) as fully socialized. Going further, is there a deep-level philosophical doubt as to whether they are fully human? Or is this pressing the point too far?

Deaf persons may suffer discrimination and isolation. They may also live liberated and joyful lives. As Nakamura (2003) has effectively described, how the older deaf generation will have to contend with emerging multiple new identities and the lack of identity that many younger deaf people felt. "Ironically, much of this struggle has

been prompted by a greater acceptance of deaf people and a drop in discrimination against those who are deaf, victories that were achieved over the past century" (2003: 224). Chan-Tiberghien (2004) notes that Japan only developed a human rights education policy in the mid-1990s and that previously the human rights education (*jinken kyoiku*) meant *dowa kyoiku*, i.e., education for the integration of caste minorities. She argues also that most changes in attitude by the bureaucracy needed to advance civil society causes are the result of world conference agreements. While this seems a strong version of the gaiatsu model, the impact of events such as the IYDP has been considerable. Moreover, globalization of knowledge of Deaf issues has led to diversification of deaf activity in Japan (educational, social, media, linguistic, political). Forward movement for the Deaf in Japan is now unstoppable.

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Chapter 9
Media and Civic Engagement in Japan

Gabriele Hadl

Introduction

Urban Japan is a highly commercialized media society. On commuter trains, most passengers are absorbed with their media devices: cell phones, e-mail, videogames, music, books, papers, or magazines. Those not actively engaged are inundated with images: print ads on plaster-free surfaces, videos ads dance on in-car screens. The tableau of Shibuya station at rush hour epitomizes modern Japan: high-rise buildings festooned with billboards and jumbotrons, masses staring at them, waiting for the light to change.

Media is so ubiquitous here, its presence is forgotten, specifically its influence on how we communicate, relate to the world, construct our identities, and engage civically. Rarely considered are the natures of institutions dominating the use of media technologies. Most are commercial, governmental, or both. Many media scholars take as axiomatic that in media-saturated societies, social reality is constructed by media texts, technologies and institutions, which usually address people as consumers, occasionally as voters, but only rarely as citizens able to shape society (Suzuki 2005).

Others also note that media organizations run by and for citizens with the broad purpose of improving society play a key role in civic engagement (Downing 2001). We may hear about a demonstration in an online newspaper, learn about the problems of a dam project through a video, begin to care where our rice comes from after reading on organic farming in a free paper picked up in a cafe, donate money after seeing an animal shelter's newsletter, give up incandescent light bulbs after seeing a postcard for "candle night," discuss a case of sexual harassment on an e-mail listserv, or learn about a video workshop through a flyer. Attending a cultural festival organized by homeless people may enhance perspective on and empathy for their situations. Contacts to the gay community may be found at

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queer film festivals. Such media create, in Nancy Fraser's (1992) terms, "alternative-" and "counter-publics."

However, research on civic engagement in Japan has rarely acknowledged the media environment, though many have noted that Japanese civic groups appear to have a small voice in the public sphere (Vinken et al. in this volume). This chapter argues that understanding this phenomenon requires a media perspective, one that takes into account nonmainstream media. Internationally, noncommercial nongovernmental media are booming. Research has shown that such media are integral to civic engagement on many levels, though to assess their "effects" requires nonmainstream research methods. In Japan, there is also a growing movement of *shimin* and *orutanatibu media* (citizens' and alternative media).[1] Yet little is known about them internationally, reinforcing the stereotype that "the Japanese" are quiet by nature.

How do *shimin and orutanatibu media* contribute to civic engagement in Japan? To answer this question, this chapter combines civic engagement research and alternative media studies. Based on an analysis of existing literature, interviews with media practitioners from over 25 organizations (November 2006–February 2008), as well as participatory observation in media projects and over 130 h of public events (2001–2008), this chapter highlights accomplishments and challenges of *shimin and orutanatibu media* makers in Japan.

Research on Civic Engagement and Media

Japanese civic groups use media in multiple ways. To draw attention to their issues, many send press releases to the *mass comi*,[2] organize press conferences, and cultivate connections with reporters. However, civic groups cannot rely on *mass comi* to fulfill their communication needs. They must develop their own media to "talk among themselves," i.e., to organize internally, apprise their members and develop a common analysis of issues and strategies. They need to "talk with each other" by networking with other groups and "talk to others" by explaining issues to members of the general public and involving them in developing solutions. Civic groups cover these needs through high tech and low-tech media: symposia, concerts, talk events, personal e-mail, printed newsletters, books, brochures, pamphlets, electronic mailing lists (listservs), websites, weblogs (blogs), videos, and audio programs. However, most lack the know-how and resources to do so effectively. In response, a number of *shimin media* organizations have emerged to support civic groups and socially

[1] *Orutanatibu media* is a Japanese neologism from the English "alternative media." *Shimin* is the Japanese word for "citizen." As the English terms "alternative" and "citizens media" have historical connotations that are not necessarily appropriate to Japan, Japanese terms are here used. See Hadl (2007) for a detailed discussion of English terms.

[2] Japanese neologism from English "mass communication": the major news media, mainstream media, "the" media.

engaged individuals in creating and distributing their own media. Examples discussed further in this chapter include Ourplanet-TV (a video production and webcasting NPO), JCAFE (an NPO internet service provider), and Indymedia Jp (an activist news site). In addition, a growing number of professionalized *orutana-tibu media* cover news the *mass comi* do not, especially stories of civic engagement. Prominent examples include the feminist paper Femin, the Labornet[3] and Nikkan Berita[4] newssites, and the G8mediaNetwork.[5]

Mainstream Journalism and the Representation of Civic Engagement

What does existing research tell us about civil engagement and media? International journalism research suggests mainstream news media do not adequately cover the concerns of civic organizations for a number of reasons:

- News values: News organizations focus on recent events, while slow burning issues tend to receive less attention. Commercial considerations also underlie selection of topics (Goldsmiths Media Group 2000). Civic groups may stage events deemed newsworthy (e.g., demonstrations or dare-devil actions), but the spectacle is often covered at the expense of the underlying issue (especially where violence and arrests are involved) (de Jong 2005).
- Hiring policies: In countries where journalists are recruited from the social and economic elite, they have little understanding of nondominant perspectives and limited personal contacts to socially marginalized movements and peoples (Curran 2000).
- Newsroom routines: Journalists are assigned to cover fixed categories of issues, like the "economic beat" or "legal beat." To get coverage, civic groups may frame their issues to fit into the existing categories (e.g., by initiating a lawsuit), and hire professional public relations staff.
- News sources: News organizations get information primarily from government, police, corporate public relations departments, and news agencies (Goldsmiths Media Group 2000). They rarely cite research reports published or news releases by nonprofit organizations (Pekkanen 2006). To overcome this, civic groups may try to develop contacts with journalists (Davis 2000). Alternative news agencies, such as Interpress Service (IPS), also try to provide NPO-centered information to mainstream media (Rauch 2003).

[3] http://www.labornetjp.org/

[4] http://www.nikkanberita.com

[5] A network established to report on civic actions around the 2008 G8 Summit in Japan, made up of Videopress, Ourplanet-TV, IMCjp (all discussed below) and others. It also worked closely with the Sapporo Citizens Media Center, discussed below.

- Content control: Even in countries with a high degree of press freedom, journalists have to consider advertisers, governmental actors, media owners, and people higher up the editorial hierarchy, often leading to self-censorship (Goldsmiths Media Group 2000).

Critical observers of the Japanese mediascape suggest that Japanese civic groups face additional barriers in getting *mass comi* coverage (Hizumi 2008): For example, press clubs offers easy *mass comi* coverage to government and industry, while excluding most NPOs, freelance journalists, and *shimin* and *orutanatibu media*. In addition, five media networks reliant on only two news agencies dominate the news mediascape. Their main offices are located in Tokyo, far from most local civic groups, and rely for income on "selling audiences" to advertisers (Suzuki 2005). As they have to keep on the good side of the advertising industry (dominated by one agency) and of the biggest advertisers (which include electric utility companies and car manufacturers, they shy away from issues and movements such as labor and environmental movements (Hizumi 2008). Within the industry, competition for advertising revenue between print/broadcast *mass comi* and net-based media has led to staff layoffs and program outsourcing, further reducing original and local reporting (Hizumi 2008). There are also media taboos. News organizations avoid critiques of the wartime Japanese empire, unflattering portraits of the imperial household, and coverage of most "leftist" and feminist viewpoints, or risk pressure from ultra-nationalist groups, organized crime, and/or right-wing politicians (Hizumi 2008).

On the other hand, there are a few positive factors for Japanese civic groups: While entertainment is the dominant media genre in most countries, Japan still has a big audience for news (Dentsu Soken 2007). Further, some local media, notably in Okinawa Prefecture, continue to rely on selling news not audiences and cover issues popular with their readers such as anti-military base, anti-war, and environmental movements (Okinawa Interviewee 3 2008). Finally, there is a growing movement for *mass comi* reform, which includes many journalists who start up alternative media to report underreported issues (Hizumi 2008).[6]

Alternative and Community Media Studies

While journalism research has limited itself to the question of representation of civic issues, the study of nonmainstream media has developed a complex analysis

[6] High-profile examples include the so-called NHK Educational TV issue (*NHK ETV bangumi kaizan jiken*). In 2001, the national public broadcaster significantly altered a program on the issue of Japanese war crimes after receiving threats from right-wing groups and taking into account the comments of politicians who held NHK budget strings, including (later prime minister) Shinzo Abe (Tokyo High Court Verdict, January 29, 2007).

of how people engage with and through media. Research on noncommercial nongovernmental media goes back to the 1960s and in recent years has emerged as a field (Rodríguez 2001). Competing terminologies, theories, and approaches exist side-by-side (Hadl 2007; Vatikiotis 2005), but consensus has emerged on a number of points relevant to this chapter.

The object of research is defined as media "by, for, of the people." The practices may be labeled "community media," "alternative media," "citizens media," "autonomous," "indigenous," "social movement," or "tactical media," differing greatly in terms of funding, governance, political stance, etc. (Coyer et al. 2007). However, the field is not so wide as to include any kind of nonmainstream media. The practices studied share a goal of improving society and democratic characteristics on the levels of production/organization, content, and audiences (Hadl and Hintz 2005).

Mainstream news media do not play as dominant a role in creating social discourse as journalism research assumes. Messages in society are circulated and created by regular people who access, use, and produce a variety of sources and meanings, among them alternative and community media. Feminist research shows that even relatively small-scale media used by civic organizations create "counter-" or "alter-publics" which in turn can profoundly influence the dominant public spheres (Fraser 1992; McLaughlin 2004). Alternative news media, subcultural alternative media, social movement, and local community media provide information and entertainment not available from mainstream media. While hardly offering "unproblematic antidotes" they contribute to improving the media environment (Howley 2005).

Do alternative media have an impact? Alternative and community media researchers have pointed out that mainstream yardsticks of audience size or influence on public opinion do not do alternative media justice (Downing 2001; Rodríguez 2001). One needs to consider "impacts" on different aspects of culture, movement discourses, personal and community identities, and governmental and corporate policies. To measure "impacts," qualitative research is needed, using ethnographic methods, longitudinal research, and a complex notion of "media effects" (Rodríguez 2001; Meadows et al. 2007). Alternative media practices often aim at hard-to-measure "cultural outcomes" or "discoursive outcomes" rather than at specific social and political change (Costanza-Chock 2003). To achieve these aims, they may involve a few people deeply, or reach many only for a moment. However, this does not mean that these practices necessarily want to be small or operate at the margins of society. Some want to support their constituencies long-term and/or reach significant audiences. To do this, they need appropriate framing conditions, such as public funding systems, access to broadcast licenses, legal protection for speech rights, and protection against interference from state and commercial cooptation (Buckley et al. 2008). In countries with supportive policies, noncommercial community media can even become the main source of information and entertainment for sectors of the population, and involve large numbers of people as volunteers (Meadows, European Parliament).

Alternative and community media are not simply one-way channels through which civic groups distribute their messages. When unjustly marginalized people collectively

produce media, the outcome is often a reconstruction of individual and collective identities and goals, which may lead to socio-political change (Rodríguez 2001). Community radio stations and public access TV often function as forums for dialog, helping to locally address issues such as racism and political divisions (Stein 2002; Lewis and Jones 2006). Radical alternative/social movement media often serve as sites for "practicing democracy" (Downing 2001), using consensus decision-making and nonhierarchical organizing (Downing 2003). Alternative and community media not only report on civil society issues, they are themselves civil society organizations that often engage in "regulatory negotiation" at critical points in history, mobilizing wider publics around communication issues (Kidd 1998; Roth 2005; Hintz and Milan 2009; Hadl 2006).

Case Studies: Shimin and Orutanatibu Media Contributions to Civic Engagement

This section summarizes results of a survey of *shimin* and *orutanatibu media*. From 2006–2008 the author conducted semi-structured interviews[7] in Japanese with key people from organizations well-known within the two major networks of *shimin/orutanatibu media*, J-CAM[8] and the People's Media Network.[9] Care was taken to cover a variety of genres and technologies. The data gained from the interviews demonstrates the ways in which Japanese alternative and community media contribute to civic engagement, often against great odds.

Print: "Ideas for How Things Could Be Different…"

Civic engagement oriented print publications in Japan have a long tradition, reaching back to at least the nineteenth century. Femin[10] has documented the women's movement for over 60 years and is currently published three times a month on eight pages of newsprint. Its mainstream newspaper format belies its content: Femin features women activists on the front page, and news from a gender perspective inside. Femin's "newsroom routines" prioritize issues like right-wing backlash against gender education, privatization and closure of municipal women's centers, reports on labor and poverty events, articles adapted from a Korean feminist publication,

[7] All translations are by the author. Interviewees who chose to speak anonymously are referred to by organization name and number.

[8] Japan Council of Community, Citizens', and Alternative Media.

[9] *Minshuu no media renrakukai,* established 1992, currently inactive. See PMN (1996) for details.

[10] http://www.jca.apc.org/femin/

and updates on anti-nuclear and anti-military base movements. The last page, in commercial papers the TV program, is a calendar of activist events. Femin's dedicated readership supports the paper with subscriptions, donations, and by mail-ordering food and household goods from the Femin Store (Akaishi 2007). There are periodic attempts to abolish the reduced "third type postal rate" in the name of profitability, and Femin has joined with other publishers, in fighting to retain it, so far successfully (Femin interviewee 2 2007).

A very different type of publication is 88 Rice Paper,[11] an artistically designed "free paper" – a magazine "free to take home" put out in organic food shops, cafes and bookstores. Produced by a two-person team of professional designers in their spare time, its purpose is to connect urbanites with rural rice farming areas. Japan's food is 70% imported and the countryside depopulated. 88 aims to give its readers ideas about how things could be different – organic farming, laid-back music, and "cool" rural living. People featured include artists and thinkers with an eco-message. 88's most original aspect is perhaps its approach to advertizing. Most "eco magazines" sold in bookstores rely on advertizing agencies that serve only big clients or on major corporate sponsors, ending up studded with corporate advertizing, much of it greenwash.[12] In contrast, 88 solicits ads from individuals, groups, and small businesses, who are shut out from advertising in most publications by the ad agency system. 88's advertizing page is a contribution to an alternative economy (Suzuki 2007), as different from its "mainstreamed" counterparts as is the local flea market to the global economy of Wall Street. However, financial stability remains a major concern for 88, with printing and shipping costs the biggest burden (Suzuki 2007).

Radio: "The Gods Are Listening…"

Noncommercial/nongovernmental community radio is worldwide well-researched and networked. Many countries legally recognize community-based nonprofit radio as a distinct media sector with separate licensing and funding systems (Buckley et al. 2008: 206–226, Price-Davies and Tacchi 2001). In Japan, however, there are no such systems. Though non-commercial stations pioneered local radio in the 1980s (Kogawa 1993) most so-called community housoukyoku (community radio stations) are commercial (Hibino 2007). Only recent years have seen a resurgence in nonprofit broadcasting (Koyama and Matsuura 2008). In Ainumosir/Hokkaido, FM Pipaushi[13] promotes Ainu, the almost extinct Indigenous language of northern Japan using an unlicensed micro transmitter. Next to the forest at the edge of Nibutani village, few people in the area may hear it. Its significance lies in bringing people together in the studio to speak Ainu (Kayano 2007), and in its service to the

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[11] http://www.wacca.com/88/

[12] "Disinformation disseminated (…) so as to present an environmentally responsible public image" (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 10th edition).

[13] http://www.aa.alpha-net.ne.jp/skayano/menu.html

nonvisible world. Said the late founder, the artist Shigeru Kayano in the first broadcast, "the gods are listening."[14] FM Pipaushi programs are also archived online, and broadcast on FM YY (or Waiwai), a licensed community radio station in faraway Kobe. FM Waiwai broadcasts in 11 languages and supports multicultural communication in its local community, Nakata Ward.[15] Programs range from culture, music, education, and entertainment for and by different ethnic groups to discussion programs, aimed at promoting community development and multiculturalism: "Usually the mayor and the governor never meet, but on FM Waiwai, we got them together to explain their multicultural policies" (Kim 2007b). FM Waiwai emerged to support Vietnamese and Korean non-Japanese residents during the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake. It obtained a license partly in recognition of its role in providing emergency information where the government had failed to do so. Nonetheless, FM Waiwai had to raise significant funds and set up a company, as local radio licenses were reserved for businesses (Kim 2007a, b).

allNEETnippon is an Internet radio project to support young people in precarious working and living conditions. NEET,[16] are young people stereotyped by mainstream media as lazy and irresponsible (Yamamoto 2007). The organization behind allNEETnippon, Kotoba Atelier also runs a blog with links to self-help and mutual support resources, books, organizes politicial art events, collaborates on a housing project for aspiring manga artists and a writing school for social minorities (Yamamoto 2007). During a series of gas-suicides in early 2008 (media reports fuelling copycats, who would find "how-to-" information on suicide assistance sites), allNEETnippon's blog posed as a suicide assistance site, but actually lead people to help resources, including one of its programs: "Before killing yourself do listen to this program" (allNEETnippon 2008). With the help of ex-NEET artist/celebrity Karin Amemiya among others, it has helped galvanize the precarity labor movement, which has helped put the issue of youth unemployment on major parties' political agenda (Amemiya 2007).

Audio-Visual Media: "I'm Not NHK…"

Video art and activism goes back to the 1960s in Japan. However, citizens using audio-visual media for social change today still have little support in terms of production/education and channels of distribution. Since Japan lacks formal public access/community TV systems, they rely on informal networks of video/DVD distribution, public workshops and screenings, and the Internet. *Shimin media* organizations play a vital role in activating citizens as producers and audiences. Ourplanet-TV[17]

[14] Ainu and Japanese transcript at http://www.aa.alpha-net.ne.jp/skayano/IIPN-A.T1.html. Translation by the author.

[15] http://www.tcc117.org/fmyy/

[16] NEET stands for "not in employment, education or training."

[17] http://ourplanet-tv.org/

is a legal NPO that webcasts work of nonprofessional video makers on its website, runs workshops for regular citizens and civic groups, produces its own programs on underreported issues, reports live from civil society events, and produces videos for civic groups. It supports itself through membership and workshop fees, project-specific grants, and a "business side" which includes rental, production, and technical services (also for corporate clients). *An ordinary life* (Japanese title *Soshite, dou ikiru?*), produced in one of Ourplanet-TV's workshops and broadcast online has also been screened at festivals locally and abroad. It shows the effects of the Disabled People's Self-Sufficiency Support Law from the perspective of a young woman with severe physical handicaps, her care staff (including the videomaker) and the disability support NPO where she works, as they try to cope with reduced support payments. The videomaker recalls, "I thought – I've never held a camera, so how can I talk about this issue? I'm not NHK…" (Arai 2007). This video's value lies in the ways it eschews mainstream narrative and visual techniques. Where a *mass comi* report of the same support NPO tended to emphasize the can-do attitude of some people with disabilities, using camera angles "looking down" on them, sappy background music and soothing voice-overs, *An ordinary life* put the camera on their eye-level, let them largely speak for themselves and used a first-person diary format. As a result, it confronts viewers with a thoroughly nonmainstream perspective of people with disabilities and the new law.

Terere creates new audiences for rarely seen videos by arranging them into a bi-monthly program package circulated for screenings to cafes and other venues in the Osaka–Kyoto–Kobe area.[18] Since anyone can submit a piece for inclusion, program contents range from social movement issues, documentaries from abroad and NPO's promotional videos to whimsical personal observations and experimental animation. Watching in a group in intimate spaces gives the opportunity for discussion among audiences and dialog between audiences and producers. Terere has also a regular program on Osaka cable TV, though the station provides almost no financial compensation, said the interviewee, "they are only looking for cheap, uncontroversial content." Cable TV stations would not touch the work of a feminist video group with which the interviewee was previously involved.[19] Still, looking back, she finds that such work, distributed only through informal networks, seems to have changed mainstream discourse: "Before we raised it, divorcees who are content with their choice was a media taboo" (Terere Interviewee 1 2007).

Another Osaka-based audio-visual organization is remo.[20] Remo was originally a typical "third sector organization," initiated and supported by the city government as part of a policy to promote contemporary art. Not sticking with art-for-art's sake, however, remo also developed projects for community memory, for engaging the history and social strife in the area where it was located (Shinsekai, a declining former Expo site neighboring a big homeless community), for creating artful and

[18] http://www.terere.jp/

[19] Two other interviewees related similar stories where cable companies who had called for submissions rejected their work because it dealt with "political" issues.

[20] "Recording, expression, and memory organization," founded 2001 (http://remo.or.jp).

socially relevant video with simple tools, for children's art, and for political media activism. Its workshops and events have introduced hundreds of people with little previous exposure to media art or activism to tools and ideas for using the audiovisual tools at their disposal. In remo workshops, video cameras on cell phones, home movies, or videogames are transformed from "my media" limited to the private sphere to "our media" for public communication. However, when the city's financial woes sharpened (Remo interviewee 1 2006), remo and the other NPOs in Festival Gate found themselves evicted. As the result of a vigorous lobbying effort in which a network of researchers and NPOs questioned the nature of local cultural policy, they were granted a temporary space in another open object. It now appears that remo will have to become entirely self-sustained in the near future, limiting its activities.

Videopress is a tiny labor-oriented production group with two paid staff established in 1989. Documenting social movements is something *mass comi* will not do, unless there is a scoop (Matsubara 1996: 17) – and often not even if there is one, especially if it broaches taboos promoted by ultra-nationalists. *Against Coercion* (Japanese title *Kimi-ga-yo Furitsu*), a recent Videopress production, tells the story of Tokyo public school teachers threatened with disciplinary action and layoffs (technically, nonextension of contracts) for refusing to stand up for Kimi-ga-yo at graduation ceremonies. Kimi-ga-yo, the anthem of imperial Japan, is associated with wartime atrocities in the minds of Japan's neighbors and many progressive Japanese. Its recent redesignation as the national anthem was widely seen as a victory for the ultra-right. The Tokyo Board of Education went a step further in requiring public schools to honor it in ceremonies. The video includes interviews with affected teachers and footage of whole classes of graduating students staying seated in solidarity with their teachers – images not shown on mainstream TV. Videopress supports its work through DVD sales,[21] technical services, and occasional subsidies from labor unions (Matsubara 2007). Videopress work is also shown in public screenings and on UnionTube,[22] a labor-oriented video sharing site that Videopress staff administrates (along with the news site Labornet Japan), as well as on the commercial YouTube. Despite its small size, Videopress has been influential in the video documentary movement, in the People's Media Network, international labor media networks, and the recently founded G8medianetwork, among others.

Online News Sites: "Use Your Own Head…"

Online news sites, in particular the participatory and "citizen journalism" genres, have internationally been hyped as innovations in journalism and a challenge to "the media."[23] In Japan, a wide range of news sites call themselves "*shimin*" or

[21] Through the Videoact! Catalog, an associated project (http://www.videoact.jp).

