The Renaissance of Takefu

How People and the Local Past Changed the Civic Life of a Regional Japanese Town

Guven Peter Witteveen

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For my family,
the people of Takefu,
and most of all,
for *Takefu Renaissance*.

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Acknowledgments

A writer's debts start at home, with those nearest who wonder whenever the work of writing will be done. Then there is the good will and generosity, too, of the people giving their time and advice to me. It can be difficult to find one's feet in a foreign society and I have been thankful over the years for the kindness of people in Takefu and surrounding towns who I have known the very longest: Horikawa Harumi, Iwata Tadatoshi, Taniguchi Masanori and his whole family, and my host teacher in 1984, Yoshida Etsuo. In *Takefu Renaissance* I was especially helped by Inoue Kazuharu and Miki Yoshimi, as well as by the many others including, Saitō Kazo, Saitō Takashi, Ueki Masaharu, Uesaka Norio, and Yamamoto Yū'ichirō. A number of people at the city hall, the prefectural offices and several local museums made the search for answers and issues very productive. For material help and the less tangible support of fellowship, curiosity and conversation I wish to thank the many people I have come to meet and know each time I return to rural west Japan. I look forward to a continuing connection to this part of the world.

St. Johns, Michigan, USA
April 10, 2003

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Preface

Takefu is a town I have come to love over the years. In the summer of 1984 I began a year-long assignment as an English teaching assistant to the junior and senior high schools of the wider Tannan valley and adjacent areas of the seacoast, as well as the mountainous interior. A bicycle was my vehicle, and the narrow side streets I sometimes took on my way home often led me to historical surprises. Compared with the few other places I knew in Japan, it seemed that Takefu alone still had about it a feeling of the prewar days. Far less of the "scrap and build" wave of the 1970s and 1980s had defaced the local character of the place. I returned for a year in 1989, and again in 1994, each time finding myself more and more attached to the place and people.

I took local history displays in museums and galleries as my doctoral research topic and was pleased to discover a local movement underway to develop the old civic center hall, the *Kōkaidō*, into an historical museum. However, instead of a textbook case of citizen cooperation with the city's Board of Education and the opening of a creative display of the local past, what actually took place proved to be a different kind of textbook, one telling about the dominance of public affairs by a handful of elected officials and the public servants. Yet, in spite of the citizen group's lack of experience and despite the city government's best efforts to discourage discussion and inquiry, somehow the members and friends of *Takefu Renaissance* successfully proved the city's improper handling of the museum development.

This book is a testament to the efforts of Takefu Renaissance and their love of the city. As an example of townspeople's engagement with the status quo political culture of 1990s city hall, their experience may not be typical, since the normal case instead is one of non-engagement. But this story is indicative of wider currents now being felt in Japan at the turn of the century. Words like *shimin sanka* (citizen participation), *PATONA-SHIPPU* (partnership) and *AKAUNTABIRITI* (accountability) are now found right beside the more familiar ideas of *machizukuri* (building of community) and *furusato* (the hometown). So this is an example of citizen involvement in the public arena of the news media and discourse of townhall-style meetings. The group's efforts predate the wave of volunteerism and the discovery of the N.P.O. idea that has followed the Great Hanshin Earthquake (January 1995) and the push for local and national reforms of the bureaucrats.

Content of the book overlaps that of my dissertation in many places. In general though, the abundant detail and frequent citations have been streamlined for this book. So readers seeking more information will want to consult the original text, much of which can be read, downloaded or searched on-line at http://www.msu.edu/~wittevee/publications/contents.htm. The ten chapters of the original have been rearranged, and in parts composed again from the vantage of 1999–2001, when the book's six chapters took form. The particulars about methods appear in the text notes to chapter one, but the conditions for gathering the data in 1994–95 are worth recounting here.

The original fieldwork was supported by a scholarship from the Monbukagakusho (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture; at the time known as 'Monbusho'). Our family of three lived in metropolitan Fukuoka on the south island for six months. Following intensive language study we moved to Sabae, seven kilometers north of the fieldsite of Takefu in Fukui-ken. To supplement the government stipend I took a part-time job teaching English conversation. This provided a car, apartment and the office facilities of the school. As a result, in parallel to the people I learned from in Takefu, much of my fieldwork was limited to evenings and weekends. In hindsight the varied schedule and distance from Takefu seems to have worked out well.

The close-up view of the town of Takefu and the surrounding Hokuriku region of Japan will give readers a view of a part of Japan not often written about. Hopefully, the fortuitous course of events in this account will stimulate others to look closely at the citizen-government connections in other places of Japan, as well. For the rebirth of Takefu, its precious streetscape, and its citizen involvements is a story about the culture of municipal politics and about the politics of local history and the wider cultural landscape. As such the book seeks answers to, and finds suggestions in the fields of cultural studies, ethnographic method and description of lives in Japan, political science and the science of history.

OF NOTE:

1. The exchange rate during the period of fieldwork was about ¥100=$1.00 U.S.
2. Japanese names are given in the order of family name, then given name; thus, for Ms. Tanaka Miyuki, Tanaka is the family name.
3. Japanese vowels resemble the a, i, u, e, o found in Italian, while consonants approximate to English values. Thus words written in the Roman alphabet are invariably pronounced only one way. Vowels with a macron on them are held for two "beats," or twice as long as the unmarked vowels. Thus *rōdo* ('road,' a word borrowed from English), but *rōdo* (labor). Doubled consonants indicate a glottal stop. Thus *hato* (pigeon), but *hattō* (eight head of cattle).
4. Japanese words transcribed in all capitals are meant to draw attention to the fact that the word has been "borrowed" from foreign (usually English) language. This typographic distinction corresponds to the special use of katakana syllabary by Japanese themselves to similarly mark such words.
5. All translations and illustrative material are my own, unless indicated otherwise.

CHAPTER 1

Renewal, Local History, and Politics

Renewal of the center of an old city in west Japan is a topic where a sense of the past intersects a vision for the future. It is where the political art of the possible meets the historical residues of the actual. And it is where the earnest efforts of townspeople and some of the civil servants run into the self-importance of other political actors. As such, the subject of local history and renewal is about the politics of culture and the wider public space of civil society.

Between 1992 and 1996 a rare set of circumstances came together in the city of Takefu. Located near the Sea of Japan in Fukui-prefecture, this regional city has long been an entrepot and cross-roads for the trade from the sea to the mountains (west to east) and from the ancient capital Kyoto to the "lands of the north," *hokuriku* as the region of the middle lands along the Japan Sea is still called today. And while the scale of capitalism has driven much manufacturing from hinterlands like Takefu to places overseas, the town of Takefu is still a kind of intersection. But this time it is not products or material that has come to the city, but instead a fortuitous meeting of individuals, historical conditions, political practices and a local event—the restoration and reuse of the Kōkaidō Hall at the heart of the city.

The case of the citizen group *Takefu Renaissance* brings the topics of downtown renewal, local history, and the politics of culture, as well as the culture of politics into sharp focus. With the demands of car culture pressing for more parking lots, in 1992 the city proposed to convert the ground floor of the *Kōkaidō Hall* into space for a few of the city's fleet of vehicles. But a group formed to oppose the destruction of this former civic center and instead to refurbish it for use as a central museum. This group later became Takefu Renaissance. Not only did they succeed in getting city councilors to preserve this early example of a Western-style, concrete and steel building, but they also drafted a museum plan which was loosely adopted. This intersection of events reflects the historical moment of the mid 1990s. And the details of the museum proposal reveal the ideas about local history that people value. But perhaps the most important part of the course of events is what followed next.

Several months after refurbishment had begun all of the work stopped, or so it seemed when seen from the street level. Inquires by Renaissance to thecity hall were rebuffed and formal petitions for more information went unanswered. The group's own investigation of various rumors finally resulted

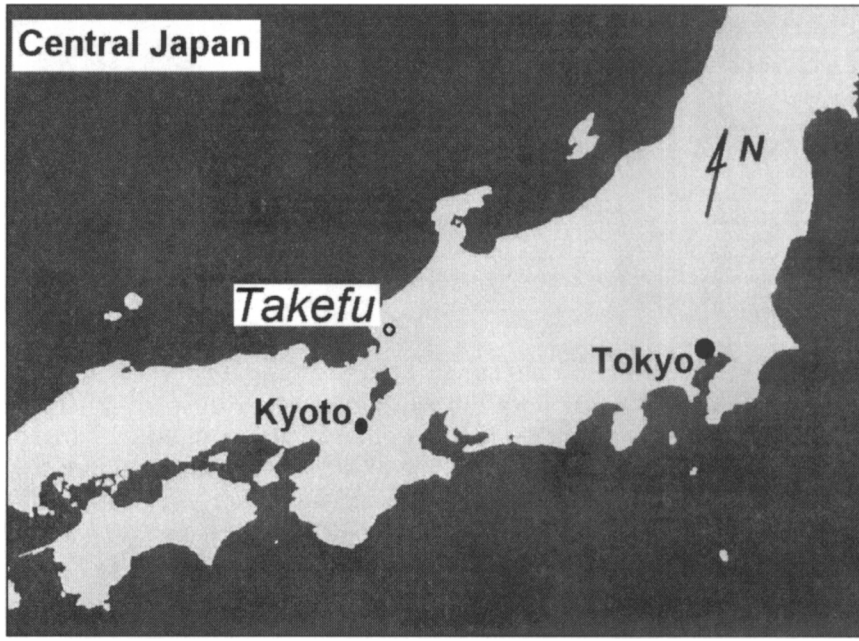

Figure 1: Location map showing the city of Takefu near the Japan Sea on the main island.

in a chronology that pointed to the mayor's plan to redirect work from history museum to an art gallery instead for the life works of a middle-rank oil painter from the 1930s, Saeki Yūzō. The mayor eventually announced this as if it were a matter of course. Like so much else of the process of local government, the procedures and justifications were not open to public view. The miscarriage of government concerned Renaissance, but what seemed most urgent to other townspeople was the authenticity of the works, the costs, and the anxiety caused by the risk to the city's image should the city end up being duped by false paintings. Happily, most things came around right in the end. But the experiences of Takefu Renaissance, the handling of the affair by the news media, and the public officials' preoccupations sheds light on the politics of culture and more generally on the character of civil society in Japan. Each of these topics, local history, civil society and the work of citizen movements have been taken up by others before.

The way that people regard the stories and lore about the landscape, streetscape and the previous generations, as well as the way people relate to the physical residues of the past are tied to a number of issues. While the issues themselves are not uniquely found in one society or another, the particular combination is specific and creates a distinctive awareness and coloring of historical understanding. And so, as with the historicity of other people and of other times, the Japanese historicity explored in chapter two is

shaped by practices that physically connect people to their land and to their ancestors, now and also as practiced in the past; along with the intangible factors of religious outlook or worldview (causality, eschatology, purpose of life, values and aspirations). The consumer driven, mass-production basis for living and the mass entertainments, advertising and education, as well as the imperatives of holding together a nation-state by reproducing a collective image day in day out, for young and old, native and non-native is another set of issues that impact historicity in Japan. The results of a survey in chapter two point to differing degrees of interest and knowledge by age and sex, and perhaps by region and along the rural-urban divide. Finally, there are the conventions of telling and displaying history inherent in modern Japanese usage that have a bearing on the texture and style of recounting and grasping the past, locally and farther afield.

Citizen movements against consumer distress, environmental abuses and local development among other things, along with protests more generally have been written about the society in Japan of premodern times and about the activism of the 1960s and 70s. Less has been said about the next generation of residents and citizens movements after the good economic times of the 1980s. The necessary conditions to support local efforts have not changed: literacy and mass media to allow popular participation, (nominal) freedom of speech and assembly, active news media, formative experiences in organizing a project, and not least of all having the time, wherewithal and inclination to get involved.

Compared with people living in other industrialized democracies, these necessary conditions are perhaps present and even better developed in Japan. But until 1998 the creation of national level nonprofit organizations (NPO) at the national level had been hobbled by lack of legal recognition and tax hurdles. And at the regional and local level NPO's or simpler aggregates of likeminded citizens in common cause have been rare. The uncommon case of the *Takefu Renaissance* citizens group taken up in chapters three and four is precisely due to an intersection of events, persons and circumstances. To uncover the reasons why citizen initiated projects are so infrequent in Japan chapter five looks at the wider context for group and individual efforts in public affairs; in other words, to explore the nature of civil society in Japan.

Compared to ideas like liberty, democracy, common good, citizen or civilization, the naming of private efforts in public matters as "civil society" has come much later. Karl Marx used the term in the later 1800s for efforts by the bourgeois to advance their own interests using the arena of discussion, opinion and actions. And Antonio Gramsci used the term in connection to the idea of hegemony—a moral and aesthetic set of norms that coincidently legitimize the wider status quo of economic interests and unequal political privileges of the property (propriety) owners. Gramsci was concerned less with the perpetuation of the property holding, propriety minding middle classes than he was interested in the interplay of civil society with political society. Civil society is where matters are discussed and support is won by

persuasion, but political society can preempt this discussion—whether reasoned debate or unreasonable noise—the monopoly it holds on the legitimate use of deadly force to compel a minimum social order.

In exploring the idea and the social terrain for civil society in Japan, several issues arise. There are a range of usages, from "rational-critical discourse" at the narrow end which focuses on the fiber of an argument, to a catch all term for all words and deeds concerning public matters made by private persons and groups. In other words, civil society is neither of the family nor of the state, but there in-between. Part of the idea of a public arena touches on a society's attitudes toward strangers, the disenfranchised, and attitudes toward authority figures. This wider cultural context implicates values rooted in religion and in worldview, as well as the less perduring circumstances of contemporary livelihoods in an industrialized, highly mobile, information-rich society. Opportunities to find out about movements and to participate depend on how civil society is reproduced by role models and the experiences in one's early years. Not only are there forces that pull one into civil society, but also there are other forces working in the opposite direction to discourage involvement in one's community affairs or in wider causes unattached to any local matter. For example in Japan the public venues and topics have been dominated by people who speak from their title or authority, not necessarily from their convictions or experiences: journalists, academics and public officials.

The case of the Takefu Renaissance citizen group becoming engaged in preservation of the Kōkaidō Hall and later the Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan (art museum) scandal casts light on civil society in Japan. As much fate or luck as anything else—defined by Alexander Hamilton as opportunity meeting preparation—the group's experiences in the public arena of Takefu City help to outline the shape of civil society in Japan and to suggest the role that this public space occupies in a vigorous community. Their successes required both information that was freely available, as well as that which they excavated with effort. It required an articulate presentation of their position to the public, to their neighbors and to the officials they addressed. Their success required organizational skills, resourcefulness and commitment in the face of adversity, and finally an ineluctable line of reasoning about taxpayer resources squandered and historical resources of the common people at risk of being erased as a result of negligent processes of the city government.

So this case brings together the study of historical understanding, citizen movements and politics of culture in Japan's civil society. The best place to enter the field is through the clouds along the Japan Sea and on to the ground for a look at the geographic setting and characteristics of the town and its surrounding region that stand apart from the wider patterns of the nation.

The earliest records from about 600 A.D. describe the regional power of the valley called *Kokufu*, with its center generally thought to be Takefu (literally 'bamboo thrives'). The spelling of the present name was decided upon in 1867 at the start of the modern era. Although the pronunciation is the same as

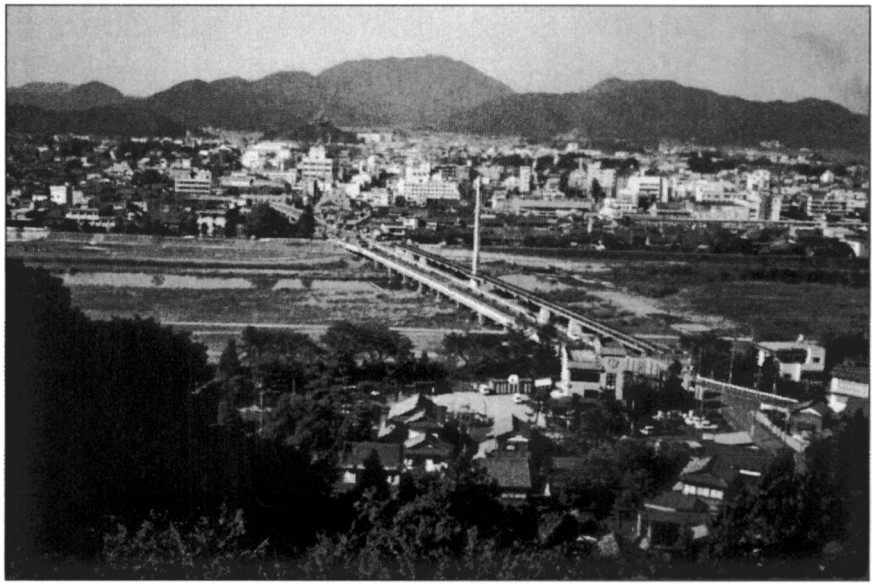

Figure 2: Cityscape, 1994, looking west from the slope of Mt. Murakuni.

the early written record, the 19th century-revived place name combines the kanji character for ‘warrior’ and ‘living’. For the many generations before 1867 though, back probably until the 1300s, the urban center was known as *Fuchū* or ‘administrative center’, a generic name then found in many places across the islands. *Takefu* was taken from a local reference that appears in a *manyō* poem of around 1100. Like other place names with unconventional written forms which work like a shibboleth, the preferred way to read the word —Takefu—(*take* ‘martial’ and *fu* ‘alive’) sets insiders and outsiders apart.

A visitor will probably notice several things about the old urban hub; that is, the rectangular area about 1.5 km by 2.5 km, with a population of about 22,000 that is the center of the wider municipal boundaries of today, with a population totaling about 73,000 in 1999. One is the streetscape, which has a mix of shops from the 1920s to 1970s, and in between, buildings put up since then. Enough buildings use the grey roofing tile and untreated wood siding to still give an overall effect of early 20th century or before. Apart from the main avenues that have been straightened and widened, the rest of the network of lanes and narrow streets can still be compared to the earliest known map of 1711, and its likeness be recognized immediately. The town was not bombed during WWII, nor has it suffered earthquakes or major floods. Except for the north end of the town that burned down in 1913, the rest of the center has a number of 19th century wood shops, houses, temples and shrines.

Of the people, one would notice a number of elderly people, but also young families. The wider setting on the valley floor is filled with paddy fields,

outlying villages that have been incorporated into the city's administration and then the mountains along the Japan Sea on the west and to the east the ranges of mountains across central Honshu. Of these the local "Mt. Fuji" is the shapely peak of Hino-san (792m). The Hino River forms a natural boundary for the eastern edge of the old city center.

A Japanese may identify the town with some of the features highlighted by the city government's promotional material, such as the obligatory list of descriptors that appears at the start of many pamphlets and booklets: ancient capital, connection to the novelist Murasaki Shikibu in 1100, proud craft tradition and leading manufacturer in the prefecture, lots of forest greenery and excellent water.

Likewise widely quoted, the city's KYACHI FUREIJI (catch phrase) might catch a visitor's fancy. It has been used since 1988, when it was conceived on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Takefu's designation in the class of "city." The phrase is attached to official publications, banners and sometimes is prominently displayed at city-run facilities.

> *sbikibu to deaeru, HI TEK machi Takefu*
> The high-tech town of Takefu, where you can meet [ancient novelist] Murasaki Shikibu

Another source of vivid, poetic imagery is the "citizen charter" *(shimin kenshō)*, adopted in 1986. It is recited at the beginning of the quarterly assemblies of the city council and is also to be seen framed and prominently displayed in city-run facilities and meeting spaces. It urges the people of Takefu to follow the example of bamboo to grow up strong, Mt. Hino's peak for high ideals when building the future, and the Hino River for making a pure environment, among other things.

Finally the attractions listed in commercial guidebooks and in the free pamphlets produced by the city neatly sum up the city in the indigenous categories of nature, culture and history. These adornments include numerous temples and shrines, along with their associated monuments and memorials. There are vestiges of the promodern arrangement of streets, notable old trees, parks and facilities connected to the production of the traditional crafts of joinery and cutlery, as well as a site associated with the early *manyō* form of poetry (c.759 A.D. for the last verse composed) and nextdoor the newly established chrysanthemum nursery and promotional center that was opened in 1998.

Still in the realm of impressions, but more specifically in reference to the people of Takefu, there are a number of things that residents will acknowledge or that people moving here from outside the city have said. While such sweeping characterization may seem out of place in an anthropological portrait, the fact that people in and out of the city refer to these points gives them significance. One characteristic is the "closed" aspect of people of the old town especially. That is, it takes a long time before one

can develop a series of connections to others in the town. Until that time one may be coolly regarded from a distance in a mixture of self-pride and other-distrust or disdain. Related is the idea that interactions are *katamate iru* or many layered, inflexible or hardened. Similarly, people will speak of the good and bad dimensions of the so-called peasant villager mentality *(mura shakai)* that can provide attention to each other's welfare and mutual support against outside threats on the one hand, but can feed hurtful gossip and can effectively crush any activity beyond the range of "normal."

Another remark is "if you can make a success of something in Takefu, then you can succeed anywhere." In other words the numerous obstacles and lack of encouragement one faces as a newcomer are a true test of one's persistence and resourcefulness. One example sometimes given is the ironic tone of conversations, such that what the person seems to be telling you is in fact the opposite of what they mean. This is sometimes said of the speech of Kyoto, as well, as seen in the example "won't you stay for lunch." This is actually intended to be a clever way to point out the advancing time and may be meant not as an invitation to stay, but to go.

At the fall, 1994 symposium organized by Takefu Renaissance one of the speakers read from a letter written twenty years earlier by a bank manager newly transferred to the Takefu branch. His summary of the characteristics of the people he knew in the city would still be accurate today.

THE SUBJECT OF TAKEFU PEOPLE

1. They are zealous at work and persevering, able to stand up against both cold weather and adversity.
2. They never cease in efforts to improve their lives.
3. They are zealous too about education, with excellent school credentials.
4. They are capable of supporting cultural refinements.
5. Although they are dedicated to their work [practices], people think that they won't survive without following where others' lead.
6. The people put great value on their own family's ways, and while they are big hearted, when they meet someone different to them, no matter how talented, they won't regard the person in a favorable light. Instead they will talk behind the person's back, all the while giving no indication of this to the person.

Abbreviation codes for sources of statistical information:

The Numbers *(references are given in abbreviation to the following sources)*

A: *The American Almanac 1995–1996.*
D: *Takefu Data Bank* (vol.2, 1992).
F: *Fukui-kensei yōran,* (Outline of Fukui prefecture's condition, 1994).
G: glossy pamphlet from Takefu Commerce and Labor desk, Takefu shi (1993).

