

**ANTI-NUCLEAR
POLITICS AFTER
FUKUSHIMA:
ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS
AND GRASSROOTS
ACTIVISM IN TOKYO**

ALEXANDER BROWN

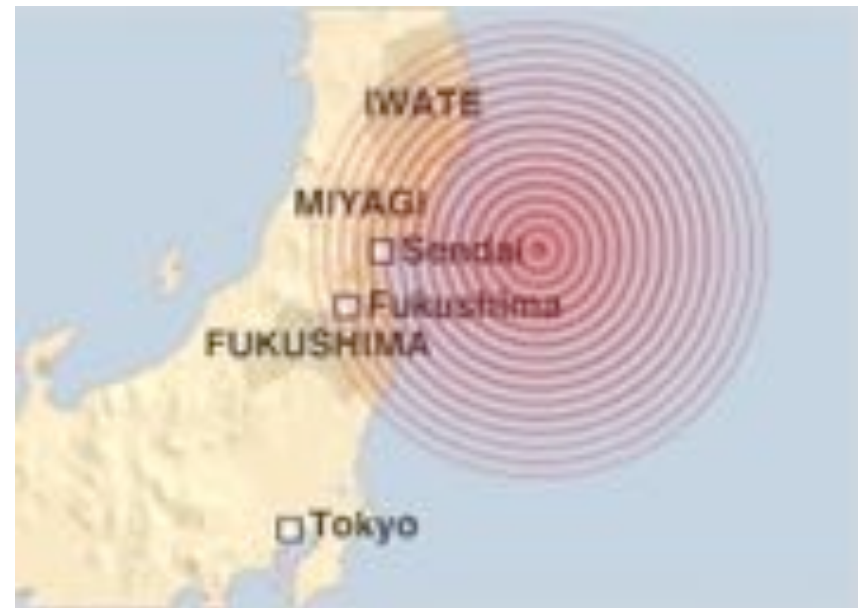
EMAIL: ALEXANDER.BROWN@UTS.EDU.AU



THE GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE DISASTER

2:46pm, 11 March 2011 a magnitude 9 earthquake occurred 90 km off the north-east coast of Japan

Followed 40 minutes later by tsunami, heights up to 12 m which swept inland as far as 10 km



THE GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE DISASTER



Earthquake and tsunami killed 18,600 people

94% died in tsunami; 6% in the earthquake & related causes

Approximately 2,700 bodies have never been recovered.

More than a million buildings were damaged with 130,000 completely destroyed.

Large numbers of homeless people, particularly elderly people, housed in temporary accommodation

FUKUSHIMA: THE WORLD'S WORST NUCLEAR DISASTER



At 3:36pm 12 March first of a series of explosions occurred at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant

Three reactor core meltdowns

Classified as Level 7 on the International Nuclear Event Scale

156,234 refugees from the nuclear disaster by the end of 2012

100,000 of those forcibly evacuated by government

CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSES

Volunteers flocked to the disaster zone

Local governments were often better equipped than central state bodies to respond to the disaster

Many volunteers later became involved in anti-nuclear protests or in providing ongoing support to evacuees and other victims



KŌENJI AND SHIRŌTO NO RAN



Shirōto no Ran's existing networks provided the basis for an unexpectedly large demonstration



Concerns with freedom of expression and access to urban space articulated with anti-nuclear message

THE DEMAND FOR FREEDOM AND SURVIVAL

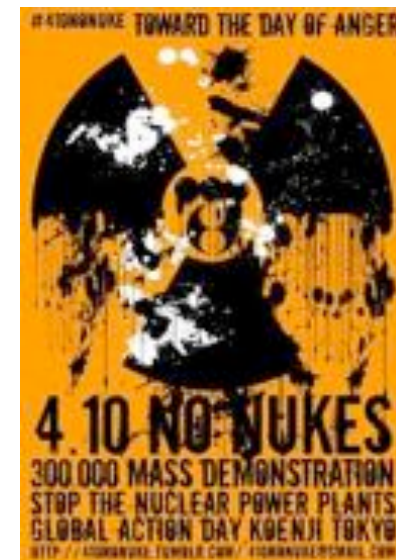
Precarity movement often framed in terms of twin demands for “freedom” and “survival”

Radiation and contamination threaten freedom and survival



ANTI-NUCLEAR PROTEST

- Precarious workers at the forefront of anti-nuclear protest after 3.11
- Mobilisation of existing networks
- Importance of social media
- 10 April 2011 Kōenji demonstration attracts 15,000



MAY 2012 KŌENJI DEMONSTRATION AND THE OI CRISIS



- **May 2012 demonstration - a celebration of the switching off of all Japan's nuclear reactors**
- **Noda pushes for restart of Oi reactor in Fukui prefecture in the west of Japan**
- **Opinion polls show 2/3 of Japanese oppose restart of reactors**

OUTSIDE THE PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE

Plans to restart two reactors at the Ōi Nuclear Power Plant sparked fresh protests in 2012

- Protesters question procedural fairness of safety evaluation process
- Fukushima incident still unresolved
- Weekly gatherings begin outside the Prime Minister's Official Residence



THE OI CRISIS WOMEN'S DIE-IN AGAINST THE RESTART

On June 7, 2012, about 70 women including 10 women from Fukushima did a "die-in" in front of the Prime Minister's Official Residence to protest against the restart of Ooi Nuclear Power Plant.

Before the die-in, 10 Fukushima women visited the Cabinet Office and met with officials to submit a letter of requests addressed to Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda.

This video clip shows the words from the Fukushima women and part of the die-in.

KANTEI MAE PROTESTS



Kantei Mae protests in 2012 largely organised by non-regular workers

Most protesters participate “freely”, not mobilised by traditional organisations (Oguma 2012)

A place for experimenting with new forms of democracy

Confrontation and engagement with existing political institutions

Prime Minister Noda agreed to meet with demonstrators in August

NUCLEAR POWER: ENERGY FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE?



ORIGINS OF THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY IN JAPAN



US encourages Japan to develop a nuclear energy programme

Class-A war criminal and media magnate Shoriki Matsutaru convenes exhibition to promote nuclear power 1955



“the great power of the atom shall henceforward be dedicated to the arts of peace.” Eisenhower

30% of power generation derived from 50 nuclear reactors (pre-Fukushima)

2010 Basic Energy Plan intended to lift this to 50%, now shelved

ELITE CONFLICT OVER NUCLEAR POWER

Nuclear power dependent on a 'nuclear village':

- LDP (policy tribes)
- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI, formerly MITI)
- Electric utilities,
- Nuclear manufacturers
- Construction companies
- Local governments
- Unions
- Academics
- Media(advertising)

Significant opposition to nuclear power on the political right

- Breakdown in nuclear village
- Renewable energy entrepreneurs
- Neoliberal advocates of electricity market liberalisation



Plutonium-kun

THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR POWER

4 decades before nuclear power plant at Fukushima is decommissioned

LDP government of Abe Shinzō continues to argue for the continuation of nuclear power

Protests, hostile local government officials and court challenges have hindered the restart of the reactor fleet

Currently 5 reactors operating



Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, August 2013

A PARADISE BUILT IN HELL?

For after all, the relationships between friends, between parents and children, the myriad acts of generosity through non-profits, NGOs, activism, religious and voluntary groups are not capitalism but the kindness and generosity that counterbalance and clean up after capitalism. These are around us all the time, another economy, an economy of altruism and love, an economy against money and capital, and this too I learned to see when I began to look at disaster (Rebecca Solnit 2012).



Source: http://d.hatena.ne.jp/AKISHOBO_eigyō/20120208/1328681537