[22] http://video.labornetjp.org/

[23] Both claims are overdrawn: Participatory and people's journalism is a many-decades-old practice (Downing 2001; Rodríguez 2001), and online news is dominated by the same two agencies as print/broadcast news (Paterson 2006).

"*ortanatibu media.*"[24] Some use "citizen reporters" who provide content at no or little cost mostly for commercial aims, for example, Livedoor's Public Journalism News (PJ News) and OhMynews Japan. Contrary to rhetoric, such ventures are not *shimin* or *ortanatibu media* projects per se,[25] though like YouTube they can serve as distribution channels for *shimin* and *ortanatibu media* contents. Others, like Nikkan Berita are professionalized *orutanatibu media* – radical content provided by independent journalists with little participation or interaction with nonprofessionals. JANJAN,[26] inspired by the Korean OhMynews, is a hybrid between commercial, participatory, and professionalized alternative media. JANJAN's purpose is "to write what *mass comi* don't" using the resources of "regular citizens" and professional journalists dissatisfied with the status quo (Takeuchi 2007). Full-time staff edits and processes material submitted by "citizen journalists," provide hard news reporting, select and translate items from alternative news agency IPS and work on special projects. Za Senkyo ("*The* election"), for example, is a nationwide database of political candidates, their political programs and statements. The purpose is to encourage transparency and democratic campaign practices in a country where political content has traditionally been a minor factor in elections. During the 2008 G8 summit, JANJAN featured a special section linking to all important sources of information, from government to anti-G8 groups' sites.

An entirely different news site is IndymediaJp (IMCjp),[27] part of the international network of Independent Media Centers (IMC), or Indymedia.[28] While IMCjp shares with Nikkan Berita and JANJAN a commitment to "alternative news," it is "radically deprofessionalized" and "decommercialized" (cf. Atton 2002) – run only by volunteers, without sponsorship or advertising, on donated time, labor, know-how, server space, and free and open source software. It is open to participation to anyone on all levels (editing, translation, content production). A translation team occasionally translates postings they consider especially interesting, attempting to bridge the information gap between Japan and the outside world. While open to any kind of content, IMCjp sees itself as supporting social movements, and seems to attract primarily "leftist" users, who use it to publicize upcoming events and reports from demonstrations or circulate calls for solidarity. Commercial service providers track their users, and organizations like JANJAN confirm their "citizen journalists" identity and bank account information. All IMCs allow anonymous posting,[29] partly

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[24] Other types of online news sites include online versions of *mass comi*, aggregators like google-news, and individuals' newsblogs.

[25] Though OhMynews is often cited as a prime example of citizens' and alternative media and has social movement roots, it now views citizens' reporters as part of his business model and sees the label "alternative" as a marketing tool (Oh 2006).

[26] Japan Alternative News for Justices and New Cultures (http://www.janjan.jp/).

[27] http://japan.indymedia.org

[28] Indymedia is internationally well-researched (c.f. Downing 2003; Coyer et al. 2007; Media Development 2003). Information on IMCjp was obtained through participatory observation 2003–2008.

[29] "All IMC's, (…) shall (…) allow (…) individuals, groups and organizations to express their views, anonymously if desired." http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Global/PrinciplesOfUnity.

to protect people from harassment by authorities, employers or un-civil society, which in Japan includes demonstration organizers, anarchists, feminists, and homeless supporters. The combination of lack of editorial oversight and anonymity at IMC, however, makes for challenging reading. A notice on the top page in place for several years reminded Japanese readers: "By all means, use your own head and take in information critically. This is good for practicing media literacy, which will stand you in good stead with *mass comi* as well."

Infrastructure Providers: "They Don't Understand Why What We're Doing Is Necessary…"

NPOs can be considered Japanese Internet pioneers. In the early to mid-1990s, businesses were cautious about the new medium, but civic groups' websites and forums made up a significant part of online communication (Hadl and Hamada 2009). An organization responsible for this early boom is JCAFE.[30] JCAFE emerged from a "grassroots tech collective" (cf. Hintz and Milan 2009), which provided online services and training for free to civic groups, especially those involved in environmental, peace, and feminist movements (Hamada and Onoda 2003). As a member of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), an international network of non-profit service providers,[31] JCAFE has played a critical role in Japanese civic groups' participation in summits, notably the Beijing Conference on Women (1995) and COP3 (1997), which lead to the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol (Hamada and Onoda 2003). Today many civic groups rely for their website, mailing list, mail server, and blog hosting on commercial services, which may be rental or "free," i.e., advertizing and/or data-mining supported. However, commercial providers' services are designed only for individuals or businesses, not NPOs. Service packages often have limitations, e.g., on the number of e-mails one can send or the amount of traffic allowed to a site. The user may not have control over what ads appear on the site, or how visitors' data is handled. In addition, commercial providers reserve the right to unilaterally remove content they consider inappropriate, block users, and sometimes claim copyright for user-posted materials. As Internet regulation legislation increasingly encourages service providers to supervise and censor their users (Hadl and Hamada 2009), the need for providers who understand and respect civic groups' needs is growing.

Another important kind of infrastructure for *shimin* and *orutanatibu media* is physical space for offices, equipment, workshops, networking, media education, and screenings. Several interviewees commented this could be provided through media centers. During the research period, dozens of Japanese visited MEDIACT, the first Korean media center, a publicly funded and civil society-administrated

[30] Japan Computer Access for Empowerment. Originally called JCA (http://www.jcafe.net/).

[31] http://www.apc.org

organization that supports media activism on all levels – from production workshops to political lobbying. Judging that public funding in Japan – if it were available – would have too many strings attached, a group of young media activists opened a civil society-funded media center in Tokyo in June 2008. Within months MediR (pronounced "medi-ar") was emerging as a meeting space for *shimin* and *ortanatibu* media, nonmedia civic groups and a grassroots media education facility. Japanese activists also learned about temporary media centers set up during major demonstrations abroad (cf. Coyer et al. 2007). When the 2008 G8 summit hosted by Japan (main event in Hokkaido/Ainumosir) approached, it became clear that alternative media people from around the world would come to cover civic activism around the summit, and that they would need facilities – a summit citizens' media center. The *G8 Shimin Media Center Sapporo Jikouiinkai* (Planning Committee for Sapporo G8 Citizens Media Center) was hastily formed by a few rather inexperienced activists (Sapporo Interviewee 1 2008).[32] Against all odds this Committee managed to negotiate space for centers in three locations – Hokkaido University, a private property, and in a space provided by Sapporo City. These offered facilities for networks like AMARC, Indymedia, and the G8medianetwork, for civil society groups' news conferences, and for individual non-*mass comi* reporters. From the early planning stages, some members of the Committee felt that getting local *mass comi* coverage for the center project would be integral to their success (Sapporo Interviewee 1 2008). The 2007 conference of J-CAM held in Sapporo had already stirred some interest in "*shimin media*," a previously almost unknown concept (Sapporo Interviewee 1 2008). Parallel to lobbying City Hall, Committee members organized events aimed at officials, academics, citizens, and journalists, succeeding at getting local *mass comi* to turn it into an "issue." The interviewee felt this put pressure on City Hall, who considers the local media as representing local public opinion. However, the interviewee thought *mass comi* reports were less effective in changing the minds of local citizens: "They still do not understand why a *shimin media* center is needed."

Conclusions: Amplifying Civil Society's Voice

This chapter has argued that thinking about civic engagement needs to include an analysis of the media environment and that special attention is needed to assess the role of *shimin and orutanatibu media*. The case studies illustrate how *shimin* and *orutanatibu media* contribute to civic engagement. First, they are forms of civil engagement in their own right: Almost all organizations studied support media production and distribution by people and groups who have been limited to communicating within a small circle of relations. This enriches and diversifies the social discourse. Second, *shimin* and *orutanatibu media* supply infrastructure for all

[32] http://imc-sapporo.blogspot.com/

other forms of civic engagement, in a media environment that marginalizes dissent and non-commercial forms of interaction: They help civic groups raise neglected or misunderstood social issues and create forums for discussing and potentially addressing them. Last, they are themselves civil society organizations, which form networks that engage in policy monitoring and mobilizing, occasionally effecting policy changes at least on the local level.

This survey identified the areas in which in-depth research should look to "measure" the outcomes of *shimin* and *orutanatibu media*. In the interviews, practitioners related stories about concrete social and political impacts they felt they had contributed to (e.g., FMYY, remo and G8 media center committee to local policy, the terere member on the discourse on divorcees, FM Pipaushi for the survival of Ainu culture). Detailed historical research would be needed to reveal *shimin and orutanatibu media*'s "cultural impacts," such as the creation of historical memory – especially documenting movements and events that would otherwise be forgotten (IMCjp, Videopress, Femin) – and their technological and stylistic innovations (JCAFE, 88). Compared to other countries (cf. Downing 2001; Atton 2002), experiments with anticommercial and radical democratic ways of organizing in Japan may be rare (limited to IMCjp in this survey), but longitudinal and participatory research with audiences and project participants would help show how and to what degree *orutanatibu media* succeed at creating "alternative" and "counter-publics." Detailed analyses of texts and contents would reveal the precise ways in which they challenge mainstream ways of seeing.

The interviews also revealed that *shimin* and *orutanatibu media* face great obstacles in their work. Almost all interviewees seemed dissatisfied with their reach, their ability to involve the "average person," and their contributions to political and cultural changes. Quantitative research would probably support the claim that the Japanese community media sector is small by many measures, for example, compared to Australia, where over 70% of people listen to community radio (Meadows et al., 2007: 4, 118, 78). Why is this so? Though interviewees tended to attribute difficulties to their own shortcomings, they also pointed to external factors, for example, the NPO law, foundations and governmental bodies' funding policies, broadcast law, and copyright regulation among others (see Hadl and Hamada 2009 for details). Australia has over 30 years of policy recognizing and supporting community radio for civic engagement, and the media of indigenous people and other ethnic minorities (Price-Davies and Tacchi 2001: 10–19, Meadows et al. 2007: 8). Japan still has none.

So far governmental policies and other framing conditions limit the voices of *shimin and orutanatibu media*. However, Japanese *shimin and orutanatibu media* continue to fight for the right to communicate publicly, not only for themselves, but all citizens and civic groups. The fate of *shimin and orutanatibu media* in the ongoing battle for recognition will have decisive effects on Japanese civil society as a whole.

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Part IV
Emerging Forms of Engagement

Chapter 10
The Soft Advocacy of Music Fandom: Japanese Youth and the Building of Civic Infrastructures of the Mind

Bruce White

Introduction

In this chapter, I will be exploring the possibility that two related Japanese youth-led music communities – one a fringe reggae community and the other a mainstream popular music fan base community – can be seen to be engaged in "public life." I will attempt to illustrate that both of these communities share and transmit a common ideological message which embraces notions of emancipation. This emancipation speaks to several areas of social life including emancipation: from the competitive consumerist work ethic and lifestyle of "the masses"; from an emotionally stifled culture where people are not able to express their feelings openly; and, lastly, from worldviews which order individuals into racial, cultural, and/or national categories.

In my attempts to demonstrate how these music communities can be seen to be "civically engaged," I will give examples of individuals who seem to use their association to these groups in order to direct their life paths, to find solutions to interpersonal problems, and to locate for themselves a nonstate (or trans-state) sense of social place in the world. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate that challenges brought to the state by "civil societies" need not necessarily involve the "concrete" infrastructure of society, but can also attempt to negotiate the dominance, influence, and content of state-sponsored and state-maintained cultural norms, values, and identities.

Indeed, I will see that resisting and reinventing the social infrastructure we have available to locate ourselves in the world as cultural beings represents a vital process of empowerment and emancipation from state power. Successfully renegotiating values, norms, and identities allows individuals to build and access new types

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of imaginative communities – to create sustainable "civic infrastructures of the mind" – which in turn act to support and inspire social actions in other areas and the living out of alternative value-sets and worldviews. Such subtle shifts in the architecture of the internal or intracultural landscape of values and identities are accomplished through what I will term "soft advocacy" – a process of packaging "alternative" norms, values, and identities to appeal to, and be taken on by, the general public.

Defining Civil Society and Soft Advocacy

This examination of how music fans go about building an alternative vision of society which aims to influence public life through a renegotiation of core norms, values, and identities requires a broad definition of civil society and civic engagement. Together, Schuller (2007); Buchowski (1996); Karlstrom (1998) and Flower and Leonard (1996) demonstrate that the term civil society can encompass a wide range of social groups and systems. Examples include: state-organized leisure associations, local government councils, and traditional kinship gift exchange systems. Schuller (2007) accentuates the need to see civil society as deeply rooted in even the most traditional societies as forms of resistance to larger social/state collectives. The examples from his study on Haiti include: African-derived ritual (voodoo), storytelling, literature, and even "*chan pwen*, composed-on-the-spot songs critical of those in power…" (c.f. Smith 2001).

So if civil society can, in effect, be related to universal forms of contestation and resistance, how do we begin to offer a definition which is appropriate to this sense of universality? For Coombe, civil society provides a "provocative nexus of orientation" with regard questions of "identity and community, nationbuilding and state formation, cultural specificities and universal human rights, colonial legal institutions and local interpretations" (1997: 1). In this view, civil society is defined as a kind of hub through which we can enter a variety of debates and ascertain a complex array of influences on a variety of political, social, and economic phenomena. Indeed, combining Coombe's perspective with Schuller's, we could suggest that civil society is a kind of cultural space, accessed universally by all people in all societies, providing us all with an additional layer for a meta-commentary on life in our society.

Coombe (1997: 3 quoting Robbins 1993) herself picks up this idea:

> A public space of interaction characterized by a dialectical tension between public and private… civil society is nonetheless a cultural space... This is a culture that occupies the public sphere but "evade[s] the strict determinations of the nation-state while remaining in interesting proximity to them."

Coombe helps us to understand how to integrate the idea of civil society into a universally locally crafted cultural space occupying a range of situations where certain agendas cross-over, clash, come-together, diverge, and/or need expression

(c.f. Fraser 1993: 14–16).[1] In emphasizing the contested nature of such spaces, or perhaps more accurately, the fact that such spaces actively set out to contest tensions arising between public and private life, our ability to interpret the material and locations which we use to debate and refine our approaches to civil society and civic engagement are perhaps expanded.

In this chapter, I shall attempt to build on these understandings by seeing Japanese youth communities as hubs through which the meaning of cultural norms and values, and of state-sponsored national/cultural imagery and symbolism, are critiqued and reevaluated. In putting forward "alternative" "more appropriate to us" versions of these norms, values, and identities, these communities also serve to address the tensions between the private experience of individuals and the public representation of their experience in Japanese society. In so doing, they can be seen to play an advocacy role that, while perhaps invisible to monitors of NGOs or official advocacy organizations, can nevertheless be seen to have an influence on public life in Japan. Indeed, as others have observed, Japan offers an interesting case study to begin to unpack the role of small-scale informal groups and the social capital that these groups contribute to building, from the more formal advocacy groups that are often the subject of study in civil society research.

Pekkanen (2003, 2004, 2006), for example, goes some way to illustrate that while Japan's civil society organizations may not be represented by the kind of large advocacy groups that have evolved to pressure the United States, the relative lack of such groups may prevent the "menace of political debate polarization" that the United States is so subject to (Pekkanen 2004: 246). Seeing Japan's civil society as consisting of "many small, local groups and few large, professionalized groups," Pekkanen advances the view that "small local groups can contribute to stocks of social capital and perhaps to the performance of local governments. They form a crucial basis of social life" (2004: 240). While Pekkanen himself sees that the relative lack of larger professional advocacy groups means that Japan's civil society "exerts negligible influence over policy" (2004: 246), his research gestures to a need to pay attention to the dynamics of the local groups and the way in which they transmit the social capital they impart to their members.

My findings will largely support Pekkanen's notion of a dual Japanese civil society (2006) where small social capital building groups seem the norm, but will also challenge the notion that advocacy should only been seen in terms of the "hard power" of large organizations. I will tentatively suggest the presence of a "soft advocacy" which, while mostly invisible to researchers and observers, may be at work in the chains of relationships and influences, which characterize our increasingly connected and contested world. The soft advocacy of aggregation – the effect of building social capital person-by-person to eventually influence a wider public

[1] This view is advanced by other anthropologists hoping to illustrate that civil society discourse is "marked by expressions of strong desires, hopes, and fears" (Rutherford 2004: 124).

perception – while not an advocacy with a representative in high-ranking policy-making circles – maybe just as powerful a way to bring important change to bear on society. Indeed, when it comes to bringing a change of attitude toward the structure of cultural norms, values, identities, and worldviews, it may be the most effective kind of advocacy there is.

Japanese Reggae as Civic Engagement

In order to explore these issues, I begin with a brief examination of the fringe Japanese reggae community where I conducted ethnographic fieldwork between the years 2006 and 2008. The contemporary Japanese reggae scene is relatively diverse and I will only be focusing here on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with what I term a "middle" fan base. Broadly representing an age cohort of men and women in their thirties and forties who are followers of the ideological messages which accompany reggae music, these people often bring their children to events. This "middle fan" base occupies a space between the Reggae artists themselves (who produce the music and largely broker the import of ideology/language from Jamaica), and a "bottom" layer of younger people who come to the scene principally attracted by its aesthetic properties (fashion, etc.) rather than the reggae ideology itself.

This middle fan base exists nationwide and fans will congregate in the summer months at outdoor festivals and events. Kyushu, Okinawa, and Tokyo are the most densely concentrated regions in terms of reggae events. However, although very large highly organized gatherings are still regular and wide-spread, the core middle fan base are perhaps best observed (and approached for interviews) at the informal (and free) outdoor events which attract big name and amateur artists who perform together in an "open-mic" environment. The most attended of these in the Kanto or Tokyo region is the Tama River outdoor event, located next to the river on the border of the city of Kawasaki, and it is here that I conducted participant observation and interviews with artists and fans.

The Tama River event brings together an almost exclusively middle fan base of people ranging in age from approximately 27 to 45. Again, however, having said this, one might be surprised to learn, (given the reputation that Reggae communities have, particularly in other parts of the world, for, for instance, drug use), that there are a great many infant children who attend the event, brought along by their middle-fan-base parents. Indeed as the music gets off to a start in the early afternoon, the event could appear to the passing observer as a mix between a huge outdoor extended family barbeque and a bohemian festival.

From the early afternoon, the music is a selection of recorded pieces carefully arranged by DJs (selectors), played through a massive PA system. Groups of fans find their own space on the large, open grass area. Some are very well prepared with folding tables and chairs, draft beer making machines, and reggae-styled rugs and blankets to hang around their temporary territories. Others are merely content with blue plastic sheets to sit on. The children run around happily, visiting other family

groups and playing with other children. They are encouraged by their parents and other groups to be aware of the music that is washing over the crowd. They are also encouraged to dance.

The various groups at the event talk about a great many things as the afternoon wears on into evening. Their young children are often a subject – the degree to which they appreciate, and are able to dance to, reggae music lends their parents some kudos particularly among childless fans. Jobs, too, are a common topic; and here I become aware of how many social-service and care workers make up the fan base, as do other noncompany (nonsalaryman) occupations (artists, craftsman, electricians, teachers). Often related to conversations on occupation, topics connected to a sense of Japan as a mindless consumer group unable to understand the impact of their consumer choices, are also prevalent. Middle fans would often point out that their world perspective or life choices were different from "the masses," even using the phrase "The Japanese" (in conversations with each other) to refer to the majority (e.g. *wareware wa nihonjin to tigatte* ...).

A conversation I had with a Japanese carpenter in his late 20s seemed typical of this critique on "the Japanese masses" and also illustrated how ecological themes inherent in the Rastafari movement's ideology were combined with these critiques.

> The Japanese house buyer is just dumb, unable and unwilling to do any research into the economic or environmental consequences of hiring huge house-builder companies to build their "crappy" dwellings. Why don't people understand that local timber, having been subject to same climatic conditions as the area in which one was trying to build would be far superior to any cheaply sourced materials that a company would provide? Why are (Japanese) people so lazy, not understanding that hiring a large company rather than hand-picking professionals would obviously result in substandard materials and higher costs for lower overall quality? This is typical of the Japanese consumer, a type blinded by the convenience of their lifestyle and lazy-thinking.

In a similar vein, conversations on the general pace of life in mainstream Japanese life, as opposed to within the reggae community, were prolific. As my main informant, Kei, a man in his early 30s who had brought his son to the event, articulated to me,

> The Japanese live in a high speed, rat-race mentality. Consuming all the time, not giving themselves a chance to stop and think. Not paying attention to the really important things in life – relationships, the environment, just being oneself, getting in touch with who you are.

For informants who were parents, such as Kei, such comments were often coupled with an explanation of why they thought it important to bring their children with them.

> I want my son to be aware that there are alternative ways to experience the world – that there are ways of thinking that are not dependant on a kind of cut-throat mentality of money, power and influence. Reggae provides a sort of base of mutual human understanding which goes against this. We can share this ideology here. We can share our values here. And we can provide a space for our children to pick up the importance of what we have learned, what we believe.

This idea that the world of reggae is one defined against a mainstream society heading toward unsustainable reality was common. Reggae was seen to provide

social space to reflect and act upon the issues, to instill change through shared ideology and its transmission to the next generation.

If the afternoon stages of the gathering allowed fans to interact with each other and share stories which confirmed their common membership of this ideologically enriched social world, as the day turned to evening and night, the event entered a different phase. It was around 7 P.M. that the "open-mic" or improvisational phase of the proceedings began.

Next to a make-shift tent which held the PA equipment, a small wooden stage allowed a succession of well-known and amateur performers to freely improvise sets surrounded by supportive, dancing, reggae fans. A succession of artists performed sets that were characterized by rapping-preacher style monologues which were peppered with Jamaican phrases and intonations. Commonly, each artist would make reference to the degree to which reggae had changed their perception of the world. And it was not unusual to shout out to the audience, in tones and exchanges more reminiscent of a gospel service than a reggae gathering, questions and phrases such as, "How many of you out there have had your lives changed by reggae?!", or "Shout out loud if reggae has changed your life!". Responses to such calls to ideology were consistently intensely enthusiastic, adding to the sensation that one was in attendance at a religious congregation, rather than an outdoor music event.

Alongside this celebration of the transformative values and identities seen as particular to the reggae community and ideology, this "free improvisation" contained a good many themes that were common to each artist. Perhaps one of the most prevalent themes of all in the free-improvisation sets was the notion that individuals must strive for clear, honest, and direct self expression. Such expression should reflect one's true feelings and must be engaged in as often as possible. Phrases such as "be yourself," "be true to yourself," "open up your heart," "express yourself," "express your feelings," "express yourself directly," "make your feelings known," "be true to your feelings," and other like-phrases, are peppered throughout the artists' monologues, and encourage the participants to reflect on this thematic. The contexts in which such ideas were voiced – in the "fringe" settings of this riverside gathering – allowed this notion of the importance of honest and full self-expression to be taken on as an idea owned by the community. This sense of ownership simultaneously offers a kind of "not-us" metacommentary on mainstream Japanese society – expressing the oppositional themes picked-up during the afternoon between reggae fans and "mainstream" Japanese people. The inference being, of course, that "Japanese" (mainstream) people are not or simply cannot find ways of expressing themselves in honest and straightforward ways.

Another prevalent theme picked-up by the artists and responded to by the audience was the acknowledgement and celebration of social diversity. In the introductions of and responses to professional and amateur artists, as well as in the content of conversations about such artists, it is clear that high status is ascribed to people who are traditionally seen (by the Japanese state) as on the margins, or periphery, of mainstream regional, racial, or historical narratives. For example, Okinawans and people from Hokkaido, (who "may" be of indigenous Ainu origin), are given

elevated status in this community. Likewise, and perhaps obviously, Jamaicans and "unconventional" looking foreigners, (Asian, black or white with dreadlocks, for example), are given disproportional (compared to other fans/artists) respect and attention (that Okinawans, Ainu, and other diverse groups have suffered "oppression" may be a key theme for some artists and fans – such a theme clearly plays into the wider reggae and Rastafari ideology).