K: *tōkei de miru ken no sugata* (1995, The Prefectures Seen in Statistics).
L: Labor and Education Statistics on Worldwide Web http://jin.jcic.or.jp/
M: Minryoku '92 (Consumer indices 1992).
P: *Takefu bōhan tōkei sho* (Police report of Takefu crime statistics, 1993).
S: *Shakai shihyō kara mita fukui ken* (Fukui-ken seen from social indicators, 1995).
T: *Takefu-shisei RIPŌTO '92* (Statistical abstracts for Takefu-city, 1992).
X: *Takefu no kōtsū* (1994 Traffic accident report for Takefu).
Z: *Kanazawa kokuzei kyoku tōkei sho* (Annual report of the Kanazawa district national tax bureau, 1992).

Impressions are worth putting down because they point to salient features to examine more carefully. So while the details may not be valuable, the general shape and direction are. In that sense, it is fair to describe the location as still maintaining its strong sense of place, a settled, deeply rooted awareness of belonging to a center, one different from any other in the valley. And while the economic activity is no longer concentrated in the middle of the old town, the abiding presence of the old buildings and course of narrow streets, the ongoing activity of the municipal government and the religious centers means that the sense of being a center and of belonging to a center is still strong. Although a fraction of the size of the ancient metropolis, the expression "sho Kyoto" or little Kyoto is a fitting nickname sometimes used by residents to describe what makes the town different to another urban area of its size.

Some of the characteristics highlighted regarding the streetscape, people and surrounding environment are supported by statistical matters, too. In an "information society" *(jōhō shakai)* like Japan's there is abundant data to choose from. Close connections run from local to prefectural to national government as well as laterally (in form at least) to other peer administrators, members of similar trade or industrial sectors, and even among hobby groups around the country. So it is worth situating Takefu in reference to the rest of Fukui-ken, the surrounding *hokuriku* block of prefectures, and in reference to the country overall.

When entering the forest of statistical data available for a place in Japan, it is important to keep the purpose in mind. Some of the questions to seek answers for include how representative is Takefu of other places in Japan; what is prominent in the economic life of the residents; and in as much as social conditions can be tabulated, what sort of place is Takefu?

Population patterns are the first place to look. Expressed in percentages of the national population, people living in regional cities like Takefu of up to 100,000 residents are just 12% of the population. Those in towns of less than 30,000 represent 21%, while those in regional cities of 100 to 450,000 equal 49% of the country's total population. Thus, 33% of the Japanese live in regional towns and villages, while the remaining 67% live in the metropolitan

centers and prefectural capitals. On balance, however, most Japanese live in urban conditions.

Before asking what sort of place Takefu is, it is worth repeating what may seem obvious, that the society of Japan is run through with the infrastructure, life course events and outlook of an advanced industrialized society of consumers. As a small piece of this complex mosaic, Takefu shares these conditions and expectations with others all across the islands and indeed with counterparts in the other parts of the world where industrial economy has been dominant for several generations. The consequences include such things as the way that much of one's daily experience is commodified so that times, prices or values are an explicit part of any decision. The sense of measured time is highly developed, as in "time is money." Numeracy and technological familiarity are as important as literacy in one's daily affairs. Where people once had abundant time, but little cash, the reverse is now often true. Technology mediates one's connection (both distance and shape) to the natural environment to a much greater extent than in places with little industrial development or mass distributed consumer economy. And from the earliest age one is classified and regimented by the paperwork and procedures of formal organizations outside of family life; such as neighborhood associations, school, hobby circles, the workplace and religious activities, for example. All of these conditions define what a normal life is in Japan, and so also for people living in Takefu.

Among the numerous measurements of the land and people of Japan, the most basic characteristic is geography. Like other island nations the Japanese are highly dependent on imported energy and raw materials, as well as markets abroad for selling their goods and services. Although by comparison with Great Britain (22.2%), only 12.5% of the Japanese GDP comes from exports, something slightly more than the 8% in the U.S., which similarly has many multi-national companies and a large domestic market (Christopher 1983:305–6). In contrast to the U.S. economy, however, there are nearly twice the proportion of wholesale and retail shops per capita in Japan (ibid:281). Besides this proliferation of shops and suppliers, other features of the Japanese society include the widespread perception of belonging to the middle class and high rates of further education. In a 1989 report of the Japanese Economic Planning Agency the following self-reporting results were obtained:

Thus, apart from the increase at the upper and lower ends, the overall share of the Japanese population identifying themselves as middle class remained at about 82%. Higher education in Japan has become widespread (34.5%, F:41); still less than the 46.6% U.S. rate (A), but well ahead of the other industrialized democracies (e.g. Britain 16%). Campbell cites the popularization of higher education, along with low coefficients of income distribution as an important precondition for wide political participation, since the education gap between leaders and constituents is then breached (1989:116, cf. McKean 1989:202).

Table 1: Class perception of Japanese by self-reporting, (cited in M.White 1993:213)

	1975	1987
upper	0.8%	1.0%
upper-middle	3.0%	3.8%
middle	43.4%	40.7%
lower-middle	35.3%	38.7%
lower	9.8%	15.6%
don't know	7.7%	0.2%

Like the people living in the other leading industrialized nations, few of the Japanese work in the primary economic sector, instead concentrating in the manufacturing and service sectors. The notable contrast with the U.S. work force distribution is the higher proportion in manufacturing and primary production (farming, etc) and the lower share in professional, administrative, and service related positions.

It is often said that the country's greatest resource is its highly educated citizenry. Compared to the 1% illiteracy rate in Japan, the upward estimates of 20% in the USA are astounding (Christopher 1983:79). Each year in Japan publishers put out twice the U.S. rate of titles per capita (ibid: 194), with circulation and readership rates for newspapers, weekly and monthly news magazines at also two times the per capita U.S. figure (ibid:200–202). The consequences of the nation's high literacy and well developed media on the one hand, and economic dependence on imports on the other are several. From an early age Japanese are taught about the significance of their main trading partners, including the cultural contrasts of Japan's most important peer nations in Europe and North America. Two results are the need to strive for superior education and for keeping informed of developments abroad. But economic conditions and social values within the country also lead to an emphasis on learning and an appetite for information.

The Japanese archipelago is commonly compared to California in surface area and north-south orientation. But with more than three quarters of the land unsuitable for building or industrial development, the space in which 125 million Japanese and foreigners have to live is practically the size of Connecticut (12,997 km2 or 5,018 square miles). Although rural areas do contain open spaces, it is the in urban centers the majority of Japanese live in today that a visitor becomes most aware of the density of social life. And despite the 350 years of sustained urban life among the society's influential stratum of daimyo, their chief retainers and entourages in early modern Tokyo (historically the location of perhaps 10% of all Japanese speakers), the earlier protocols of agrarian village society *(mura shakai)* continue to characterize

organizational and interpersonal life (cf. Bestor 1989, Chie 1970, Gotoda 1985:12–13).

The geographic proximity to China (and corresponding distance from other traditions of civilization) along with geological and climatological facts also determined the character of Japanese society. In the literature of Japanese collective self-examination *(nihonjin ron)*, the earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, typhoons, heavy precipitation, high humidity and maritime resources have all been considered formative to the relativistic world view of the native Shinto religion (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986, Yoshino 1992). The more tangible elements of social life have been inspired in many cases by Chinese examples, whether it is traditional crafts and industry, Confucian codes of conduct and attitudes to authority, or the written and spoken lexicon. Some of the beliefs and practices that persist in the institutions of medicine, scholarship, government, law, art and religion have grown from the centuries of connection with the Continent by way of the kingdom on the Korean peninsula.

With national unification and the development of feudal rule, practically all links to the world beyond Japan were forbidden. By the middle 19th century people, ideas and things again began coming in and out of the country. This time, however, it was the awe of Western technology and social life that came to be the most significant source of influence on the surface of Japanese social life. The result today has been a knack for adapting foreign ideas to local applications. So while a Westerner will perceive familiarity of material culture and some (especially English-derived) vocabulary, the significance of the item or behavior may very well have little connection to the Western expectations. Thus the people of Takefu, like those elsewhere in the Japanese state, seem to resemble their counterparts in other industrialized nations. But in practice, the Western elements disguise an East Asian substrate that inflects the visible elements in Japanese ways.

In addition to geographic and climatic factors, the cultural sphere of influence, and dependence on a world order that permits foreign trade, other no less significant aspects of Japanese life today include the relatively recent material prosperity, the course of the foreign exchange rate and balance of trade, and the burst of the "bubble economy" in 1993. The doubling of the yen's value in 1985 and another 20–25% appreciation in the early 1990s made possible the expansion of Japanese joint ventures abroad and with it the increase in the number of Japanese in contact with foreigners. Besides the favorable exchange rate, the trade deficit with the United States was another reason for Japanese to invest abroad. The consequence for the individual Japanese was to make foreign goods easier to buy and foreign travel increasingly affordable. This situation, combined with the government's educational and industrial policy of *kokusaika* [internationalization], affected people's attitudes about themselves in relation to non-Japanese, and their perception of Japan's place in the international world order.

The steady growth in material prosperity since the 1960s accelerated during the 1980s and 1990s. But when real estate speculation and scandal exposed in the billowing stock market came on top of the drop in foreign exports, the overinflated economic balloon rapidly sagged during 1993. College graduates had trouble finding jobs; companies announced production cutbacks, and unemployment, still low by international standards, climbed from 2.1% in 1991 to 2.9% in 1994 (L). The conspicuous lifestyles of the "bubble period" *[BABARU jidai]* disappeared at the same time and the slight recession caused some to reject the material rewards and grasping ways of a salaried career. Many joined the ranks of *datsu SARA* [people throwing off the salaried life], leaving the metropolitan areas either for their provincial origins ("U-turn"), or for somewhere on the way back home ("J-turn"). The overall effect of the extended economic slowdown following upon material prosperity has been to make people reflect on what is of worth, what one should work toward, including for some, a reconsideration of traditional values and practices (Kitada 1994).

Takefu is part of the Hokuriku region, consisting of three prefectures along the Japan Sea, from south to north: Fukui, Ishikawa, and Toyama. It is widely accepted in Japan that the people of this block share much in common. The measures found in the "Prefectures Seen in the Statistics, 1995" *(tōkei de miru ken no sugata)* and in "Consumer Indices '92" *(minryoku'92)* bear this out, as well. All three border the Japan Sea and, in addition to their common climate, share a reputation for seriousness *[majime]* and hard work *[kinben]*. The fact that conscripts from the towns and villages of Hokuriku suffered high casualties during the Second World War can be attributed to the hard assignments they were given, but is also related to the belief in taking a job seriously, and furthermore the teachings of the Jōdō Shinshū sect of Buddhism that has flourished there. These tolerant and uncluttered teachings promise comfort in the next world and appealed to the once mainly farming families of Hokuriku, where today the sect continues to have a stronghold of believers.

The practice of both spouses seeking income (K:51), along with part-time farming among often three generation households (K:46, 48) has led to household income topping the nation's averages (K:219), with balance of savings (K:75, 245), home ownership rates (K:254) and size of dwelling to match (K:264). Fukui prefecture differs from the other two in a number of measures. For example, in the percentage of citizens who have continued past the nine years of compulsory education, Fukui (95%) ranks 30th, while Toyama (97.8%) and Ishikawa rank 1st and 2nd respectively (K: 157). In the number of museums per 1 million people, Fukui is number 17; Toyama and Ishikawa are numbers 2 and 3 respectively (K:171). At the median rank for police per 1,000, Toyama (#21) and Ishikawa (#22) differ from Fukui which is at number eight (K:432). Fukui has fewer of its people in the 15–65 age and than Toyama or Ishikawa which both are average. The working age population that does not leave the region may work in the numerous factories

located there. But to a degree greater than elsewhere, many open their own small business. Barber shops, beauty salons, stationery stores, restaurants, coffee shops, and traveler inns (ryōkan) outnumber the average per capita number nationally (M:594). Fukui is average or above in the number of young families and retirees. It has more than the average number of elementary schools per 10,000 pupils recorded for Toyama and Ishikawa prefectures.

Other figures relating to public facilities and social infrastructure further define Fukui in reference to the rest of Hokuriku. For example, the number of public baths in Fukui per capita is almost half that of the other two, and is even below the national average (M:594). By implication the traditional venues for conversation are therefore more limited in Fukui. Disposal of refuse by landfill also differs, or at least the projected amount of fill space left differs. Fukui (#41) has less space remaining than either Toyama (25) or Ishikawa (24, K:284), which may be adding urgency to the recycling and waste reduction efforts in Fukui of the late 1990s.

As for the figure about estimated cost of fire damage (Fukui #20, Toyama #46, Ishikawa #44), it is not clear what this reflects. Perhaps Fukui's fire departments, of which there are as many or more per capita than elsewhere are less able (K:410). It may be by chance that more valuable property has burned. But where the damage is by intention, it would fit the proverbial characterization for Fukui of practicing deception when desperate times come:

> Etchū gōtō, Kaga kojiki, Echizen no sagi
> [Robbery in Toyama, Begging in Ishikawa, and Fraud in Fukui]

FUKUI AND HER PEOPLE SEEN IN THE NUMBERS

The prefecture's boundaries form the shape of a key, with the narrow end at the south called Reinan area, separated by mountains from the larger, more populous area in the north called Reihoku. At 35º north latitude, the climate is temperate, and is influenced by the proximity to the Japan Sea. The narcissus was Fukui's first designated natural symbol and, according to an official pamphlet, reflects collective characteristics, "It is said that the patience of this flower that blooms in the severe wind and snow of the Japan Sea reflects the personality of the citizens of Fukui Prefecture" (F, back). With 828,000 people, it ranks 44th of Japan's 47 prefectures in population.

The genesis of the present boundaries is worth reviewing, for it explains the composite nature of the prefecture. At the end of the Tokugawa reign in 1867, old fiefdoms were amalgamated, often along the same geographical features and regional cultural affinities that defined the premodern divisions previously. In Fukui several combinations were tried before arriving at the present formulation 14 years later (1881). The result was a fracture prone graft of two distinct regions, Reinan to the south and Reihoku to the north, each with separate traditions and loyalties. In spite of the old rivalries between Fukui-city, Ono-city, and Takefu-city, and then all of these together

in the north *(reihoku)* versus the people living in the southern end of the prefecture *(reinan)*, the present prefectural system continues to serve. In the same way, a look back at historical developments can also shed light on the prefecture's dominant industries today.

Figures from the prefecture's own statistics *(kensei yōran)* point out that still in the 1990s Fukui ranks first and second nationally in a variety of silk and artificial silk fabric products. Other top ranking manufactures in the prefecture include knit wear, dyeing and finishing of yarn and fabric, lace and other textiles, paper making, spectacles, straw rope and lacquer ware production (F). In the past, households had raised silkworms for generations, so it was natural to set up the early textile factories in Fukui. Thus the manufacture of fabric and related services has long been associated with Fukui prefecture and has given generations of women the possibility of wage labor, resulting in the prefecture's national lead in the percentage of women engaged in gainful employment (56% Fukui, 48% Japan, F:52). The cottage industry of eyeglass frame production has been another leading source of families' double incomes, particularly in the area adjacent to Takefu, centering on the town of Sabae today.

Certain measures of the prefecture are in line with national averages. For example, the per capita numbers of psychiatric hospitals (K:372) and counselors (K:332), old people's centers (K:317) and sports facilities (F:49) in Fukui are similar to the rest of Japan. The same is true of the money spent per pupil in elementary school and on public welfare, although it could be argued that the same figure goes further in Fukui than in metropolitan areas. The number of nurses per capita and the proportion of female teachers at the junior high school level are likewise as expected, based on national averages. The people of Fukui also hit the national average in the area of leisure and culture. The number of passports per 1,000 persons (considerable international business for a rural area), the spending per person on books, and the number of movie theaters per 1,000 persons all are comparable to the national averages. But considering the predominantly urban environment of most Japanese, with only 33% living in places like Fukui prefecture with towns of 100,000 or less, the figures for passports, reading matter and movie theaters are significant. Finally, with regard to demographic averages, Fukui matches the national rates per capita for incidence of heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure, as well as for deaths per 1,000 people (although more elderly do live in the provinces). Life expectancy for Fukui women, on the other hand, is higher than in the rest of the country on average.

On the population pyramid of numbers in each five-year range, there are practically an equal number of males and females between the ages of 20 and 30. But because of the custom of continuing a family line in the male line, more often it is men who are called on to return and take over the household, family business, or religious office. These returnees will ideally be oldest sons, resulting in the phenomenon of locally born oldest sons concentrating in rural areas like Fukui prefecture. Being groomed as prospective (nominal)

heir to a household or enterprise may have the effect of making this segment of the population accustomed to the attention of authority and conservativeness of responsibility. In other words, while the nation as a whole is graying *(kōreika shakai)*, the countryside is composed of a higher percentage of the elderly, who, along with the numerous households headed by oldest sons, tend to be more conservative in outlook.

The numerous ways in which Fukui prefecture leads the country all seem to come from the inhabitants being more Japanese than Japanese. That is, while education and hard work are valued widely, in Fukui these are emphasized even more. As a result, the people of Fukui have the third highest rate of high school graduates going on to higher education (44.2% F:41). Government expenditures per capita on education (#4, K:118), on community education (#2, K:119), on learning and leisure halls for young people (#3, K:172), and the rate of gym diffusion among public high schools (#2, K:141) are all very high. Through the exhortations of government and teachers, and the examples set by peers and parents, young people take on a high regard for education. Students in all forms of learning institution in Fukui are 6.46 per 1,000 persons (#2, F:44). Libraries per population are also high (#2, K:170), despite the tendency for people to frequent bookstores, either to build their own libraries, or to stand and read in the shop *(tachi yomi)*. Further evidence of the greater than average involvement in education comes anecdotally in the example of the prefecture's initiatives to expand the native English speaker program. In 1984, with the national government providing funds for two American Assistant English Teachers, Fukui prefecture led the way by locally funding six additional foreign teaching assistants, to be distributed across the entire prefecture. Following the success of Fukui's example, other prefectural school boards have followed suit, resulting in a Japan English Teacher (JET) program that is tens of times bigger, employing native English speakers from across the planet.

Fukui prefecture could be nicknamed Academy in the Fields *(inaka no gakuen)* for the energy and money spent on educating one another. But an equally fitting moniker would be Prefecture of Company Presidents *(shachō no kuni)*. The many small contractors and subcontractors to the eyeglass frame and textile industries have led to a proliferation of company presidents. Thus the familiar address one receives at the barbecue and beer shops, "shachō!" which is as much flattery as a statistically fair guess as to the patron's social rank. The many double income (or more if multi-generational) households have made it possible for many others to go into business for themselves, contributing to Fukui's higher than average number of modest enterprises listed previously (barber shops, etc).

With so many female wage earners (#1, 56.3%, F:52) working so many hours each month (#4, 186 hours, F:54), the amount of cash in the local economy has had many ramifications for the household as well as government in Fukui. The people of Fukui have levels of savings per person higher than the national average (F28: $69,000 per person Fukui, $66,020 Japan). This

follows from the fact that they save a greater portion of their earnings, have lower living expenses, and have one of the highest rates of double incomes. But the figure of average savings account balances is deceptive, for the lower wages as well as expenses of the rural areas mean that a given figure is worth more in practical terms. Large personal savings (#4, K:75; cf. $1.3 million per Fukui household, $1.09 million Japan, F:62), the availability of land and number of three generation households (#6, 38.9%, F:19) may explain the size (#3, 165 m2, F:67), and proportion of owner occupied houses (#5, 78.2%, F:66) in the prefecture. The pervasiveness of multi-generation households can be seen not only in the size of homes, but also in the prefecture's position in total number of households (#46, K:43) compared to this ranking #44 in its total population (K:15). Seen another way, Fukui is #3 in average number of persons per household (3.48 persons, F:18). Things like divorce rate (#44, K:53), bankruptcies (#43, K:63) and life expectancy of men (#14, K:355) may also relate to the mix of psychic support and expectations exerted by three generations living together.

Savings and the prescription to work may also account for the number of rehabilitation hospitals (#3, F:81), staff (#1, K:326) and residents (#1, K:327). At the same time these provide work for Fukui's greater than average number of nurses and assistant nurses (M:537), as well as being a visible example of the government's use of tax money for all to plainly see. With its high rate of property taxation (#3, K:89) the government of Fukui prefecture has been able to pour money into educational expenses (above), major building projects (#1, K:100, 107, 115), road paving (#5 in percent roads hard surfaced, K:302), and civil engineering works (#5, K:115). The road works may be in response to the high rate of car ownership (#5, K:248), a fact related to the many traffic deaths (#5, K:429) and violations (#3, K:430). The prefectural government also stands out in its funding for public safety: ambulances (#4, K:398), firefighters (#5, K:414), fire prevention (#3, K:102). Given the horror of Fukui-city's aerial bombardment in the closing weeks of WWII and its complete destruction three years later by earthquake, the public safety budget is no surprise. This experience of disaster may also explain the prominent rate of disaster insurance (#4, K:448), basic life insurance (#4, K:446), and the size of policies insured (#2, K:444), at triple the Japanese average ($340,100; F:100)

There are some negative consequences to the cash rich local economy created by the many small companies and household double incomes. Consumers are able and willing to pay more for food, for example (#5, K:243). They also use the low priced electrical energy from nearby nuclear power generators in greater than average amounts per year (#4, 7330 kw per person, F:29). Finally, the price of residential land has increased at a rapid rate in recent years (#2, K:244). Taking the positive and negative ramifications on balance, though, the combination of strong work ethic among both sexes and the emphasis on education throughout the life course seems to have been for the best. At least with reference to the amount of public consciousness, the

prefecture excels. Measured as per cent of the population involved in social service *[shakai hōshi katsudo]*, Fukui ranks first among prefectures (K:179). At the same time, at the opposite extreme from the citizens of Fukui, the prefectural government shows much less awareness of the public good. There seems to be little in the way of zoning control or review boards for proposed construction, with the result of haphazard urban development. The people of Takefu fit within most of the wider prefecture's statistical indicators, although in some ways the figures of the town show clear contrasts.

TAKEFU'S REFLECTION IN THE NUMBERS

To make useful connections, the various figures have been grouped into four topical areas. Presented in order of public visibility, these figures have to do with 1) the city's infrastructure and public services, 2) community events and civil society, 3) economic measures and 4), household information.