Whereas in other sectors of Japanese society, one might often hear fragments of dialog commenting on the specifics of "The Japanese," or of "foreigners" as stereotypical categories attempting to lament the cultural uniqueness of Japanese culture, here in the discourse of reggae fans, points of origin are secondary to the commonality of the human spirit and to the notion of sharing one earth. Many of the artists include some version of the well-worn phrase "don't matter where you come from" in their sets, often coupled with messages of ecological and human coexistence on one planet. Likewise, again, "the Japanese" refers to the not-me "masses" rather than the "we" majority, (as I have mentioned above). Conceptually, such linguistic maneuvers serve to sever the speaker from the cultural category of "Japanese," elevating them into a kind of no-man's land – they are neither *gaikokujin* (foreigners) nor Japanese. Such linguistic reflections of the cultural world map, the lack of any cultural or racial essentialisms in conversations which might otherwise include them; and an absence of referential positioning in a world ranked according to nation, culture, economy, or race (see Ohnuki-Tierney 1993 for traditional ranked models) help to illustrate the degree to which social and cultural diversity is a worldview embedded in the minds of the reggae fans, a de facto aspect of their membership.

The Divisions of Identity in Japanese Society

This short ethnographic extract espouses several themes that warrant further commentary, particularly with regard what I will term the "divisions of identity" in Japanese society. First, however, it is interesting to note the changing styles of interaction and the kinds of cultural space that were orchestrated at the event. The community gathering at the Tama River began in a shared informal extended family-like atmosphere. There was no planned event structure to the afternoon and the interactions between groups of fans were completely unstructured. However, despite the *leisure* setting of the afternoon – the carefree mixing and sense of intimacy – there was also a set of intense practical discussions underway.

The anticonsumerist rhetoric (see also, Vinken, this volume) was perhaps the most prevalent of the themes discussed by a number of groups during the daylight hours. My own conversations with informants – the carpenter's view of consumers "blind" to the underlying ecology of their consumer choices, or Kei's blanket stereotype of "The Japanese" rat-race consumer-mad citizen – were good examples of the kind of discussions which highlighted this theme. Such setting up of divisions between the values of the immediate community and those of a stereotyped

view of wider society illustrated that while the appearance of the group dynamics of the afternoon may have seemed random or haphazard, in actual fact this gathering represented a very particular attempt to produce a very particular kind of cultural space.

The single-track employment system where one joins a company devoting one's life to the job remains a strong image in Japan, even if the reality is a fast growing population of part-time or unemployed youth (Mathews 2006). "The Japanese worker," as seen by the reggae fan, largely conforms to the "salaryman" stereotype – a robot-like individual who sacrifices a degree of human happiness, freedom and personal growth for the promise of financial security. The setting apart of the values of sustainability and the search for a deeper meaning behind the lure of power and money can be seen then to directly contest the values of Japanese society (as perceived by reggae fans). To lament the rat-race money-hungry mentality of "the Japanese" is to enter into a debate on what should represent the real work ethics and values of these individuals. Such conversations helped therefore to expose tensions between the private lives of careworkers, carpenters, and teachers, and their sense of containment – and need to find separation – from within a set of societal norms that they perceive and unrepresentative of these lives.

Alongside the notion of "the Japanese citizen/consumer lifestyle," was another theme that was being critiqued in this space – that of the emotionally or expressively challenged "Japanese." Here, the interpersonal skills of the mainstream were being challenged, and underlying this, a negative interpretation of the assumed consequences of "being brought up Japanese." Japanese people were seen to be unable to express their true feelings. At best, "the Japanese" found it difficult to find an appropriate vocabulary for their emotions, at worst, they were emotionally "stunted" – as one informant put it to me in the afternoon – "the Japanese are crap at communication" (*nihonjin wa hyougenryoku heta da yo*). By contrast, the reggae fan perceives that they have passed a psychological barrier put up by their society – preventing them from expressing their true feelings and emotions. Transcending this barrier is life changing and such senses of accessing newly discovered personal resources of expression are clearly portrayed through an almost religious celebration of the transition to being a member of the reggae community.

Of course, needing to find self expression and to be able to voice one's feelings openly and honestly is not a theme confined to the world of reggae. Such views are found in many sectors of day-to-day Japanese life. Indeed, this theme can be seen to hold a particular resonance in Japan, particularly in relation to the family, and, more precisely, to the ability of fathers to communicate effectively with their children. Fathers have historically been blamed for their inability to open up on an equal basis with their children – to go beyond the disciplinarian role of household head. Indeed, from as early as the 1920s and 1930s "patriarchal masculinity (has been) criticized for its inability to come to terms with the modern world" (Standish 2006: 62). It is thus likely that many reggae fans will, at the very least, be familiar with a larger social critique and imagery which portrays Japanese social and familial relationships as lacking in free emotional expression.

As well as providing a cultural space within which to critique values and norms associated with Japanese society, conventional Japanese identities and worldviews were also under negotiation. It is well-known that the internal Japanese cultural commentary *nihonjinron* literature is alive with references to senses of Japanese uniqueness and distinctness (Befu 2001), but the degree to which such imagery also infiltrates the public mind set has also been observed. Reischauer, for instance, has commented on the contradiction that the Japanese are "among the world leaders" but "perceive themselves as being so distinct from the rest of humanity as to be unique" (1988: 395). Likewise, Kato (1992): 313), with a sense of desperation, sees "many people in this country even go[ing] so far as to divide all human beings into two major categories: Japanese and non-Japanese. Cosmopolitans are rare and cosmopolitan ideas and values are unwelcome."

While it seems clear that such ethnocentric identities and worldviews are already under negotiation in wider processes of generational change (see Mathews and White 2006), the world of reggae sets out to provide a space not only for an expanded critique of this aspect of Japanese social infrastructure, but also offers concrete alternatives to thinking about the world in this way. In the reggae reworking of Japanese identity and worldviews, not only are notions of origin given little or no status, but there is a sense of the elevated or celebrated status of those who may have been considered marginal within ethnocentric models of the world. Indeed, fans themselves refer to "the Japanese" as a group of people representing society-at-large rather than use the term to ascribe to themselves a unique ethnic or cultural identity. The concepts of uniqueness and ethnocentrism may have powerfully marked previous generations' cultural symbolism, but here they are turned on their head in an attempt to empower people to see the world as unitary, connected, shared, and borderless.

The contesting of the norms, values, and worldviews seen to represent a conventional Japanese society, the members of this gathering were thus involved in a series of negotiations about how to resolve divisions in Japanese society. These zones of contestation about what it means to be a productive member of society – do we *have to* live in a state of high consumerism; or to be in-touch with our innermost feelings and be able to express them to our loved ones; or to be able to see the world in all it local and global diversity rather than just as Japan vs. everyone else; are not in any way unique to fans of Japanese reggae music. Largely, these divisions can be seen in the generation gap that exists in Japan and is negotiated in a variety of areas such as the family and community (Nakano and Wagatsuma 2006).

However, what both the afternoon and evening reggae event sessions contributed to achieve, was the building of a hub – a "nexus of orientation" – whereby these themes and threads of cultural critique and national membership could be brought into one cultural space. These negotiations, broadly spanning psychological, spiritual, emotional, and conceptual takes on what it meant to be a member of "Japanese culture," also offered a set of well-formed alternatives. This cultural space, then, was one which celebrated reggae in itself, but because it also served (in the process of this celebration) to draw in several threads which people used to critique the

symbolic structure of Japaneseness, I argue that it can also be thought of as a public space – a location where Japanese citizens could attempt the redrafting of conventional images of what it meant to belong to Japanese culture.

In the next section, I shall explore the possibility that such cultural spaces – these informal small "civil societies" – play an important role in expanding their reworked social infrastructure into ever wider circles of societal life. As such they do not only contribute to the stocks of social capital for their immediate members, providing "a crucial basis of social life" Pekkanen (2004: 240), but they also begin a chain reaction of connections and influences which, while unofficial and "undocumented,"[2] can challenge the dominance of particular state-sponsored symbolism – the cultural images and ideas that the Japanese nation has traditionally put forward to represent itself. The example I shall now turn to is the emergence of the pop band Def Tech and the popularity they achieved through 2004–2007. As I will attempt to demonstrate, the rise of Def Tech was directly and indirectly dependant on the social capital made available by the fringe reggae community.

Chains of Influence: The Rise of Def Tech and the Involvement of "the Majority"

"Be your own vessel!" sung Shen from the stage as he and Micro danced back and forth in front of an audience of several thousand. The words were met with a raucous cry of support from the crowd as the song My Way continued its Jawaiian-style rhythmic wave over the swinging hips and arms of Def Tech's fans.

> "Believe it my way" are some words to live by
> No matter how you feelin' even if you wanna cry
> You gotta do what you do, stayin' true to your crew
> Givin' it soul on the role but always keepin' it new
> With your own style, own existence, own reality
> Bring complexity and love with creativity
> Days are something special be your own vessel
> Just take what's inside and give it a wrestle…
> What you are inside so you know who you are
> Livin' it up with no doubt ready for any scar
> So that's it go make a hit go out, benefit
> From the words that we spit and never, never,
> ever quit.

As the song came to a close the familiar lyrics – this track was the flagship of Def Tech's rise to fame from 2004 to 2006 – slowly gave way to a sermon-like

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[2]As opposed to, for instance, an NGO that is "registered" with the appropriate authorities and has minuted meetings.

preaching by Shen, the, music continuing to provide a bass rhythm to accompany and augment his preacher-like tone.

> When you are feeling low, when you are feeling threatened, when you are feeling like nobody loves you; what do you do? Do we carry that negativity forward? Do we set out to hurt the feelings of others? Some of us may.

The crowd are quiet and attentive, and although there is no audience feedback of a gospel-like nature where the crowd might well answer the preacher with cries of support, it is clear by the hushed occasional nods that Micro's words are being absorbed and reflected upon.

> Some people, when they feel inferior, when they feel attacked, or criticized, they lash out, or close off, and this becomes a way of life. Some people shut themselves off from others because they have felt threatened in the past, because they have had pain in their hearts, because they have felt unloved.

> When we love others, though, we should want to reach them, to get beyond the walls. When we feel a particular way about someone close to us, we should be able to say that we love them. There are too many people in this society that don't express themselves properly. It is time to change this, time to look inside to find out our true feelings and motivations! Time to make a better world where true feelings are shared!

These words ushered in another bonus chorus to cheers and applause and the performance continued. The popular music band Def Tech were on a live tour promoting their highly successful album "Catch the Wave" and I was amongst a very youthful audience of their live performance at the Kyoto Kaikan in 2006.

It is hard to imagine an image more at odds with the notion of a Japan defined as unique or divided from other peoples than that of Japanese man and his Hawaiian-Caucasian band-partner creating a musical mix of Jamaican reggae, American-derived rap and Pacific Islands melody. For three and a half years between the winter of 2004 and 2005 and the autumn of 2007 that is exactly the image that millions of Japanese, in supermarkets, bars, restaurants, clubs, pubs, on radio and television, in newspapers and magazines, were exposed to. Micro and Shen sold 5 million albums and their innovative "Jawaiian" genre (a blend of Japanese, Hawaiian, and Reggae styles), inspired the formation of new bands, won national awards and recognition, and brought countless Japanese into contact with a vibrant reggae-surfer-derived ideology of: honest self-expression, sustainable environmentally-conscious living, global citizenship, and the open inner search for a "true" sense of self. Though short lived, it is safe to say that Def Tech, was a phenomenon.

Part of Shen and Micro's success was in the attractiveness, timeliness, and crafting of their "message." By organizing and packaging reggae ideology in a more user-friendly, feel-good popular Hawaiian/Jawaiian sound they seemed to vastly expand its reach. Shen is a Hawaiian himself and provided a Pacific Island Music sound to the reggae phraseology. In the transition, the music and message is largely stripped of any sign of any "unseemly" Rastafarian roots such as protest against authority, drug, or sexual references, although much is retained including Reggae/Jamaican syntax and principles of sustainability and renewal. Def Tech renders

the reggae ideology with a veneer of romantic Islands' idealism, a process which aids in the ability for a much larger proportion of people to join forces with its message.

Micro, a Tokyoite and the other half of the Micro–Shen duo "fell in love with Bob Marley at 3 years of age."[3] Often referred to on stage as "Micro-Marley" Micro's preacher-like stage style clearly speaks to his role now as a facilitator and broker of reggae ideology to a mainstream, predominantly youth, popular music market. Through interchanges with the audience, the messages and ideology in the music are given a special immediacy. It is an immediacy and relevance that trades off the solidarity of the group, the Def Tech presence, and the carefully constructed and adapted message. It is clear through the performance that Micro is the "director" of The Message, and that his enthusiasm for transmitting such an ideology lies in an assumption that he can help to empower youth with a sense of social agency – by using some of the tools necessary to improve the quality of their emotional and interpersonal experiences and relationships.

As well as encouraging his audience to reflect on their ability to express their feelings toward one another and to loved ones, Micro's preacher-like interludes also cover the related themes of living sustainably together on this one earth, and seeing each other as individuals rather than as representatives of cultural or national stereotypes. As the lyrics of the track Consolidation Song read, it "Doesn't matter where you come from let's go as one, Consolidation Song." A short act performed in their live concerts also hammers home this theme: Micro and Shen cleverly stage an argument toward the end of a song themed around the idea of the pointlessness of cultural/racial essentialisms. Feigning annoyance at Shen, Micro begins by making comments about how foreigners can't understand things properly, how they are all individualistic and selfish and think they are superior. In response, Shen counterattacks by saying that Micro is a short and bad-tempered Japanese, typical in the fact that he doesn't say what he feels until he loses his temper. The argument proceeds to the two making derogatory remarks about racial features such as the length of Shen's nose. Just at this moment, the argument suddenly stops and the two singers face each other and begin to sing about how pointless such stereotypes and limited worldviews are when they are seen in the context of real human relationships.

Like the reggae community which Micro feels he represents, Def Tech provide their fans with a hub-like space from which to come to terms with a variety of contemporary tensions. Like the reggae community, the themes under contestation are those which seem to be most represented in the differing experiences of young and old – they follow themes identified as part of the Japanese generation gap (Mathews and White 2006). In parallel with the reggae community, Def Tech also set out with a strategy to introduce alternative norms, values, and identities which better reflect the realities of life for the fans. In so doing, Def Tech too enters a debate on what it means to live in Japanese society – asking what cultural values and social infrastructure are needed to overcome the public–private tensions inherent in the lives of their fans.

[3] Information from short biography on the Def Tech website (see http://www.deftech.jp).

However, Def Tech differs from the reggae community in several aspects. Crucially, they are (were) a popular music band with an elegant musical and lyrical packaging around their core message. This helped their alternative versions of norms, values and identities to be spread widely across generational, class, and other societal divides. Their message reached many millions of people in all kinds of work roles, backgrounds and ages. Such reach propelled their alternative versions and visions from being the self-professed ideology of a few to having the potential of being an empowering option of empowerment for the many.

Another key difference between the reggae community and Def-Tech are that Def Tech fans were only able to attend rather irregular concerts that the band performed on its nationwide tour. Just as is the case with any other form of popular music, fans overwhelmingly engage with the band through the purchasing of albums. Introducing Def Tech into my discussion may warrant the need to distinguish *civic engagement* from the power to build social capital and power through the market as a *consumer citizen* (again, see Vinken, this volume). Taking Pekkanen's definition of civil society representing the "organized, nonstate, nonmarket sector" (2004: 118) the view would likely be that in that Def Tech's message is organized by a popular cultural industry into record sales and events, that any community or movement associated with it would be subject to removal from the civic category. But my point here is one of seeking to understand the blurred boundaries of motivations and symbolic and interactive realities – to suggest a snowballing of influence – of advocacy – from the building of social capital in reggae gatherings to beginning to capture and represent a "public" mindset which calls for change in the way that norms, values, and identities are organized in Japanese society.

Localizing Soft Advocacy in Japanese Intergenerational Cultural Space

While it is incredibily difficult to find convincing empirical evidence which isolates particular efforts to raise social capital to particular results, i.e., that Def Tech or Reggae fans have had any real influence over public debates, what is clear among the fans I spoke to and observed was the deliberate transposition of values and capital from these communities into the very fabric of their lives and of the next generation's worldviews. This intergenerational transmission is clearly a powerful secondary builder of social capital. In a powerful and more immediate way, however, the Japanese state broadcaster, NHK's, high profile coverage[4] of Def Tech leading up to and after their wide spread popularity could be seen to reflect a state-sponsored need to provide younger people with the well-packaged alternatives on offer from Def Tech – at the very least it attempted to validate and sanctify

[4]See Def Tech profile on the NHK website http://archives.nhk.or.jp/chronicle/B10002200090608200030052/.

Def Tech's proposed alternatives. Likewise, during the period of 2006–2007 the Japan Ad Council ran a series of high impact and powerfully influential public service announcements on the theme of the importance of communication, and specifically intergenerational communication between fathers and their children. Again the timing of these advertisements coincided with the efforts of Def Tech to preach the importance of intergenerational communication.

In this, Def Tech seemed to have accomplished a legitimization and popularization of a reggae-derived package of values, norms, and worldviews that manipulated traditional Japanese cultural values into a form which represented a new generation's needs to occupy a Japanese cultural space. In so doing, the Def Tech phenomenon relied on a series of interconnected local and global networks that predated the member's very births in order to achieve its provision of this common public hub or nexus. Def Tech could not have existed without Bob Marley – Micro's boyhood hero. Nor could they have risen to fame without the creative directors who brought Marley's music to Japan in the 1970s. Nor without the Japanese fanbase that Ken and his generation of fans represent, in turn a product of a need to contest issues facing their community.

The role of these groups, then, perhaps reflects the potential power of building social capital and having that capital "spill-over" from social world to social world. Again, as with Pekkanen's observations on civil society in Japan (2004, 2006), there is no explicit state-level advocacy group which is fueled from this building of social capital. Rather, the focus seems to be on building such social capital into a kind of "imaginative consensus," where the force of public opinion swells to a kind of tipping point; a kind of ground-swell which exerts social pressure on the people who work "above" where the pressure emanates. Such pressure, I suggest, may be termed "soft advocacy".

There is no doubt that the snowballing prominence of Japanese reggae in the youth experience was responsible for Micro's ability to set out, and largely succeed, in establishing the popularization of many of its messages through the Def Tech message. And it would take a very critical sociologist of Japan not to be convinced that between the years 2004 and 2007, the series of changes occurring in the coverage of family problems – particularly with regard to problems in intergenerational communication patterns – was completely unrelated to the discourses or metacommentaries that popular cultural movements like Def Tech brought to the traditional vehicles of change. Thus, while it is next to impossible to empirically prove the existence of soft advocacy, it would require a far greater effort to attempt to discredit the notion in a world which is so intimately connected and interdependent. The concept reminds us that:

> Public spheres now develop across national borders, and relationships between state and society may be consolidated among global diasporas and a transnational populace. Relations of publicity are often intercultural and sometimes global in character; states may be influenced by social movements elsewhere. (Coombe 1997: 7)

Indeed, both the reggae world and that of Def Tech have their origins in countries some distance from Japan. In the fringe reggae scene's reinterpretation of what

it means to live in Japanese society and in Def Tech's more public reassertion and legitimization of this interpretation there are global processes at work. However, perhaps more salient than the internationally charged process of building the civil infrastructure – the alternative norms, values and identities I have documented – is the way in which they speak about the core needs to resolve tensions between private and public life. And at the heart of such zones of contest are the ways in which we feel we are or are not represented by the society to which we contribute. Challenging the social infrastructure of that society – the kind of people and norms it purports to represent – seems to serve a vital role in facilitating social and intellectual movement and mobility. And indeed, such advocacy may only be possible in "soft" critiques involving ever-increasing bodies of opinion rather than hard-edged institutions with an agenda for change and action.

Conclusion: The Transient and Aggregative Nature of Civic Engagement

Understanding how cultural spaces are created in all kinds of locations in order to evaluate, contest, negotiate, and rework norms, values, and identities allows us to see the interdependent aggregative impact of human action, of visions in the making and of those being made real. The focus on the building of alternative visions of what it means to live in Japanese society by youth communities contributes to our understanding of such processes. In particular, such communities emphasize the ongoing need for the imagined or symbolic landscape of society to be developed and expanded to fit new generational realities and needs. And to understand how those needs are to be met we see how many worlds of influence – connecting family, the community, the culture, and the nation – come to inform and respond to these efforts.

The measurements that have traditionally been employed to understand civil society projects comparatively between nations – looking out for the emergence of particular forms of organizations or groups or periods of history – may, in a climate where cultural spaces are improvised and organized into being in many different ways, be seen as outdated. For observers in the field of civil society, the challenge is to recognize a new interdependence of multiple worlds of experience, meaning, and interaction, and their complex and combined influence on the movements, motivations, and identities of individuals and their wider groups.

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Chapter 11
Re-imagining the Relationship Between Japan and Korea: Popular Culture and Civic Engagement

Reiko Ogawa

Introduction

Located as two neighboring countries in East Asia, the relationship between Japan and Korea has been stranded dating back to the colonial history. Japan's colonial past remains a thorny issue in East Asia today with unsolved questions on war reparation, "comfort" women, history textbook, territorial disputes, and the Yasukuni Shrine. Compared to the European colonial experience in Africa, the social, political and cultural level of Korea was not so different from Japan as to legitimatize the 'civilizing colonial mission'. In fact, Japan's premodern development was largely shaped by civilizations transmitted from China and Korea including the political system, science and technology, culture and religion. However, in the process of modernization Japan's intellectual leaders drew a sharp boundary between Japan and the rest of Asia in order to maintain its independence from the encroachment of Western imperial powers. As the history shows, Japan did not only separate itself from Korea following the modernization of the West, but it went to an extent to model the imperial expansion and colonial domination. Even after more than 60 years have passed, due to the unresolved issues in the political arena, the negative image of each other haunts the relationship between the two nations till today.[1]

In postwar Japan, the development of modern civil society based on democracy, peace, and social justice became a mandate. Political parties, labor movements,

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[1]According to the opinion poll of Joong Ang Ilbo, the leading newspaper in Korea, Japan is the most disliked country for Koreans and at the same time the top country that Korea has to learn from (Joong Ang Ilbo, September 22, 2008). The opinion poll of the Cabinet Office in Japan (2008) shows that Korea is increasingly becoming a "close" country. In 2006, about 49% felt that Korea is "close"or "somewhat close" but it increased to 57% in 2008 which marked the highest rise since the poll started in 1975. Interestingly, the proportion of those who feel close to USA is 73% which reflects Japan's postwar politics and position.

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grass roots organizations and intellectuals actively provoked ideals and ideas on local, regional and global issues including anti-US-Japan Security Treaty, anti-pollution, anti-Vietnam War, and support for democratization in Asia. These movements with unified organizations, ideologies and clearly defined adversaries had their momentum until the end of the cold war. However, as we see in Japan and elsewhere, the intensification of globalization has brought a different social imagery which, in turn, leads to new ways of civic engagement.

The flow and exchange of pop culture in East Asia has been developed throughout the 1990s crossing national boundaries and received in different locations. Although the flows were uneven, mutual circulations of images within East Asia "decentralized" the notion of globalization. It is no longer seen as merely "Americanization" or "Japanization" (Iwabuchi 2002). In Japan, the arrival of Korean Wave or *hanlyu* became a social phenomenon that has drastically changed the Japanese perception of Korea. The *hanlyu* fans are not passive consumers but actively involved in post-text activities, thus developing new forms of civic engagement. This chapter aims to discuss the changing texture of civic engagement between Japan and Korea through the impact of popular culture which brought a new way of imagining "the other."

Solidarity-Based Civil Society Movements

Before the arrival of hanlyu, the information of the neighboring country was limited both in terms of quality and quantity. Tei (1995) examines postwar Japanese image toward Korea and classifies it into three periods. The first period is from the end of Japanese colonial rule in Korea until the signing of Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea in 1965, when the diplomatic relationships between the two countries were normalized. During this period, Japan was strengthening its alliance with the USA through the signing of Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan in 1960 and pursuing rapid economic development. Being preoccupied with its own development and political concerns, Japan was generally indifferent to Korea as USA was considered to be more important as a partner.

The second period is from 1965 to 1983 when political interest was suddenly raised due to the abduction of Kim Dae-jung, the opposition leader of Park Chung-hee in 1973. Almost being killed on the ship, fortunately, Kim Dae-jung was released in Seoul near his house 5 days after the abduction. Since this incident happened at the hotel located in the heart of Tokyo by KCIA, it was considered to be an abuse to Japan's sovereignty as well as human rights violation by the Korean government. The media and civil society including the intellectuals and labor union activists reacted actively criticizing the Japanese government in not condemning the Park regime, demanding fact-finding, and expressing solidarity of solidarity with the Korean democratization movement.

The third period is from 1984 to present where the flow of goods and people have intensified. Within the overall interest toward "internationalization" of society, the cultural interest toward Korea was gradually developed through media and publications. The Seoul Olympic in 1988 and the joint organization of 2002 FIFA World Cup together with the economic development in Korea brought a new impression of Korea as dynamic and energetic. In the cultural arena, the Korean film "Shiri" (1999) was a big success for the first time in the Japanese film market with more than a million audience. This was followed by "JSA" (2001) which was a mega hit of more than a billion yen revenue. The growing interest in the cultural arena paved the way to accept the Korean Wave in 2003.

Before the democratization of Korea in 1987, information on Korea was mostly confined to political and economic issues. Civil society also published alternative information regarding the situation of democratization movements and violation of human rights under the military regime. However, these did not have a wider circulation and was limited to the progressive intellectuals, labor union and a small number of the Christian community in Japan. The general impression of Korea under the military regime appeared to be "fearful" and "brutal."

When Park Chung-hee declared martial law in October 1972, the leading intellectual magazine, "Sekai" carried out an underground report exposing what has been going on under the military rule. The series titled "T.K. Sei" was published 176 times from 1973 for 15 years till the democracy was achieved in Korea.[2] This underground report inspired many conscious intellectuals and activists who felt a sense of guilt of Japan's colonial past. They wanted to contribute to build a better relationship with Korea. Various "solidarity" movements with Korea were initiated by intellectuals and labor unions providing support to the democratization movement of Korea. They also campaigned against the human rights abuse of the military regime. For the Japanese activists, "solidarity" meant to learn and support the struggle of the Koreans who are sacrificing their lives for the democratization of Korea, and bring political change to Japan to be more democratic (Wada 1975). Among the activities were the campaign to release the symbolic leader of the democratization movement and poet Kim Ji-ha who was sentenced to death and Korean-Japanese So Sun and So Shun-shik who were suspected to be spies and were in prison in Korea for 19 years (So 1994).[3] The brutal oppression of the democratization movement in Korea and Japanese government's policy to ignore the dictatorship was criticized sharply by the intellectuals and activists. Among them, the sense of guilt and responsibility toward Japanese colonialism, which lead to the Division of Korea and outbreak of Korean War, was strongly shared.

[2]T.K. Sei, *Kankoku karano Tsushin* (Letters from Korea), 1-5, Iwanami Shinsho, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1980, 2004.

[3]Kim Ji-ha and his poem was the symbol of struggle against the military dictatorship and many writers including Oe Kenzaburo and Jean-Paul Sartre demanded his release.

The “solidarity” movement with Korea was undertaken by urban intellectuals and labor unions through discourses of anti-imperialism, peace, and human rights. The activists were predominantly well-educated men having experienced political struggles in Japan. They were knowledgeable about the political and ideological developments in Korea. The language that they used were confrontational, denouncing the Korean dictatorship which arrested, tortured, and killed the activists in the same way as the Japanese colonial regime did in oppressing the anti-Japanese movement in the Korean Peninsula. The movements were also being shaped by the tensed political climate of cold war in East Asia with infiltration of spies and ideological battle between North and South Korea, a climate which continued until the 1990s. The actors in the “solidarity” movement were not interested in the daily lives of the ordinary Koreans, they were not attracted to Korean culture unless it was part of the larger democratization movement[4], and they were politically motivated and committed with a clear identification of the adversary.

Arrival of the Korean Wave

The Korean popular culture became more widespread in Asia in the aftermath of 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. It became part of Korea’s national export industry in order to rebuild the national economy. This coincided with the demand in other affected East Asian countries to look for cheaper programs than the relatively expensive Japanese contents. Korean contents became a big success in the rest of East Asia and became part of the daily programming of many local stations.[5]

In Japan, *hanlyu* started in 2003 with the broadcasting of “Winter Sonata” at NHK satellite TV and rebroadcast in 2004 in NHK, Japans national broadcast organization, which made a megahit that nobody was able to predict. “Winter Sonata” is a romance drama with the actor Bae Yong Jun who became most popular among the Japanese fans, predominantly among middle-aged women. *Hanlyu* consisting of dramas, popular music and films became a social phenomena frequently covered by media. Although the major portions of fans are middle-aged women, the fans are spread between teenage to those in the 80s.

The youngest girl that I interviewed was 12 years old and she became a fan because her mother was always watching Korean drama. Being exposed to Korean TV all the time at home, she already picked up some Korean words from the drama such as “thank you” (*komapsumnida*) or “it’s okay” (*kwenchanayo*). Considering the history that learning the Korean language was prohibited during the colonial

[4]The people’s cultural movement (minjun munhwa undon) which was provoked by the poet Kim Ji Ha was well introduced to Japan through a journal “Shin Nihon Bungaku” (New Japan Literature).

[5]For discussions on reception and consumption of Korean Wave in East Asia, see Huat and Iwabuchi (2008).

period and Korean residents in Japan today carry the memories of deprivation of their language, it is "revolutionary" for a Japanese primary school student to learn Korean. Korea's economic development has certainly contributed to building of a more equal relationship between the two countries but without the social imagery of *hanlyu* that penetrates the daily lives, this was unconceivable.

The eldest fan that I interviewed was in her 80s. She traveled to Korea with her husband for the first time in her life after she became attracted to "Winter Sonata." She started learning Korean language at her age because she was so touched by the beautiful line of "Winter Sonata." Now she has many friends of younger generations to chat about Korean drama and even receives text messages about the latest news about *hanlyu* on her mobile phone. Many fans pointed out that *hanlyu* gave them meaning in life and saved them from mental depression, menopausal disorder, and even divorce.

Today, there are nearly 200 books published under the title of "Hanlyu" in Japan that covers language, cooking, touring, and cultural topics (Hwan 2007). In 2000, Korean films shared only 4% among the foreign films. It remained at the level of 3–4% until 2003. However, after the arrival of *hanlyu*, in 2004, it rose to 10% and in 2005 it reached 16% (Yan 2007). The KNTV (Korea Now Television) which can be subscribed through Sky Perfect TV was started in 1996. It initially targeted Korean business men and their family, Korean students, Korean wives, and Korean-Japanese but it went into red figures as the market was too small. However, after the arrival of *hanlyu*, 80% of the subscribers became Japanese (Son 2007). Today, most of the big book stores and DVD shops including the rental DVD shops have a separate shelf for *hanlyu* books, DVDs, and K-pop music, thus changing the cultural landscape of Japan. *Hanlyu* is not a onetime fashion but now it has firmly established itself as part of the social fabric.

Changing Images, Making Meanings

Instead of asking *why* the Japanese women became attracted to *hanlyu*, I would like to examine *how hanlyu* changed the social imagery toward Korea, which led to new forms of civic engagement. Considering the historical development of civil society in Japan, *hanlyu* brought a profound change in terms of actors, ideas and practices from the "solidarity" movement in the 1970s–1980s. The women who became attracted to "Winter Sonata" for the first time did not have any interest or presumption on Korea prior to the arrival of *hanlyu*. Until the broadcasting of Korean drama, the representation of Korea in media was largely limited to the political and economic issues which did not appear to be interesting to the majority of those who are socially marginalized. Many women pointed out their surprise when they first saw "Winter Sonata" because they felt that they did not know anything about Korea. The surprise was soon turned into an impression of Korea to be "beautiful," "comfortable," "relieved," "warm hearted," "encouraged" and "reminds good old memories."

"'Winter Sonata' was like receiving a present in my heart" says a 60-year-old woman. Her children are independent and her husband, just like any other Japanese man at his age is quiet and will never express his "love" to her through words or by behavior. The kind of romantic and pure love which was expressed by Bae Yong Jun in "Winter Sonata" never happened in her life so by watching the drama she feel so attracted by the emotion, sensitivity, and purity which brings her a warm feeling and meaning in life. *Hanlyu* also represents the "order of precedence by age," portrays strong family ties, shows affection and concern to lovers and friends which is against their everyday reality of transformation of family and social values, individualization and independence, and admiration of cosmopolitan citizens. Even though the women know that it is fiction, they still get attracted to it because *hanlyu* presents a story that is narrated in the space where the globalized world and locally embedded values converges.

Hanlyu is historical in a sense that it is almost the first time that modern Japan has literary "discovered" Korea in a positive light. A Japanese woman in her 70s liked the "Winter Sonata" so much that she posted the lyrics of the song in the kitchen so that she can sing while cooking. Another woman in her 30s will always turn on Korean TV at home because she thinks that the Korean language is so beautiful and she would like to hear it all the time. At karaoke she only sings Korean songs. She is now aware of the Japanese colonial history that Koreans were prohibited to use their own language. However, she is not behaving like this from a feeling of guilt or apology but rather she simply fell in love with Korea. Unlike the solidarity movement activists, she is not learning the language for the sake of bringing political change but while watching Korean TV all the time, she became to understand how Japan is reported in Korean media.

Many *hanlyu* fans start learning the language because they want to understand Korean drama with all its nuances. They prefer to watch it with subtitles because when it is dubbed, the drama will be quite different from the original, they say. While watching the drama, they become exposed to Korean culture and become knowledgeable, in various fields ranging from family relationships, social structure, food, fashion, Confucian customs, and history. Once, they familiarize themselves with the language, in some cases, they start reading Korean newspapers and watch Korean TV news. Even when they read the Japanese newspaper, a woman in her 60s says that she will always look for the "Han" (韓) character showing her enthusiasm in wanting to know everything about Korea.

The ways in which the fans are attracted to the images varies but it can be pointed out that they are not merely passive consumers but active agents. Media functions in an ambivalent manner as it turns women into consumers by creating the desire through capitalism, while at the same time promotes autonomy. The fans do not simply sit and watch the drama at home but actively develop networks and participate in society.

Aside from learning the language, traveling is another interesting behavior that was inspired by *hanlyu*. One of the influential programs that were promoted by the travel agents is "drama site tours." The travel agencies promote tours to visit the site where the drama was filmed, eating in the restaurant which is shown in the drama

and enjoy shopping in places where their favorite actors usually shop. Numerous travel agencies have promoted these tours attracting a wide spectrum of people among whom more than 90% are women. Many of them have never visited Korea in the past.[6] The fans also help the travel agents to design the attractive drama site tour and guarantee the success of the tour.

The Japanese who travel to Korea in the 1970s were predominantly men, including the notorious sex tours. In 1970s, women were less than 10% among the tourists to Korea, but *hanlyu* drastically changed the gender composition of travel to Korea (Hirata 2004: 53). On the subways in Seoul or shopping malls in Pusan, one will always encounter a group of Japanese women who gradually increase their autonomy and ability to move around independently. One woman in her 30s who works at a company in Fukuoka has visited Korea for more than 30 times in the past 3 years. She flies to Seoul or to Pusan on Friday evening and back to Fukuoka on Monday morning to go straight to her office. Fukuoka is 900 km down south of Tokyo and only 200 km to Pusan which takes only 30 min by flight so "it is like a commuting distance," she says. When I asked what she does in Korea, she replied:

> I walk down the street and do what the actors of the drama will do. For example, go to sauna or eat at the same food court as in the drama, and sing at karaoke box. I take a subway or the bus in order to follow the same experience of the actor in the drama. When I see the rebroadcast next time, I recognize the places, "Oh, I've been there" or "I've eaten that" and I feel close. The system of the subway is slightly different [from Japan] so there is a discovery. I buy daily goods at the supermarket and carry the plastic bag through the custom clearance. This is so much fun. I don't mean to be seen as Korean or I don't mean to behave like Korean. But I suddenly realize that all the things around me like clothes, accessories, cosmetics and sandals all are made in Korea. It is a kind of self-satisfaction but I feel that I became close to something far.

Her narrative exemplifies the typical behavior of fans who become repeaters in traveling to Korea. *Hanlyu* is not just about melodrama, cool actors, and singers but it is inevitably connected with the representation of Korea as a country. The economic development in Korea resulted in the rise of a consumer society similar to the level of Japan. Big cities such as Seoul or Pusan are in a good position to fulfill the desire of the Japanese women. Korea became close because it can be accessed easily mediated by tools such as language and travel, but yet it is different. The virtual experiences through screen become a real experience through travel and their travelogues are circulated in internet blogs as well as in their daily conversations constructing the narrative of *hanlyu*. The discovery, surprise, impression, emotion, sympathy, friendship, and reflections through travel create images of places and people encouraging the others who have seen the same drama to travel. This similar experience of watching the drama and traveling to Korea builds up the shared culture of meanings toward Korea and the easy access, safeness, and the feeling of "similar yet different" continue to make Korea attractive.

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[6]Interview to a travel agent which organized drama site tours sending 7,000–8,000 fans from Japan to Korea.

Consumption of drama is a matter of individual lifestyle choice; however, one interesting characteristic of *hanlyu* fans is their network through circulation of information. The DVD of different *hanlyu* dramas are circulated among women in various communities. At the Korean language class, at workplace, between neighbors in the same apartment, at daycare centers, school PTA's, and at fan meetings. Some who have a good collection of DVDs will invite her friends for screening or organize birthday parties of the favorite actors at home.

The women's network through *hanlyu* is intergenerational and cuts across geographical boundaries. Those who belong to different generations such as 30s and 50s exchange the DVDs and go to fan meetings together. Those who are in their 60s will chat with friends who are in their 30s and 40s about the same drama and travel together to Korea. Also, those who meet at fan meetings from different parts of Japan will keep contact and exchange information. *Hanlyu* has contributed to developing a community of women creating a space of intimacy which is maintained and expanded through the circulation of information.

After several years since they encountered *hanlyu*, the fans are interested in consuming whatever it is about Korea from the day-to-day social lives in Seoul to Korean politics and history. Although the nature of drama does not directly reflect the controversial issues between the two countries, by getting to know Korea through acquiring the language skills and having opportunities to travel, one cannot avoid being exposed to postcolonial issues between the two countries. The encounter with Korea through *hanlyu* brings both self-reflection about the individual lives as well as the reflection on Japan's history.

When one goes to language classes, Korean language teacher will talk about Japanese colonialism in Korea. While watching the Korean TV, they will broadcast programs on the territorial issues of the disputed island of Dokkdo (in Korean) or Takeshima (in Japanese). The favorite Korean actor will tell a story of his grandfather's death caused by the Japanese military, and Korean fans will share their views about Yasukuni Shrine and comfort women's issue through internet. The Japanese fans who became close to Korea through *hanlyu* are put in a position to encounter these challenges and some are ready to face it.

A woman in her 60s bought a history textbook for high school students in Korea and was seriously studying at home in order to learn how history has been written in the eyes of the Koreans. Some who watch the Korean news reports will compare how the issue of territorial dispute has been reported differently in two countries. Those who started traveling to Korea will visit the Independence Hall, where the history of Japanese colonialism has been exhibited with scenes of torture by the Japanese military. While the firsthand knowledge and experience on Korea increases, it brings new forms of subjectivity formation to the people who have long been marginalized in political participation. A woman in her 50s who had no idea about Korea prior to the arrival of *hanlyu* says:

> [For me] the entrance was "Winter Sonata," but we should not run away from history. Japan should face its history as an invader and we should not forget about it. There are many problems such as revision of history textbooks, but Japanese should always have a feeling of apology and Koreans have to have a broad heart to accept it.

She admits that she did not have any interest in Korea and hardly had any knowledge of colonial history until she became attracted to "Winter Sonata" in 2003. Within several years, she has become aware of the issues that hinder the relationship between the two countries and she actively promotes social participation. She has established a group of *hanlyu* fans encouraging them to learn the history and has been involved in the civil society organization which promotes grass roots exchange with Korea. She also advocates the city to become friendly to the foreign visitors especially to a large number of Korean tourists.

In fact, many *hanlyu* fans are active in social participation in doing whatever they can, trying to contribute within their own capacity. Some will organize a civil society group promoting community-based exchange projects and others will become the host family for Korean students and children. With the social imagination being provoked by pop culture, Korea suddenly became central to their lives penetrating their lifestyles from daily food to social participation.

However, unlike other subcultures such as punk or hip-hop, the nature of *hanlyu* does not necessarily politicize them and turn them into an antistate consciousness or participants in antistate movements. Popular culture is first and foremost an entertainment, and although there is an emergence of new subjectivity it is left to the individual level. The *hanlyu* fans are primarily mothers, daughters, and wives who neither have much experience in organizing social movements nor political participation. They enjoy playing in the world of *hanlyu* as they always have a safe home to return to. By filling up the emptiness and dissatisfaction in their heart through the virtual world, they gain meaning and strength in life. But compared to the more experienced solidarity movements these empowerment are likely to be at the individual level, thus reflecting the marginality of the Japanese women in the public sphere.

For example, the *hanlyu* fans respond extremely emotionally to a question "What will you do if the fan meeting of your favorite actor became canceled due to political dispute between Japan and Korea?" They will say furiously, "I cannot allow that to happen!" However, when I ask further, "What kind of action will you take?" some will emphasize the importance of dialog between the two governments, others will say they can only express their feelings in the internet space without clear ideas about policy advocacy. The marginalization of Japanese women in the political sphere poses certain limitations in bringing social change at the macro level. Although profound change in reimagining Korea and formation of new subjectivity is taking place at the grass root level, we are yet to see the larger process of reconciliation in history in East Asia.

The Other *Hanlyu*

Hanlyu fans are free from traditional Marxist ideologies and party politics which were strong in the Japanese left movements. Some are even unconscious about the Japanese colonial history in Korea and therefore do not have any sense of guilt toward Korea.

Even though they themselves are depoliticized, their thoughts and behaviors are shaped by the larger political discourse under global capitalism.

Modern Japan has situated Asia as "uncivilized" and separated itself from the rest of Asia in order to become member of the West. Japan labeled Korea as "backward" to uplift its position and show its superiority by internalizing the Orientalist gaze of the West. Not only Korea but the rest of Asia in general was the negative "other" to Japan, under-represented in various public spheres conveniently forgotten or casually consumed. Thus Japan maintains a dual position of being geographically situated within Asia but acting not as a member of "Asia." Consumption of "Asia" (excluding Japan) became a trend in 1990s when the image of Asia was represented by resorts, food and ethnic fashion to provide "healing" for the stressful and exhausted workaholic Japanese. Asian restaurants and shops mushroomed all over Japan providing different choices as commodified symbols of globalization. The media produced the made-in-Asia images as "warm," "nostalgic," and "something that Japan has forgotten." The discourse to situate the rest of Asia as Japan's past reflects and refracts the continuation of the Oriental gaze, which was constructed under colonial modernity. "Asia" became an attractive option for consumption for it provokes nostalgia of "similar yet different." In such celebration, the power relationship entailed in the consumption is yet to be questioned and the desire created by global capitalism failed to reveal the issues of the marginalized who do not neatly fit within the framework (Iwabuchi 2008). Here, the "others" who are forgotten in the consumption speak provocatively about the limitation of *hanlyu*. Who are the "others" in the discussion of *hanlyu*?

In Japan, Korean descendants who came during the colonial period are the largest ethnic minority population until 2006. Having its roots in the colonial history when the colony was meant to exist for the benefit of the empire, migration from the Korean Peninsular had started to supply cheap labor for the capitalist development of Japan. By the end of the war in 1945, the Korean population working in coal mines, construction sites, and factories in Japan had reached two million. After the war, many strived to go back to their home country but due to political instability in Korea and lack of livelihood, some decided to stay. After more than 60 years, the first generations who carry the memory of the home country are aging and the majority are born in Japan.

The negative image of Korea and Japan which haunted the relationship between the two countries mostly affected people who are living in-between. Compared to the Japanese *hanlyu* fans who hardly had any preassumption about Korea, the Korean-Japanese have accepted *hanlyu* in a far more complex manner. The point has been discussed elsewhere so here I would like to elaborate how the hanlyu impacted in changing the perception of the Japanese toward Korean-Japanese (Ogawa 2007). There are approximately 600,000 Korean-Japanese spread over various sectors of the society from university, law, art and culture, sports, education, social welfare, and entertainment industry. The nationality and identity of the Korean-Japanese are extremely diverse according to education, place of birth and upbringing, age and gender, and ideological background. However, except for a few who will reveal their identities, the Korean-Japanese as a community are largely invisible in society.

Japan has been a multiethnic nation for more than a century and civil society has been promoting the idea of *kyosei* (living together), but prejudice and exclusion still persist in social systems, institutions, and practices (Lee et al. 2006). Therefore, many Korean-Japanese will use the Japanese names in order to avoid discrimination. Discrimination at times of marriage or job recruitment exists today. It is telling that in order to seek better opportunities approximately 10,000 persons obtain the Japanese nationality every year.

Until the arrival of *hanlyu*, many fans pointed out that they did not know anything about the Korean-Japanese. Some would say that they have never encountered such person, thus reflecting the invisible position of the Korean-Japanese in the society. The positive image of Korea promoted through *hanlyu* had contributed to improve the position of the Korean-Japanese to a certain degree. Some Korean-Japanese feel that it became much easier for them to reveal their identity because after *hanlyu*, it suddenly became "cool" to have a Korean name. The changing image of Korea also encouraged the Korean-Japanese to act as bridges between the two countries. A second generation Japanese-Korean in her 70s who runs a Korean food store says:

> I did not come to Japan because of conscription so I always feel grateful that I am allowed to live in Japan. Therefore, I feel happy when I see a Korean doing excellent and I feel sad when the image of Korea becomes bad. I'm glad that many Japanese came to know the beauty of Korea through hanlyu.

Since she speaks the Korean language, she organizes study tours to Korea bringing Japanese friends who became interested in Korea. Thus, *hanlyu* became a tool of communication between the Japanese and the Korean-Japanese.

However, for the Korean-Japanese who lived in-between the two countries, the distance with the Japanese cannot be easily transcended. Living as an invisible minority without much support from both governments, and facing marginalization in daily lives, they have a complex feeling against Japanese who are attracted to hanlyu. In fact, it was the assimilation pressure from the Japanese society which prevented them from learning the Korean language as well as representing themselves as Koreans in a positive manner. However now, suddenly the same Japanese are saying "Korea is beautiful," "Koreans are so warm hearted," "I can express myself better in Korean language" knowing about Korea far better than the Korean-Japanese. This incidence had brought complex feelings to many Korean-Japanese. A second generation Korean-Japanese woman in her 50s says:

> I will not say this directly to Japanese, but frankly speaking I do not feel comfortable when those who are above 70 years old joyfully says, "Oh! I watched the Korean drama for the whole night!" If we look at history, they should consider that those who are above 70 have lived in the period when Japan colonized Korea. So I almost feel like saying "Your husband might have done a great job in the battle field but he might have bought a Korean comfort woman!"

Her criticism is against easy consumption of *hanlyu* by the Japanese fans without being conscious of the history between the two countries. The Korean-Japanese have lived through the history so they cannot detach themselves and see the drama

as fiction or fantasy. They often feel frustrated and hurt by the insensitivity of the Japanese who do not have much knowledge of history. Without knowing the situation of the Korean-Japanese some would ask a too straight forward a question such as "Why can't you speak Korean even though you are a Korean?" or "Are you planning to go back to Korea some day?" which is very offending to the Korean-Japanese.