Many of the impressions a visitor to Takefu first has are supported by statistical prominences. For example, there are many old buildings. The town was not bombed during WWII and has never been damaged by earthquakes, although in 1913 the northern half of the urban hub practically burned to the ground with a loss of 483 houses. There is a relatively high proportion of buildings constructed before WWII (T:10), and many of these are in the traditional *machiya* form of a shop fronting the street level with a living area above and to the rear (11.1% Takefu, 6.6% Japan, T:10). More of Takefu's streets are in the narrow category of less than 4 meters, compared to the prefecture on average (42.3% Takefu, 34% Fukui, T:11), and the overall low rate of sewerage connections in Fukui prefecture is even lower in Takefu (T:13). Finally, a visitor might notice derelict houses or shops closed for business here and there. This is the practical result of the population "doughnut" phenomenon (D:9), whereby aging parents at city center cannot induce children or outsiders to take over their business. Younger people are either unable or unwilling to move to the closely built old neighborhoods, something reflected in the drop for Takefu's core population (T:27), as well as in elementary school enrollments.

Records are kept of less obvious, but no less notable features of Takefu's infrastructure. Municipal expenditures on public welfare per capita (S: p.129, G-1) is low in a prefecture which is ranked overall above the national median at number 19 (K:110). This conservative view of a limited government welfare in Takefu is congruent with the conservative attitudes to authority reflected and made possible by high ratios of townspeople per doctor, dentist (T:21), teacher (T:27), and city council member (S: p.118, D-6). The traditionally high status of each of these roles is perpetuated because of their scarcity in relation to the rest of the population. Hence each concentrates more power in his or her hands than elsewhere.

Moving from measures of Takefu's infrastructure to the town's civil society and public life, other statistics stand out. For example, in spite of their

library holding one of the highest number of books per capita in the prefecture, the lending rate per person on average is one of the lowest (T:30). This accords with the conservative belief in buying one's books instead of using the ones lent to "the public." Next-door Sabae-city, in many ways contrasting the conservatism of Takefu people, records one of the prefecture's highest lending rates per capita (T:30). Perhaps it is Takefu's conservative attitudes in general, and the relatively high regard for authority that results in lower than expected incidents of crime reported. Although the city accounts for 8.64% of Fukui's population, in cities and countryside, it was the location for only 8% of the crimes (P: p.1). Abiding the law is less clear in the case of driving etiquette, however. The highest proportion of the prefecture's already high rate of fatal accidents is recorded in Takefu (X: pp.6–7). Certainly the area's mixture of narrow lanes, wide highways, and winding mountain roads introduces many demands on drivers. A happier picture comes from fire statistics, where the town seems to beat the odds. Despite the low number of fire fighters, and closely packed, normally old wood-built houses of the city, there are relatively few outbreaks reported.

The third area of municipal statistics relates to economic measures. A similar percentage of Takefu's population is engaged in farming as the rest of the prefecture (26.5% Takefu, 26.8% Fukui, 14% Japan, T:40). But the majority of these are part-time farmers, relying on elderly family members, both spouses and other relatives to supply labor (92.8% Takefu, 66.5% Japan, T40), with rice the single most important source of agricultural income (72.1% Fukui, 29.7% Japan, S:15). Takefu has proportionately fewer people involved in services (17% Takefu, 23% Fukui, 26% Japan, T:36). In the tertiary sector about 27% is retail business (D:18) with 430 food related businesses, 290 restaurants, 220 clothing, 100 furniture, and 90 car or bicycle related. Takefu leads the prefecture in value of goods manufactured per person (T:45), with four corporations alone accounting for 30% of the jobs (automotive and electronics). Other, smaller, companies include makers of sportswear (30 factories), roof tiles (11), furniture (70) and cutlery (43) (G:2, 3). Unemployment, already low in Fukui-prefecture (1.3%, Japan 1.9%), is similarly low in Takefu, where many foreigners of Japanese descent have flocked since the national government began granting a special labor visa in 1990. In 1999 the 1,600 Japanese-Brazilians were the single most numerous in Takefu and together with the other resident foreigners amount to 2,300 persons, or almost 2.6% of the city's population, far more than ever lived there before. Takefu surpasses the prefecture for jobs per seeker (3.3) with a figure of 5.4 jobs available for every person seeking work (T:33). In short, while old shops are closing downtown, business overall is good in the Takefu area, with new stores opening along the recently completed by-pass highways and in shopping centers outside the traditional commercial center downtown. Figures from the Tannan tax bureau, centering on Sabae and Takefu, show a lower than average number of incidences of tax arrears per filing household or

company. The average amount in arrears is also lower than average here (Z:142).

Finally, the remaining municipal statistics give some indication of household condition and the sorts of choices townspeople make which concern their own well-being. Once again the conservative or traditional values held in Takefu are reflected in a figure like the low proportion of elderly living on their own (K:48). Put another way, more people live in three generation households there than in the prefecture or country overall. Furthermore, the number of often elderly, bedridden per 1,000 persons is higher in Takefu (2.7) than in the prefecture on average (1.8). Turning to the working age segment of the population, Takefu differs from the prefectural pattern. In spite of, or perhaps because of, the abundance of work and high rate of double incomes *(tomo bataraki)*, birth rates have dropped between 1980 and 1991 by 15–20% (D:9). Lastly, Takefu preschool and day care rates are at the top for Fukui prefecture. It is not clear whether this has more to do with an above average urgency to excel in education (a cultural value and means of grading job applicants, *gakureki seidō*, the "school credential society"), or is simply related to the availability of municipal subsidy for two parent working families. What is more certain, though, is that the high number of students to teachers (T:27, 28) helps to perpetuate the traditionally high status enjoyed by teachers. Both their scarcity (and good pay, but long hours) and the command or lecture style of leading classes maintain the distance between learner and leader needed to reinforce the teacher's elevated status.

In sum, while it is not a revealing observation, Takefu is indeed characterized by its more than average conservative attitudes. Unlike other medium sized regional cities that serve as bedroom towns to metropolitan centers, Takefu itself is a local center. Most commuters go no further than Tsuruga 30 km south or to Fukui-city a similar distance north. So the attitudes and more cosmopolitan experiences available to metropolitan workers and the community life of their commuter municipalities is much less immediate in Takefu. According to folk knowledge in Japan land base and economy are connected to the prevailing outlook of the people there. So, for example, the uncertainties of harvesting the sea are supposed to make people in coastal fishing villages gregarious and changeable. Those in the mountainous interior are supposed to be strong willed, quiet and sure of themselves. While those in the rice growing valley bottoms, like Takefu, who were most closely subject to feudal controls are supposedly most meek under government authority, even today. So the old folk wisdom is not entirely off the mark when it identifies certain collective characteristics with geographical features and the particular historical experience of feudalism of a place.

This sketch of Takefu based on numbers is now complete and can be seen as a whole. The nation has international prominence, with economic involvements overseas that have repercussions at home and vice versa. Japan's economy has blossomed since the 1980s and as the population grays

and foreign goods and services become ever easier to obtain, both the government and individual citizens are pressing for increasing emphasis on quality of life issues, the development of social amenities and value put on leisure pursuits. Now that target economic standards have been reached, there is increasing attention placed on developing community identity *(machi zukuri),* social services *(shakai fukushi)* and life long education *(shōgai kyōiku).* These tendencies may be amplified in Fukui prefecture because of the high rates of two parents working, the generally serious but thoughtful nature of the people, the higher than average proportion of elderly in the population, the emphasis on education and search for new ways to live in an atmosphere which is prevailingly conservative at the household and prefectural level. Into this picture comes the statistical portrait of Takefu, which matches Fukui prefecture's emphasis on work, savings, education and traditional practices at home and in work life. Notable distinctions include the look of the city itself, with many prewar wooden buildings and narrow streets, the authority enjoyed by the relatively low number of authority figures (doctors, dentists, teachers, city council members), the slightly higher number of people aged 15–65 but low amount of crime reported, a relatively large number of foreign residents and manufacturing jobs, and a discernable zeal for adding to one's education and savings account.

While the people of Takefu also fit within the general description of Japan, owing to geographical particulars, the course of economic development and the intangible elements of expectations and values, the townspeople stand out in quantitative national comparisons. Their conservative attitudes and practices have several implications for the thesis of this story about the politics of renewing a regional Japanese town. Specifically, the extremely deferential attitudes of the people to those with titles of authority (e.g. doctors, dentists, teachers, civil servants and elected officials) means that community leaders like these are not likely to be (openly) challenged in their decisions. Neither are townspeople likely to try participating in decisions which affect themselves or the town overall. Similarly, the record of the city expenditure on welfare services (low) and municipally created health and recreation facilities (high) shows the government accustomed to its paternalistic role. Thus when elected leaders confuse a project that is in their personal political interests for one benefiting the city and therefore also seen to be a generous enhancement to the well-behaved constituents, then townspeople are unlikely to rise up and call these assumptions into question at the risk of seeming ungrateful, or worse, to be seen as a public nuisance.

Yet, against these odds, that is exactly what Takefu Renaissance did when the mayor led the town council and ranks of civil servants into the dubious KKD (Kōkaidō) project for conversion into the Saeki Yūzō Gallery. In addition, the large number of manufacturing jobs, which depend on the status quo of government and business relations means that many of Takefu's townspeople have more than cultural values that incline them toward conservative ways of thinking and acting. They may perceive their livelihoods

to depend on traditional ways of doing things and hence, have economic incentives for letting sleeping dogs lie.

The behaviors and beliefs substantiated by the various statistics here contribute to an ethnographic description of a regional town in an area of Japan that has been overlooked by foreign social scientists so far. But with regard to the subject of local history and the politics of renewing a town, several implications follow from the town's conservative expectations and practices.

The picture of Takefu stands out in greater relief when seen against national patterns. Japanese society is characterized by great uniformity as well as diversity. Literacy rates and educational standards, quality of medical care and public service, access to the information of mass media and the products of mass production assure a common stock of experience across the land. This characteristic is further enhanced by the Tokyo-centrism, location of political, commercial, scientific and cultural organizations. At the same time, the differences between the generations are amplified by the introduction of new technology and maturation of a consumer ethic. Differences are further heightened by the existing regional differences that for centuries were perpetuated from one valley or village to the next in splendid ignorance of each other's ways. Then there are the contrasts in rural and urban social life that add to the variation in Japanese social life.

The demographic profile on the national level includes a low rate of population increase (9.86 births per 1,000, cf. 15.7 for the U.S.), a divorce rate almost that of the U.S., long life expectancy and a projected bulge in the proportion of elderly citizens which will affect consumer as well as voter preferences (Hussen 1991, Uchida 1991) and social services. The Japanese government's proportion of GDP spent on military, research and development, civil service and public education are all smaller than those of the U.S. The practical result is to cause private enterprise to answer these needs. And in the case of money saved from the defense expenses, the effect is to reduce the tax burden on the individuals and companies in the Japanese economy. But more specifically of significance to the subject of this study, these relatively low levels of government support may possibly have the consequence of inuring citizens to the limited aims of elected authorities and civil servants. In other words, government in Japan may then come to be perceived as having a narrow definition of the public benefit or the common good. There are plenty of big budget public works projects, but relatively little record of social initiatives.

The country's economy, like that of Takefu, has rapidly grown since the end of the Edo years in 1868, and particularly following WWII, during the period of high economic growth *[keizai kōdō seichō],* 1955–73. Throughout this period the people of Japan have depended on imported energy and raw materials to support their national economy. Increasingly, however, the low labor costs in some cases (S.E. Asia, China) and balance of trade concerns in others (N. America, W. Europe) has led to more and more production moving

overseas. When this domestic economic downturn and the rise of the yen's exchange rate in the 1990s and subsequent difficulty in selling goods abroad is seen together with the sudden demise of the real estate and securities speculation in 1993 (the "bubble" economy's bursting), it is easy to understand the slight climb in unemployment figures. Homelessness has risen in the metropolitan centers, and not just among Japanese nationals. With the passage of special working permission granted to foreigners of Japanese descent on the one hand, and to non-Japanese manual laborers from certain countries on the other, the number of foreigners in economic distress has gone up.

Like their counterparts in the other industrialized societies, increasing numbers of Japanese are questioning the earlier goals of accumulating material wealth and (conspicuous) consumption. For example, the number of practitioners of traditional hobbies and skills are up, as are the sales of books about the Tokugawa days, and the ratings for period dramas (Kitada 1994). But despite the appearance of wealth indicated on paper by statistics, the average person has a similar amount of disposable income as other people living in the industrially developed nations, except that housing and food and transportation costs are proportionately higher (Van Wolferen 1989:411).

Among the leading industrial nations like the U.S., the educational attainment separating ruled from ruler is relatively small, with high rates of persons pursuing post secondary school education. Unlike Westerners, however, there is a wider band of the population who identify themselves as middle class (83.2%). And studies of income distribution coefficients confirm a relatively low range of differences between lowest and highest in Japan (McKean 1989:202). Educational levels are at or above those in peer national states: e.g. literacy at 99%, publishing and readership of books and other print media at twice the U.S. rate. The informational content in the monthly news magazine *bungei shunjū*, similar in circulation to *Newsweek* in the U.S., is as sophisticated as a much less widely circulated publication like *The Atlantic Monthly* in the U.S. (cited in Christopher, 1983:200–2). Others have called these indicators false due to the lifeless form that the supposedly intellectual discourse takes (Miyoshi 1991:217–232; Van Wolferen 1989:94–8), but the generally inquisitive and news hungry nature of people in Japan cannot be denied.

SUMMARY

The three prefectures of the Hokuriku region, Fukui, Ishikawa, and Toyama have historically shared more than climate, speech patterns, religious fervor and an economic development that has permitted double incomes. According to statistics, they continue to combine the high rates of home ownership, emphasis on saving, extensive budgets for public works and small social welfare appropriations that together indicate conservative attitudes of residents to their governments. In the case of Fukui prefecture, and Takefu in

particular, the stereotypic image that Japanese value education and have a strong work ethic is even more pronounced, as figures show for rates of further education and double incomes. Conservative attitudes were suggested by things as diverse as amounts spent on weddings (high), type of alcohol consumed (*sake* in above average proportions), numbers of health professionals (low per capita), and proportion of multi-generation households (high).

Given the physical, financial and social patterns of people living in the Takefu area, the interest shown in local history makes sense. And while this interest is not shared evenly, there was enough pride of place and concern about the local past to launch the citizens group that later became Takefu Renaissance. To explore the fabric of history in the Takefu area the next chapter will take up the subject of historicity in Japan.

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CHAPTER 2

The Place of the Past in Takefu

Occupying a large lot in the heart of Takefu, the Kōkaidō Hall (KKD) has been a prominent feature on the city's skyline. It has been an integral part of the many social changes that townspeople have lived through during the reign of the Shōwa Emperor (1926–1988). When the building opened in 1929 the KKD was a rare example of Western style public architecture in the valley. It is built of reinforced concrete, and its six-story tower, two main floors, and the basement total 1,287 square meters. It was listed in a 1988 national inventory of surviving examples of early Western style buildings, and its significance has only increased with time. By looking closely at the efforts of Takefu Renaissance (TR) to cultivate the town's historical resources in this case study, it will be possible to see the ways in which the content and methods of the group's community building activity is shaped by surrounding social conditions and is affected also by cultural values.

From the time it was formally established in 1993, Takefu Renaissance was chiefly occupied with securing the KKD's preservation, and then in raising townspeople's interest to discuss how best the building should be used. This first period ran from February 1993 to December 1993, and is featured in this chapter. The period running from January 1994 until fieldwork ended in March 1995 corresponds to the shadowy subversion of the original plan to refurbish the KKD for use as museum and visitor center as it was approved by the city council. Most prominently, it was the mayor who led the maneuvering that was intended to make the KKD into an art gallery. These machinations drew TR away from its initially cultural mission and into the realm of city politics. The sharp questions and thoughtful discussions about democracy and community, and about the responsibilities of citizens and elected officials that this scandal generated are the focus of chapter four.

The first period corresponds to the building's genesis, its life of service, and its threatened destruction. The talk of destruction is what sparked the formation of TR's forerunner, the *Takefu no Bunka o Kangeru Kai* (TBKK), or Association for the Discussion of Culture in Takefu. The result of their work was a proposal for the preservation and renewal of the KKD for use by the people of Takefu. The chapter begins by chronicling the KKD story. The details of the plan for KKD as history museum envisioned by TR will come next, along with discussion of historical consciousness more generally among

the people of Japan. Then the chapter continues with a look at the historical terrain and interest groups in the Takefu area, and the story of the

Takefu Renaissance group itself. Chapter four picks up the KKD saga with Mayor Koizumi leading the restoration plans astray. In an open letter to the people of Takefu, on the occasion of founding the TBKK, Ms. Miki Yoshimi, one of the group's leaders, pointed out the significance of the KKD's location and its connection to the people of Takefu as reasons to reject the city council's proposal to convert it into parking space for part of the municipal fleet. This had been used as the place where the local lord used to handle financial affairs and to hear grievances *[bugyō sho]* during the Tokugawa period; a combination court and tax office. By 1853, a year after the American Commander Perry levered open trade and diplomatic links to the archipelago, Takefu's great renaissance man, Matsui Kōsetsu, a synthesis of industrial acumen, cultural refinement and educational vision, founded an academy for the town's most capable young men, and especially for its samurai sons. Among its graduates were Watanabe Kōki, one time governor of Tokyo prefecture and later Tokyo Imperial University's first president; Saitō Shūichirō, the vice-minister of what today has split into METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) and MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery) was another alumni; as was Matsumoto Gentarō, the founder of a pioneering local women's college. Another famous son was Machimura Kinya, the father of dairying in Japan and frontiersman of Hokkaidō island, whose son became its governor. Then there were also Taniguchi Ichigaku, scholar of Japanese; and much later, Dōhi Keizō, dermatologist, founder of Fukui Prefecture's Medical Association, and creater of the still active hometown association in Tokyo for the support of Takefu high school graduates' study in the metropolis. After six years, the Rikkyō kan (Academy) changed its name, but continued 12 more years as an educational institution, serving in the end as an elementary school until the town built a new one nearby. Soon after the site became that of the Takefu Town Hospital.

The reign of "Enlightened Government" (Meiji period, 1867–1911) closed with the death of Emperor Mutsuhito. With the succession of Emperor Yoshihito and the reign of "Great Rectitude" (Taishō period, 1912–1926), the fruits the country's program to rapidly develop the national infrastructure of basic industries, transportation and communications had reached regional towns like Takefu. By around 1915, there was already popular interest among the townspeople to build a public hall for displays of art and culture. It is not clear whether the interest to build was part of the generally expansive spirit of the times, or came from a pride of place and deeply rooted sense of rivalry with other municipalities. In any event, not long after Hirohito, emperor of "Light and Harmony" (Shōwa period), was installed in 1926, money for the construction of the KKD was collected. Significantly, the funds came largely from the citizens themselves. Since the town government alone could not finance the building, money was raised by donation. What is remarkable is the

widespread support for the project. Of the ¥80,000 cost originally estimated, the town textile magnate, Yamamoto Jin'uemon, along with two other prominent townsmen accounted for roughly half of the money. The remainder came from the small donations of many townspeople. The municipal government mainly paid the ¥40,000 cost overrun. In other words, from its conception to its realization, the KKD has been a building of and for the people of Takefu, constructed on a place of continuing association with civic, educational and cultural life.

From its opening in 1929 until the early 1970s, when television ownership and automobile use allowed increasingly privatized experience of life, the KKD served along with the radio as another means of bringing metropolitan, and foreign culture, and far away information to the people of Takefu. Things like performances of Western-style theater and music, social dancing, fashions and even food novelties like "curry rice" could be taken in there. Touring troupes from the big cities, regional talent and the efforts of townspeople themselves could be enjoyed.

Between 1934 and 1955 the KKD functioned as the city hall. Following administrative amalgamations with surrounding villages, Takefu became classified as city in 1948. In that same year, the prefectural capital of Fukuicity was leveled by an earthquake, which came on top of destruction in the closing days of World War II by bombing. One consequence to this tragedy was now to make the KKD in Takefu the focus of culture and art for the combined area of Takefu and Fukui for several years. When the city hall of today was opened in 1955, the KKD was used to provide extra office space for the city.

In the 1960s and 70s, as neighborhood *kōminkan* (public halls) took over the function of exhibition hall and performance space, the primary use of the KKD became that of departmental offices for the city's *shakai fukushi* (social welfare) and *shakai kyōiku katsudō* (community education activities). In 1988, administration of the latter was superceded by the national policy of promoting *shōgai gakushū* (life long education). It was around this time that talk of the KKD's demise first came up.

In the middle 1980s the Japan-U.S. trade imbalance was at its peak. The yen had recently appreciated by 70%, going from ¥240 to ¥140 per dollar. Following the national government's lead, local municipalities too were starting to emphasize quality of life over strictly industrial initiatives. Libraries were expanded, museums built, recreational facilities and annual events developed. In Takefu's long term development plan, published in 1986, it was proposed that the KKD and city office annex next-door one day be razed to make room for a new combined facility to accommodate future growth of the town and the expansion of its services.

In March 1990 the building was closed for use in public events. The city council voted ¥21,000,000 (U.S. $210,000) for the KKD's conversion to office space for use by the Education Board, to include provision of a conservation lab and storage space for the city archeologists. The following

March only the archeologists continued to use the building when the Education Board moved into the next-door city annex building. Subsequent discussion in the city council led to the fateful proposal for conversion of one section of the ground floor into parking for the adjacent office annex. This proposal was later reported in the local newspaper.

Fukui Newspaper, January 17, 1992

(headline) Parking Garage Conversion…. voices calling for preservation, too

…. One part of the old Kōkaidō's west wall would be opened up, and with remodeling to the 386 m^2 ground floor, it should be able to accommodate about 20 of the City Annex Building's fleet of vehicles.

With the publication of this newspaper story and the fact that the Education Board had already vacated the ground floor space, the destruction of the building seemed close at hand. This turn of events prompted the formation of a group dedicated to seeing to the building's preservation and eventual reincorporation into civic life. Discussion began initially in the meetings of people involved in the steering committee for the annual Takefu International Music Festival (begun in 1990). When the subject of preserving the KKD and the idea of challenging the will of the governing authorities was brought up, opinions were divided about the relevance of this matter to the basic mission of the committee. So, in February 1992, the committee members with the widest concern for protecting and promoting the town's cultural life decided to form *Takefu no Bunka o Kangeru Kai* (TBKK), the "Association for the Discussion of Takefu's Cultural Life." After one year TBKK was reconceived and re-christened as *Takefu RUNESANSU* [Renaissance] with the wider mission not only of discussing the town's cultural life, but also, as the name indicates, of rekindling the civic and business life of the town.