A second generation Korean-Japanese in her 40s tries to convince herself that *hanlyu* is a good thing because everyone around her is talking about it. But frankly speaking, she feels uncomfortable when she encounters a Japanese *hanlyu* fan who speaks Korean and visits Korea very often because that is something she was not able to do. She also feels cynical that the Japanese *hanlyu* fans are only interested in "cool" Korean idols across the national boundary and not the Koreans living next door. When *hanlyu* boom was started, there was a growing interest among the Korean-Japanese community that they are the ones to be the "bridge" between the two countries. However, after several years, they feel that they have failed to do so because they cannot speak the Korean language and they do not know well enough about Korea.[7] For Korean-Japanese, Japanese are the ones who deprived them of their language and culture and yet after *hanlyu* it is the same Japanese who are appreciating Korean culture and language.

Son (2007) has done a study in Osaka which has the highest concentration of Korean-Japanese. Responding to the question, "What do you think about the appreciation of the Japanese society toward *hanlyu*?" Among 56 respondents between the age of 20 and 80 years, 37 replied "I feel happy," and 14 replied "I feel complex because they [Japanese] discriminated us and now that they are into *hanlyu*."

The relationship between the Japanese and Korean-Japanese are ruptured and cannot be restored easily. However, certain changes are taking place. Inspired by *hanlyu*, Japanese are becoming sensitive to the issues of Korean-Japanese. In other words, *hanlyu* has provided a space for encounter between the two groups. A woman in her 30s says:

> I think there were Korean-Japanese around me but we were living in a different world so there was no contact. But I came to know a Korean-Japanese at a Korean language class and became aware that although we are about the same age, she had suffered a lot and had lived a hard life.

Just like the issue of history, the new subjectivity created through *hanlyu* inevitably brings them to encounter the issue of Korean-Japanese. A woman in her 50s says, "After I became addicted to *hanlyu* I started to participate in a civil society group which is working to improve the relationship between Japan and Korea. There I met a Korean-Japanese." She has been helped greatly by the Korean-Japanese community when she organized the first concert inviting Korean musicians.

[7]There are some Korean-Japanese who have been successful in promoting hanlyu such as Lee Bon U, a film distributor or Chon Kap Su who organizes "One Korea Festival."

The friendship built among the two has been continuing since then strengthening mutual understanding at the grass root level.

Another woman in her 40s who also works with Korean-Japanese in the cultural group says, “Next time I am born, I want to be born as a Korean.” This is a revolutionary shift in one’s identity considering so many Korean-Japanese are still disguising their identities or obtaining Japanese nationality because of the prejudice and discrimination. The imagination brought by pop culture made Korea to have such positive connotation, which may gradually expand to the positive image of Korean-Japanese. The interest toward Korea which was inspired by the media has not only transformed the perception of Japan’s neighboring country but also seeking ways to create a more multicultural Japan. *Hanlyu* became an arena for the Japanese, Koreans, and Korean-Japanese to develop a civil society which is tolerant toward diversity and respects differences.

However, the positive effect of *hanlyu* is not meant to solve all the contested issues and discriminatory systems. The process toward multicultural Japan is not a one directional progress for those who believe in *kyosei* (living together) of people of different background. Responding to the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, Japan had finally admitted the Ainu to be the indigenous people of Japan in 2008. However, the ideology of Japan as a homogeneous race continues to persist consciously or unconsciously among those who are in power. Setbacks and backlashes have been expressed in accepting the increasing number of migrants, achieving gender equality and the vision toward an East Asian Community. The transformation of the society under globalization has given rise to a new type of nationalism since the mid-1990s. This nationalism lead by a group of scholars, writers, and cartoonists distorts history writing, valorizes Japan’s past, and denounces the apologetic attitude of Japan toward Korea and China in order to “regain the pride” of being Japanese. This ideology has been proliferated through popular media attracting the people who are living precarious lives under the unstable employment system due to deregulation. Both love (through *hanlyu*) and hatred (through new nationalism) toward Korea are expressed in the virtual space without a point of convergence or space for dialog. Japan lacks the political will to solve the contested issues between Korea and it is left in the hands of civil society, which has been challenged by racist and chauvinist ideas. Even though profound changes are gradually taking place in improving the images and relationship between the two nations at the grass root level, we are yet to see the concrete changes taking place at the political level.

Conclusion

The social imagery provoked by Korean wave or *hanlyu* has drastically changed the Japanese perception on Korea and motivated the fans in social participation in a way very different from the civic engagement in the 1970s and 1980s. Although the fans may not initially be aware of Japan’s colonialism and the presence of Korean-Japanese as a minority next door, the increasing encounter with Korea through

hanlyu provided a space for reflection, learning, dialog, and eventually action. Considering the big gap in history writing and perception between the two nations that fuels nationalism, the impact brought by pop culture can be considered as a historical exercise in bridging the two countries. The process of reconciliation from the grass roots level can be seen when the Japanese fans reach a point of not merely consuming Korea but humbly learning how Japan has been seen in the eyes of the Koreans and Korean-Japanese. In a way, popular culture, which is the first and foremost entertainment, does not necessarily erase memories of the past and turn one into a thoughtless consumer. Rather pop culture opens up a space where issues on war responsibility and human rights are becoming even more universal under the globalization which Japan has long ignored.

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Chapter 12
Fun with Consumers: Enjoying Anticonsumerism in Japan

Henk Vinken

Consumer Society Japan

Japanese consumers are the toughest. In business and marketing circles they are regarded the most meticulous and demanding of all. A producer, a sales person, or shop keeper should offer the best quality products and services if they want to survive in Japan.[1] Websites advising how to do business in Japan all emphasize the key role of quality and the high brand consciousness in Japan.[2] There does not seem an end in sight of the number of newly opening Chanel, Prada, or Vuitton flagship stores. The Japanese seem willing to queue in long lines to be part of the latest brand-shopping experience. Krispy Kreme's only donuts store in Japan at the up-market Shinjuku Southern Terrace complex in Tokyo has a daily queue of more than 200 people at any time of the day, for as long as it has opened doors late December 2006. The opening of yet another famous brand electronics store in Northern Osaka in early March 2008 led to queues curling around the soccer field size store in full circle, for 3 weeks in a row, from morning 10 to evening 10, every day. The very same store of the same size can be visited a 20-min subway ride from there, but it is being part of a new shopping event that attracts crowds in amazing numbers.

This chapter focuses on civic activism that responds to consumer society Japan. Who in Japan acts on consumerism and especially on its threats, for instance, to the environment: shoppers, consumer organizations, civic groups, or individuals? After a few more lines below on consumerism in Japan, I will present the main conclusions of the study of the Japanese consumer movement. This reveals that it is busy with many issues except responding to consumerism and its side-effects. Other, more

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[1] See Herbig and Palumbo (1994).

[2] For example, http://www.venturejapan.com/japanese-market.htm.

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loosely organized activists have taken up the invitation, such as the "slow life" movement and people involved in Buy Nothing Day (BND) in Japan. The former seems to have developed in a well-established brand related mainly to food. The latter is a growing international 1-day event that in Japan builds on highly educated and networked younger people who are very serious about having fun with consumers.

Several anthropologists, united in the edited volume by Tobin (1992), show us the Japanese efforts to create their versions of the abundance of Western cultural imports, ranging from department stores, home-decorating, Tokyo Disneyland to the tango. Tobin's book, for instance, when discussing Western versus Japanese fashion, shows how much energy and work is put in flirting with commodities from Western areas and defining the essence of genuine Japaneseness. This results in subtle domestications of the imported culture as well as modifications in Japanese culture.

Consumption in Japan is not "just" a pastime or "just" play, it requires hard work and serious training. Hendry (2003) gives several examples of Japanese women who laboriously train to grasp the essence of dancing, cooking, chocolate-making, or English-style tea drinking. Creighton (1994, 1995) shows how pervasive the link between consumption and training can be. Matching the cultural emphases on education and group belonging, baby food producers, department stores, and shopping theme park developers alike target women and especially mothers with highly sophisticated educational products, store clubs, membership programs, magazines, professional motherhood services, and luxury physical sites. Complete store floors are reserved for studying the art of shopping. Here mothers and their offspring can learn to become a good shopper while bonding with other women and children. Creighton dwells on what she calls "edutainment" marketing in Japan, from a shopping catalog entitled "First Goods" addressing the baby directly as a shopper on the day it is born to age-graded clubs at department stores where special interest classes are regularly held. Membership of consumer clubs and shop-card systems are found in other countries too. In Japan, the discount on products is not the key benefit, but the chance to physically meet, socialize, play, and learn. Learning itself is neither directed at individual cognitive progress per se, nor is it aimed at standing out as an individual, but at creating a bridge between the child–mother bond and the larger social world (Creighton 1994: 46). Edutainment serves as a socializing agent to develop the type of consumer behavior consistent with cultural values, as a means to linking selves to others, to become a customer in a network of relationships.

There are a few more in-depth ethnologies of Japanese consumer culture. A group of authors has focused on the representations in the media of Japanese female customers (see the volume of Skov and Moeran 1995). Via advertisements different generations of Japanese women are associated with different types of consumer behavior and roles. New groups emerge that are heavily targeted in marketing, including the "cuties," young women apt to buy anything that celebrates childlikeness and that works to postpone heavily norm-graded adult life. Like other Japan-watchers, the authors have the tendency to attribute heavy interpretations to everyday

behavior against the background of sweeping representations, such as an adulthood that is repressive or young consumers who resist traditional values.[3] Clammer (1997) offers a contradictory perspective. In his grand tour of consumption in urban Japan, he claims that Japanese people are not burdened by consumption because it is embedded in deeply rooted indigenous ideas on aesthetics and material things. Consumption also plays an important part in social relations which the classic examples of gift-giving and spending "good times" with peers prove. Young women creatively use goods they consume, furthermore, to establish new forms of sociality. Other authors do not follow this positive twist of consumption by young women. They stress the traps opened up for young women who follow the unrealistic images of Japanese womanhood in advertisements (Ivy 1995). Nancy Rosenberger (2001) also shows that the generation of young single women turns to consumption because they have difficulties to express themselves, for instance, at work.

Anthropologist and former ad agency worker McCreery (2000) also builds on a generational notion, but is less condemnatory. He cites a large body of data legitimizing his idea that the Japanese have changed from "worker bees to wary shoppers." In the 1980s, when "Japanese consumerism had become the envy and marvel of the world" (McCreery 2000: 248), the baby boom generation lived self-indulgence to its utter limits. Not just a jeans, but a designer jeans, not just a bag, but a Vuitton bag, not just bottled water, but French mineral water. With men confined to their desks, women above all reaped the material rewards of consumer society. McCreery mentions the still abundant lifestyles of the "silver aristocrats," retirees whose career boomed in the glorious bubble years, but he is cautious to make any assessments on the consumption attitudes and behaviors of the post-bubble generations. What he seems to imply is that especially for the baby boomers consumption is the ultimate identity-marker. The younger generations are "snacking" or "grazing," no longer fully indulging in consumerism, but maintaining a neutral distance to products offered to them, which is particularly disturbing for marketers who prefer a passionate consumption-addicted generation above all.[4] Such a generation apparently is the baby boom generation, the same one author and marketing consultant Fields (1989) identified as "Japan's new consumer generation" in the late 1980s.

In these ethnologies there is not much eye for the other side of consumption, the downside. The downside of the Japanese consumption frenzy is waste. Waste in tremendous quantities. A much quoted number of 30 million plastic bags are carried out of the retail sector each year.[5] The sector responds to the great cultural importance

[3] The "resisting values" argument can also be found in a chapter by Moeran and Skov (1993). The chapter deals with Christmas, the "theatre of consumption," in Japan. Young people are said to indulge in the Japanese makeover of Christmas as a youth cultural rejection of adult values in favor of "hedonist consumption." This might all be true, but it is not backed by much evidence.

[4] See Goy-Yamamoto (2004) for a similar claim.

[5] See http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20070403i1.html.

that is put on thoroughly wrapping products.[6] Confectionary products are wrapped individually in small plastic bags before being put in another larger one. Fresh products like meat, fish, or dairy that are already securely packed in plastic get another on-the-spot wrapping by the cashier. Et cetera. The resulting large amount of plastic waste is, for the most part, burned releasing gigantic amounts of air pollutives. And waste of plastic bags is just one issue. Japan is also a 24-h consumer society *par excellence* with almost no store closing days except for a few days around new year's day, long shopping hours for most stores and 24-h shopping in the huge and fiercely competitive market of Japanese convenience stores. It can also boast the world's highest vending machine density per capita.[7] Most of the machines are selling hot and cold drinks around the clock, but there is no limit to what can be sold from the estimated 5.6 million vending machines that literally can be found at every street corner. These days they include elaborate LCD-displays and other gadgets that help to raise the energy use per vending machine.[8] It is possible to continue to list, but it is safe to summarize here that Japanese consumerism, however profoundly related to its culture, is a threat to the Japanese and global environment.[9] Who is responding to this threat, or, who is willing to: shoppers, consumer organizations, civic groups, individuals?

Shopping as a Political Act

Michele Micheletti is an advocate of the message that shopping has political virtue and can be a political act (Micheletti 2003; Micheletti et al. 2004). Shopping is political when with purchasing products or services one is trying to further a public cause. Buying organic food as a routine or because of specific allergies is not a political act (see also Halkier 2004, and Shah et al., 2007a, b). Buying it because

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[6]See Hendry (1993) on the cultural and social importance of wrapping in Japan, not only of products, but of buildings, bodies, relationships, expressions, etc.

[7]See http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2010.html.

[8]For more on the devastating effects of consumption on the ecology, landscape, and lives of ordinary citizens in Japan, see "The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence" by Gavan McCormack (1996). Yet, Japan is called the most energy-frugal of the advanced nations (expressed in amounts of energy used per dollar worth of economic activity) due to "superior technology and a national spirit to avoid waste," according to Prime Minister Fukuda in the International Herald Tribune of 5–6 July, 2008. The same article reports that Japan's emissions of carbon dioxide have continued to grow. One can only wonder what Japan's scores would be if it would scale down the energy-frugal production of yet another type of car, again a new brand of canned coffee, an even larger collection of TV screens, etc. Furthermore, with even the Prime Minister citing the national spirit to avoid waste (referring to the concept of "mottainai," or the regret to waste something – material or not – of value; see Aoyagi-Usui and Vinken (2003)) it is all the more striking that anthropologists have not included the theme of waste in their studies on Japan's mass consumption.

[9]As a side note: In the park surrounding my workplace in Osaka there are numerous large waste bins that encouragingly read in vast English block letters: "Please waste."

one wants to encourage more safe and sustainable food production is. Micheletti shows how citizens are using the marketplace to express political, social, and normative values beyond issues of price, taste, and quality of goods. This form of participation, also called "political consumerism," can start with private concerns and can end with the shaping of political identities and further political action, which is particularly the case for young people and women. For these groups political consumerism is a site for political agency: consumer choices become a code for people assuming responsibility for their own lives and that of others. With numerous historical examples, Micheletti shows that women have often been excluded from institutions of the public sphere and have created other sites to work for their (political) interests, for instance through decisions on consumer issues in their daily shopping.

Dietlind Stolle and Marc Hooghe (2005) argue that "public awareness," "regularity of action" and "motivation" are basic criteria in order for consumption to qualify as a form of political consumerism.[10] First, in the case of product labeling for instance, citizens who are aware of these labels and its ethical, social, or ecological dimensions must be separated from those who are not. The political consumer buys products because of public virtue: for political, ethical, or social reasons. Second, a one-shot consumer decision based on this public awareness or virtue does not make one a political consumer yet. Regular and frequent conscientious purchases make the difference. Third, the motivations should be public: making a relationship between buying labeled products and concerns for the environment, equality in society, global social justice, child labor, for instance. A fourth element could be added for those true activists who link their concerns to other forms of political action: join a consumer group, sign petitions, contact businesses, politicians, civil servants, etc. These actions separate the active from the passive political consumers.

As shown in the introductory chapter, one can place political consumerism at the core of the alternative civic engagement trend (see Chap. 6 of this volume and Stolle and Hooghe 2005). The structure, issues, mobilization, and styles of involvement in this type of engagement are different from the more classic forms of engagement. Before looking into this type of engagement in Japan as far as consumerism goes, it is time to shortly present how the traditional consumer organizations in Japan are doing.

Lifestyle Citizens, Consume!

The issues at stake for consumer organizations in Japan are product safety and product labeling. Unsafe and mislabeled products make headlines in all major media in Japan almost daily. Antimonopoly regulations and product liability were

[10] See also Stolle et al. (2005).

also high on the agenda of the manifold of consumer organizations in Japan, some of which are established well before World War II, most of which are run by and for women, and a few of which operate entirely without cooperative ties to government or business organizations. There are several compelling studies on the history of the consumer movement in Japan.[11] Especially the study by Maclachlan (2002) contains an analysis of the interplay between consumer movement advocates on the one hand and Japan's bureaucracy, politicians of the ruling parties, and business on the other. The former in general lack meaningful access to the latter, yet at moments of dissension in the alliances of the latter, advocates and public opinion on consumer issues seem to function as "a swing vote in the decision-making process, propelling policy debate toward a conclusion when it might otherwise have ended in a stalemate" (Maclachlan 2002: 139). All determining, Maclachlan shows, is the level of cohesiveness among the pro-business, producer and not consumer-oriented interests that control the policy process in Japan. When there is either diffuse and disorganized or open and sustained conflict, the consumer organizations are able to mobilize and activate public opinion to make a difference. At moments of conflict the vested interest groups are most vulnerable to outside influence in the form of movement-activated public opinion (Maclachlan 2002: 9). When there is no crack in the closed network, when the opportunity structure to engage in the policy process as a movement or an individual is weak, public opinion has little to no effect on this process.

Maclachlan and before her Vogel (1999) attack the stereotype that consumer activism in Japan is passive, docile, or even irrational (e.g., not fighting protectionism even if this results in high consumer prices) leaving behind duped consumers. The organizations do lack privileged relations with the decision makers, but they have a history of forming alliances with key actors in the polity waiting for the right moment (the moment of dissension, Maclachlan would argue) to have an impact on the policy agenda. They win in bits and only occasionally, but they are not completely out of the picture. More importantly, they share the rationality of their policy-making and business counterparts in emphasizing self-sufficiency, safety, and quality. They aim at protecting small-scale native food producers and promote buying Japanese, which in turn reinforces trade protection. They oppose market deregulation or agricultural liberalization and instead advocate heavy regulation in order to guarantee safety and quality. They urge the improvement of product quality first and frown upon market stunts with low priced, imported goods. They accept higher prices if it protects domestic markets and ensures high-quality products (they fight price hikes if they do not serve this purpose). With consumer organizations, policy makers, and business sharing these goals, it is no surprise that they are busy collaborating, instead of marching the streets and staging confrontational actions. That might seem passive and it is if one forgets to focus on the shared interests and the processes resulting from this. If one thinks organizations should push for

[11] See, e.g., Garon (1997), Furlong and Strikwerda (1997); Kirkpatrick (1975), Maclachlan (2002), Vogel (1999).

liberalization, deregulation, "or other outcomes the reporters assume the Japanese consumers must want" (Vogel 1999: 201), then they are passive and docile indeed. If one focuses on the shared interests and joint efforts, one sees an actively involved consumer movement. Consumer activism is another example of Japanese civil society that is not confronting their "opponents" by trumpeting their causes in noisy conflict, but that is instead seeking close cooperative relationships aimed at pressing issues when the timing is right. Consumer organizations in Japan have staged several boycott campaigns in the past. In the late 1950s and early 1960s there was a newspaper boycott when papers sharply raised their prices in a cartel agreement, in the early 1970s there was a boycott of shops selling products with dangerous additives and at that time there was also a very successful color TV makers' boycott when the sets were overpriced after price fixing.[12] It is, however, safe to say consumer activist organization are not often using boycotts as a pressure strategy. Consumer organizations are also engaged in buycotts, especially in their promotion of buying Japanese and in their consumer educational activities, but also as a consumer force itself through its powerful buyers' clubs and consumer cooperatives.

Consumer organizations are not engaged in responding to consumerism and its side-effects. The shared interest and close relationships that the organizations wish to seek with the business community and government are reasons for this. Another, related reason is the diffuseness of the consumer identity concept. Maclachlan (2002: 78–82) provides different linguistic examples showing that the concept of the consumer was stretched by these organizations to cover a wider range of publicly more acceptable identities. The disliked terms "consumer" and "consumption" highlighted passiveness, an antiproducer attitude, and wastefulness. The solution was found in a term that covers producer, citizen, consumer, and worker, all converging in the concept of "lifestyle person." Consumption just for the sake of consumption was suspect. A term was coined that includes the active workings (by women) to secure survival of the family and improvement of one's livelihood and lifestyle. The lifestyle person is working while consuming, improving family and community, not alone, but with its allies such as local business and government. Consumption, in that way, is civic engagement. Refraining from it is an act unworthy of a citizen, uncivil behavior. Fighting consumerism would mimic fighting the hard work for improvement of life as a Japanese citizen.

Slow Down, Eat Well

Concern for the side-effects of hyper-consumption and consumerism in Japan picked up, however, a few years after the turn of the millennium when some high profile opinion leaders started advocating their versions of the "slow life."

[12] All examples are from Maclachlan (2002).

Anthropologist Shinichi Tsuji and musician Ryuichi Sakamoto are two of those leaders. Tsuji is a university professor, author, and director of the "Sloth Club." Ryuichi Sakamoto is an Academy Award winning composer and head of "Boomerang Net," a nonprofit organization that opposes a nuclear reprocessing plant in the north of Japan.

The two have gained celebrity status in Japan and it is hard to avoid news of their most recent whereabouts and initiatives. They are in the media more often than not. Both men can be found on a website of NTT, Japan's telecom giant, that reports on both mentors' good intentions on an eco-meeting in 2004 sponsored by NTT.[13] In June 2008, Tsuji is still in the news as he announces a successful domestication of the global blackout movement. This movement promotes switching off the lights for a couple of hours each year.[14] Tsuji added the idea of lighting candles. The Candle Night movement was born.[15] Tsuji hopes that people spend the blackout time at a more leisurely pace than usual. Says Tsuji: "Candle Night can be enjoyed in lots of ways. When it becomes fun, you might want to do it every week. Then it might even prompt a change in lifestyle" (The Daily Yomiuri, June 21, 2008). Sakamoto and especially Tsuji are the Japanese ambassadors of the "do good, feel good" movements found all over the developed world that use celebrities to reach out to a wider public.

The "slow life"-organization that is secured of continuous attention is the Tokyo-based Sloth Club, started in 1999 by the very same Tsuji. A sloth is an extremely slow mammal living in tropical rainforest in South and Central America hanging upside down in trees for most parts of its life. The Sloth Club promotes copying the sloth's low-energy, nonviolent, peaceful, symbiotic, and recycling lifestyle. "We are going to be sloth," the nongovernmental organization's website announces.[16] Becoming a sloth is not about becoming lazy or unproductive, but about engaging in slow activities, such as gardening, farming, unplugging and lighting up candle lights, or doing slow business. The latter relates to promoting fair trade, organic products, and local produce. The Sloth Club group operates several businesses including slow cafes. It also organizes trips to far away micronations under the umbrella of "Slow Tourism." They head for Ecuador, Bhutan, Myanmar (…) and the Iriomote Islands to reconnect with nature ("slow tourism is reconnecting"), experience the local culture ("slow tourism is the cultural trip") or to plant a tree ("slow tourism is the ecology"). The Sloth Club seems skillfully branded business.

Much of the "slow life" trend is business, maybe especially so in Japan. The "slow food" branch of the "slow life" enterprise certainly is. It is fraught with nostalgic

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[13] See http://www.ntt.co.jp/kankyo/eco_e/talk3_e/talk.html#profile.

[14] See, e.g., http://www.earthhour.org/.

[15] See http://www.candle-night.org/english/, including hints what to do under candle light. Another short appearance of Professor Tsuji was July 7, 2008 on the Japanese version of CNN that brought an item on the slow life movement.

[16] See http://www.sloth.gr.jp/E-index.htm.

and nativist notions of the good life of Japan's yesteryears, with ideas of the natural relationship of Japanese people with the unique quality of their domestic produce, even relating to discourses of the real Japanese lifestyle, that of farming at the spiritual center of the nation, the country-side. Notions that are eagerly reproduced by foreign media.[17] Leaving all mythical language aside, the slow food trend in Japan can also be regarded as smart business. The icon of the slow food trend is a "homemaker" Harumi Kurihara, "Japan's Martha Stewart," according to a 2004 article in Japan Inc.[18] Harumi Kurihara is a cookbook writer, restaurateur, and TV chef, but more so a "style guru." Millions of cookbooks, recipe leaflets, and style magazines leaped from her business brain to the kitchen shelves and coffee tables of Japan. The publishing world picked up on the trend. A foreign journalist who returned to live in Japan was amazed how the magazine racks changed face since the early 2000s: "I saw a plethora of new magazines using phrases like 'slow living,' 'self-sufficiency,' and 'natural life' in their titles."[19] Especially food and cooking, but also forest huts, wooden furniture, light bulbs, rustic Okinawan holidays, bathing, longing for the rural, anything imaginable was branded as part of the slow life trend. Also in 2004, strikingly, an English language weekly in Japan, Metropolis, reported on the slow life trend, including references to Professor Tsuji.[20] Many reconciling thoughts on the need to slow down, but very few concrete examples other than a booming "culinary landscape" to exploit by trendy "slow cafes," topnotch French restaurants, and up-market bistro's aiming for the Best Slow Food Restaurant Award. Although slow architecture, slow music (think Sakamoto), slow cities, and even slow prefectures are also being spotted in Japan, the most successful "market segment" of the slow life movement in this country is slow food.[21]

The slow life trend and especially the business side of it centering on food is firmly established in Japan. What is striking is that it has evolved without much reference to the polity. No debates on policies, laws, regulations. No thoughts on the role of government, national or local. No demands to political parties or bureaucracy. It seems a free-floating type of movement. Perhaps better, a "feel good" consumer trend, more than a movement. It is a consumer trend with its own heroes, its key

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[17] See the short movie and the mythical explanations ("background facts") on the Japanese and rice "Japan: The Slow Life. Tune in, drop out, grow rice" by Jason Cohn. Check http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/2005/11/japan_the_slow.html.

[18] See http://www.japaninc.com/article.php?articleID=1296.

[19] See the commentary in *Wired*, 2006, issue 1: "Japan grows a beard"; see also http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/commentary/imomus/2006/01/70013.

[20] See http://metropolis.co.jp/tokyo/538/feature.asp. Strikingly 2004 seems to be a year in which "slow life" moved fastest in Japan. Many media accounts are from that year. It was also the year in which the international bestseller "In Praise of Slowness" by Carl Honoré appeared. The book is a full account of all slow life trends, including slow food (first of all), slow cities, slow medicine, slow sex, slow leisure, slow etc.

[21] See LOHAS, Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability, a network that brings together companies that practice "responsible capitalism." LOHAS does not beat around the bush and simply regards LOHAS itself as a market segment. See http://www.lohas.com/.

companies, its designer magazines, its carefully crafted ads, convincing the Japanese consumer to go slow, meaning, to buy more of their own produce and exclude others. It perfectly matched the focus of Japanese traditional consumer advocacy mentioned afore. Moreover, one has the chance to act politically by eating well. One can advocate a cause without having to do make painful chances to one's lifestyle or do something completely all-absorbing such as joining, volunteering, discussing, lobbying, or protesting.

Buy Nothing

The most radical way is to buy nothing at all, something that BND promotes for at least 1 day in the year. BND is a 1-day moratorium on consumer spending, a day of protest, and a day to celebrate sustainable lifestyles, according to its promoters. It all started in 1992 in Vancouver, Canada, "as a day for society to examine the issue of over-consumption" (Cohn 2005). Now BND-events are taking place in 65 countries with allegedly millions of people joining. From a "relatively insignificant event in its early days" BND has become a "huge phenomenon," according to one of its founders, Kalle Lasn, an ex-advertising executive and editor of the Canadian anticonsumerist *Adbusters* magazine (Cohn 2005; see also Revkin 2007). BND took off worldwide when the campaign was put on the internet after the mid-1990s. Part of its global success was rooted in the use of a message-board system. This created "nodes" in a network with which several cities in the world could function as local BND headquarters. In some countries, like in Japan, there is an elaborate central website showing, among others, what events took place and are in planning.[22]

There is no formal organization behind BND. The basic philosophy is that anyone can organize an event they think fits the BND message. While there is no real organization, there is a sense of collectivity. At the level of imagery there seems to be a sense of being part of a larger whole. Although most country websites look different, they all do refer to the same imagery. BND-related logos, posters, and pictures provided by the makers of *Adbusters*, the headquarters of BND at the image level, can be found across the world. Also, the website of *Adbusters* has a mailing list, a list they call the culture jammers network, with which subscribers are kept informed on upcoming BND-events.[23]

Kalle Lasn is not only the cofounder of BND and cofounder of Adbusters, but also the author of the activist book *Culture Jam* (Lasn 2000). In that book, Lasn criticizes contemporary consumer culture in hilarious and furious ways. Lasn sees big corporations and their advertising dominating all facets of life and causing all the ills, both physically and mentally, known to humankind. We are made

[22] See http://www.bndjapan.org.

[23] See http://www.adbusters.org/.

physically sick by the ads of tobacco and liquor companies and their likes. Mood disorders, panic attacks, depressions, and mental ills, are also caused by advertising.[24] Moreover, corporations are repressing our freedom of speech as well as harming the environment. Lasn's trademark statement is that we are bombarded by 3,000 marketing messages a day, ranging from a traditional TV-commercial to the small hidden ad found at the bottom of the holes on a golf course. The solution is to fight back starting with creatively jamming the messages from the corporate world. By making fake advertisements building on the logos of well-known brands, by creating new products (clothes, sneakers, etc.) carrying messages against consumer culture, by offering aesthetically equally powerful designs that carry a social activist message, and by doing something creative at BND. That can be going to a store and just running around the aisles with an empty cart. It can be creating a stand to cut up credit cards. It can even be something classic such as staging a demonstration or organizing a teach-in.

The timing of BND is North American. Each year BND takes place late November. In the United States it is on "Black Friday," the friday after Thanksgiving when the shopping frenzy for Christmas is at its peak. The BND's around the world follow suit, usually taking the next day, Saturday, which is the busiest shopping day of the week in many countries. In many developed countries in Europe and Asia the year-end shopping battles late November still have to reach their zeniths. Still, at that time, most store displays, most advertising, and most public spaces in many countries, also in Japan, are already preparing for the upcoming Christmas consumer fest.

BND is not without criticasters even among anticonsumerist circles. BND and its more comic relief mimic the "Church of Stop Shopping" of the performer Reverend Billy (starring in the documentary "What Would Jesus Buy?") are contested for being too radical and that buying smart instead of buying nothing is the solution.[25] Buying a bicycle on BND, or buying from a thrift store, buying a membership to a car share network, buying organic, durable, reused are, according to these critics, the "intelligent choices" to make instead of holding one's buying-breath just that 1 day. Legitimate eco-retailers do need customers, not boycotts, it is noted. Others state that BND is an example of leftist, anti-American known-alls who aim to let people feel guilty and live an impossible idealized "simple life." The list of critics include those who would rather listen to young people living the right way early on in their lives instead of hearing from those, like Lasn, who first secured a comfortable life and then turned "green." Others emphasize that regulations for producers are easier to implement and more effective than forcing people to buy

[24] See the interview with Lasn at the SustainAbility network http://www.sustainability.com/network/global-influencer.asp?id=201.

[25] See the November 2007 web article by Andrew Revkin for the New York Times' Dot Earth and its long list of responses for these criticisms: http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/11/22/a-fresh-advertising-pitch-buy-nothing/. For the Church of Stop Shopping see http://www.rev-billy.com/.

differently, thus advocating that producers instead of consumers are best targeted. The productiveness of protesting consumerism by walking around in Wal-Mart with an empty shopping cart is also mildly questioned. Counter criticism is voiced too: they argue that seeing BND as a gimmick is pointing out the obvious. The very point of BND is to bring attention to corporate culture's consumptive activities with the hope that people start thinking by themselves, and buy smart or stop buying every once in a while. BND is not a doctrine, someone says, that tells you how to live your life, but an inspiration to think differently about the taken-for-granted way of life.

Buy Nothing Day Japan

From December 2007 to April 2008 I conducted eight interviews (in English) with people involved in BND Japan: old-timers, first-timers, men, women, Japanese citizens ,and foreigners living here, all about half/half.[26] Most of them were in their mid-30s, one just passed 26 years of age. Most interviewees were delivered by one person, the coordinator of BND Japan. Three people I interviewed lived in Tokyo, three in Kansai (the area around the cities of Osaka, Kyoto, and Kobe), one each in the smaller cities of Gifu and Nagano, in central Japan. I balanced the number of men–women, foreigner–Japanese, region, etc., carefully before contacting them. Still, the key criterion was their ability to speak English.[27] After interviewing the coordinator I contacted others by email with an outline of the intended interview. The outline I emailed the interviewees listed several questions on how they got to know BND, why they engaged in it, what activity they engaged in, how they would define BND and the people engaged in it, why they think it is necessary, whether their lifestyle is low-consumption, whether they think BND helps and whether it should stay as it is. Another group of questions related to politics in Japan, their interest, activity, and opinions in this realm, their opinion on NGOs in Japan and their own connectedness to groups with a similar mission as BND in Japan. Crucial here was the question whether or not their BND engagement is an alternative for activism in politics or other groups. A fair share of the start of every conversation went into learning about the lives of the interviewees, their histories, and their desired futures.[28]

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[26] This is a small number of interviews and cautions me to draw any definite conclusions about BND Japan. After carefully comparing the first six interview transcripts, however, I did reach the conclusion that a point of saturation was imminent. In qualitative interviewing it will always be a question whether one has definitely reached this point or not.

[27] Occasionally I checked with some interviewees if I was not sure about the meaning of their responses.

[28] The following not only builds on the interviews, but also on a content analysis of (the English version of) the website of BND Japan. I fully skimmed all links on the site to underlying pages, archives, and links.

With the coordinator BND revived in Japan. The coordinator is a European woman in her 30s living in Kyoto. She knew BND from the USA where she has lived. Soon after she arrived in Japan in the late 1990s she more or less stumbled on a powerful idea to start BND in Kyoto. She found a bag of Santa Claus suits in the garbage. The idea of Zenta Claus was born. Since then, at every BND in late November, right in front of the high-end department stores in central Kyoto, one or more persons dressed as a Santa Claus quietly sit, legs folded and eyes closed, among the bustling crowd of shoppers. "The concept," the coordinator says, "builds on the Japanese tradition of meditation and at the same time comments the Western Santa Claus shopping spree." The BND Japan website adds some further authority: the Zenta icon refers to a Zen realization by the German artist Yana Milev: "the revolution starts where you sit."[29] The iconic Zenta image caught on quickly and is now part of the core imagery of BND around the world. The act of meditating as a Santa Claus in the midst of shopping war zones brought the necessary mix of protest and street performance to BND.

The coordinator is a highly educated woman, working as a researcher in university education in Japan. She is also a highly networked person, naming a large number of organizations to which she relates and that focus on alternative lifestyles or giving a voice to grassroots movements in Japan. She is no match to the aforementioned Kalle Lasn and his aggressively voiced conspiracy thinking. As a "Kalle Lasn"-light version, she expressed concerns over business control, amazement too, but no harsh condemning warrior-type of slogans. She is the key initiator and coordinator of, as the BND Japan website claims, a network of about 350 activists and 15 businesses and organizations.[30] She provides the core body of text on the BND Japan website. She produces the newsletters and she serves as a webmaster of the BND Japan website. She also plays a key role in the network of most interviewees and their activities related to BND. Without her, the interviewees frequently noted with worry, BND Japan will likely come to a full stop. The coordinator herself stresses that at first things started with her friends from the eco-movement and slow food movement, from where it snowballed through friends of friends, mainly in the Kansai area: "Only in a later stage BND 'professionalized' with me as its central coordinator."

BND Japan is not a movement and not an organization, it is a 1-day event, the interviewees stress. The BND Japan website confirms: "Events are organized by anyone who wants to. Therefore, every place, every event is different. It's up to you. So far, in Japan, there are small business owners, students, designers, teachers, "regular working people," dads and mom's, citizen's groups (environmental groups, peace groups, labor groups) organizing events and activities."[31] The coordinator notes that "coordination is needed in order to match with the central BND/Adbusters team in Canada and for backing up communication channels. It is also needed in

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[29] http://www.bndjapan.org/english2/about/thezentastory.html.

[30] http://www.bndjapan.org/english2/about/faqs.html.

[31] See previous note.

order to network, to connect new and already involved people." Her coordination team is 10 people strong. This points to some ambivalence on the status of BND. To the outside world, on its website, BND appears an inclusive and fluid network. From the interviews it looks as if BND is a real movement with a strong leader who has branded BND in the Japanese market with her invention of the Zenta icon and is now busy directing a vibrant team who, in turn, connect to a body of highly networked activists.

Before assessing BND as an emerging form of civic engagement along the lines of the Stolle and Hooghe framework (see Chap. 1), a short glimpse is offered on what the interviewees did on the last BND's in Japan.

In Kyoto in 2007, Zenta made its sixth yearly appearance at the street intersection near Kyoto's main department stores. A group of assistant-Zenta's (including children one of the interviewees brought along) handed out flyers, tried to talk with passers-by or when people stopped explained what their action was about, played musical instruments, did several things, in short, to attract attention. "Some were interested, but many were too busy to understand the meaning of what was going on… Many walk very fast, and we were unable to catch them to provide information. It was a too noisy a place too," says a 30-plus-year-old man from Tokyo who traveled to Kyoto for the occasion.

In Osaka BND is different. The coordinator instigated the Osaka event that started in 2003. She recommended a group of people working for homeless people to join in and to support an event in Nagai tent park village, a homeless village in the south of Osaka. The 30-something Japanese man who got involved as a supporter and who names himself a "working poor," told me that at the event, he and other "have-somes" brought food to the homeless at BND. The food was donated by an organic food shop in Osaka. He was happy to support this as "most of the poor are forced to consume cheap poisons and wasted food or trashed cans to keep alive." But "BND itself is not poison to the brutal economic system of the world under which poor and homeless are starving. My efforts are directed at trying to destroy this injustice." He is a self-described "anarchist" with a website containing similarly strongly phrased comments and picture reports of protests against evictions of homeless from different Osaka parks.

In Tokyo, BND 2007 passed calmly. Three young American men carried a couch on the central square in front of Shibuya Station, a top location for shopping by younger people from all over the country. The Americans sat down and just relaxed, chatted, and played some music in between the thousands of shoppers passing by every minute. "When asked what we were doing, I told them 'we're relaxing'." There were no flyers and no discussions: "I took it as a funny thing. Nobody reached, but nobody offended either. They all felt safe." A few hours later the police asked them to move away with their couch because "they could not just sit there doing nothing. They said: "you're using space and that is a disturbance." Many passers-by were confused, but we did not disturb anyone" says the 26-year-old American interviewee.

In Gifu, a small city not far from the large urban area of Nagoya, a young Japanese woman organized her first time BND in 2007. She wanted "to do something different,

something other than what others do… If I want people to think, I need to make it fun. Yet, I could not come up with anything." With her mother and her mother's friend, a bar owner, they eventually decided to have "a swapping event exchanging items with no money involved in the bar of my mother's friend. Something with general items, not only about the environment… It was a great success: many people, locals, outsiders not in our network, many from the Brazilian and Peruvian minority community turned up. A great diversity of things happened, new communications arose and the networking was great." Cooked dishes were traded for things from stores, handmade items were swapped, and the bar gave items away.

In Nagano, the city in the midst of the Alps in central Japan, a 34-year-old Canadian organized the Global Cup Soccer Tournament for BND in 2006. People dressed in costumes mimicking global brands kicked a ball shaped as the world. "The goal was to show how global corporations are kicking the world around by encouraging overconsumption: a street action, not aggressive, not angry, but outgoing." They also handed out flyers, talked to people and invited them to come to a community center in downtown Nagano and watch the movie "The Corporation," a movie set in Vancouver about the origin of corporations as a legal entity, but also about sweatshops, pollution, and how people are shaped into buying things. Some 40 people, mostly Japanese, came to the community center out of a 1,000 flyers handed out. "A good score."

Not many other things happened in Japan at the last few BND's. The BND Japan website offers an endearing report from Guam (!): a person admits to have put a BND sticker on a shopping bus that drives tourists, many of whom are Japanese, to the K-mart.

BND is an exemplary form of the newly emerging, more fluid repertoires of civic engagement. It is in terms of structure, issues, mobilization, and type of involvement as I will demonstrate below. There is also an overlapping feature in the people participating in BND Japan, an overlap that might be indicative for people who enjoy these emerging repertoires of action in general.

The *structure* in these types of repertoires is informal and not bureaucratic. It is horizontal, flexible, and building on loose connections. It is such that it can respond quickly to emerging issues. BND has a strong leader, but this is certainly not advertised on the BND website.[32] The relationships of the event organizers and participants with the leader are not that tight or exclusive, especially not outside the leader's hometown of Kyoto. There is no guidebook defining the structure of BND Japan. What is more, many interviewees spontaneously expressed their aversion to tight structures, as a model for day-to-day life in Japan or for BND. There is a general distrust of organizations: "There are no "nice" organizations. There are a lot of activist organizations… but they are looking for sponsors to survive, so end up not being able anymore to criticize media or big corporations," according to one of the interviewees, a salaried IT-worker in Tokyo who hides his BND activism

[32] What is more: in order to contact her, I had to email BND Canada to get a name of who is involved in BND Japan as this is very hard to find on the website of BND Japan.

from his colleagues and clients and maintains the Japanese version of the BND Japan website. Almost all interviewees, however, were closely involved in at least one other network of activists, whether that concerned community issues or a global creative anarchism platform. Much at BND builds on a network of friends of friends or on an even looser network of people who joined in after meeting just once at a party. They do things at their locale, without much interference of the BND leadership. BND is also open for any new initiative of outsiders. If they report to have organized an event, they are part of BND. The actions themselves make them "member." There is a newsletter/bulletin board network, and people, also those who do not organize something at any moment in time, can join it without any screening. There are no membership conditions, no fees or regulations. Much of the BND events are directed at and valued for creating new networks, at networking itself, at learning to know new like-minded people or at "setting up a support system to raise involvement and consciousness" as the Nagano organizer puts it. Largely existing as a virtual network through its website, BND Japan has a potential to address suddenly arising issues and tap into global actions with few effort. The fact that its core actions are concentrated to 1 day, however, makes the network dormant for most part of the year. The irregularly distributed e-newsletter does not really change this.

In terms of *issues* BND qualifies as an emerging repertoire of engagement if these issues are less institutional or party political, if they contain lifestyle elements, if they are not per se defined as "political" are about daily decisions and close to home, if the issues themselves make people feel connected, not membership or ideological identification. It is obvious BND deals with lifestyle elements and daily decisions in its focus on the side-effects of consumerism. In Japan it is as much about the negative impact on the environment as about the mental addiction to buying, about the loss of modesty, the loss of the traditional hesitation as regards wants and money, about consciousness of where goods and foods are from, how they are produced, the seasonal fit, about a sustainable lifestyle in general. It is definitely far away from the world of politics as is. "Politics and politicians, they do not matter. They are too adjusted in Japan to look at as an arena of change," the above mentioned IT-worker says. "BND should never become political, if so, the Japanese will stay away. Politics is not "their problem," it is something for those from above," the Gifu organizer adds. "My attention is more to the base, my circle, there where I make the first steps of change. I think of my social circles as a tree in which each should do what he/she can. I can tell students, kids, mothers and they can use that in their own tree," a BND Kyoto participant tells. "Most parties in Japan do not want to work for change and politics is a different world for most Japanese anyway… I prefer groups that are local and work on a daily basis, deal with daily life," the Canadian Nagano organizer stresses. The Kyoto BND visitor from Tokyo mentioned above and the Osaka organizer both emphasize their anarchist lifestyles and ideologies that obviously align with a strong dislike of organized politics in general. "I seek people with similar views, who have a common spirit, the do-it-yourself spirit… Even if you're not an artist, live like one: make your own food, clothes, basic things. Make it yourself. Resist capitalism. Make not consuming part of your lifestyle.

Cooking. Creating. Enjoyment," the Tokyo anarchist (and video artist, visual artist, part-time anthropology lecturer, art journalist, and graphic designer) assures me. "There is no connection with politics, with economy, no aims to influence policy outcomes, no lobbying. BND is more aimed to serve as a network, to connect people, and to serve a cultural goal, that is to make a difference in culture," the BND Japan coordinator summarizes. BND and its issues are far away from the polity, but are they close to the daily lives of the participants, do they overlap with their lifestyles? Yes and no, is the unsatisfactory answer. Particularly the more ideologically inspired participants, such as the two anarchists mentioned above, walk the talk in full. There are more people who relate BND to their own life, but the coordinator admits: "The relationship with my own ecological/political lifestyle and BND is weak. So it is for many others." "The Culture Jam message to buy nothing isn't fit for me. I buy, but only the best stuff," says the Gifu organizer who ensures me her Prada wallet is her only high brand item ("an example of buying good quality stuff that lasts long"). Most interviewees do, however, make an effort, however small in some cases. For instance, by driving an older, smaller car instead of the brand new German ones, which colleagues of the IT-worker drive. By carrying one's own chopsticks ("my hashi") around and refusing the ones that food stores give away. By having a private BND more than once a month, even if that is sometimes because one simply lacked time to shop that particular day.

As regards *mobilization*, BND fits the image of spontaneity, ad hoc, and easy entry/easy exit so typical for emerging forms of civic engagement. As stated, anyone having an idea to organize a BND event can do so. The American carrying his couch into Tokyo's Shibuya station area did consult the coordinator of BND ahead of the action, but they did not meet or discuss any of the particulars. Just as long as they do not violate the BND motto of not selling or buying anything, they can go ahead. The BND coordinator does send flyers, booklets, and other items to the ones who plan an event. In the course toward each BND and at BND itself, there is no formal strategy to mobilize people. At BND itself, participants aim at reaching out to the surprised public who are usually unaware BND was coming to town. The exception is the Gifu event which was carefully planned and organized in order to reach as much people, including local politicians, as possible. The people mobilized to participate are usually friends of friends and they are predominantly foreigners living in Japan. Most interviewees expressed their regret about this, wishing more Japanese people would join in. "I invited more people to join me, but all who came were fellow-Americans," says the Tokyo organizer. "In Kyoto now more people participate, but almost all foreigners. I want this to change," an old-time Kyoto BND participant says. The very nature of BND makes entry and exit easy. Most organizers and participants do not know if they will be joining BND again next time. As the BND coordinator says: "BND is "activism for beginners." For many it is a first involvement leading to more intense social activism, doing something useful not just for themselves or their family but for other people, aiming at social change." This analysis diverges somewhat from the experiences of the interviewees, many of whom are expert organizers and active participants in other social change networks before and while joining BND. An interviewee who frequently stressed

she is “only a common homemaker” turned out to be an active social entrepreneur, contacting people in the local parent–teacher association, asking questions to politicians, aiming at mothers who visit her own language teaching school, and “trying to change others, meaning people I know, friends, family, students.” The interviews present several contradictions that people engaged in the new types of activism deal with: they aim at broader social change, try to reach out beyond their own circle, and at the same time they stress it’s important to impact one’s own circle, one’s own life. “The importance of BND is that it reinforces commitment and the self. It tells you you’re OK… It is a way to stress yourself that it is important, to strengthen your values,” the BND coordinator says.