The stories of the KKD and TBKK/TR are closely bound up together. Their discussions about possible uses of the KKD culminated in a reasoned petition to city council for the KKD not to be made into parking space. In March 1993, the city council adopted a plan to refurbish the KKD for service as an as yet unspecified museum-like facility, with a budget of ¥100 million (approximately U.S. $1 million).

In April 1993, about six weeks after its launch, TR sponsored a discussion about possible uses for the KKD. The result was a set of plans for gallery exhibits, permanent and temporary, for use in the KKD as museum. This proposal was submitted to city councilors in June. Then in August, the city council voted to fund a proposal for the *fureai rekishi kan* (Hall for Exploring Our History), a plan that closely resembled the one worked out by TR. The budget was now to be doubled to ¥200 million (U.S. $2 million), spread over two financial years, ending in March 1995. The chronology appears in summary form below.

THE KŌKAIDŌ Civic HALL (KKD)

*complete dates given as year-month-day; e.g. 960423 is 23 April 1996

Significance of the Site Prior to Erecting the Kōkaidō

pre 1856	Magistracy for the town's Lord Honda.
1856	Rikkyōkan academy built there.
1880	Takefu Town Hospital opened.
1912–15	Popular support for making a civic center for the town.

Beginning of the Kōkaidō

1929	KKD completed: metropolitan and foreign culture displayed, local performance venue, social center, town landmark, tower used as fire watch.
1934	KKD serves as Takefu's government center until 1955.
1948	Takefu classed as City.
1955	City Hall moves; KKD still provides office space.
1970s	City's Social Welfare and Community Education center.
1986	City's long-term plan: to replace with bigger center.
1988	Life Long Education program launched, KKD as center.
1988	KKD declared to be Takefu's representative period building by the Japanese Academy of Architecture.
9003	KKD closed as public venue. Education Board offices left.
9003	City Council budgets ¥21,000,000 for conversion to archeological lab/storage.
9006	First annual Takefu International Music Festival (TIMF).
9103	Education Board vacates KKD to next door City Hall Annex.
9103	Education Board considers using KKD ground floor for parking.
9106	Second annual TIMF (well organized, grassroots citizen group sympathetic to local culture).
920117	Fukui Newspaper reports city council parking lot proposal.
9204	Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru Kai (TBKK, Association for the Discussion of Culture in Takefu) launched.
9205	TBKK solicits citizen opinion, synthesizes the case for preservation, renewal and reuse.
9206	Third annual Takefu International Music Festival.
920810	TBKK drafts plan for use as museum/visitor center.
920913	TBKK preservation plea, plan submitted to City Council.
9212	City Council abandons parking conversion proposal.
930225	Takefu Renaissance (TR) launched, superseding TBKK.
9305	City Council adopts museum idea in principle, budgets ¥200 million.
9306	TR submits detailed exhibit plan to City Council.
9308	City Council adopts museum plan for the *fureai rekishi kan.*
931212	Refurbishment begins for planned fall 1994 opening.
9312	Budget enlarged to ¥210 million over two financial years.

The work of refurbishing the KKD to meet current fire safety codes, provide wheelchair access, and to convert it for use as museum began in December 1993 with an opening date estimated for sometime in the fall of 1994. In fact, however, less than a month after the work started, events leading to the conniving to make an art gallery out of the KKD began covertly. As a result, refurbishment was secretly suspended at the mayor's behest sometime in February 1994. But thanks to the vigilance of TR and its supporters, over the course of 20 months, matters were rectified in the end and work on the museum proceeded once again. TR's detour into city politics, a path which effectively shed light on the ways in which citizen initiatives like TR's are handled in the civic arenas of town government, media, and the city at large is told in chapter four. What follows below, however, is the context for the group's initiative and a closer look at their proposal for the KKD, eventually submitted to the city councilors for consideration as a local history museum in June 1993.

PROMOTION

Fukui Newspaper, December 12, 1993

> Although there were voices of criticism in the [city council] discussions, like "It's wasteful to spend money on preservation repairs when the city finances are strained," the [KKD] repairs were decided upon.

Councilor Takamori, Takefu Shigakai Dayori

> In planning for the city's growth and improving its outward appearance, I consider it important that we look at Takefu's historical legacy and traditions in a new light, and take into account the streetscape and old storehouses that give the town its special character. In the case of the [town center] Hōrai Precinct Renewal Project, investigations are underway into the ways in which the existing [traditional style, earthen walled] storehouses can be used, as I would like to see done, to stimulate business there.

Both quotes are fair indicators of the public opinions of elected officials in Takefu. One historical expert on the town told how councilors, whom he knew in private to be sympathetic to preservation matters, fail to advance these interests in public. Instead, town politicians normally stick to the formula in place since the 1960s: promote industry; give visible proof of benefits to citizens by opening ever more municipal facilities for leisure, education and culture. This section will present the views of civil servants about issues affecting preservation of the town's historical character. The discussion will form a background to the TR plans described later.

Interest has grown in the Japanese past since the early 1980s all across the nation (Koplos 1988). The surge in the construction of all categories of museums can be attributed to several factors. Mr. K, a curator at a Fukui area museum, pointed to the growth in leisure time and material wealth among the public, as well as the popular interest in *RŪTSU* ("roots," family genealogy)

which was sparked, as it was first in the U.S., by the broadcast television serial *Roots,* based on Alex Haley's book (1976).

In Mr. K's experience, public spending in Japan responds to popular interest, as in the following example. News of public interest in family roots came to national budget planners. They then made some money available for proposals from the facilities such as Mr. K's, that receive national funds. They "guided" (suggested, but not required) the form that proposals could take with the aim of making future exhibitions more engaging and facilities more accessible. With the wild growth in the yen's exchange value and balance of trade deficit unrestrained during this period, it is easy to imagine that the Japanese government suddenly began to find itself with money to spend on increased social services, cultural facilities and other amenities to enhance the general quality of life. This trend was echoed at the prefectural and municipal level, too.

While economic development in the 1980s was measured by *HĀDO (hardware,* the physical part of the computer metaphor) such as roads, dams, swimming pools and community halls, according to Takefu's head librarian, Mr. Katō Yoshio, the emphasis in the 1990s is shifting to *SŌFUTO (software,* the more intangible part of the computer metaphor). Recent examples he gave were the *rekishi kaidō* (history routes), and the initiatives for getting visitors to 'discover' for themselves the good foods of each locality. Instead of pilgrimages to the metropolis or to monuments of the nation-state, consumers are urged to explore the hinterlands, with the effect of promoting the best of local foods, crafts and products, and thereby learning the best ways from each other's regions. When asked whether the cumulative effect would be greater national uniformity, Mr. Katō said no, he could not foresee any danger of losing local character.

In 1994 the issue of social amenities and quality of life, lately discussed by national media, was in the front of the mind of Mr. W, a young staff member of Fukui prefecture's Office of Cultural Affairs *[fukuiken kyōikuchō bunkaka].* At around this time the national economy had stagnated. International trade balance pressures, political reform efforts, securities scandals, real estate speculation, and uncertainties about what to achieve now that the country as a whole had rocketed to the planet's highest levels all combined to burst the so-called bubble economy *(BABARU hajiku).* So, when asked about the outlook for the work of his office, Mr. W acknowledged that money would be harder to come by; but that this climate would cause them to think more clearly about their priorities and to decide which projects were most important.

When I suggested that the policies to fund quality of life projects might be in his budgetary favor, he was not especially optimistic about the rhetorical weight lent by the national government and media emphasis on quality of life, leisure time and personal edification. His job, regardless of rise or fall in budget, was to cultivate public interest and pleasure in the expressive and performance arts. Pressed further about the exact role of his office in the

affairs of each municipality, he mentioned the organizational connections of the prefectural capital to the national metropolis, his office mates' knowledge and experience in selecting programs, and the financial strength to bring opportunities to all corners of the prefecture.

In the phrasing of his words he displayed the benevolent paternalism famous in East Asian civil servants. He seemed to feel the weighty responsibility of his title, obliging him to instruct the people for their own good. At the same time, there was also a sense of satisfaction in the rightful exercise of authority, along with a self-assured air that comes from the deference that the civil servants of Fukui prefecture could expect to be shown by members of the public. Citizens in turn were supposed to see in this magnanimity a likeness of the Government's omniscience, backed by the state's omnipotence.

This blend of authoritarianism and benevolent paternalism can be found in the municipal offices of Takefu, too, where the city has promoted several preservation projects. In the city planning office *[kikaku chōseika]* the quality of life issue has taken the form of designating a dozen redevelopment precincts around the city, several of which are based upon the existing historical character of each area. From the postwar years until relatively recently, Mr. Kondō explained, the office followed national trends, moving as fast as conditions allowed to make the brooding regional town's streets brighter and rationalized to automobile traffic. This development philosophy during the years of high economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s *[keizai kōdō seichō]* was called *SUKURAPPU ANDO BIRUDO* (scrap and build). Specifically, streets were straightened and made wider. Property was paved over for parking space. Most infamously in Takefu, in the summer of 1966, the town's signature tree lined waterway, laid two kilometers through the town almost 400 years earlier, was covered over for the convenience of cars. When it came time to replace buildings downtown, it was most often by multi-story steel frame structures with added space for rent, in place of the former wood frame, owner-occupied shops topped by heavy gray roofing tile.

The rapid flow of information across the nation made it possible for town governments to extend the same mix of envy and pride found in village scale society to the wider stage, making the entire country one village. Town's vied with each other for municipal 'firsts and foremosts'. Ironically, the same flow of information that led Takefu along national trends and the resulting sameness was now leading to efforts to stop the erosion of local character. Mr. Kondō described the direction in today's age of *seikatsu no yūtori* (leisure and quality of life) as being guided by the watchwords of *kosei o nobasa nakereba naranai* (an imperative to *express* the individual character of the town) and *kosei o mamoranakereba naranai* (the necessity of *protecting* the existing fabric of its character).

Through the mass media, regional and national conferences of mayors, chambers of commerce, and service clubs like Rotary International, Lions International, and so on, the tendency had once been for towns to keep pace

with each other's developments, if not to go one better. In the same way that village life combines extreme circumspection and appetite for news of peer behavior with strong personal pride and a competitive spirit of rivalry, so too had municipalities vied to "modernize" their towns, at any cost. Perhaps it was only the stubbornness of the people in Takefu that delayed any larger scale destruction of the townscape and disappearance of the way of life rooted in its small streets and low roofs. Whatever the reasons for its relatively intact streetscape, classified by period, the oldest remaining parts of Takefu belong mainly to the early modern era (1600–1867). It is this aspect, Mr. Kondō said, along with the abundance of shrines and temples that must be emphasized now for Takefu *[tokusei o ikasu]* to attract visitors, new residents, and new businesses.

In fact, in the middle 1980s, the idea of spotlighting the historical character of selected town precincts had been announced with the publication of *Shape Up My Town takefu: rekishi to KURAFTO machizukuri kōsō* (Renewing Our Takefu: Scheme for Development Based on the Town's Craft Tradition and Rich History). But these conceptual plans only began to take physical form in 1991 with the formation of the three person Bureau of Economic Redevelopment in the city hall's Commercial Development Section *[shōkō shinkōka shigaichi saikai hatsu shitsu]*. As of December 1994, Mr. Shimizu of the Bureau said that only about 30% of the plans were under way or near completion. The main problem was to secure funding for his office from one budget cycle to the next. In the case of the redevelopment of the area south of the train station and that of the Hōrai-cho precinct, the original plans were eventually cut in half. Because these two ventures were private sector *[minkan]*, with guidance provided by Mr. Shimizu's office, the problem was to gain majority support in the neighborhood for the plan. But residents were reluctant to proceed, saying that the status quo was all right, and that to make changes it takes money, which may not always be recouped.

Things went most easily when the enthusiasm of one of the neighbors toward a particular project could be enlisted to rally the others. Sometimes this was an older person, but at other times support came first from younger residents, Mr. Shimizu said. The usual procedure was for his office to hold a public meeting at the neighborhood commons hall *[kōminkan]*. The city would describe the sought after effect for the street and building appearances, but actual compliance remained at the discretion of property owners. There was in fact no tax incentive or other concrete benefit from cooperating, or conversely penalty for not complying. In the case of recalcitrant residents, Mr. Shimizu said that it often required one on one, personal efforts to persuade them. In the end, however, unless majority support could be gotten, he saw no sense in forcing the city scheme through if it would only result in more people vacating the already depopulated town center. A place inhabited only during regular business hours, Mr. Shimizu thought, would be a sad, lonely prospect *[sabishii]* indeed.

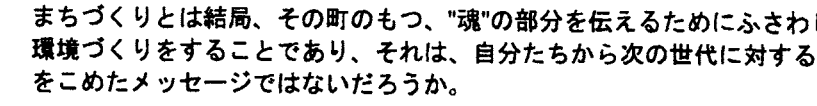

Figure 3. Kawabata Gohē, machizukuri no saido

> In the end, what *machizukuri* (cultivating community) is about is taking proper care of the place in order to pass on part of the town's essential spirit. So, it is kind of a message packed with collective feelings from ourselves to the next generation.

Part of the title of the city's economic redevelopment project is the word *machizukuri,* cultivating community; or literally, making the town. This term appeared as early as 1967 in the slogan of the then newly created *seishōnen dan,* the Junior Chamber of Commerce (JC, or Jaycee) service organization: *akarui yutakana machizukuri* ("Building a Bright, Flourishing Community," cited in Kawabata, 1991:34). The word has regularly been part of the discourse of municipalities, business associations, and the national media since the early 1980s. Its meanings can be physical (ramping sidewalks: Takefu City Council, June 1994), or financial ("The small town of Obama has put elevators in its public buildings, so why can't we [afford to do the same]," Takefu City Council, June 1994). In one of the city of Takefu's statistical publications the word appears in compounds like *chōwa no aru machizukuri* (a place running smoothly; or literally, of 'harmony') in reference to the town roads and communications; *sumiyoi machizukuri* (a good place to live) in reference to conditions of housing and sewerage; *shiawase na machizukuri* (a pleasant place) in reference to facilities of medical care, education, public safety; and *katsuryoku aru machizukuri* (an active, hardworking community) in reference to the town's economic conditions, reported sector by sector ('92 Takefu shisei RIPŌTO, 1993).

More often, though, the term *machizukuri* is used in an abstract sense to mean improved social conditions, particularly cultural enrichments which result in pride of place and increased attractiveness to visitors, thus yielding psychological as well as material benefits. The work of Mr. Shimizu's Bureau of Economic Redevelopment is one example. The town's development of Shikibu Park (see chapter three) is another. Other things, like the 26th annual amateur literary talent contest held in 1994, performances of Japanese style drum groups at town festivals, or the furniture fair sponsored by the joiners guild each summer are also parts of *machizukuri.* But it is more often the publicly directed and presented, highly visible and non-economically motivated activities that are called *machizukuri:* e.g. the town's distribution of free flower seeds and planters, campaigning to make Takefu a "flower city," or a 10 kilometer running race the city sponsors.

The idea of having citizen led initiatives shape the life and direction of their town is one of the more interesting uses of *machizukuri.* As Mr. Nakamura of

the International Affairs desk in the city planning office put it, their goal was to encourage citizen involvement in the town's administration in order to make it the kind of place residents wanted to live in. This was echoed in the words of Mr. Kondō across the desk, who spoke with admiration of the efforts of the history oriented groups TR and Tachiaoi Kai. He wished out loud that motivated members of the public *[shimin]* would be included in city initiatives from the very inception of a plan *[tane kara]*. In this he seemed to be making a contrast to the more standard function of selected citizens being invited to give a rubber stamp of approval only after a program was all but in place. Mr. Kondō went so far as to say that it is the job of the Planning Office to create organizations and opportunities that would attract the input of its women residents, and likewise, the viewpoints of its expanding elderly population. However, given the often less than civic minded spirit of people here, who seldom think on the scale of an abstract, Common Good, the inclusion of townspeople in the design of city programs might not necessarily achieve Mr. Kondō's desired effect.

In the Education Board offices, too, Mr. Hayashi spoke highly of the efforts by TR for the preservation and use of the KKD. In his mind, the eventual results were secondary. What was significant was the fact that citizens were coming together under their own direction in common cause. He spoke with some envy of the way he had heard that Americans take interest in preserving their historical resources, with citizen led initiative and problem solving.

Messrs. Nakamura, Kondō, and Hayashi, all relatively young or junior members of their offices, all thought well of TR's efforts. Being an outsider and identifying my TR affiliation may have had some bearing on the complimentary replies I received. This contrasted to the reactions by civil servants that members of TR had: sometimes being regarded as a public nuisance for the group's unseemly questioning of the government's handling of the KKD matter.

What is interesting here is the use of *machizukuri* to mean citizen led town improvements. Another idea which has affected prefectural and municipal governments that is sympathetic to initiatives "from the bottom up" has been the declaration of *chihō no jidai* (the age of the hinterland) and, more specifically *chihō bunken*, that is, governmental "devolution," or the distribution of national offices to sites outside of Tokyo, as well as the principle of transferring as much decision-making and discussion to local levels of government. The first was coined in 1984 but has not gotten much beyond the slogan stage. The second was coined around 1994 and finally in 1999, with the help of the economic downturn, it is moving in the direction of substantive change in the balance of tax authority and budget discretion between the local and national government. Specific legislative provisions took effect in April 2000.

In the City Planning Office, Mr. Kondō used the term *machizukuri* with still another reference: market 'catchment' area. Because of the increasing expectations people have for leisure time, the availability of cars and general

spread of material prosperity, he thought people, particularly the young people with disposable income, would choose shopping destinations by reason of the quality of the experience, not by simple economic rationality. What he understood of the regional 'catchment' thesis was that each area consisted of about 500,000 consumers and could best be planned for by a single, overarching planning authority. Along the Hokuriku district of the Japan Sea coast, these catchment clusters were centered on greater Niigata, Toyama, Kanazawa areas, and the Fukui-Takefu corridor.

At the national level *machizukuri* is used, among other things, with explicit reference to the exploitation of a town's historical resources. According to Pr. Abe Takao, consultant to TR, formerly part of the country's Ministry of Home Affairs *[jichi shō]* and lecturer at Hokuriku University in Kanazawa, the national policy is to offer loans to promote the active use of old buildings, traditional products, production techniques and craft industries within today's economy. The intent is that a town or region will identify its special products, historical facts or attractions and capitalize on these in a well-organized way. The end result should be enhanced "*pride* of place" [Pr. Abe's English language counter to my suggestion of the expression "sense of place," as used in English]. Earlier he brought up the idea of *kokusaika* (coming to be international in knowledge, outlook, manner), as the complement to *machizukuri* and *chihō no jidai.*

Whereas the latter two terms are concerned with local circumstances and initiatives, *kokusaika* seems at first glance to be unrelated. Yet, at the April 1994 TR meeting, Pr. Abe pointed out the connections, reasoning first from the global to the local and then back again. He said Japan above all others had the very serious responsibility to demonstrate to Asian countries what benefits came of successful industrialization and advanced capitalism. Specifically, he said that the surrounding nations looked for evidence of increased quality of life coming from Japan's modernization. They wondered what exactly does a country with a mature economy now do with its (public) wealth. Appealing to his audience using a rhetorical convention reminiscent *of gaiatsu* (being pressured from outside), Pr. Abe went on to say that Japan has an obligation to set an example among developing Asian nations: that historical heritage can and must be saved for thoughtful uses, not only after economic maturation, but even along the way. Japan also owes it to the entire world to maintain its own, Japanese part of human diversity created by their own ancestors.

Going the other way, reasoning from the local to the global this time, Pr. Abe expressed the "know thyself" dictum of Descartes: that local character *[tokushu]* should be preserved and pride be taken in it. Because the truest way to "become international" *(kokusaika)* derives not from conformity to some "universal" manner, but rather is rooted in knowledge of one's hometown, from which foreign standpoints can be fairly assessed. A variation on this argument came six months later from Mr. Saitō Takashi, city hall employee, organizer of the junior branch (school children) of the Tachiaoi Kai historical

association and active member of the Takefu International Music Festival. He said that Takefu people needed to be self-aware of their town's history in order to answer questions from foreigners visiting and resident. In this formulation, knowledge of one's own town would lead not only to honest appreciation of foreign ways, but also to better personal relations with foreigners themselves.

To sum up, I have highlighted three themes that enter the immediate fiscal concerns in local government. Quality of life and the encouragement of initiatives from citizens and local government underlie all three themes: *machizukuri* (cultivating community), *chihō bunken* (administrative devolution), and *kokusaika* (international outlook). Of these, *machizukuri* most directly concerns a project like the proposal to preserve the KKD for use as a museum and visitor center. Although *machizukuri* has a range of meanings when used by civil servants, of interest here are its welcome to citizen participation in the town's government, and its use of historical resources for the pleasure of residents and even for the commercial benefits that could come as a result of the town's enhanced appeal to visitors. Yet, in practice, the initiatives of TR were not entirely welcomed. Nor, as the quote below shows, in spite of expert advice to the contrary, elected officials in Takefu do not seem convinced of the value and effectiveness of harnessing the town's historical resources to *machizukuri.* In this case it is the Ōi-ke historical home, the early 19th century residence and production site of a soy sauce maker.

Councilor Takamori, Takefu shigikai dayori

> With regard to the manner of preserving it [the Ōi-ke historical house], the [national] Bureau of Cultural Affairs and all those concerned have conferred about it. They concluded that preservation of the site is altogether too problematic. So our approach will be to preserve it in documentary form.

The facts of the Councilor's retelling are not entirely true. But what is notable is that his statement does represent how members of the elected government charged with using tax revenues in a politically justifiable way seem to be reluctant to support preservation orders, even when there is a prospect of it becoming a self-supporting or even profit making enterprise. The remarks of individuals not part of the government shed additional light on the prevailing atmosphere surrounding the KKD proposal.

RESIDENTS' ASSESSMENT OF THE TOWN AND ITS PROSPECTS

Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru no Kai, prospectus

> …In order to make our Takefu a place where you can be proud to have been born in, and which is a great place to live in, we believe that each person has to look around himself and consider what should be saved, what be made anew. The time has come to think

> about what sort of life we should have, to make proposals and then to carry them out.
>
> "Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru Kai" would like to become a sort of think tank, concentrating the wishes of citizens who love our dear town and drafting proposals.
>
> Without historical connections there can be no cultural expression. And now, if we do not begin to take steps immediately, there is the danger of another one of the town's historical links disappearing. So, first of all, plans for the preservation and use of the Ōi-ke and Kōkaidō are being drawn up. "Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru Kai" takes 'culture' in a wide sense to be 'the values at the heart of people's lives.' And so, in order to enrich the lives of people in Takefu, we will be creating proposals in a variety of arenas.