The *type of involvement* in emerging repertoires of action is less collective or group-oriented and more individualized. This does not per se seem to fit with BND Japan. Many forms of action exist within the BND repertoire, which require just one creatively inspired daring individual. True, also at BND Japan much depends on these individuals. But even with foreigners outnumbering Japanese in BND Japan, BND Japan is not per se an individualistic form of action. Efforts are made to come out in numbers when performing on the streets, either flyering, meditating or kicking a globe. Efforts are also made to connect to other groups, such as the homeless or minority groups, or to be backed up by groups, such as food stores, cafes, broadcast media, and local community groups. Interviewees, foreign or Japanese, are aware that in Japan some types of actions are counterproductive and other types of action, especially when more Japanese flavored, are more effective. Loud, noisy, provocative, and strongly political or ideological actions and angry, aggressive, and confrontational attitudes are not liked, not by the BND participants and according to them not by the Japanese public. “Never will something good come out of pointing fingers,” the Gifu organizer explains. “It is important not to be too forceful. That is not effective. Just show others your “my hashi” at dinners. Show others you use paper on two sides, that it is nonwhite paper, the “homemaker” from Kyoto argues. “It is a strategic choice: humor keeps protest non-violent. In Japan angry protest would not be OK. Demonstrations would be too strong. It was difficult to talk to people in the street, to impose thinking on others, to send out the BND message and at the same time communicate that we do not want to hurt small business or that we cross legal lines,” the Nagano organizer points out. “The Culture Jam message is useful for Japan, but difficult to fit in in Japan,” the Tokyo anarchist maintains. He continues: “It is not impossible but it is more important to live like a culture jammer. The key weapon is humor, as for instance the Clown Army at G8 summits shows, because too much aggression puts Japanese people off… Yet, BND Japan should go beyond funny and provide more pictorial, graphic information to make an impact or use Japanese masks, build on the Japanese sense of humor, on the manga/animation tradition or use animistic Gods, e.g., the God of the poor, of the drunken, etc., instead the imported character of Santa Claus.”

The last point is typical for the *kind of people* involved in BND Japan and, perhaps, more in general in new forms of civic engagement. Despite their diverse backgrounds, they share the ability to look at their social activism from a creative, cultural perspective. They build on the knowledge of Japanese culture, seek inspiration

in powerfully designed images, and in a do-it-yourself way create artistic objects with which to support their message. What is also typical is that almost all of them have university training. The "working poor" organizer from Osaka has even visited two of the best universities in Japan. Two of the interviewees work (part-time) at high-level universities. All of them have during their student years been active in various social activism networks. All of them have been outside Japan, including the Japanese nationals, for a longer period in their younger years. Many of them mention a list with different social roles with which they identify. They are not "only" an English teacher or "just" an artist, but also they are also organizers, publicists, musicians, entrepreneurs, consultants, etc. Only a few of them tell me who they are and what they do in a straightforward, single-role way. They are a "mere" homemaker, an "ordinary" salaried man, a university lecturer. Yet, even they have many faces. The homemaker is also an entrepreneur and a language teacher, besides a community activist. The salaried man is also a translator of social activism literature and webmaster. The university lecturer appeared to be one the most networked community activists of the lot. Here we perhaps touch upon the most important feature of the activists involved in BND: they have a social network that is not only large but also diverse, ranging from like-minded, well-educated people engaged in similar activism groups to "ordinary" people sleeping in homeless parks, bringing their kids to school, working hard to make their business a success. If anything they are not one-dimensional, they are not either an activist or something else, they combine different roles and identities in themselves and in their networks.

Conclusions

Consumerism is not a major theme for most Japanese. Nor are its side-effects. Civic activism in Japan that responds to consumerism has either turned into a cleverly branded lifestyle business or lives at the margins when groups of mostly foreigners take the streets once a year to have fun with consumers. In the mean time, the network of businesses, consumer organizations, and governments at different levels makes efforts to promote the hard work of buying. Shopping and consuming is civic engagement as with these acts of Japanese people (i.e., Japanese women) help to improve the livelihood of their family and community, a message all three parties seem to voice. In line with the ideas of political scientist Micheletti, mentioned afore, shopping in Japan has a political virtue and is a political act. It is not about shopping the "good" commodities (fair trade coffee, child labor free apparel, etc.) or about shopping for the causes (e.g., global justice) Micheletti and many other idealists have in mind when they debate political consumerism. High quality home-made produce as well as high-end foreign brands offering products that "last long" are the targets of the Japanese citizen-shoppers. With these commodities one signals that one's lifestyle, one's family, and even one's relationship with the larger community (including local business and government) are doing well.

It is not surprising that consumerism and its downsides are not in the nucleus of policy efforts. What is striking is that the polity is not in the eye of civic activists concerned about consumerism. This is not unique to Japanese civic activism as the American political scientist Eliasoph (1998) eloquently shows. She discovered that American citizens in volunteer groups and other civic organizations avoid politics in these public sphere organizations trying “hard not to care about issues that would require too much talking to solve” and shrinking “their concerns into tasks that they could define as unpolitical” (Eliasoph 1998: 23). With pride, not only the Sloth Club celebrity Tsuji but also the BND-interviewees present themselves as unpolitical people who do not need the political world, who denounce making efforts to lobby, and who have “wisely” turned away from the world of deliberation and decision-making. They have better things to do. Tsuji has a business to run, and the BND-people are thinking about their next humorous move to touch the hearts of consumer-passerby’s on that one shopping day in November. Most of them are foreigners living in Japan, so their access to the political system is limited. Put in opportunity structure terms: the degree to which they are likely to be able to gain access to power and to manipulate the political system is low if not equal to zero.[33] Yet, it is not only opportunity structure. There is another side to it too. The very identities of the people involved in BND prohibit full-scale involvement in the polity. Given their desire to live a diversified life fulfilling multiple roles, they are not likely to indulge in a political world that, probably especially so in Japan, requires a single-mindedness, a topical focus, and, importantly, an all-encompassing one-dimensional identity as a political activist or, worse, a politician. The latter would mean they would have to cast off most of the other roles and identities that make them who they are now. It would also mean that they would lose their openness to changes in their life course.[34] BND is not everything or the only important thing in their lives. They have made numerous changes before and are focused at experiencing even more. Perhaps at the next BND.

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[33] See, e.g., Kitschelt (1986) and McAdam et al. (1996).

[34] See also Chap. 1 in this volume and Vinken (2007) for more on contemporary life courses and the implication for civic engagement.

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Part V
Concluding Section

Chapter 13
Conclusions: From Politicization to Culturalization of Civic Engagement

Henk Vinken and Isabelle Diepstraten

Introduction

The preceding chapters picture an overwhelming variety of citizen activism in Japan and a wide diversity of repertoires of civic engagement inside or outside formally acknowledged civil society organizations. Some of these are willingly cooperating with government and market players and some are deliberately keeping some distance from these players. All of them are working with classic or with new forms of action, sometimes building concrete infrastructures for activism and sometimes realizing imaginative communities. In this chapter, we will make an attempt to distil the key arguments used in the preceding chapters. We will reflect on the core aim of this volume as formulated in the first, introductory chapter: to provide an insiders view of civic engagement in Japan – in any form, old or new, and inside or outside organizational frameworks – that shows us how activists play with the interdependencies of their actions with those of state and corporate representatives. The underlying rationale is that this way the volume may provide a realistic, dynamic, and contextualized view on civic behavior that is profoundly interdependent with, responsive to and sometime simply directed by actions taken by other parties. In doing so it wishes to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on civic engagement in Japan. After presenting some of the key findings from the different sections of the volume we will conclude with a core line that we think is helpful to draw in the postwar history of civic engagement in Japan: building on the examples from the preceding chapter we discern lines that follow the track from politicization to culturalization.

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Key Arguments

We will present the key arguments of the chapters in this volume along the lines of the separate sections.

Part I: Introductory Section

From the first chapter of this volume we may learn that it does not make much sense to idealize civil society and civic engagement that are independent from the state and the market place and their actions. Civic engagement cannot be separated from activities from the latter two parties – in Japan and elsewhere. In the interaction process volunteers, civic activists, community organizers, and the like shape – sometimes even unintended – state programs and local mainstream policies while working for the common good, providing help or mobilizing community members. Key is to keep a distance, to not become a subcontractor of government or to be trapped by market sponsors, as also the other chapters in the introductory section show. In other words, to learn to balance interests, to construct coalitions, to engage in the joint reconstruction of what is of public concern and what good society itself looks like. Civic engagement, the first chapter repeatedly argues, is a concerted effort of citizens and representatives of government and business.

There is change in the relationship and interaction. One feature of change is the lowering likelihood that young generations will be civically engaged through membership organizations. If we wish to include this generation in our analyses of civic engagement we will have to focus on the emergence of new forms of political interest and engagement. One defining aspect of this change is based in changing socialization regimes of late-modern society. Simply put, socialization is increasingly thought to be under self-control with young generations thinking they can and must carve out their own individual path through life. This includes a quest for identities with the best fit for them and their lives. It also includes indulgence in forms of engagement that allow individuals to maximize openness, flexibility, and individuality in terms of identity and life path.

Chapter 2 dwells on the long history of collaborative forms of civic engagement in Japan along the lines of democracy, corporate responsibility, and organized voluntary activism. Civic engagement is not just located in the realm of voluntary organizations, but extended to political and corporate spheres: to political leadership, to political forces and political institutions, to party officials giving people space to voice their political opinion and pursue their space within the polity, but also to business groups and corporations that act on the basis of social responsibility, which in this era translates to providing employment and working with voluntary organizations on social and environmental issues. Voluntary organizations, in turn, should prepare for a phase of further blurring social spheres: they not only will be involved in providing public services, but also in fulfilling their role as a watchdog and in advocacy and policy analysis. It shows us that when focusing on civic

engagement in Japan, the polity, corporate world, and voluntary organizations should and can share the same mission: promoting people's quality of life. The key argument is that they can best do so when the different partners in this mission work together in an integrative way.

Chapter 3 provides us with a historical analysis focusing on the social, economic, and political dimensions of civil society. However, for the author there is a related but distinct argument to be made about the conceptualization of civil society itself. Far from being a Western-derived, or Western-owned concept, he sees civil society embedded in the actions of all individuals who find themselves subject to the downward pressure of society and governance. Their local efforts to establish rights for themselves and others takes a myriad of forms, forms observable outside "The West," forms observable in premodern Japan. After a rather aggressive and violent phase in the 1970s, civic engagement since the 1990s has been preoccupied with finding a new vision to regain vitality of Japanese society. The chapter depicts political and administrative reforms taking place under the broadly felt urge to arrive at structural change in general (*Kaikaku*). The powers of the infamous Iron Triangle of party politics, bureaucracy, and business groups came under heavy pressure and more collaborative forms with civil society organizations emerged, especially on issues such as environmental protection, international cooperation, emergency aid, peace building, and also gender issues. The chapter makes an urgent call to these organizations and civically engaged people in general to establish rational relationships without becoming a subcontractor or a too intimate partner to the administration or the corporate world. Almost similar to the previous chapter this one argues that civic engagement in Japan entails an ever-continuing construction and reconstruction of one's own position over against government and business sectors.

The three chapters compromising the introductory section share the overall analysis that civic engagement in Japan is not confined to a separate sphere and is not taking place in a social, cultural, economic, or political void. They show us that relationships and interactions with other spheres are multifold and precisely for these reasons meaningful in the Japanese context in which collective efforts, shared missions, and consensual strategies (over against aggressive, oppositional ones) are not just valued most but are also the very subject of continuous contestation of all partners involved. The latter already includes that civic engagement in Japan is not an easy or rosy affair. In many occasions it is a tough battle, sometimes full of frustrations, and always suitable only for those with a long breath.

Part II: Established Forms of Engagement

In this part of the volume, we have included several insiders' examples of organized collaborative civic engagement in Japan: in alternative community union activism, in collaborative environmentalism, in actions by big-city immigrant unions.

Activism of community unions is the key subject of Chap. 4. The growing body of nonregular workers, the similarly growing resentment about inequalities in terms of wages and benefits and about disrespect by regular workers, fueled the creation of alternation unions in Japan. The "regular" unions are mostly firm-based and part of the large and psychologically far-away labor federation *Rengo*, which, in turn, maintains cozy national-level relationships with government and business groups. The alternative unions, also called individual-affiliate unions, do not limit their activities to collective negotiations, but increasingly blend with other organizations, notably antipoverty NGOs, a strategy strange to traditional unions. The new and highly networked unions offer alternative perspectives on work and life, develop more dynamic strategies to mobilize public opinion, cater to new groups of (young, female, foreign) citizens, and focus on effective forms of direct aid to their "members." Membership is different from traditional union affiliation: seldom lasting longer than the individual case at hand. This hampers continuity of union work, including the recruitment and training of activists. Hope that they will spearhead a strong labor rights movement is therefore moderate. On the other hand, the unions willingly seek coalitions with the traditional federation Rengo, with a multitude of NGOs, and at several recent events even with established political parties. This search is seen as necessary for bringing about meaningful and lasting labor reforms.

Many people and civic groups have been active in the environmental realm in Japan. Chapter 5 shows us that contemporary civic engagement in favor of environmental protection goes well beyond oppositional and confrontational activism and beyond a strategy of retreat in an ethos of purity and thus of distancing from links with government or business. Both strategies have resulted in little to no impact on policy or business actions. Successful strategies, this chapter shows, build on collaborative environmentalism, when people resist the construction of another nuclear power plant, when they cling together in building a fund for a communal wind power project, when they network to help fight global warming. All these actions reveal the key features of collaborative environmentalism: equal partnership, cross-organizational/sectoral and cross-disciplinary participants, and common aspirations and goals. Additional defining characteristics seem to refer to the ability to build bridging social capital and also to create new and positive symbols that, paradoxically, build on old traditions. Civically engaged people need to be able to build ties with groups outside their own circle. This brings them resources and information needed to advance their own case. Next, creating new and positive symbols is needed if the activities are in need of broad public support. These symbols have high appeal especially when they refer to old Japanese cultural traditions, prevent the public from being drawn into political affairs, or any other overt type of activist identity. Civic engagement related to the environment seems to be successful and quickly institutionalizing in Japan when it builds on collaborative, bridging, and culturalizing strategies.

Immigrant unions are on the rise with the increase in the number of foreign migrants in the inner cities of Japan, Chap. 6 reveals. These unions deliver support for foreigners' settlement, first of all related to workplace issues, later on as concerns residency issues, and today much more as regards broadly defined family and livelihood policy issues. Almost like the community unions of Chap. 4, these immigrant

unions, as this chapter shows by example of the Asian People's Friendship Association, have been increasingly involved in and focused on the political arena for giving support to the foreign residents. With a peak of activities in the mid-1990s, the association focused on consultation of work place abuse. In addition, it developed research activities into working and living conditions, after which family matters (family reunion, issues of permanent residency, etc.) became the core focus. In part resulting from the association's pressures, pro-migration policies were proposed by several administrations, policies for which the associations support is needed. The association, in turn, developed a focus well beyond individual cases and is no longer adverse from collaborating with the office of, for instance, *Homusho*, the Ministry of Justice. Also, for the association we can detect that cultural activities, e.g., in foreigner festivals and other public events, are key to the success in terms of visibility, reach, and acceptance among foreigner and host communities in the big cities of Japan. Again, similar to the environmentalist strategies mentioned above, culture seems to have a strong mobilizing effect as regards civic engagement on behalf of foreign migrants in Japan.

The three examples of more formally organized forms of engagement in Japan in the respective three chapters of this part of the volume, reveal that civic engagement related to alternative groups in Japan (nonregular workers, environmentalists, and foreigners) can be successful when it builds on networking between the differently situated groups within the political, business, and voluntary worlds. This requires individual resources, mainly the attainment and strategic use of bridging social capital: the ability to reach across lines to other parties and thus to go beyond bonding, i.e., establishing emotional ties with only like-minded people. It also requires a sharp eye for the role culture plays in Japanese society. Using positive, i.e., nonconfrontational symbols that are especially developed for one's activity but that are underpinned by Japanese traditions (festivals, paper crane folding events, competitions) are crucial for the appeal to and thus acceptance and support of the general public.

Part III: Engagement Outside the Mainstream

Activism in support of Japan's ex-Untouchables the *Burakumin*, of the Deaf, of the *shimin,* or *orutanatibu* media (citizen or alternative media) are grouped together in Part III of this volume: engagement outside the mainstream. While recognizing that the groups served with the forms of civic engagement as reported in the previous section are neither part of the mainstream, the Burakumin, Deaf and alternative media activists have probably the hardest battle to fight in order to be fully included in Japanese society.

Chapter 7 starts with the turbulent history of Burakumin activism. Buraku leaders, especially those of the Buraku Liberation League, have played their part in an incredibly long battle to build community infrastructures, to educate their children, to secure jobs and livelihood of their families, and also to take action against discrimination. The media, academia, and educators are careful not to touch these

issues in order to prevent accusations of discrimination and the denunciation tactics of the Buraku organizations. The result is that even success stories, such as the community building activities (*machizukuri* in Japanese), are known only within the Buraku communities throughout Japan. Consequently, many Japanese are unaware of positive news on the Buraku, and, moreover, young Buraku are hesitative to openly identify with their own community. After the harsh conflicts that were dealt with in 1960s and 1970s, the 1980s brought a closer cooperation between the Buraku and several indigenous minorities (such as the Ainu in the North and the Okinawans in the South of Japan). What struck the leaders was the positive identification of these groups with their own culture. They cultivate their culture, including heritage music and food, even when not subsidized. They teach their heritage without a word of anger on discrimination. They let younger members enjoy outside cultures and do not spit on them for leaving their own group, something League members do. Young Buraku dislike the closed, narrow-minded community, so it seems, while recognizing that not all Buraku communities in Japan are like that. Yet, they want to explore their cultural identity more extensively, develop pride in their own heritage, and search for new and positive Buraku symbols. Yet, they still are careful not to easily mention their Buraku ancestry despite not having experienced discrimination themselves. They do recognize that their quest for a positive identity requires interactions with outsiders and building bridges with a hostile, but sometimes a simply uninformed outside world.

The Deaf movement, the topic of Chap. 8, has a successful history in influencing the state, while increasingly and skillfully using culture as a leverage to stipulate deaf people's rights and to arrive at an astounding level of institutionalization. The deaf for long formed an outsiders segment of Japanese society. Here too, the early strategies of the Deaf movement, in all its diversity, mimicked the ones used by other minority groups in the 1960s and 1970s. The movement and its fight for basic rights (such as the right to use of sign language instead of lip-reading in early education) were strongly politicized. Resistance, protests, and strikes against discrimination on many social fields were the ultimate early-day repertoires of action. Yet, the movement went beyond resistance alone. They also have been able to work within a civil law environment (which usually promotes state interests only) and successfully manipulated the system to their own benefit. Since the late 1980s, the chapter almost playfully shows, the course changes into a promotion and celebration of Deaf cultural space. With TV-shows, film, theaters, literature, magazines, even deaf manga, the deaf community with its rising number of organizations works to raise its profile as a culturally distinctive entity and at the same time, by emphasizing the individual behind each deaf person, to counterbalance the idea of a monolithic deaf identity. For the younger generations of deaf persons the natural state is developing and adopting multiple new identities, while also experiencing a lack of one all-encompassing identity as a deaf person. The older generation is struggling with these paradoxes. Especially members of that generation who have little opportunity to interact with the outside world, in part because they were not raised with sign language and/or lack a supportive social environment.

Chapter 9 presents the civic engagement of and through *shimin* media. Media, the chapter argues, are vital in understanding civic engagement in contemporary societies. Civic engagement is all about gaining and giving voice to one's cause which, by definition, is possible only with media. The media environment with its texts, technologies, and institutions, has an all-defining impact on what civic engagement entails. Mainstream media in Japan (and probably elsewhere too) rarely address people as citizens; usually they are addressed as consumers and only occasionally as voters. Shimin media, usually of the anticommercial and radical democratic kind, fills the gap. They face, however, many great obstacles, which in part relate to external causes. Because of the restrictive NPO-laws, ditto broadcast laws, copyright regulations, funding policies, etc., shimin media have difficult times, not just to make ends meet, but also to gain political, public, or community support and to obtain satisfying levels of reach among these publics and communities. These difficulties translate to a wider circle of citizens and civic groups who aim to channel their cause through these alternative media. Shimin media, the chapter stipulates, are first of all a form of civic engagement in their own right. Many people involved in the production and distribution of these media are part of the creation of an alternative scene that may function as a "counter-public." Furthermore, they provide an infrastructure for other forms of civic engagement that cannot gain access to mainstream channels. They help others to raise neglected and misunderstood social issues and to create forums for discussing and potentially addressing them. Moreover, they are part of a network of people and organizations that engage in policy monitoring and mobilizing. Finally, they are especially strong in the cultural realm. More than impacting policies and promoting policy changes, they impact culture as such: by creating a historical memory while documenting otherwise forgotten movements and events, by mobilizing the counter publics while showing them how things in Japanese society can be valued differently, by contributing to the cultural landscape and creating new audiences while producing rarely seen videos and other types of audio-visual art forms that are outside the mainstream.

The three afore-going chapters in this section show us the crucial importance of interaction and culture in various different forms and shapes. Interaction beyond one's marginalized group of origin is key to gaining support for one's cause, first of all in the politicized era of the 1960s and 1970s in direct confrontation with the powers-that-be. Especially the Deaf community and also the Buraku community succeeded to effectively work with state representatives to further their cause. The former community managed to create a full-fledged cultural space ranging from theaters to manga, thus including wide circles of young generation members. The Buraku community remained closed and resentful against escapees, thus alienating their younger members who also wish to explore the cultural dimensions of their Buraku identity. Those civically active in shimin media also seem to create their cultural niche serving alternative publics, yet remain outside the mainstream as they fail to create meaningful interaction channels with state and business partners.

Part IV: Emerging Forms of Engagement

This volume makes a case of focusing not just on organized and classic forms of civic engagement, but also on the newly emerging nonformal types of civic engagement, types that may well specifically attract younger generation members. Types that may very well make up a new political and civic socialization environment for younger generations.

Chapter 10 presents an in-depth analysis of Japanese youth-led music scenes that can be seen to be engaged in "public life." The key word seems to be emancipation: emancipation from competitive consumerist work ethics and "mass" lifestyles, emancipation from an emotionally stifled culture with people who keep their feelings to themselves, and emancipation from worldviews that order individuals into boxes labeled with race, culture, or nationality. By analyzing both a fringe and a mainstream music group the chapter shows that young people associate to these groups in part because they support these emancipatory strives, but also to have more control on the direction of their own lives and to create a sense of social place in the world. They do not concretely develop social groups or "real" communities, but they create "civic infrastructures of the mind" or imaginative communities with members who do not necessarily meet in "meat space." These communities do form a supportive network of values and social capital to guide and inspire social action in other areas and the living out of alternative value-sets and worldviews. Fans deliberately transpose values and capital from these communities into their lives and worldviews thus presenting themselves as a new generation. In doing so, they tap into relationships of their heroes with powerful outside partners, such as the national broadcaster NHK or the Japan Ad Council. Topics such as communication between generations or contemporary family problems are setting agendas in Japan and speak to the core needs to resolve tensions between private and public life for these younger generation fans. Not in a classic "harsh" way of overt protest and politicized actions involving institutions, but by improvised "soft critiques" voiced by the imaginative community that aims to build an alternative vision of what it means to grow up and live in Japan.

Another high profile cultural topic is analyzed in Chap. 11: the rising popularity of Korean pop culture in Japan which led to what is called the Korean Wave or *Hanlyu* in Japanese. Popularity or even acceptance of anything or anyone Korean is far from self-evident in postwar Japan. What is more, Korean immigrants not seldom hide their identity of origin in order to avoid discrimination. It is nothing less than historic, the chapter argues, that Korean pop culture, especially televised family dramas and their lead players, has gained such levels of popularity. On the waves of "decentralized" globalization, culture from East Asia gained more status and brought a new social imagery which in turn led to new forms of civic engagement. Those who encounter globalized culture are not merely consumers, but actively involved in various follow-up activities. Hanlyu, in particular, provides a space of reflection, learning, dialog, and also action with which gaps between Korean and Japan are bridged. Although hanlyu involves entertainment first and

foremost, it also fuels a process of reconciliation from the grass roots level with the (often female and middle-aged) fans addressing issues of war responsibility and human rights in and well beyond their own social circle. This affects fellow Japanese people, but also Koreans and Korean-Japanese, who all witness a highly active, but socio-economically and politically marginalized segment of Japanese society trying to learn more about the often ignored and thorny Korean–Japanese relationship. Hanlyu does not politicize the fans or make them antistate activists. Hanlyu leads to a form of civic engagement that motivates them to be socially active in a very different way than in the pre-1980s era (an era with unified organizations, ideologies, and clearly defined adversaries), for instance by using play, joining travel groups, visiting Korean culture stores, etc. Also, it motivates them to add to the drastically changed imagery of Korean culture and of Koreans, inside or outside Japan, and finally to contribute to a civil society which is tolerant toward diversity and respectful toward differences.