The opinions among the townspeople toward the preservation of the town's historical streetscape vary as they do among politicians. But overall, certain attitudes seem to prevail. At one of the monthly meetings of TR, a member attributed the lack of general citizen interest in the KKD's outcome to a mentality of complacency *[do demo ii]* in public matters that have only indirect personal consequence.

As to the question of why the town is conspicuously late in building a museum of its own, a retired man keenly involved in half a dozen of the local history groups, classes and activities gave three principle reasons, of which the following was observed by several people elsewhere. To begin with, Mayor Koizumi is preoccupied with making quantifiable economic expansion, at the expense of neglecting cultural matters or other, less tangible, quality of life elements.

The man continued by saying that, unlike the previous mayor, the late Dr. Kasahara *(bungaku ga suki,* fond of literature; cultural matters), who served four terms of office, Mayor Koizumi is part of the Japan indicted as dangerous by the 1994 Nobel prize winning Japanese novelist Oe Kensaburo in his explanation for rejecting the Imperial Order of Culture decoration *[bunka kunshō]*. Like the Japan that ended up at war with the world, Takefu's mayor too appears to be guided not by any comprehensive set of operating principles. Instead people in public office seem to respond ad hoc, adding oil to the squeaky wheel; willing to sacrifice too much for the favor of those patrons who support administrative status quo. But Takefu's low commitment to art and culture is not limited to the elected city leader.

Among townspeople in general, the retired man said, there is little interest in public support of the arts and learning. These are private refinements. His assessment was repeated by someone in the Planning Office at city hall, who pointed out the generally conservative mindset of townspeople and their normally low support for any new enterprise, private or public. Short of outright sabotage, new initiatives often seem to be left to wither in neglect

until finally abandoned. When a program, or business venture does succeed, it is due to a regular and loyal customer network having been cultivated or transposed from elsewhere. And yet, I knew from other experiences that people in Takefu are serious students of arts and learning *[kyōiku nesshin]*. Compilations of the annual literary talent contest *[shimin bungakksai sakuhinshū],* a collection of retired people's essays *[rōnen no shuchō takefu shi KONKŪRU ōbo sakuhinshū],* an amateur dramatic society that travels abroad, and the turnout at the fall "culture festival" *[bunkasai]* were just a few testaments to individual effort that challenged the "low cultural interest" hypothesis for the Takefu's lack of museum.

This man acknowledged the townspeople's diligence in their pursuits of culture and learning, but these interests were personally motivated. The collective interest required to produce a museum was something different. And besides, he said, the fact is that the best and brightest who would lead such an initiative very often go away for college and, once employed, never return; unless obliged to stay because future duties as head priest, head of household line, or manager of family business dictate otherwise. Those left behind may be less intellectually inclined, or have only average interest in a museum, which would create higher taxes. Another common line of reasoning was to question why a museum should be built when there is one already in the hamlet of Ajimano, five kilometers east of central Takefu. It consists of a single hall covering the natural environment, prehistory and history of the entire valley of the wider Takefu area. So in name at least, there is a museum for Takefu. Thus the voting public can easily believe that little would be gained from building another in city center.

Along with the generally low interest in public efforts at preserving the townscape, Ms. Miki of TR pointed out how the professionalization of architects in Japan may have led to the decline of traditional style buildings, together with the infrastructure that supports the old-style construction industry. During the country's economic boom following upon the Korean War effort, professionally schooled architects began to take over what once was part of the master carpenter's domain. With drafting tables, knowledge of steel frame construction and techniques learned from other parts of the developed world, Ms. Miki thought that the architectural vocabulary had been expanded at the expense of the more limited range of structures and materials used by master carpenters which had given the result that each part of the country bore a characteristic family resemblance. Or, in her words, the *jōshiki* (widely held conventions, "common sense") that had once reigned was now eroded, so that when it comes time to rebuild a house or shop, people who consulted architects would exercise their consumer instincts for choice, convenience and fashionability rather than to allow themselves to be guided by concern for matching their neighbor's buildings (cf. losses in Kyoto, Higgins 1996). The result today is a hodge-podge of colors, shapes, and design elements in which the older forms are hard to find.

New demographic distributions, car culture, and the spread of franchises and discount shopping centers all are factors leading to the decline of the old town center. In a conversation with three members of TR, Ms. Miki, Messrs. Matsui (cutlery craftsman) and Kurahashi (printer), these factors all came up as they might affect the prospects of the old townscape. Like families all over Japan, those owning shops and living in downtown Takefu often have only one or two children. If neither of them should be able or willing to take over the business, the parents will either retire at that point, closing the shop, or keep it going until it is physically or financially no longer possible. The net result has been a loss of commercial activity in the town center. The number of people living there has gone down, and with it, the school age population. When at last the property becomes vacant, the new owners feel little attachment to the old building and may have it demolished in favor of something more convenient to today's way of life. Inherited but unneeded property may simply be left derelict. In either case, the easy destruction of the old townscape has been the result of new population patterns and changes in social attitudes about maintaining family property.

A related factor in the population distribution is a generational ebb and flow. As a younger generation reaches adulthood, marries and begins to look for a house, desirable downtown property remains occupied by the aging parents' generation. As a result, people with young families have tended recently to concentrate in other areas surrounding the town, such as the Kunitaka district east of the town center, across the Hino River.

The popularity and affordability of personal automobiles in a rural area like Fukui prefecture has contributed perhaps above all else to the destruction of the way of life growing from the narrow streets of the town center. First it was uprooting the pines lining the street waterways in the name of traffic safety, and convenience of commerce. Then it was the widening and straightening of the streets, and the paving over of property for use as parking space in the name of attracting shoppers in cars. Now it is the spread of shopping malls at the outskirts of the old town, due to easy highway access, and the innate appeal of enterprises that are new, along with the spread of uniformly designed chains like *Ryūtsū* (shoes), *Ban Ban* (toys), *RIKĀ WARULDO Hana* (alcoholic drink), *ARUPEN* (sporting goods), and *3 Q* (consumer electronics). Ironically, it was automobile traffic that accelerated the demolition of the townscape and now, thanks to traffic bypassing the town center en route to the malls or to nearby towns, it is the cars that have allowed old central Takefu to change so little, with bicycles and feet still proving to be a convenient way to get around the town.

The proliferation of brightly colored, cheaply constructed franchises along the Takefu to Fukui highway is based on a customer to proprietor relationship that is less personal and more economically rationalized (high sales volume, fewer middlemen, lower profit margins). This undermines the old economic assumptions still lingering in some downtown Takefu shops. The new stores' uniformity can also be psychologically distressing. Both Mr. Kurahashi and

Ms. Miki commented on the way that the drive to and from Fukui-city had become disorienting in recent years because the multiple chain store businesses are unreliable landmarks. You may wonder which take-out sushi shop you have passed, for example.

Ms. Miki made a final set of remarks about the changing townscape. She was uneasy about the city government's handling of the streetscape itself as an historical resource. It was only when the economic advantages of maintaining regionally distinctive character *[kosei o mamoranakereba naranai]* were impressed upon the city's Planning Office that the old "scrap and build" mentality was finally checked. However, even though "quality of life" and "leisure" have become watchwords of the 1990s, the administrative reins are still held by the old heads of departments and sections. While she was glad to hear the pro-preservationist stance of civil servants like Mr. Kondō, she reasoned that they would only reach high administrative rank after a good deal of the townscape were gone.

Another example of the persistence of the old scrap and build way of thinking can be seen in the city hall's approach to showcasing the town's old streetscape: not by encouraging and facilitating owners to refurbish their downtown property in keeping with Takefu's character; but, in one case, by proposing to expand the green field site of Murasaki Shikibu [history] Park with a row of purpose built old-style shop reproductions filled with (emblematic) souvenirs of the town. In other words, rather than to inject new life into what does live on downtown, as Ms. Miki and others would prefer to see, this city hall proposal would isolate and "pickle" the signature streetscape as something to be looked at, not to be lived in.

Taken together, the remarks by a few townspeople interested in the use of the city's historical character, and conversations with Takefu's civil servants provide a general background for the discussion sponsored by TR about possible uses of the refurbished KKD. The quotes by elected officials above show the limited support for a public program of preservation, in spite of indications of widespread household interest in genealogy across the country and a "museum boom" *[hakubutsukan BŪMU]* in many municipalities.

National policies and media attention have given emphasis instead more generally to *machizukuri* (cultivating community), *chihō no jidai* (regionally led initiatives), *kokusaika* (developing an international orientation), and quality of life issues. The city of Takefu is pursuing a project to renew parts of the town based on a 1984 conceptual plan. But on balance, whatever individual interest there might be in preserving and making use of the town's historical character, and in keeping with the remarks made above by town residents, the support for public projects seems to be relatively low overall.

MUSEUMS OF LOCAL HISTORY

Before introducing the specific museum plans proposed by Takefu Renaissance let us look at existing facilities for representing the past in this

part of Japan. Prefectural, town and village museums have flourished since the middle 1980s, during the so-called *hakubutsukan BŪMU* [museum boom]. According to conversations with curators in Fukui and Fukuoka, information gleaned from back issues of the quarterly magazine *Museum Kyushu,* and the Japanese museumologist Shiina (1993:179), in the 40 years since 1951 the number of museums has grown by ten times to 2,700, with over 50 opened each year since the middle 1980s. Of these, history museums are the most numerous, accounting for 69% of all institutions in 1980, followed by art (17%) and science (8%).

Many of the town and village museums in Fukui-prefecture were completed in the late 1980s. Fukui Prefectural Museum itself opened in 1984. The city-founded museum, which inherited the district lord's treasures, opened in 1953. Compared to many regional museums, this prefecture's is bigger. But in spite of its size, only three curators of historical material are employed, perhaps half the number to be expected for an institution of its size.

Around the country many museums were built hastily, before collections had been assembled, or needs assessed. During the economic boom years following the late 1960s, a government's program was measured by visible changes. Libraries, sports facilities, concert halls, and museums sprang up, sometimes with little thought to how the facility should be fully used. One strand in this thinking was simple rivalry with neighboring towns or prefectures, another strand was the philosophy that content will follow from form. That is, if the equipment is right, expert performance will necessarily follow. The preoccupation with correct form resonates sympathetically with themes in Japanese culture generally, found most clearly in Zen Buddhism; and with practices in Japanese society such as the emphasis on packaging and presentation, proper paperwork and procedures; e.g. school rules which proscribe certain color erasers, or limit the number of pleats on skirt uniforms. In the case of many regional museums, this approach to cultivating the infrastructure for arts and education has been called *hako gyōsei* [government by (empty, showy) boxes].

Once a museum has been commissioned, built, and the positions filled, the final step is to choose its content. M, a curator at the Fukui Prefectural Museum, described this disapprovingly as *hako gyōsei:* the container is more important than the content. Another example of *hako gyōsei* is the speech-making about using museums to improve citizen's lives. This rhetoric he said was hollow or pro forma only, *katachi dake,* because the prefecture's museum, art gallery and library are in widely separated locations, none of which are near the heart of Fukui-city. Even ten years after opening, the museum still would get calls asking its location and how to get there. A third example of *hako gyōsei* is putting objects into glass cases (the "packaging" is more important that the content sometimes). Another example is the museum personnel, who often operate in "boxes." The sections on *shizen, kōkogaku, rekishi,* and *minzokugaku* [natural history, archeology, history, folklore] will therefore show the personality of the curator (one person decides everything,

not a group of experts). M did not know the reason why, but in Japan people will normally take it personally if their comments are criticized. Opinions "belong" to a person; they are not part of some public arena. The problem is not putting an opinion into words but the possibility of one's own ideas being attacked, or being misunderstood. So in the end, rather than to say something new or difficult, most people say nothing, *(giron wa dekinai.)* A fifth *tokuchō* [special characteristic] might be Japanese people's strong curiosity *(kōkishin).* For example, M mentioned the open (no glass case) exhibits in a French museum he visited. M thought that people in Japan might very well try to touch or smell the things.

The idea of *hako gyōsei* appears at all levels of government, but somehow no museum was built for Takefu. Considering its significance in Fukui-prefecture, second largest in population, first in value of goods manufactured, and having the longest continuous history, it is indeed surprising that no museum has been built previously; not even during the ten year long "museum boom." Members of the public gave several reasons to my queries. First, the nearby Echizen no Sato history park contains a *shiryōkan* [hall of artifacts; cf. *hakubutsukan,* hall of display, or museum]. However, the single display room describes the wider valley floor; it is not confined to the city's old core. Second, civic identity may be poorly developed, eclipsed by loyalties and interests in family, neighborhood or place of work. Thus, perhaps few citizens would care for a town museum, would take interest in government affairs, and would wonder at anyone else doing so. Third, many taxpayers and city councilors, at least until recent years, would be reluctant to have money spent on a museum. That is, the value placed on cultural matters for the general benefit is very low; possibly because many of the brightest sons and daughters of Takefu migrate to the metropolitan areas, an observation repeated by several people. And finally, the mayor has not been an advocate of the museum. During his four terms in office, the previous mayor Mr. Kasahara had had several cultural facilities built and artistic initiatives funded. By contrast, the current mayor, Mr. Koizumi, will promote economic development at any cost according to several persons. Cultural pursuits, except as publicity gestures, are not on his agenda.

A brief sketch of the museums of Fukui prefecture, Fukui city, Ono city, and Mikuni village will illustrate the character of area local history museums. All of these have full-time curators, four to six weeklong special exhibitions each year, and with the exception of the Fukui city museum (c. 1953), all were built in the 1980s.

The Fukui-city Museum facilities were built soon after the war ended at a time when glass wall cases, simple lighting and hand lettered text panels (still a policy today) were normal. The three newer museums achieve a brighter, highly finished (glossy, crisp) effect. But in all of the museums the typical display elements are present. The exhibits begin with a chronological sequence going from the stone age to the mid-20th century, displaying archetypical artifacts of each age: e.g. pottery, stone tools and jewelry from

the prehistoric years, Buddhist images and paraphernalia from the Nara to the Kamakura age, armor, porcelain and religious writings up until the beginning of the Edo era, and the things relating to the local lord, industries of the area and events of the period 1603–1867. Thereafter the emergence of the modern nation-state is the main theme, featuring the personalities and technology of the time. Although there are many things in common, each museum does differ from the others in minor ways.

The assigned purpose of each museum explains some of the differences between them. The prefectural museum is largest of the four and is meant to describe the development of the entire prefecture, with sections on natural history and archeology (until about A.D. 700), which then overlaps with history until documentary evidence becomes abundant (about A.D. 1600). After the historical section comes folklore, which is not rigidly bounded, but seems to cover the years between 1850 and 1950. The museum has a wide range of publications for sale, offers a summer lecture series for children with their parents, produces video documentaries, and screens films for the public. Also, as an outside curator pointed out, this museum has tendencies toward social history. That is an emphasis on the everyday life of people that is more often overlooked in exhibits elsewhere.

The city of Fukui museum predates the others and is exceptional for its rich collections of property once belonging to the regional daimyō, Lord Matsudaira, as well as for the things held by other members of the ruling feudal class. One consequence of this is the high percentage of original (not replica) artifacts on display. One of the two curators estimated that over 80% of the holdings were originals. Another characteristic of the city museum that follows from its superb collection is an emphasis on leaders of the former Matsudaira dynasty, along with other notable personages connected to the city's rise. Local history is tied to the developments in the wider Japanese islands by overlaying a general chronology and asking about the city's development in each era; and where possible, to point out direct links of local and national affairs. Examples include Fukui city's famous sons and daughters, the early use of certain technologies that would later become widespread in Japan.

Ono-city's museum is across the street from the city hall, in a building which promotes and exhibits its local industries, houses the town library, and includes a tourist information counter and souvenir shop. The museum itself is a single square hall, measuring perhaps 30m on a side, with glass display walls all around. In the center are pedestal cases. At the entrance is a wall mounted topographic model of the mountainous valley floor fitted with buttons which when pushed will illuminate the spots where archeological discoveries have been made to date. There is a bank of back-lit pictures of the town's scenic and cultural treasures; its "face." Flanking the exit is a similarly large panel of images. This time it is a sepia-toned set of local photographs categorized under headings like school life, holiday times, life cycle events, city government, the agricultural year, and so on. Finally, the Ono city

museum proudly displays the 19th century enterprises of its farsighted past ruler, Lord Dōi: the coastal ships he ordered built to trade between today's Fukui prefecture and the north island of Hokkaidō; also his passion for Western learning, at first through the Dutch community in Japan, and later through the English language.

In the port village of Mikuni is a museum called the Ryushokan. It is a reconstruction of an eight sided, five story, all wood building designed by the 19th century engineering father of Dutch artist M.C.Escher who lived in the village for a time. The first building had served as the village elementary school. Its reconstruction preceded the "museum boom" years and was built in an effort to stem the outflow of local treasures and artifacts for sale at curio and pawnshops. With a reason and a place now to donate historical material, the town began to build up its collections. Because it is an ancient port, a large-scale model of a Japanese style sailing ship fills the museum foyer. Giant floats used in a festival each year are kept on display in the museum as well. Unlike the normal displays in glass-cases, at Mikuni's museum there are two "open display" sections. One is a frozen moment of a local author's writing room. The other is a turn of the century shop-front street scene. While neither of these presentations is uniquely Japanese, there are a number of things on balance that are particularly common in the museums of Japan.

When curators were asked if there were ways of thinking or a manner of presentation that were especially Japanese in approach, several answers were given. Leaving aside an analysis of the text panel language usage, one curator remarked on the *hako gyōsei* (above). Another curator singled out the television and video game elements of displays; e.g., a quiz show mode of presentation targeted at children's pleasure. Other examples are the liberal use of visual images, including the frozen moment tableaux above, or a video "bar" where visitors can select the tapes they wish to view. The various buttons to push at each "quiz" kiosk also are reminiscent of a video arcade. The visitors' often strong curiosity of museum artifacts was also pointed out. For example, if not enclosed in glass, many would be inclined to sniff or poke at the materials.

Other patterns not pointed out by curators, but which seem common are the fact that most visitors are admitted under the group tour rate; i.e., that visitors will experience the exhibition in knots large or small, confined to the tour timetable. There is also perhaps something left over from the old belief that museums were either treasure houses, allowing one to peek at the life of (former) elites; or that museums were little more than storehouses for useless or outdated objects. Another characteristic is that very often it seems that pleasurable visual effect is more important than the artifact's analytical or historical significance. Text panels and presentations are rich in detail but poor in synthesis or interpretive explanation. An artifact is a thing *(mono)* to be classified rather than a key that opens the door into a different set of life ways. At the national museums founded before World War II and still slow to change, the minimal information supplied puts the burden of learning and

interpretation on visitors. Museums, their publics, and the particular nature of historical display in Japan are subjects unto themselves. This glimpse of a few museums in the fieldwork area is a good sampling of the usual form that displays and facilities take. Given these reference points, the intent of TBKK's (TR forerunner) proposed exhibit design for Takefu takes on a more complete meaning.

VISIONS OF THE KŌKAIDŌ HALL

Statement on the reuse of the KKD by TBKK

> Dating from the time of municipal consolidations and the expanded jurisdiction of Takefu, the Kōkaidō should be the place that focuses and shores up the identity of that older, smaller Takefu. It should be the place where the town's distinctive ways can be recognized. We have been thinking about the uses for this identity filled Kōkaidō….
>
> Even now at the Echizen no Sato Local Museum [KKD analogue] things like a "Honda Tomimasa Exhibition" [the Lord first assigned to rule Takefu] or "The Culture of Takefu's Townspeople" is highly unlikely to be held…. That is, after all, due precisely to the fact that displays are designed in connection with the village of Ajimano's Echizen Manzai [performance], Manyō poetry, or the *ikkō ikki* [16th century farmer uprising and catastrophic martyrdom].
>
> The Takefu-city artifacts kept in the museum there should be returned to the Kō kaidō [for rightful display].

By the fall of 1992, the final disposition of the KKD was not yet certain. What was clear, however, was that it would not be remodeled to fit 20 cars as had been first proposed. What was needed then was a plan for its reuse. Typically, the city government would like to have had a plan received through the proper channels internally—not from citizen gadflies; and would like to have had this then quickly and unanimously accepted. But to the contrary, a delay in making a decision about the KKD is just what TBKK was urging. This would allow time for ample discussion of the issues involved by townspeople at large, itself a salutatory civic exercise. TR was also suggesting that members of the public become co-partners with the city in designing the KKD plan. In other words, rather than their role being limited to possible membership in an invited panel of representatives from the various organizations in town, TR hoped to see citizens and civil servants become equals, at least in this project.

Specifically, TBKK asked for the creation of an advisory committee of government members, citizens with an interest in the KKD, and subject area experts. It was thought that such a body, along with the feedback gained in public meetings, panel discussions, opinion surveys, and so forth, would in due course be in the best position to make recommendations for the eventual use of the KKD. In fact, however, and in keeping with habit, the only members of the public whom the city consulted were those property owners directly affected by the changes being proposed. In short, the matter of the KKD was

handled like any other piece of municipal business: as the eminent prerogative of the authorities.

Letters sent out, first by TBKK and later by TR, state their complaints plainly:

Townspeople's voices in the KKD matter

So far the city government has not listened to what the townspeople have to say at all. The course of development has only followed the City's own ideas and the opinions of a few residents immediately affected by the plans. It is embarrassing to say, but the townspeople themselves, showing little interest in cultural matters of civic life that do not affect their personal gain or loss, bear some responsibility for this situation.

We are proposing the introduction of a "Citizen Council for the Cultivation of Community," to be the complement to [the goal of] "Community Built Upon History and Craft Traditions" which the City has already announced. The proposal grows from feelings of danger: that a town with 1,300 years of history will have nothing left to be proud of, that the things passed down to us from those before will vanish one after another, and that the life downtown will die.

In keeping with the goal of increasing townspeople's appreciation of culture, now, more than at any other time, it is important to have the voices of willing and knowledgeable citizens reflected in the city's administration of cultural affairs. No matter if "best" is not achieved, for City Hall and townspeople alike, the "Citizen Council" will result in initiatives that are "better."

In the matter of selecting a fitting reuse for the Kōkaidō, Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru Kai acts as a touchstone to the question, "for the people of Takefu, in what kind of direction should community building go."