The final chapter, Chap. 12, of this part of the volume deals with anticonsumerist activism in Japan as celebrated with Buy Nothing Day, an international and loosely organized 1-day event that in Japan builds on highly educated and networked younger people. Consumerism is not a major theme in Japan despite its overwhelming levels of consumption, from every conceivable high-level brand of clothing to hundred sorts of canned coffee in the omnipresent vending machines. Classic consumer organizations do not touch the subject and the civic activism that does respond to it has turned into a cleverly branded slow-lifestyle business. Consumer organizations are part of a network that includes government and business and that promotes the "hard work" of buying. It seems that shopping and consuming are forms of civic engagement themselves, because with these acts Japanese people (that is women) show they care for the improvement of the livelihood of their family and community. Shopping is a political act, but in a twisted way. Political consumerism is not about fair-trade goods or about contributing to global justice, but about signaling that one's lifestyle, one's family and community (which include local business and local officials) are well-balanced and fully Japanese. Buy Nothing Day activists, the chapter shows, live at the margins when taking the streets once a year with humorous acts (many of which relate to Japanese cultural traditions) aimed at touching the hearts of the consumer-passersby. The core activists are mostly foreigners living in Japan who say they are interested in doing politics, who say they wisely turn away from the world of deliberation and decision-making. In part they are willingly choosing to involve in loosely structured, lifestyle-oriented, and spontaneous activism. From another perspective, one may also claim that this is their only option with a Japanese political system that limits access, certainly to foreigners. Yet, the framing of the participants of Buy Nothing Day activism also shows that they want to live a diversified life fulfilling multiple roles. This prevents them from indulging in a political world (and in a world of organizations in general), that would require a single-mindedness, topical focus, and the all-encompassing identity of a political activist or, worse, a politician. They do not want to cast off all other roles they like to play and identities they like to live out in their life.

The three chapters on emerging forms of engagement in Japan provide unique empirical evidence of repertoires of actions that are nonformal, adhoc, irregular, lifestyle-oriented, even essentially nonpolitical. The effects of these alternative repertoires are at best located at the cultural level. It requires some leniency of mind to accept that music fans who create their own imaginative civic community widely contribute to crucial discourses among the generations. Also, it seems far-fetched to regard middle-aged women involved in celebrating Korean pop culture as the pioneers in reconciling Japanese–Korean relationships. Similarly, it is quite an effort to think of foreign 1-day anticonsumerist activists to make a dent in hyper-consumerist society Japan. What the chapters have in common is the belief that these alternative repertoires add to Japanese civic engagement culture from a seemingly unintentional, loose, and relaxed perspective. Participants are deliberately staying far away from all-determining politicized identities and are messaging others to follow them and to also carve out their own path through civic life. In the process, they may find out that music, pop culture, and 1-day street performances are not "just" fun and enjoyable, but also ideal contemporary platforms to carry forth messages of what good society is about.

Culturalization and the Issue of Dual Civil Identities

At the end of this concluding chapter we need to shortly reflect on all chapters and their key messages in relation to the core aim of the volume. As stated at the start of this chapter the central aim of the volume is to provide an insiders view of civic engagement in Japan that shows us how activists play with the interdependencies of their actions with the actions of state and corporate representatives.

Many tough battles have been fought between civically engaged citizens, their support groups, government and bureaucracy, and the business sector in Japan. In the process, all parties, some more than others, recognize and acknowledge the real mutual dependencies and the need to rely on each other instead of aggressively oppose each other in the continuous construction and reconstruction of what good society means in the Japanese context. It is much more a matter of maturity to accept and strategically work with these interdependencies and shared needs than to strive for independence and confrontational advocacy. Nonregular workers, environmentalists, and immigrants have shown to be successful advocates for their cause if they develop smart doses of bridging social capital and thus can reach beyond establishing only emotional ties between like-minded people. Interaction beyond one's own group also proved to be crucial for the Deaf community. The Buraku community but also the people involved in citizen media suffered from their inability to reach across lines to other parties and to strive for the appeal to and thus the acceptance and support of the general public. In the newly emerging form of civic engagement much of the contacts with outside groups remain imaginative, most of the times so intended, almost deliberately aiming for an exclusive social and cultural space. From the perspective of policy change the newly emerged forms of engagement,

for now, lack effectiveness which by and large is due to their deliberate separation and refrain from interacting on a political level.

Another factor of success as measured against the attainment of goals set by civically engaged citizens and their support communities is culture. After a period of politicization of civic activism we can sharply discern a period in with civic engagement is culturalized. What is more, we may even detect a trend in which culture is used to depoliticize civic engagement. In the Deaf community, among the Buraku, within the shimin media circles, for those involved in Buy Nothing Day, and surely for the Korean pop culture and youth-led music group fans, but also for environmentalist activism and to some extend for immigrant and community union activism, culture plays a dominant role in the civic engagement of the 1980s and later. Festivals, cultural events, paper crane folding activities, film, theater, manga, TV-dramas, heritage music, ethnic food, audio-visual art, etc. are mentioned in almost all cases as crucial elements to win over public acceptance and support in contemporary Japanese society. Especially when cultural values and symbols are communicated in such a way that they both visualize one's public cause as well as tap into existing Japanese cultural traditions.

Yet, the appeal to the public is only part of the story. The other part is that culture is essential for younger generation members to become civically engaged to begin with and to have the ability to construct identities that are not monolithic, all-determining, and one-dimensional. Many chapters relate to younger generations who wish to explore cultural aspects of the groups they originate from or wish to support. They want to know more about heritage food, about old Japanese traditions that included antipoverty or anticonsumption symbols, about rarely seen videos, music or media with which to speak to the Gods. In some cases this exploration and reflection precedes action or even commitment to a public cause. As stated in the introductory chapter, the continuous reflection on the shaping of one's own biography becomes visible in several life domains, including the domain of politics, civil society, citizenship, and civic engagement. The domain of politics and civic engagement is not excluded from this monitoring process related to today's quest for one's own individual path through life. It is believed that especially forms of engagement that allow for flexibility and individuality gain popularity. Platforms (instead of organizations) that underline the value of self-organization, self-confrontation, and even self-destruction (i.e., leaving previously accumulated experiences behind when necessary) do so as well. This is especially relevant for the post-1980s generations that are most strongly confronted with the ideal of the self-directed biography. They especially are believed to seek and produce their own path in the domain of civil society, citizenship, and civic engagement.

Culture, with its wide array values, symbols, and artifacts, can help to escape from monolithic, all-determining, and one-dimensional identities. Seen from this context, identities that feel like a lifelong straight-jacket, for instance the identity of the politically conscious and radical activist and certainly the identity of the politician, are likely to be discarded. In some chapters we saw activists who flexibly changed identities depending on contexts: salaryman one time, activist-translator of critical literature the next; university teacher one moment, video-activist the next.

Key in this identity-hopping was not to be too open about one's activism in circles that might not understand one's causes. Perhaps, but here speculation starts, Japan's issue is not that it consists of a dual civil society (many small organizations, a few large advocacy clubs), but of people with dual civil identities, of people who do not fully engage in the identity of the civic activist alone. They are willing to be activist alright, but only for as long as the activist identity can be swapped for another, more socially acceptable one. Civic engagement is alright, as long as the identity of a civically engaged citizen is not hampering the functioning in other contexts or periods of life. Identity-hopping, in summary, seems necessary if one aims to avoid stigmatization and perhaps even marginalization in other nonactivist contexts, for instance in working life.

Chapter 14
Epilogue: Toward a New Legal Form for Civic Engagement

Masayuki Deguchi

Linguapolitical Research

Some time ago, I was invited to attend a research meeting at Harvard University by the anthropologist Professor Theodore C. Bestor. He published "*Neighborhood Tokyo*" (1989) under the name of Miyamoto-cho, in which he described community organization in a neighborhood in Tokyo. The terminology such as "civil society organizations," had not been popular among researchers. His outstanding anthropological research of civil society in Japan is not usually considered as civil society research. Looking back, studies into Japan by US-origin anthropologists have a long and brilliant history, and in this line of tradition Bestor particularly studied Japan's civil society organizations in a new context. One of the first examples is "*Suye mura: A Japanese Village*" (Embree 1939), a classic in Japanese community studies. Bestor did not veil an anthropologists' pride while building on the long tradition of anthropological observers of Japan's civil society. Frank Schwartz and Susan Pharr, both political scientists and scholars at Harvard, had just published an encompassing study with the very clear cut title "*The state of civil society in Japan*" in 2003. This influential book stimulated Bestor and his colleagues to plan a research meeting that included Roger Goodman and myself.

My own perspectives on civil society do not dwell on either anthropology or political science. As is more often the case among civil society researchers, my style of research is very interdisciplinary. My affiliation, the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) is, however, heavily "discipline-oriented" being a Center of Excellence of anthropology. Minpaku, fully funded by the national government as an inter-university research institute (IURI), according to Japanese law had changed into an independent agency alike other national universities in Japan. The IURIs in Japan are core research centers that carry out leading-edge collaborative research.

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They are operated by the research community and provide research facilities to researchers based domestically and abroad.

While areas of research differ widely, the IURIs, in their roles as international research centers, share the common functions of promoting exchange of research as well as nurturing graduate students to become next-generation researchers. Each research institute corporation is expected to make substantial contributions to the research developments of its fields.

Based on the 2004 National University Corporation Law, the IURIs were reorganized into four Inter-University Research Institute Corporations; each corporation consists of a network of IURIs. As was done with the national universities, the IURIs are maintained as bottom-up organizations. Decisions about their operations from future planning to personnel are decided by committees centrally composed of members from the research community. Different from other IURIs on natural sciences, most researchers at Minpaku conduct fieldworks outside Japan and publish research results in Japanese. Minpaku has a long history of programmed "Inter-University Research Projects," which in academic exchanges are discussed and conducted jointly by scholars of the Minpaku and outside organizations from all over Japan. The discussion is generally carried out in Japanese, also when the study is on issues and themes outside of Japan.

While studying networking among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), I became interested in language issues. Gradually I developed the new theory of "linguapolitics" (Deguchi 2005; Deguchi et al. 2008). Linguapolitics is an interdisciplinary science that studies political, social, or cultural effects before and after choosing one or more than one "language" as the transactional language in a situation in which more than one language may be used. The term "language" here refers to any set of patterned signs that may be input into an information-processing device such as a human brain; therefore, language can be natural spoken language, but also Braille, sign language, or computer character code. The CEGIPE project, or the project Civic Engagement and Globalism in the Postmodern Era, on which this volume builds (see also the introductory chapter of this volume) can be regarded a laboratory for my interest in linguapolitics, the first linguapolitical joint research project in which the "transactional language" is English.[1] This choice of language is in a sense exclusive for Japanese researchers and inclusive for non-Japanese researchers. Whenever we invited a "Japanese valence 1" speaker, we translated into English for English speakers. Minpaku also invited non-Japanese guests to help further the CEGIPE project and thus the linguapolitical study. Within the framework of Minpaku's fellowship program, two scholars, Govind P. Dhakal and Tek Nath Dhakal, were invited between August 2006 and July 2007. The first editor of this volume, Henk Vinken, was invited between November 2007 and August 2008, and Yashavantha Dongre between December 2008 and November 2009. They joined the project.

The famous anthropologist Harumi Befu, who is perfectly bilingual in English and Japanese, warned us that the project may suffer from "English Imperialism." It is

[1] Transactional language or settlement language is a language that is used for communication between two or more people from different linguistic zones; for example, when a Chinese and a Japanese speak to each other in Chinese, Chinese is the transactional language or settlement language.

recognized that picking up English as a "transactional language" is an unusual attempt in the Japanese scholarly context. It seems natural that we are criticized for opening up to "English Imperialism." The academic globalization seems to expel "recessive languages," almost as globalization is believed to impact, if not override specific local cultures.[2] Inter-University Research Projects which take a linguapolitical perspective allow non-Japanese researchers to participate. But they are also crucial for Japanese scholars. It is important that in these joint linguapolitical projects the group can discuss key sensitive issues without any bias, such as in our case issues related to discriminated minorities. If these issues are discussed in Japanese, the meaning of words might spread a bigger scope than intended and yield unintended discriminative feelings. If Japanese researchers would be speaking Japanese, they are therefore apt to avoid arguments on these controversial issues, even if these issues are of high importance in the study of Japanese civil society. Having to speak English, so it seems, has the advantage for Japanese researchers of more easily dealing with controversial issues.

Koeki Hojins

In the capacity of a scholar who is deeply involved in the academic and policy debates on civil society in Japan, I also contributed to our linguapolitical CEGIPE-project by explaining – in English – more on the future developments of civil society policy and law-making in Japan. The key question we debated is about where Japan's civil society will go. We agreed that although community-based organizations, even those with a premodern heritage, have changed radically, they have not disappeared entirely. Rather, various changes in organizations can be found in new Japanese communities inside and outside of Japan. Pointed out in some chapters, the Act to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities in 1998, indeed, has impacted and still impacts civil society in Japan (see, e.g., Pekkanen 2000, 2006; Deguchi 2001; Ishizuka 2002; Kada 2006). Perhaps a much more influential and enduring legal reform has been enforced in December 2008. I wish to make some cursory remarks on these changes within the framework of this epilogue.

The 1998 law gives grass-roots organizations the appropriate tools that can allow them to act easier. It is often pointed out that tax incentives for these organizations are not enough, but many have reached consensus that Japan has made a step forward to civil society by this law. At the least, it has created a situation that many people involved refer to the law as the so-called NPO law and that many know that a corporation under the law is called an "NPO" (Amemiya and Hotta 1998; Deguchi 2001). Tokutei Hieiri Katsudo Hojin (or specified nonprofit corporation or juridical

[2]Dominant language and recessive language is a language that is selected as a transactional language over another or other languages; for example, "A" is the dominant language in Network "Aa" in which the native languages "A" and "a" are available when only "A" is used. Needless to say, this term is inspired by the law of inheritance; note, however, that the law of dominant inheritance exists in genetics while there is no such law in Linguapolitics. Depending on the situation, a language can be either a dominant or recessive language, or a coexistent transactional language. The opposite of dominant language, "a" in the above example is a recessive or latent language.

person, SNC) is the formal legal name of these new corporations, yet NPO Hojin is the more commonly known one.

As of April 30, 2008, 34,487 SNCs are authenticated and that is even more than the number of corporations included in Civil Code 34, despite the 110 years of history of this Civil Code. The SNCs are very small in economic scale. The Department of Social Policy, Cabinet Office of Japan made a survey into the SNCs. The survey was conducted in between February 22 and March 28, 2006. The survey sampling is simple random selection of 3,000 samples from a finite population of all the SNCs as of the end of March 2005. Some 1,010 SNCs responded (Cabinet Office 2007). The survey shows that about 59% of the SNCs have an annual revenue of less than 10 million Japanese Yen (some 100,000 US$). A quarter of the SNCs have less than 1 million Yen (10,000 US$). Compared to a GDP per capita in Japan in 2005 of 35,650 US$, one can conclude that most of the SNCs can be considered very small. Most of them have no paid staff. The median of the income by the SNCs, according to the survey, is 3.65 million Yen and mean is 21.47 million Yen.

Compared to SNCs, Koeki Hojins (Public Interest Corporations) based on Civil Code 34 are much bigger. According to White paper on Koeki Hojins (2005) by Ministry of Home Office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), median of income by Koeki Hojins is 59.27 million Yen, some 16 times of that of the SNCs. The mean is 718.48 million Yen, 33 times of that of the SNCs. Total number of Koeki Hojins is 25,541 in 2004 which is a little less than SNCs. Most English language literatures on civil society refer to SNCs instead of Koeki Hojins. One should, however, realize that the economic size of Koeki Hojins is much bigger than that of SNCs (see also Appendix 1).

Koeki Hojins have been criticized for giving cushy jobs to retired bureaucrats while enjoying subsidy from the government. Government officials who obtain executive posts in Koeki Hojins for which they used to be responsible for supervision and oversight are called “Amakudari” or “descent from heaven.” The government makes subsidy to such organizations not per se to conduct public benefit activities but to pay high salary to the retired bureaucrats as executives of the organizations.

One specific scandal triggered reform of the Koeki Hojin. The arrest of lawmakers in a bribery scandal by one of the foundations named KSD foundation caused the loss of public trust in Koeki Hojins in 2000. KSD foundation is a typical “Amakudari” Koeki Hojin. Reform on the Koeki Hojins is considered as a part of administrative reform. In a sense, there are two kinds of reform of the Koeki Hojins. The first is aimed at encouraging civil society and the second at decreasing subsidy to Amakudari Koeki Hojins. The latter is the biggest trigger for the reform of Koeki Hojins. In the international context, Japanese charitable NPOs consists of pure NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) and Quasi-NGOs. The latter part of the charitable organizations were cause and subject of the reforms. The Koizumi Administration (2001–2006) at that time, enthusiastically, had promoted Administrative Reform. Reforming the Amakudari organizations is an integral part of these reforms.

There have been various criticisms regarding the modalities of management, supervision and oversight, and governance concerning matters such as issuance of kyoka (permission) for establishment by competent authorities. It is a kind of self-dealing between active bureaucrats and retired bureaucrats: bureaucrats establish a Koeki Hojin by his/her own permission and give subsidy to it, than they retire and become executive of the organization which includes a high salary. The age of retirement of bureaucrats is around 50–55 years. This system gives the Japanese bureaucracy energies and keeps the salary of the active bureaucrats low. In some sense this has been a profound part of Japanese culture. Yet, the huge deficit of Japanese government made it clear that this system could not be maintained. This is the fundamental reason why reform of Koeki Hojins has been launched as part of administrative reforms. And, ironically, the problems related to the KSD scandal serve as a strong impetus to the reform. The majority of Koeki Hojins, however, are purely nongovernmental organizations and important part of civil society. Enhancing their activities is pivotal for Japan. The reform of Koeki Hojins has brought difficult aspects to light such as the ambivalent situation for both attainment of administrative reform and strength of civil society at the same time.

Pillars of Koeki Hojin Reform

From such a situation, "Yushikisya kaigi" (Expert Meeting of the Public interest Corporation), chaired by Yoshiharu Fukuhara, was formed to prepare the scheme of the new law. After vibrant discussion, they issued the report (2004). Three related acts were proclaimed on the Koeki Hojins reform. It is worth examining these acts somewhat closer. The three are:

1. Act on General Incorporated Associations and General Incorporated Foundations (Act No. 48 of 2006).
2. Act on Authorization of Public Interest Incorporated Associations and Public Interest Incorporated Foundations (Act No. 49 of 2006: hereinafter referred to as the "AAPI").
3. Act concerning Special Measures for enforcement of General Incorporated Associations/Foundations Act and AAPI).

At the same time, the Civil Code was revised after 110 years of its establishment. All three acts were enforced from December 1, 2008 which is also the 10th anniversary of the SNC act. The basic schemes are shown Fig. 14.1.

As a result of these Acts, first of all, people now can create a general nonprofit corporation with a legal personality simply by completing registration, without any interference by the government.

In the second place, the government set out a scheme in which a third party can determine and judge general corporations which satisfy certain requirements to become "public interest nonprofit corporations" (New Koeki Hojins). General nonprofit

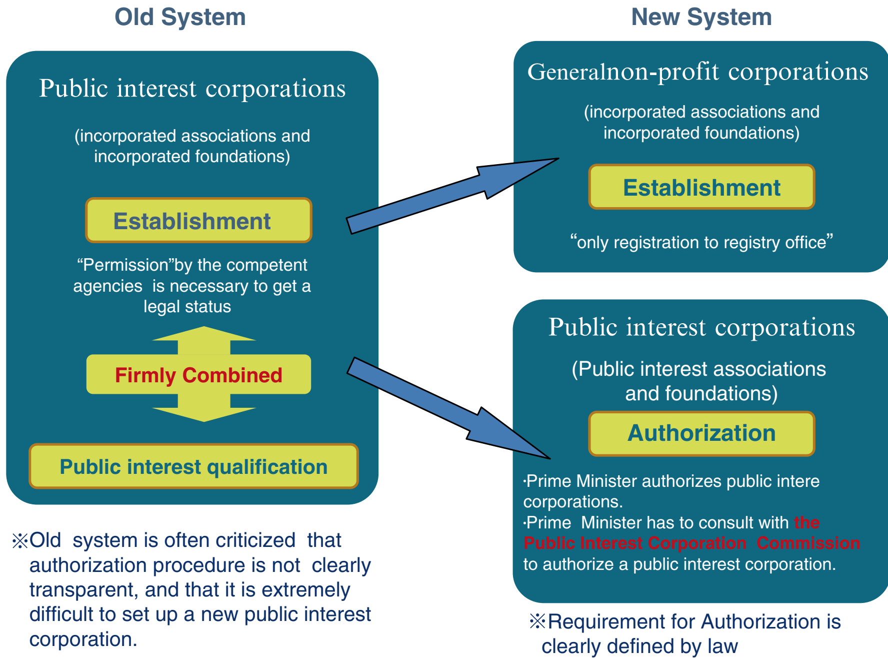

Fig. 14.1 Basic scheme of Koeki Hojin reform. Source: website of the Cabinet Office

corporations are established in the form of incorporated associations (Ippan Shadan Hojins) or incorporated foundations (Ippan Zaidan Hojins).

Ippan Shadan Hojins can be established if there are at least two members without any financial requirement. The responsibility of the directors and auditor is clearly set out. The procedures to be followed by members when filing a representative suit are also provided. Ippan Zaidan Hojins, by contrast, must hold net assets of at least only 3 million Yen. They must have a board of directors. Governance and disclosure of organizations are emphasized.

AAPI and the New Commission, PICC

AAPI is the most important for the development of public interest corporations among three laws. The AAPI includes "the Public Interest Corporation Commission" (PICC) which plays a role of the third party determinations, and describes requirements and procedures necessary for a general incorporated association or foundation that applies to obtain its authorization. PICC has been set up by the Cabinet Office and seven commissioners who are appointed by the Prime Minister upon obtaining the consent of both houses of the Diet. PICC has a more or less similar function as the Charity Commission in the United Kingdom. At the same time, the

tax system was profoundly changed. If the Commission authorizes a general incorporated association/foundation as a public interest one, the organization can enjoy both tax exempt and deductible status. These changes and the previously mentioned reforms and new Acts may help Japan to make fundamental step forward in creating better civil society organizations.

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Appendix 1

Annual expenditure by Koeki Hojins, 2004

Competent agency		Numbers	Annual expenditure: Less than 10 million	Less than 50 million	Less than 100 million	Less than 5 billion	Less than 10 billion	Over 10 billion	Total	Average
National government	Association	3,731	258	1,101	718	1,117	226	311	3,309,077	887
	Foundation	3,163	340	588	347	886	335	667	6,829,499	2,159
Local government	Association	9,134	2,169	2,934	1,094	2,155	395	387	2,160,536	237
	Foundation	9,669	2,664	1,979	1,015	2,208	676	1,127	6,194,957	641
Total		25,541	5,400	6,586	3,154	6,300	1,627	2,474	18,390,315	720
		(%)	21.1	25.8	12.3	24.7	6.4	9.7		
Previous total		25,825	5,417	6,693	3,170	6,382	1,633	2,530	19,022,906	737

Source: White paper on Koeki Hojins, MIC 2005

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