The Kōkaidō has been a part of townspeople's lives. We would like to ask that plans be polished by the creation of a project team, which includes citizens, and is based upon a careful consideration of the roles which townspeople should play and the roles which the Administration should play.

We urgently request your support.

"Afterword" from Proposal for Fundamental…

The basic idea that "Renaissance" proposes at this time is for citizens, administrators and subject experts to cooperate, and that the Kōkaidō be restored.

The budget appropriation should have originally been based on a thorough discussion with these three parties, but in fact it has turned out to be the reverse. At the end of June this year [1993] an appropriation of ¥200,000,000 [U.S.$2 million] is supposed to be made, but there has not been adequate discussion so far. How ever the concept for restoring the Kōkaidō turns out, with ¥2 million there should first of all be discussion about the things that will not change, such as the appearance of the exterior or entry hall. We would like to see five years allowed for completion of the entire project, so that this gem of Takefu may last for the next generation. Furthermore, it will be necessary to consult the person in charge of modern architecture at the Bureau of Cultural Affairs [in Tokyo] and honor his advice.

> With repairs currently underway, a "conceptual committee" comprising citizens, administrators and subject experts should be formed in all haste and plans for how to use the Kōkaidō should be worked on. Things like the exhibits and even the budget could probably be done with the input of townspeople.
>
> When we think about the future course of Takefu, this place of culture, two things are needed. One is to draw attention to the historical fact of the ancient capital of Kokufu being located here. The other is to highlight the traces of Takefu's flourishing commerce and cultural expression from the Tokugawa era onwards. In order to do so, it will eventually become necessary to have a city archives, museum, and center for archeological research. It is with this in view that we should be thinking about how best to make use of the Kōkaidō.
>
> No matter how many years it should take, those of us today would do well to learn from the way of thinking of our ancestors, who gave us such good buildings.

One of the benefits of holding public discussions lay in the process itself. TBKK regarded the web of friendships, intersection of social networks, and the ideas generated along the way as something just as important to the social fabric of the town as the proposals that would come out at the end.

With no sign of the government forming the three way consultative body proposed by TBKK, let alone of responding to the group's letters, they went ahead and began discussions about possible future uses of the KKD, with a view to stimulating civic and commercial life and in keeping with the civic role the KKD has played over the generations. From the start two things were essential. First, willing and knowledgeable citizens should work side by side with city hall's professional handlers of regulations and financing, not as ruler to subject, but as partners. And second, that the KKD be refurbished and integrated into the life of the town, not as freshly polished ornament, but as the home base for numerous citizen organizations.

Four general patterns initially emerged for the use of the KKD. As a cultural center *[bunka kan]*, there would be a multi-purpose main hall, gallery and storage space, meeting rooms and an office for a curator. Another possibility would put the KKD to use as a promotional center for the town: providing touring literature, visitor direction, "Takefu-brand" shop, coffee shop, meeting room and multi-purpose hall. The third form it could take would be as a social center, complete with beer hall, restaurant, coffee shop, multi-use hall, gallery/lounge, and games room. The final design in this early stage was KKD as reincarnation of the original Kōkaidō, combining the informational, cultural, and socializing functions under one roof.

As discussions continued over the weeks, eventually ten proposals were explored. In August 1992, one month before TBKK submitted its findings to the City Council and three months before the date of the first letter quoted above, TBKK summed up these many proposals in a table. One column detailed the use of the ground floor, and another column each for second floor main hall, second floor anteroom, and for any additional remarks. Roughly

half of the suggestions were for display space. The other half were for performance, meeting or other activity space.

Plan One "Townspeople's Hall" in which the ground floor great hall would be made into five rooms, complete with equipment for making the green tea that often accompanies discussion. The building would be open until 11 p.m. Upstairs would be performance space, as well as craft and art exhibition space. In this plan there would also be a memorial exhibit of Takefu's famous son, Matsui Kōsetsu, who is connected to the site. Numerous events could also be organized (e.g. seasonal contests, days for used book and produce markets).

Plan Two "Lease Space For Citizen Organizations of Takefu" According to this idea, use of the KKD would be limited to groups of and for the people of Takefu. Room for presentations, displays or performances would also be available in the upstairs hall.

Plan Three "History and Arts" The main floor would present thematic displays: "Deme the Noh mask maker," "Fumitatsu and the Comic Poetry of Old Takefu," "The Town's Frontier Initiatives on [north island] Hokkaidō," "The Bricks for Hokkaidō's Prefectural Office and Yamamoto Hesaburō," "The Old Pleasure District," "Akou Rōshi [tale of loyal retainers of Edo times]," and "Famous Figures Connected to Takefu." In the hall upstairs would be a seminar room. There would be performance space, to include a series of *SATADEI NAITO KONSĀTO* (Saturday night concerts).

Plan Four "Children's Center," to include artwork displays, rooms for art classes, storage space for acquisition and active collecting, a library of related books and other reference materials.

Plan Five "Gallery Space and Storage" According to this plan the KKD itself would be razed in favor of a purpose built structure.

Plan Six "History Museum-variation A" featuring ancient documents and excavated material, and thematic displays on "Takefu Like It Used to Be," "From Fuchū [1600–1869] to Takefu," "The Streets of Takefu in the Past," "The Pine Flanked Water Courses," "Smithing and Mosquito Net Manufacture," "Machine Weaving." There would pace for meetings and presentations, with the possibility of opening up the sixth floor observation deck to the public, too.

Plan Seven "History Museum-variation B" In contrast to the permanent exhibit above, this design would call for special exhibitions to be researched and presented in turns; e.g., "Prehistoric Takefu," "The History of Takefu's Artisans," "The Traditional [craft] Industries of Takefu." The remaining space in the main hall would be open by request to any uses.

Plan Eight "Art Exhibition" Here the KKD would contain a permanent collection of local pieces and other important material, with citizen expressive and performing arts accommodated in the upstairs hall. Once

> again, there should not be a rigid closing time to halt discussions, such as found in the city's existing Culture Center *[bunka sentâ]*.
>
> *Plan Nine* "Enlarged KKD" would double the number of floors to four: the basement and part of the ground floor would be for parking, the other half of ground would be exhibit space. The second floor would spotlight the town history, personages, industry and arts. The audiovisual room and three other meeting rooms would be on the third floor. The top floor would be dedicated to displaying excavated "cultural properties" *[bunkazai]*.
>
> *Plan Ten* "Grand Design" for the greater Takefu hinterland would first be set out and then the KKD's role would follow from this design.

THE PROPOSAL FOR KŌKAIDŌ AS MUSEUM

> **Proposal of Fundamental Concepts for Reuse of…**
>
> Starting from the notion of "preserve the streetscape," the goal is not for all places to aspire to the same townscape. Rather, we would like to see Takefu's special sense of "pride" and "snugness" be developed.
>
> It is our responsibility to pass on to the next generation this building that not only has played a part in Takefu's culture and political beginnings, but because of prospective plans for its renaissance, will also be a renewed symbol of the town of Takefu supplemented by the values added from our times.

In contrast to the more open ended proposal submitted to the City Council by TBKK in September 1992 *[kōkaidō no hozon katsuyō ni tsuite*, Concerning the Preservation and Use of the KKD], the proposal which TR submitted to the Council in June 1993 contains plans which define a set of exhibits about the townspeople's history, told from the "bottom up" *[shita kara no chiiki keisei]*. It includes both blueprints and a larger schematic framework within which the KKD is placed. This *Takefu kōkaidō saisei kihon kōsō teian sho* as it is called (Proposal of Fundamental Concepts for Reuse of Takefu's KKD) envisions the refurbished KKD to be town symbol, wellspring for culture in town, and place for people to get together. In this form the KKD would become instrumental to Takefu's renewal and civic growth, its *machizukuri.*

The proposal contains several illustrations. One of these is a schematic figure which presents the KKD as the intersection of several overlapping circles which together comprise the townspeople's identity: education, tourist attractions, social enjoyment, culture and history, information, and emblematic city landmark. Another schematic figure diffracts "cultivating community" *(machizukuri)* into *hito zukuri* (building individual character), *shimin no AIDENTITI* (citizen *identity)*, *chiiki no kasseika* (regional revitalization), and *AMENITI* (social *amenities).* Each of these in turn lists specific examples.

"*Hitozukuri"* includes raising the general quality of (school) education, the life-long education program, participation in the Information Age, and the

encouragement of personal edification. “Citizen Identity” means local pride, a reconsideration of the town’s culture and reevaluating it in a new light, long range vision for the town’s community development and improving the town’s image. Under “Regional Revitalization” comes stable population growth, promoting local industries, support for the old merchant districts, steadily attracting new companies and workers, and coordinating town with regional development plans. The final factor, “Amenities,” includes a safe and healthful town, a place full of nature and harmony [peace], and making it the kind of place that is both relaxing and culturally stimulating. To these ends, the proposal attributes the KKD a central role; specifically, by refurbishing it in the form of history museum, meeting space, and visitor reception center.

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> On the ground floor will be a gallery and study area for local history and related things. The Plan for the second floor is to preserve and display historical material and excavated materials. As much as possible the city wants to keep to the original appearance [of the building].

In March 1993 the City Council voted to make the KKD into a museum. Three months later Takefu Renaissance submitted a proposal for this conversion, their “Proposal of Fundamental Concepts for Reuse of Takefu’s KKD.” In the proposal TR describes belief in making this project a practical example of townspeople working together with the municipal administrative apparatus to achieve a truly meaningful facility. The proposal carried with it an exhibition plan for the KKD, as well.

This plan consists of four parts. There is an overview of the facility: hours, admission, dimensions of the structure, major features of the building, mission, and an outline of the exhibition sections. The second part is a chronological inventory of artifacts to collect and panels to be created, for an estimated total of 150 items that will cover more than 2000 years of history. When the ratio of display pieces to years in each era is calculated, the lowest concentration in the proposed inventory comes in the 10,000 year stone-age Jōmon era. The Kōfun period (A.D. 300–600) has about 22 years per item, as does the Kamakura period (A.D. 1185–1333). At twice this concentration, about 10 years per item, come the eras of Asuka-Nara-Heian (A.D. 592–1184), Muromachi & Warring States (1334–1568), and Edo (A.D. 1600–1866). The biggest concentration, at about five years per item, is found for the most recent period covered, 1868 to about 1950, the years following the end of the Tokugawa regime. Leaving aside questions of the historical importance of the respective eras, it is not simple to answer the question of whether this disproportionate attention is due to reasons logistical (availability of material), presentist (closest period to living memory), or nostalgic (the times of one’s remembered ancestors).

The third part of the plan goes beyond the overview and inventory. It actually spells out a set of themes and curatorial principles to guide the

ongoing research and exhibition presentation that the KKD would be home to. Mr. Kasamatsu Masahiro, a consultant to TR and a curator at the Prefectural Museum in Fukui-city, designed this part of the plan. The last part of the plan is a streamlined architectural plan view of the ground and second floors, clearly showing how each space could be used. But it is the complementary character of part one (overview), with its standard array of artifacts and great men, and part three (conceptual plan), full of warnings about falling into the unsatisfactory conventions of historical displays found elsewhere in Japan, that provides a starting place to discuss the situated nature of the proposed museum exhibits.

Gloss of Utilization Plan for (provisionally) "Our History Hall"

fureai rekishikan (kasho) no riyō keikaku

1. *Purpose of facility* To care for and display historical and cultural artifacts and documents connected to old Takefu. Provide a place for area residents to come in contact with these historical materials in order to rediscover their own area. In addition, because many of these things are Takefu's important tourist attractions, to establish a tourist information facility.
2. *Location* [gives street address]
3. *Floor Space and Construction* [gives dimensions and composition]
4. *Outline of the Installation*

A) *exhibit spaces* From the time this place was [ancient capital] Kokufu in 646 A.D. it has flourished as a center for government, economy and culture. Numerous important legacies are located here. With this background of tradition and history, the museum will display documents and materials concerning the archeological finds, cultural treasures and personages connected to the town. The facility will be run so that people will be able to easily understand the outlines of area history and culture.

— Large Hall: materials relating to history and culture.
— Middle-sized Hall: materials relating to the 700 year old traditional industry of making Echizen Uchi Hamono (hand forged cutlery).
— Small Hall: materials relating to famous sons.
— New Acquisitions Section: Newly obtained historical and cultural material exhibited. Works produced from citizen's cultural activities can also be displayed here.

B) *study area* Besides the exhibits, establish a study area for browsing over material relating to the museum collection for those wishing to deepen their understanding of local history.

C) *restoration of the v.i.p. meeting room* The building's exterior, entry hall, VIP and meeting room would be restored to original appearances to the extent possible. Use a proportion of the VIP room for display. In the spirit of the original KKD, the room should allow visitor access freely, and in its nostalgic furnishings it should engender discussion.

D) *provision of a curator for consultation with the public* Employ a couple of curatorial consultants for guiding visitors and managing the facility.
E) *the Takefu information desk*

i) Display information regarding sights to see within the town, including pamphlets, for the use of visitors and residents,
ii) Guide visitors on courses of varying length and theme,
iii) Furnish a rest and refreshment lounge with tables, chairs, vending machines.

5. *Opening Times* 9–6.
6. *Closing Days* Under investigation. Try to accommodate area residents' circumstances as much as possible.
7. *Admission Charge* Free.

ANALYSIS OF THE MUSEUM PLAN

At first there may seem to be little that is remarkable in the above outline. But when the language in the original is looked at closely, and the cautionary points made later in the exhibit conceptual plan are regarded, then the congruence to conventions in other local history museums is unmistakable.

There are four instances in the outline that merit closer examination. The first is the proposed name of the museum itself, the *Fureai Rekishikan.* The word *fureai* seems to crop up in public, often government sponsored, events and facilities. Its usual meaning is "to come in contact with; to meet," as in heart to heart, sympathetic communion (cf. Robertson 1991:186). It is a compound word derived from the verb *fureru* (to touch, brush up against) and *au* (to meet), in which the first component is an intensifier for the following, primary meaning. In its rhetorical effect the expression is perhaps analogous to the idiomatic "set up" for "establish" in English. The two-part idiom consists of a base (set) and a prepositional intensifier (up). The compound expression tends to sound less formal, more concrete and thus is capable of carrying an image that can be visualized.

Fureai connotes a non-threatening, cozy experience and seems to resonate with a widespread impulse to sniff, feel, taste, see or hear things directly through one's own senses; in this case to "experience" local history. A related remark is the plan's call for use of the "New Acquisitions Area" to display the works of area residents. This provision echoes the impulse to participate in a matter directly, with one's (especially physical) whole self. The *Fureai Rekishikan* not only would allow people to come in contact with the town's history and culture, but also to contribute their own works, if temporarily, for community display.

Another characteristic of this and other Japanese museums, and of all kinds of presentations generally, is the rhetorical convention of inserting numbers or statistics. This is not a matter of seeking superlatives or the number mania found in the U.S., but seems instead to be a professional mark of preciseness, something indispensable to completeness. In the case of the KKD museum

plan, the street address, its reinforced concrete composition, and its two floors totaling 1,277.18 square meters (with a tower reaching six floors, and one floor underground) are all detailed.

The next observation is that the exhibition focuses above all on objects rather than on their context and the stories they can tell. In the KKD outline and inventory the items are designated cultural treasures, excavated material, and famous sons. Very often in Japanese museums, themes, concepts, processes, or connections to the social world prevailing today are displaced by labels, which in their minimalist form might identify only size, weight, date, stylistic category, and donor, for example.

A fourth observation about the KKD outline is the categoric distinction made in history-culture *(rekishi bunka).* The first half of this compound term usually means chronology of political events and sometimes, for the years after the nominal end of feudalism in 1866, a chronology of technological changes. At many museums "history" ends and "folklore" begins at 1866, the date marking the onset of earnest industrialization. The second half of the term, *bunka,* usually means the tangible and intangible fruits of artisans, scholars, and less often, practitioners of Japanese style performance arts. In other words, *bunka* is to some extent ahistoric, regarded as unchanging and outside of time. This KKD plan specifies the exhibit of historical as well as cultural materials.

The terms *rekishi* and *bunka* are distinguished, but frequently appear together as a set, often with the additional term "nature" *(shizen)* to form a trio. Tourist pamphlets as well as the obligatory paragraph or page at the front of municipal publications reciting the town's assets might speak of all three, history, culture, and nature as inherent, even organic, properties—in the twin sense of *characteristics* that pertain, as well as *possessions—f*orming tangible and intangible "capital" belonging to a place (cf. Robertson 1991:17).

In sum, the overlapping concepts of "history" and "culture," the propensity to present things *(mono)* rather than topics, the exactitude of measurements, and the appeal of directly "experienced" history are some of the aspects of Japanese handling of their past evident in the KKD outline. In addition to these, other observations can be made to situate the representation of history in its Japanese context.

Under "Purpose of Facility," the expression *furusato o sai hakken dekiru basho* (a place to rediscover one's "hometown") appears. The term *furusato* ("hometown" or "root bed of ages") is similar to what Ortner (1984) called a key symbol. It is not a source from which so much else of the Japanese symbolic universe derives, but it does have many layers of personal, public and state meanings. Robertson (1991:28–37) and Ivy (1995:103) describe many of these dimensions. Whatever simple denotation it once hearkened to, today this term implicates the historical weight of three or four generations having left the countryside for cities and the metropolitan areas. This urbanization and separation from the terrain and graves of one's ancestors has

led to the semiannual *sato gaeri* (going back to the rural roots to tend graves or visit relatives).

The term *furusato* invokes waves of nostalgic images found in popular culture among those separated from their ancestral grounds, real or imagined (Hughes 1985; Mita 1992). Since the 1980s it also has featured in advertising of local products, tourism campaigns, and town boosterism as a wholesome noun or adjective, possibly analogous to the expression in English of "good old." In any case, as it appears in the KKD outline, "…to rediscover one's hometown," the term resonates with the social conditions of the nation and region.

Another particularly Japanese feature in the KKD plan is the provision of a Takefu Information Desk. Taken by itself, the inclusion of tourist information seems to be natural, logical, common sense; hardly specific to a museum in Japan. But when seen in the larger frame of Japanese organizations, a tourist information area is an example of a pragmatic aesthetic: products, services, initiatives should have practical purpose. Put another way, when deciding a matter based on principle or based on net results, the chances are higher that a Japanese organization will choose the latter. Just so, the KKD outline builds this very sensible function into the facility.

Mr. Kasamatsu, a curator at the prefectural history museum, was asked by TR for his ideas on the design of exhibits for the KKD museum. His plan consists of a major theme supported by three minor ones, as well as the provision of special temporary exhibit space. Only the outlines of the exhibits are sketched in his two-page document, with numerous cautionary notes, advised suggestions, and incidental remarks.

He imagined the main theme to be the story of Takefu's development and course of change over the centuries. He wrote that it should follow familiar chronological patterns, but adopt a seldom used presentation; namely, to avoid retelling the conventional national history in local materials in favor of a truly local history, a social history that tells about the local people's lives. In other words, this exhibit would depict the formation of Takefu "from the bottom up" *(shitakara no chiiki keisei).* Standard political history and administrative organizational trees should appear only incidentally as references for visitors.

To support the museum's theme of "Takefu's Development in this Region," Mr. Kasamatsu proposed a section on earliest life in the area villages, one on life-ways through the early modern era and the citizen movements that arose, and a section about the changes that followed from the growth of industries later in the 19th century. The first section would chart the location of oldest known village sites. The town's earliest function as regional center, then during the early modern era, as post-town (for changing horses, lodging), and afterwards its choice as train stop would also be considered with reference to the effect on local people's livelihoods and lives.

The second section would have two parts, one focusing on the material culture of people's daily life, and one on citizen's movements known to be

associated with the town. His notes concerning buildings, articles for use in daily life, arts, toys and so forth contain the following cautions. He urged the focus be kept on the way of life of ordinary people. And differences in period and social strata should not be glossed over. He also raised the issue of how best to present religious art, possibly wondering whether to treat it strictly sociologically, or more loosely in aesthetic or religious terms.

The 16th century uprisings of farmers *(ikki)*, 19th and 20th century disturbances about rice costs (sōdō), and movement for citizen rights around 1880 would be the other thematic features in this section of the exhibition. Mr Kasamatsu's notes urge a careful presentation of the economic context to these events, so their occurrence is not merely taken as something spontaneous, or organic to the region, or innate in townspeople's character, for example. Furthermore, sources of information and factors contributing the people's consciousness should be considered in order to keep from insinuating some kind of inevitability, or to guard against the simple recitation of dates and happenings that is conventional in history displays.

The third section corresponds to the modern era, from about 1850 onwards. Commerce and shopkeepers, production of hand-forged cutlery (perhaps those of mosquito netting and Japanese style paper, too), and the manufacturing of textiles are the components of this section on "Industrial and Economic Changes." Again, Mr. Kasamatsu's notes are instructive of the kinds of practices common to town museums elsewhere which he warns against. He suggests placing these exhibits within the context of the wider regional economy, including tracing the links of city (shops) and countryside (manufactures). He warns against collapsing this section into a simple advertisement for local crafts and businesses today. The question of how much importance and attention to accord to the effects of technological changes is something else that he brings up in passing.

The final portion of the conceptual exhibition plan mentions a special, changing exhibition, one that should have some connection to the permanent display themes. Overall considerations to bear in mind are, first, to choose display media and devices which are easy to change and can be used in many capacities. Explanatory panels and label text should also be in a form amenable to revision or amendment. Mr. Kasamatsu also brings up the idea of a rotating exhibit within the permanent installation in which pieces would be shown for a few months at a time. Finally, he insists that curators trained in Japanese history be instrumental in maintaining the facility rather than to pasture retired civil servants there *(ama kudare)*, as is often done with city facilities. He underlined his caution-filled plan by concluding with a diagram with arrows to show the living cycle of research and ongoing public exhibitions which he hopes for.

Prefectural Museum Curator Kasamatsu, 6/1993

If it's just going to be a BOX, forget it…
There are enough "dusty old places" ALREADY

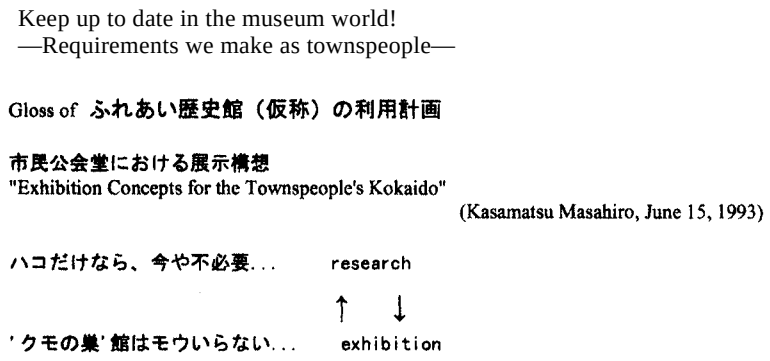

Figure 4: From "Proposal of Fundamental Concepts for Reuse of Takefu's Kōkaidō."

SUMMING UP THE PROSPECTS FOR THE KŌKAIDŌ HALL

From the time in 1986 that there was first talk of the building's eventual demolition to the time that the Fukui Newspaper reported a plan to convert the ground floor to a parking lot, less than six years had passed. About six months after that January 1992 newspaper story *Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru Kai* had formed itself, had begun issuing public appeals for the building's preservation and rehabilitation, and had created a list of possible uses for the reuse of the facility. In the next six months they evolved into the more sophisticated and interventionist group *Takefu Renaissance.* Then in August 1993, six months after TR's launch, they submitted a detailed plan for the reuse of the KKD as a museum.

By way of background to this course of events, discussions with civil servants concerned with the administration of cultural affairs in the prefecture and city were described. The issues in the civil servant's world, which would have a bearing on the future of the KKD, were then counterpoised to the views of some townspeople concerned with the town's cultural life. Finally, to document the KKD reuse proposals, the plans at each stage were presented, culminating in the "Proposal of Fundamental Concepts for Reuse of the Kōkaidō Hall," which was submitted to members of city council in August 1993. The second half of this chapter will look at Japanese attitudes toward the past generally, and then explore how Takefu residents relate to their past, based on a survey. Finally, the question will be taken up about the ways in which this historical consciousness bears on the plans proposed for the KKD's representation of Takefu's history.

WORKING WITH THE PAST: ATTITUDES, CONNECTIONS AND MEANINGS OF THE PAST-PRESENT RELATIONSHIP

> …each age writes the history of the past anew with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time.
>
> —Frederick Jackson Turner, historian (born 1861)
>
> We cannot avoid remaking our heritage, for every act of recognition alters what survives. We can use the past fruitfully only when we realize that to inherit is also to transform.
>
> —David Lowenthal, geographer (1985:412)

The scholarly literature on museums and Japanese social life provides several keys to understanding the museum plan that *Takefu Renaissance* (TR) submitted to the city councilors of Takefu. Special attention will be given to the significance of culturally specific attitudes toward the past in shaping representations of history in general. The scope will then narrow to writings about Japanese representations of the past, and finally leave the literature to look at the results of a survey of about 300 people conducted while in the field concerning attitudes of townspeople toward the past.

A useful starting place for the study of historical representation in public life comes from the study of museums. In recent years a sustained body of scholarship has developed to thoughtfully study the content of history exhibitions and the functions of public history in social life. Writers have scrutinized historical displays to see what is being told, as well as to see the viewpoints being presented or left out (Benson et.al 1986, Blatti 1987, Karp & Lavine 1991b, Karp, Kreamer & Lavine 1992b, Kreamer 1992, Leon & Rosenzweig 1989, Potter & Leone 1992, Wallace 1989).

The subject of historical and ethnographic museums, mainly in the Western world, has generated a great deal of interest among social analysts, curators, journalists, and the communities who have a stake in exhibit displays. While the museum as an institution itself is not new, scholarly and popular acknowledgement of its political nature within the social order is. In an edited volume, Karp (1992a, cf. 1991 a) tells how museums through their label text and the choice of categories for groups of people effectively impress an identity upon the people described. In the referential act of naming, a set of expectations and limitations is laid over the preexisting stereotypes that the labels of Chicano, suffragette, or deaf communities carry, for example. Thus Karp writes that museums and the discussions they generate are one place for contesting the identities of the many communities that comprise a society.

The starting point for Karp's essay is a distinction in social life between political and civil society, which was originally made in the 1930s by Antonio Gramsci to describe the nature of social order within a state. It is the coercive powers found in political life, in combination with the hegemonic nature (seemingly apolitical, received conventions of propriety) of civil society, that gives a state its stability (Gramsci 1971:263). In Karp's essay the difference

of civil and political society is the difference between discussing a matter and doing something about a matter, using the force of law. In this view, museums increasingly are the subject and location of contested identity. It is here that life chances accrue to the named communities under scrutiny. What follows here is a review of another aspect of the study of museums; not a consideration of museums' place in civil society or public life, but instead the complementary question, the role of social facts in making museum representations of history. This will be an enquiry into the shaping effects of present-day social conditions and cultural conventions on history displays.

Scholars from all across the social sciences and humanities have written about the peculiar link between today's circumstances and the way people understand their past. Geographers (Lowenthal 1985, 1989), archeologists (Fowler 1992), historians (Bury 1932, Carruthers 1990, Chamberlain 1912, Nora 1989), anthropologists (E.Bruner and Gorfain 1984, Kugelmass 1992, Price 1983, Yoneyama 1994), sociologists (Buruma 1994, Halbwachs 1992) and psychologists (J.Bruner 1990) have all written about the way in which individuals, corporate groups, and nation-states recognize and articulate their pasts in keeping with present-day sensibilities and in line with the prevailing conventions for presenting history.

Historical events might not be crudely overwritten in any obvious way. More subtly perhaps, the story remains the same, but its significance may change. In the example given by Koselleck for the Nazi era in Germany, this identity of past and present becomes clear: [although] "the events of 1933 have occurred once and for all…the experiences which are based upon them can change over time" (1985, cited in Boyarin 1994:29). In other words, in circular fashion, understanding of the past gives significance to people's present life at the same time that their grasp of history is revised with reference to current circumstances. This is not to say that unsettling pasts can facilely be made palatable, but that in time even the worst chapters of history will be incorporated into the history told in the present. For national level history in the 20th century, this rehabilitating process has been illustrated in the cases of Germany (Kramer 1995) and Japan (Buruma 1994). But to say the past is refigured in light of the present does not mean that people everywhere perceive an abiding presence of the past in their lives, either as an acting force in daily affairs, or merely as an inert relic.

Scholarly Interest in History Representations

The study of history as it is told within each society is implicitly the study of the past-to-present relationship. Researchers inside and outside of anthropology have taken history as an analytic object. Within Krech's review of writings that call themselves "ethnohistory," the following types of study have emerged: 1) histories of *ethnoi* (particular, often fourth world, populations) done by outside observers in a conventional chronological narrative way, 2) documentation and description of indigenous forms of

history telling, 3) writing that relates insiders' understanding of the past in a particular society, 4) standard history written to take account of cultural dimensions and dynamics of past events, including possibly incorporating the elaborations of native informants which could result in, 5) an outsider's narrative history configured chronologically which goes beyond merely (above) decoding cultural elements to reveal larger processual subtleties (Krech 1991:360–361).

Within these studies interest has not been very great in local (indigenous) forms of telling history and maintaining social memory -numbers 2 and 3 above. While linguistic and cultural relativism has been a persisting topic in anthropology, the relativism of historical representation has been commonly overlooked. Studies of "sense of place" and the appreciation of native forms of presenting history have mainly come from scholars of oral history (Basso 1984, Borofsky 1987, D'Azevedo 1962, Descola 1995, Feierman 1990, Hill 1988, Peel 1984, Rosaldo 1980, Tonkin 1990, Vansina 1985). But Japan scholars, too, have touched on the shape and meaning of the past there (Buruma 1994, Goto 1993, Han 1995, Kweon 1994, Lebra 1993, Masters 1992, Plath 1964, R.Smith 1974, Wendelken-Mortensen 1994).

Studies of Japanese life that have touched on the past-present relationship have been diverse. Examples include the historical preservation movement (Kihara 1980, 1986; cf. in Greece, Herzfeld 1991), historical homes (Ehrentraut 1989, 1993, 1995), and the making and marketing folk-style pottery (Moeran 1984). Plath (1964) and R.Smith (1974) probed the particularly Japanese character of the persisting past in the form of ancestor worship practices (cf. Tsuji 2002). Others have looked at history's meaning among certain groups of people, either to explain how members of the former aristocratic class understand their heritage (Lebra 1993), or to look at the way townspeople remember their peasant martyrs (Walthall 1986), or to study how a city's earliest residents use history to define their relationship to the town's recent, commuter residents (Robertson 1991), or to discuss how neighborhood festivals can promote a sense of community (Bestor 1989, cf. Kelly 1990a). Still other researchers have looked at the realm of leisure, studying the nostalgia found in folk songs (Hughes 1985) or in domestic travel campaigns (Graburn 1983, 1987, 1990; Ivy 1989, 1995), and the national history depicted in an amusement park (Brannen 1992). Each of these studies touches upon historical understanding, but none takes representations of the past as its central matter (cf. Bestor 1989, Fujitani 1992, 1993; Robertson 1988, Yoneyama 1993, 1994).

Historicity, taken here to mean the attitudes, content and stylistic conventions for representing the past within a society, has been recognized as an issue within the scholarly literature. But it is normally mentioned incidentally rather than to be taken up as an analytical focal point. Among historians, White (1990) holds one of the strongest interpretations for historical relativism. He writes about the effects of literary devices used by professionally trained historians, and about the predisposing order in the

narrative form itself which they use (cf. J.Bruner 1990, Flores 1995, Polkinghorne 1988, Yoneyama 1993). These analyses have seldom extended to amateur local history (cf. *jibunshi* Figal 1994, Suzuki 1982). Even though they do look at the nature of writing history, these writings seldom go into the rhetorical features specific to a culture.

When the forms and qualities of history representations are mentioned, it is often incidental to the author's main subject. In the anthropological study of Japan, too, various research has touched on the indigenous understanding of the past-present relationship. For example, Bestor looked at the multiple struggles over what was 'traditional' in a Tokyo suburb in the early 1980s. His iconoclastic aim was to show readers that Tokyo does not consist of village-like enclaves with great historical depth, nor is Japanese social life governed by the principle of 'harmony.' For him, recourse to history was something instrumental; something to further one's personal status. He found that it was merchants who promoted a sense of village-like continuities of tradition. He did not consider historical representation as something contingent upon the historical moment or connected to indigenous attitudes about the past-present relationship, as I propose to do.

> "Traditionalism, to use Bestor's term, has proven a useful idiom in which to blunt the disruptive potential of this diversity [to the supposed homogeneity of Japanese: life styles and life chances] by casting it as a more innocuous contrast of old and new"
>
> Kelly 1991:422

Jennifer Robertson took up the competing interests of natives and newcomers in a commuter city of the Tokyo metropolis. Through historical records, participant observation, and symbolic analysis, she described the relations of these two populations of the town and the initiatives by the city government to smooth over the divisive distinctions that the residents made. Tradition played a strategic part in the town's community relations of the two groups. Displays of history would link personal claims to historical precedent, the town's efforts at collective representations to create civic pride, and historical visions used in national campaigns of nostalgia, reinforced by national grants to encourage 'local place making' *(furusato zukuri).*

While Robertson did point out that the thematic content of the Japanese past promoted in public discourse is agrarian (cf. Gotoda 1985:12), she did not dwell on the stylistics of townspeople's vision of the past, the texture and flavor of pastness itself. She focused on the claims to historical precedence made by townspeople and the meanings of the past for the country-wide phenomenon of 'native-place making' *(furusato zukuri).* By contrast, I am looking systematically for a relationship between towns-people's historical understanding and prevailing economic conditions, and the display of local history. Like Robertson, I am interested in the impression which national media makes on the local community through their presentation of *furusato*

zukuri and *machi zukuri* (hometown and community cultivation efforts), Japaneseness *(nihonjin ron)* and 'Internationalizing' *(kokusai ka)*. But unlike Robertson, I have put the historical representations in the foreground. Being a regional town, the civic boosterism of Takefu's past involves things other than the tension between the native and newcomer groups she described. Taken together these glimpses of Japanese relationships with the past suggest some dimensions of the indigenous historical understanding.

Indigenous Regard of the Past-Present Relationship

Indigenous ways of understanding history have not been examined systematically (Lowenthal 1985:xxvi), despite the salience as an issue in historiography. People's attitudes toward the preceding era or toward more distant times vary from one society to the next. Depending on the country and the people's social infrastructure, different parts of the past will be highlighted or else be downplayed. *What Time is this Place?* (Lynch 1976) is a book about the U.S.A. describing the dominance of the Revolutionary War era on the East Coast, and the Civil War and Victorian era for the Middle West. The necessary complement to the preferred eras, personages and events is the forgotten past. Or, in the words of John Tchen, the question to ask is not only "what has been a part of commonly remembered community history… [and] what stories or myths are retold to help understand the past" but also "what aspects of life have become silences in the collective memory" (Tchen 1992:315)? In addition to patterns of preferred pasts, the quality of past-ness and individuals' historical consciousness may differ (e.g. by gender, Keesing 1985), a point Climo and Teski elaborate in their edited volume, *The Labyrinth of Memory* (1995:3–9). The processes they distinguish concern individuals, but with regard to the dimensions of historicity, should apply equally well to collective representations of history display, too. These include remembering (inflected by present needs), forgetting (repressing unsuitable matters), reconstructing memory (interpolating from sparse traces), metamorphosis of memory (narratives with a life of their own), vicarious memory (others' experiences insinuated as one's own through proximity, familiarity, or emblematic identity).

Where people speak the same language, but have different public discourse, the past relates differently to the present. Lowenthal (1989) remarks on the contrast in the "redemptive exceptionalism" among the professionally written American histories, and the British historical establishment, "which portrays Britain as a nation with an already achieved historical identity that demands of the present only appropriate reverence and protection" (p.1275). In contrast to both of these, he remarks on the collapsed time scale in Irish perceptions of history, in which events like the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 can still be regarded as unresolved matters of living consequence (Lowenthal 1985).

It is not enough simply to ask what occurred in the past, as both native and non-native historians normally do. One must also consider the (stylistic) form

that the story or display takes, along with attitudes toward heritage, and the recourse which individuals and institutions have to historical knowledge. The case of the 16th century, mission educated but indigenous Andean historian, Guaman Poma de Ayala, shows some of the diversity in recording and presenting historical knowledge. He combined the pre-colonial visual and spoken tradition of telling the past with the textual protocols of the Spanish overseers (Adorno 1989). While his depiction of the past has generated scholarly attention, less dramatic forms of indigenous history must likewise be considered when trying to understand local historical representations.

The form of representation is not limited to written or pictorial media. Basso (1984) and Rosaldo (1980) invaded the cultural geographer's subject when they described how stories of the past are attached to the terrain where people make their lives. Basso focused on Western Apache place names, which, like those descriptive Ojibway names incorporated into the geography of the Great Lakes region or the famously many-lettered place names of Wales, take the form of a long title. These serve as a kind of headline, condensing the attached story. The people Rosaldo lived with in the Philippines did not have these story-like names for the local landscape. But he found people recounted events by reference to place; that is, the location was equally important as the events to (public) memory. Basso's and Rosaldo's work on memory places suggests an extension from the mnemonic cues of toponyms to all proper nouns loaded with meanings (cf. Buruma 1994; for advertising and tourism meanings, Graburn 1983, 1988, 1990). The names of personages, buildings and artifacts (cf. routines themselves which Bourdieu calls "habitus," 1984) may serve to anchor and give substance to connections of the past-present.

The landscape and annual calendar are marked not only by stories but also with commemoratives such as monuments or calendrical events, particularly in the case of nations. Lowenthal (1985), Mosse (1975) and Nora (1989) have described the proliferation of historical markers as part of national states' ongoing need to substantiate their apparent longevity and to mark territorial boundaries. Nora's discussion in particular is stimulating. He suggests that the national state's interest in a totalizing and metropolitan version of history has encroached upon local historical understanding and upon individuals' sense of the past to the point that memory places *(les lieux de memoire)* are restricted to isolated sites such as museums. The result is to divorce the past from current social life until, as Hartley began his novel *The Go-Between*, "The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there." Indeed, as History written with a capital 'h' comes to be a province restricted to professionally trained, metropolitan scholars, the past does come to be a foreign place, suitable for brief visits by the curious and fun seekers, unrelated and inconsequential to a person's daily decisions or livelihood.

The nature of this link between past and present is determined by the avenues available for knowing the past. As Lowenthal points out, people come to know the past through a combination of personal experience, beliefs,

reworked memories, relics, and the History found in cultural productions, whether in its educational, entertainment, or commercial varieties (Lowenthal 1985:185–7). The past which people know and refer to in the present is mostly recent (ibid:40); going further back, the necessary residues and experiences which would link people of today to events of the past are not readily available.

What the issue of indigenous historical understanding (historicity) means for local historical representations is that the nation-state may indeed cast a long shadow over the attitudes to the past held by people in the provinces (Lowenthal, Nora). Historicity means, further, that the local terrain itself holds collective memories (Basso, Rosaldo). Besides the presence of the past and the form of its representation, notions of ancientness, attitudes to past society, and the relationship people perceive between past and present must also be considered (cf. Descola nd.). It also means that references to important past dates and public events may act like other proper nouns such as toponyms and the names of emblematic personages which carry special cultural significance.

First Impressions of Japanese Historicity

In Japanese life today, there has been an efflorescence in popular historical interest with particular emphasis on the feudal Edo period (Kelly 1990a, 1990b; cf. Kitada 1994). This boom is reflected in television production, with the focus of television epic dramas on these early modern years (Kelly 1990a) and on the pre-WWII years in the daytime serials (Kitada 1994, cf. Samuels 1994:13–15, 246–249). This attention and popular fascination with the Japanese past is spurred by something more fundamental than the mandate of The Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), which in its charter "is specifically enjoined to promote the elevation of cultural standards, preservation of cultural heritage, and creation of new cultural traditions" (I. Hall 1983).

Popular interest in the past can also be seen in the promotion of local products and tourism campaigns (Yates 1995), books on traditional foods and handicrafts, and schedules of festival events published in newspapers. Robertson (1991) tells of newspapers that carry columns devoted to Japanese ways, along with a calendar of festival times and places. The national government even established an information center for people planning to tour the provinces (p.58). The postal service has ready-made packets of regional delicacies on sale, for an authentic taste of the locality (p.31). And she goes on to say that the expressions of local pride 35–40 years ago which were once regarded as parochial have since the 1980s been seen in a positive light (p.69). No doubt the vastness of the Internet extends popular interest in the past even further.

The national and local manifestations of nostalgia Robertson sees partly as an extension of a literary genre with roots going back at least 1500 years.

According to this 'affective environmentalism' (p. 17) the air, water, quality of light and so forth of the locale are supposed to impart character to the people who live there. This longing for ancestral place she identifies with a collective search for an 'authentic,' morally pristine society of agriculturists (p.71). Gotoda (1985) goes further by locating this collective agrarian life in the rural northeast of the main island whence much of Tokyo, and therefore "Japan," comes from. In Robertson's example, one suburbanite's image of the goodness of the provincial life consists of "[unconditional] motherly love and local dialect…without these conditions the *furusato* feeling [belonging to an (ancestral) locale] toward a place will evaporate" (p.20). Kelly (1986, 1990a) also mentioned this identification between the past and the provincial landscape of (imagined) agricultural communities. He described his fellow rural townspeople as "poised delicately between having a past—the focus of local concern, and being a past—the focus of metropolitan fascination" (1990a:80). People in Japan are linked to their past through feelings and practices of memorializing their ancestors in which the (putative) opinions of the dearly departed may be taken into account in making life decisions (R.Smith 1974). Japanese may feel a stronger sense of obligation to maintain a family line and its social standing than Westerners are accustomed to, for example.

Lebra (1993) describes Japanese attitudes toward the past in her book about former aristocrats there. After WWII the legal status of both aristocrat and the household *(ie)* form of inheritance were abolished in the name of democratic forms (cf. Imai-Thurn 1995). Yet among elites and commoners alike she describes the salient feeling of obligation to perpetuate these distinctions in their family lines (p.117). Another indicator of Japanese attitudes to the past comes from Plath (1964) and R.Smith (1966, 1974). Both looked at ancestor worship practices in Japan and concluded that the dead continue to play a role in lives of their descendants. In some cases the dearly departed are relied upon or taken into account when making life decisions at the daily service performed in front of the memorial altars. Using a rough analogy, the altars act something like a one-way videophone, allowing the departed to observe the earth-bound (cf. Lebra 1976a, 1982, 1991).

In addition to the Japanese attitudes toward history suggested by Lebra, Plath, R.Smith, Kelly, and Robertson, Theodore Bestor points out the ease with which social developments are regarded as traditional (1989:253). He mentions the observations made by many Japan scholars that the Japanese have a "penchant for 'instant tradition'—the ability to cloak new circumstances and institutions with a mantle of traditionalism" (cf. Fujitani 1986, 1993; and, re: State Shinto, Chamberlain 1912). In the same passage he goes on to say, "even as stability of tradition is lauded as a great virtue, innovation and flexibility are highly regarded."

Other dimensions of historicity are the linguistic conventions of presenting a story and the values and worldview people hold for their past. Both the manner of representing history and of reacting to it are affected by these

cultural considerations. Concepts like causality, fate, agency and authority, and the positive or negative images associated with a place or historical time contribute to the character of the past which members of a society understand.

The way Japanese worldview may color historical meanings can be seen in the insinuation of causative significance to the quality of air, water, and light of a locale. These properties can be associated with the characteristic creative powers of a place. A certain course of events, or the emergence of a historical personage or product, for example, can be understood to derive from these innate, organic properties of a location (cf. Robertson 1991:17). The clues from these various observations suggest that indigenous historical understanding is bound up not only with worldview and genealogical reckoning, or with the themes and course of Japanese past events, but is tied also to economic imperatives of promotional campaigns and commodity culture (Robertson 1991, cf. Ivy 1995), and the contrast of region to metropolis (Kelly 1990b).

In sum, Japanese historicity seems to have three dimensions: the places where the past can be found (the physical, ideational, experiential features available to people), the culturally particular forms and content of the past (investigated below), and the influences of current social conditions on the representation and understanding of history. By combing the literature on Japanese life, some of the details of Japanese historicity have emerged. But to sample the character of the Japanese past-present relationship I prepared a list of survey questions that would more directly provide information about respondents' thoughts about the past. A sample of the Japanese survey form appears in the appendix, along with an English gloss.

THE SURVEY OF HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING

Inspired by Lowenthal's 1985 panoptic look at the uses and regard for the past in the U.S.A. and England (cf. Fowler 1992), this survey was designed to elicit details of Japanese historicity. It was designed to probe attitudes to historical periods by looking at respondents' experience of time-culture, such as differences in genealogical depth, places within one's life that were self-consciously "historical" or which were perceived to be unchanged from the past. It would discover the locations and objects that caused feelings of historic-ness, as well as the images of history learned from public discourse (advertisement, school years, historical dramas). Finally, the survey examined the intersection of historical meanings with both the town's image and national self-representations (i.e. the extent to which ethnic and regional identity is founded on historical visions). Wherever possible, findings were sorted by age and sex to give a more finely tuned picture of history for people in the regional town of Takefu. The results are summarized here, but the detailed discussion appears in Witteveen (1997:248–297).

The form that was distributed in the spring of 1995 to 300 people of Takefu achieved a response rate of roughly 33% (98 forms). The survey went through

several incarnations. It was first conceived in English in 1991 as part of an assignment for a graduate course on time-culture. After a year in the field I created a Japanese version, replacing some earlier questions with more focused ones. A Japanese friend helped to sharpen the sentences to make it read as intended in the original. Through a personal connection this handwritten form went out to 19 members of the Takefu High School class of 1959 who lived outside of Takefu but still participated in annual reunions. Thanks to the letter of introduction by their classmate, which accompanied the survey, 12 people replied. Compared to this rate and the 100% response rate of the 40 personal friends or acquaintances enlisted in the project, the other groups contacted had much lower response rates.

Both the Tachiaoi Kai and Takefu Renaissance (TR) assisted me by converting the form into typescript, adding further questions, reproducing and mailing the forms to everybody on their mailing lists. Other participants included members of the public who were attending a community education course on local history held on weekends in Takefu, and a class of 35 high school students (given a shorter form in English, partly as an exercise in their foreign language skills). Among the 98 respondents were three friends from the southern metropolis of Fukuoka and 16 from further south still, Kagoshima, at the north and south ends of the island of Kyushu respectively.

The survey replies can be characterized further by sex: 65 males, 30 females, 3 not stated. Classified by age somewhat subjectively into four groups according to the era at which they reached some degree of adult consciousness (age 12), the ratio of surveys was, in order of youngest group to oldest, 7:27:35:26 (the three other individuals gave no specific age). Group I (ages 12–19, born 1976–1983) grew up in a period of material prosperity, but has little social experience outside of school and home. Group II (ages 20–40, born 1955–1975) came of age during a period of material prosperity, and has had experience of work and the wider social world. Group III (ages 41–61, born 1934–1954) entered their youth in the aftermath of the war years in which much of the old order persisted and material wealth could not yet have been imagined. Group IV (ages 62 and older, born 1933 or before) formed their adult character under the prewar and wartime militaristic regime, a time barely recognizable now in the bountiful 1990s.

Survey Findings and Significances

Several results from the survey stand out. The first observation generated by the survey has been that collective representations of both Takefu (41%) and of being Japanese (42%) frequently make direct or indirect historical references. For example, “Takefu is the place whence Tokyo University’s first president came,” makes explicit reference to the past. And, “practicing the art of tea service *[cha no yū]* is an example of what I think of as being Japanese,” makes implicit reference to continuity from the past through practice, the incorporation of old artifacts, and acknowledgement of the master’s lineage.

That the past was found to be the source for collective representation underscores the importance of how people of each society understand the past-present relationship.

Analysts of ethnicity and the motive sentiments of national states have previously discussed the role of public commemorations and (textbook) history in rousing emotions and stimulating loyal attachment to a territory. Writers like Anderson (1983), Lowenthal (1985), A.Smith (1986), and E. Weber (1976) all have described the processes of inventing national citizens and appropriating historical events, personages, and places into nationally claimed heritage. They tell how the images of history which people hold in their minds function to create a family-like sense of belonging to the state and a super-organic (monolingual) body of citizens. Nora says the universalizing current in state sponsored histories makes for a past that is supposed to belong to everyone, yet belongs to nobody in particular. The perception of 'belonging to all citizens,' regardless of origins, is the basis for allegiance and nation-state collective representations.

National identity is something that has to be reproduced daily and in each generation. History is a potent source for defining and reaffirming collective identity. National governments have a stake in persuading individuals that they belong not to region or to ethnic group, but to the national citizenry. States use history to teach citizens a common origin and thus to insinuate a shared destiny. National governments also make use of the persuasive power of tradition when justifying their deeds or motives. As Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) describe it, practices attributed to tradition or claimed to be authentic often turn out to be of quite recent origin; they are invented traditions. Others have made the same point in Japan: Bury (1932), Chamberlain (1912), Fujitani (1993), Schnell (1993), cf. Befu (2001).

The results of this small survey of Japanese historicity supplement the studies above by quantifying the extent to which people at various stages of life identify their ethnicity with elements that refer to the past. Furthermore, recognizing that this observation may not apply universally, a pattern emerged among people in their 20s and 30s. They located their Japaneseness in culturally marked objects like *sentō* [public baths] or *tatami* [floor covering woven of rushes] more often than did older respondents. People over the age of 62 gave most of the examples of Japaneseness in the "Japanese attitudes and concepts" category (e.g. circumspection, perseverance). Falling halfway between the concrete associations of the young and the more abstract associations made by the old, people in their 40s and 50s gave most of the examples in the "Japanese practices and pursuits" category (e.g. the art of tea service, conventions of gift giving). Since "Japanese objects" had a higher proportion of references to the past, it follows in the case of this survey population that the collective representations of young people above all have a physical character and contain historical attachments.

Age also correlates with the pattern of preferred eras, with the interests of the oldest respondents going back the furthest and those of the youngest going

back the least far (cf. Mita 1992:309, for male and female valorization of periods in the modern era only). Categorized by theme, the replies of the oldest group emphasized the "atmosphere" of that period, while those of the youngest group stood out in "the common person's living conditions." The theme that appeared most often in men's replies was "the energy of that age," while women's answers concentrated on the "atmosphere" of the period.

On the other hand, negatively valued historical periods (WWII and the 16th century Warring States period) were almost uniformly selected across the generations and sexes. Thematically, however, women emphasized the "violation of basic human character." Men along with women identified "general misery," but differed in their emphasis on "authority overstepped" and "rigid, unjust social relations." Factored according to age group, each group's historical experience seemed to play a part in the particular character of their replies. The youngest group, whose knowledge came from textbooks, had answers falling into the categories of "authority overstepped" and "rigid, unfair social relations." Group III, whose knowledge came from oral tradition and hearsay emphasized "general misery of the age" and "basic humanity crushed." And group IV, whose knowledge came from direct experience, gave examples that fit into the multiple categories of "general misery," "basic humanity crushed," "authority overstepped," and "suffering of oneself."

These findings are significant for lending substance and detail to the observation made elsewhere about the rise in popular historical interest observed across the country. Kelly (1986), for example, refers to the history "boom" that began in the 1980s. Robertson (1988, 1991) documents the nostalgically motivated activities of "native place making" *(furusato zukuri).* The inventories of Japanese local histories Bunn and Roberts (1981) and Nagano (1988) made from the holdings of their countries' respective libraries give further evidence of residents' keen interest in the history of their own nearby surroundings. At the most popular level, there are at least a dozen major historical theme parks in Japan, mainly focused on the premodern (Edo) and early modern years. And the fact that the theme of the nationally televised serial drama *(taiga DORAMA)* each year often comes from the early modern period is elaborated in Kitada's 1994 piece. She writes of the flourish in titles and volume of books sold about the Edo period. The bad old days have been recast as more creative times of simple living and cultural inventiveness, a wellspring of purely Japanese genius and source for Japanese solutions for problems today. For example, a white paper on leisure pursuits that she quotes showed a 15.8% increase in people practicing calligraphy and a 4.8% increase in practitioners of the art of tea service *(cha no yū).* Lebra (1991) also notes the mainly Edo era character of history parades, heritage tourism, and (aristocratic) ancestors -personal or emblematic of a town or region. She suggests that this selective historical interest has to do with a hunger for the order and stability that the past represents. Against the maelstrom of the "information society" *(jōhō shakai)* and the demands of

"becoming internationally oriented" *(kokusaika)*, imagining the past offers tempting pleasures indeed.

Advertisers have exploited history's appeal to good effect. Examples in the survey fell into two types of thematic category: conventional, inert reference to places, events or words having historical meanings (e.g. Edo-style sushi, Echizen [premodern region name] style soba noodles) on the one hand, and more sensuously directed references on the other (e.g. old fashioned quality, the taste of your old hometown). The attractive power of these expressions comes partly from the sensory pleasure of whatever taste or other quality is being enhanced by hearkening to history. But it comes moreover from the resonance with feelings of nostalgia that are being stimulated.

In summary, the survey tended to confirm commonly held stereotypes about the different experiences and interests of men and women. For example, in their word associations to "feudal" or "old-fashioned," men referred to political matters in disproportionately high numbers. Deeper knowledge of one's genealogy and the appeal of history's heroic aspect applies to men more often than to women. The survey also generally supported stereotypes about people in the various age groups. Those in their 20s and 30s seemed most sensitive to the historical inequalities continuing today. Their historical interests extended back in time the least, as did their genealogical knowledge. Among the age groups, the collective representations of being Japanese made by young people used historical references most frequently. Many of their images were of Japanese material culture. One inference that follows is that people in this phase of life are most susceptible to the appeals of national identity made by the state; i.e., since they are still young enough to be searching for clues to their social identity, and that their ethnic identity is coterminous with the image the state cultivates from history, as taught in school textbooks and examinations, for example.

Group IV's sense of historicity stood at the opposite end from group II's. The people in group IV failed to acknowledge the old-fashioned and feudal character of affairs nowadays. Yet their knowledge of genealogy and interest in historical periods extended back furthest of the age groups. In keeping with their identification of Japaneseness in the "attitudes and concepts" category, people of group IV associated abstract images with their favorite eras, too. Among the specific images connected to eras they found most appealing, most referred to examples of "atmosphere of the times."

Along each aspect of historicity surveyed, group III was generally intermediate to II and IV. Thus they identified their Japaneseness not in objects or attitudes, but rather in "practices and pursuits." Their genealogical knowledge and historical interests, too, proved to fall halfway between those of group II and IV. However, their recognition of the feudal nature of the workplace, and the old-fashioned nature of the political world came closer to that of group IV than it did to group II. Based on contours of Japanese historicity synthesized from the limited survey data, the characteristics of Japanese style historical understanding can be suggested.

More Clues to Historicity in Japan

The Takefu survey helps to pinpoint the objects and aspects of individuals' lives that are acknowledged for having links to the past. The question about home furnishings and decorations found considerable concentration of responses, with five categories alone accounting for 73% of the replies (hanging scrolls, ceramics, knickknacks, weapons and armor, folding screens). The notable absence of "furniture," "lacquerware," and "writing tools" from the responses to "what old things do you have to decorate your home with" can be understood from the normally utilitarian classification of these objects. In other words, these things were usually valued according to the present utility rather than their value as objêt d'art or decoration.

Another survey question asked for the aspects of people's lives in which they were conscious of a historical character. As in the previous question, results concentrated in a few categories. Among these, 54% of replies fell into categories of the material culture like foodways, certain articles of clothing, and equipment still used. Opening the field of possible history related objects and aspects still wider, people were asked in another question for the specific places, objects or events that made them think of the past. Replies in the categories of "places" and "objects" together accounted for 77% of the examples given. In particular almost one third of the places identified were Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines. In the "objects" category, 18% of the examples were of agricultural tools, associated closely, as they must be, with the flesh of those who lived in a thoroughly agricultural society (cf. Kizaki 1994:133 on artifacts "born" of a place). Although objects can be ultimately linked to a time or place, significant features of Japanese historicity seem to involve attachment to a place; not merely to conjecture some past event, but of more fundamental, organic concern for one's personal origins.

What Kramer (1995:58) writes about nationality in Germany residing primarily in race rather than primarily in citizenship rights found in the cases of Italy, France and Great Britain, can also be said of being Japanese, only more so. Buruma (1994:51) tells how much more problematic it has been therefore to root out the elements leading to the disaster of WWII. In his comparison of the meaning and persistence of the war's reverberations among the Germans and the Japanese today, he points out how Hitler's National Socialism could be decapitated, but by contrast that the protocols of authority and hierarchies of social institutions supporting the military order in Japanese society ran through the core of Japanese social relations. With the identity politics of nationalism so infused with organic substance in both these societies, it is easy to understand the special meaning of attachment and identity that resides in the very soil of a locale. Applegate (1990) studied the Heimat [hometown] movement of early 20th century Germany, and pointed out "the relation with the soil that Heimat museums cultivated above all else…" (p.95, cf. Eidson 1993).

There are many examples of the special sentiment that the soil has in a society as dominated by agricultural village life as Japan once was. The significance of the soil is amplified by a worldview of proximate causes, mistakenly called "animistic." Buruma (1994:129) quotes a young Japanese woman visiting the place in China where her father was put to death during the war, believing that the earth she was collecting somehow contained the traces of her father's time spent there. Elsewhere, in a novel, a character remarks of a historical home museum that the "air inside still contained traces of…" (Kizaki 1994:131; cf. Y.Kawabata 1968 on the living aura of antiques still in use).

The attachment to a piece of land rather than the structures can been seen in the relative ease with which people in the countryside will have their dwelling rebuilt (50 years would not be unusual for the houses made of wood so common previously). The same individuals, however, would be reluctant to leave their piece of land for another location. The attachment to the soil of one's ancestors includes a sense of stewardship, as well. People who have inherited fields or wood stands of their family feel obligated not just to refrain from cashing in the property, but to see that the land continues to be worked, either leased out, or when possible worked by (extended) family members themselves, even when there is little profit or joy in it. The land itself plays a part in constituting individual and familial identity in these cases by permitting the living to take their places in what is perceived to be an unbroken link with the past; but more practically speaking, with the generations to come. In addition to the organic, almost osmosis-like process of linking subject to soil and physical conditions, the notion of "nature," too, tells something about Japanese historicity.

While the changeability of the weather and the sense of mutability brought with the passing seasons is a common source for poetry in probably every society, in Japan these changes are relatively great, even volatile, thus amplifying the intensity of temporal awareness among people living there. Earthquakes, snow and mudslides, volcanoes, typhoons and formerly the more common outbreak of fires all have deeply impressed on people here how small their efforts are against the energy and intensity of natural forces. Various national symbols have associations with the past some of which are very specific, like the turtle (10,000 years) or Japanese crane (1,000 years). The video leader appearing at the start of a weekly television series about Japanese history (NHK 1989), "rekishi tanjō" (Birth of History), used the following stream of images for evoking the past. These came from Japanese creation stories and from folk sources.

Through special effects and backed by an up-beat synthesizer tune, the quickly moving images shifted in sequence from an airborne perspective, flying above peaks and down valleys, then straight into a wall of rock. It splits and blinding light streams through. Next comes a whirlpool tinged in gold. A crane, symbol of 1,000 years of life and happiness, flies away. The camera shows a backlit clay haniwa figurine (pre 600 A.D.) before cutting to a

medieval period mask. The screen fills with bursting fireworks (associated with the time of O-bon, in summer, when ancestors return). Next comes the stillness of space, dotted by stars. Reminiscent of Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the viewer sees a baby become a bald, old man. The sequence ends with cherry blossom petals floating into the golden whirlpool. The reporter for the week's particular segment is introduced, along with the scene of the historic event and its dramatic recreation. Aside from the individual images presented, the overall message seems to be 1) the vastness of known history in Japan, 2) the fantastic changeability of form, reminiscent of the changeling *bakemono* monsters of folktales (mountains, rocks splitting open, whirlpools), and 3) the mutability of this worldly life.

Kizaki, in her novel *The Sunken Temple*, evokes the past by the quality of light, shadow, and sound features in the natural landscape. Memories are triggered by glances at the massive roots of a tree old enough to have witnessed the events that preoccupy the protagonist. The roots seem able to change into some other form *(bakeru).* They are the place whence something ominous seems about to emerge (1994:49). Recognizing nature's generative force in events past and present is nothing new, but a term for the all encompassing concept of nature in Japanese *(shizen)* is relatively new, dating only to the late 1800s (Imamichi 1983:352). Before this the geographic features and natural processes were defined in relation to the person or persons in question. Those places affecting one's life would be taken care of. Those outside the scope of personal concern would not.

In spite of the creation of a general term for "nature" more than one hundred years ago, the ethic to care about the undifferentiated, "everybody's" environment is only weakly developed. The scale and imperatives of the industrial economy caused the destruction of many cultural and natural resources. This fact and the conceptual overlap of "nature" with "culture" and "history" explains the 1950 (revision in 1976) national law for the preservation of Japanese treasures in each of these three categories *(bunkazai hogohō,* Thornbury 1994). According to this law, individual trees, rocky outcrops, bodies of water and scenic vistas may be designated for protection as part of the nation's heritage. What is important to note here in relation to Japanese historicity is that the (numinous) creative power of natural force is highly regarded. Also nature as a categoric, collective entity is weakly defined. But particular natural entities may be singled out as designated treasures, classified on a par with the cultural and historical ornaments of a place.

The final avenue through nature leads back to the discussion of present day orientation and preoccupation with presentation. Both Hendry (1996) and Yamaguchi (1991) describe how plain, unfashioned natural elements have no human meaning. Hendry says the relationship of nature to culture is not one of equals. Rather, everything is defined contingent to cultural purpose. Not to be mediated culturally is to fail to register significance. In a word, unhandled makes for existential invisibility. Thus cultivating trays of bonsai, practicing

the art of arranging flowers *(kadō),* and the viewing of (rock) gardens all connect people to nature. However without this human touch, the exercise loses meaning. Nature in other words, can have no independent significance. It can be thought of as being overdetermined.

Natural elements, much like the (seasonal) code words of a haiku, can function in a commodity-like way. Or, using a wordprocessing metaphor, the bits of nature may be "cut and pasted" as desired. They are discrete items of known value, which can be used as citations, both scholarly and popular. Hendry (1996) takes the notion of *shakkei* ("borrowed" landscape) to illustrate the way natural subjects are manipulated to domesticate nature, making it fit for incorporation into human life. The term refers to the arrangement of foreground (e.g. physically part of one's premises) and background (e.g. the curve of a temple roof in the middle distance or conjunction with a mountain's shape beyond) to compose a pleasing effect.

Yamaguchi sheds light on the tendency toward overdetermination of nature and culture in Japanese society with his piece on the poetics of exhibiting Japanese culture (1991). While Hendry argues that "nature" exists only to the extent that it is manipulated with cultural purpose, Yamaguchi identifies the elaborate treatment of nature and culture with primordial precedent. He points to the religious belief behind this urge to (over) arrange matters. According to Japanese tradition, it is often the mask rather than the actor that has meaning; the container rather than the contents, the act of giving rather than the gift. In his example from Japanese mythology, the pseudo-gods appeared originally. The true gods came only later (p.66–7). Much in the same way that commemorative photos can take on a reality superordinate to the actual occasion, so too are Japanese gods said to prefer the derived representation to its source material (p.64).

In sum, it is difficult to identify any one source for the presentist aspect of Japanese historicity. It is not clear whether a volatile natural environment has given impetus for the finely tuned awareness of change in human affairs, or whether heightened attention to appearances and the impression being made comes from the quality of social relations during 10 generations of Tokugawa rule, or whether the tendency to carefully process and present matters is rooted in religious aesthetics. Yet present day orientation, the importance of presents and their proper presentation do seem to be overlapping aspects of people's attitude to their past and their understanding of the past-present relationship.

HISTORICITY IN JAPAN, ITS MEANINGS AND ITS MEASURES

The first clues to Japanese historicity from the literature indicated the abiding connection between ancestors and descendants (Lebra 1991, Plath 1964, R. Smith 1974), the agrarian imagery of the past several generations, and a certain ease in cloaking a practice in an air of age-old tradition (Bestor 1989, Fujitani 1993). In addition to these qualitative characteristics, Kelly (1986,

1990a) and Kitada (1994) described the high degree of commercial popularity in the (premodern) past these days. Moving from the general to the specific, a small survey of historicity yielded more detailed results, according to age group and sex.

Four major topics came out of the scholarly discussion of Japanese historicity. The first was the great popular interest in the (premodern) past and the observation how nostalgia evolved from a narrowly defined feeling of (lack of) attachment to a particular place, to a generic desire for bygone days or even a craving for "nature" more generally. The second topic that came up was the pragmatic and presentist worldview that prevails in Japan. The integral role of ancestors in daily life among many Japanese today was given as one example of this oftentimes instrumental attitude to affairs. As another example, much of the meaning and pleasure in Japanese time-culture comes from its present day prescriptive (when to do/say what), proprietary (which reference is appropriate to a context), or poetic (aesthetic pleasure) character.

The concept of "nature" was the third topic brought up in connection with Japanese historicity. Nature's existential subordination to social life and cultural meanings was pointed out, along with the special generative powers attributed to nature. For example, part of a person, place or thing's character can be credited to the geographic particulars of origin. Based on the same reasoning, the special properties of a place, natural, cultural and historical, are often equated under the rubric of the outstanding features or essence of a place.

The fourth topic followed from the second and third. Given the presentist outlook and the fact that nature's significance depends on its cultural manipulation, it is not surprising that surface appearance and preoccupation with the visual aspect of presentation are also part of Japanese attitudes to the past-present relationship. Rendering the past appropriately into conventional patterns and stories that make sense to people today is not unique to Japanese, but the great attention to detail and high degree of polishing is remarkable.

HISTORICAL VALUES AND THE MUSEUM PROPOSAL

In June 1993 Takefu Renaissance proposed a detailed plan for use of the Kōkaidō Hall as local history museum. It is evident that the plan fits within the definition of Japanese historicity drawn out in this chapter. For example, there is (self-acknowledgement of the fact of great) attention being given to detailed visual presentation, which Mr. Kasamatsu, a curator at the prefectural museum by vocation, pointed to in his closing comment: "if this one's just going to be a box [for pretty things], then the townspeople don't need it." And in the other document that was part of the proposal, the museum purpose includes showcasing the (emblematic) *bunkazai* treasures of the town. The precise measurements quoted for the museum is another instance of the attention to final detail.

The presentist-pragmatic orientation that figures into Japanese historicity is also evident in the KKD Museum plan. There is to be provision for the latest

excavated finds or newly designated *bunkazai* treasures. The facility should combine multiple functions of tourist service, local history self-study, and period conference room use. A curator should be accessible to members of the public. A negative instance of this practical propensity, which Mr. Kasamatsu cautions against in his notes, is to collapse town information into town boosterism or simple advertisement for local industry.

One part of the present day orientation is to judge an institution by the (sensory, perhaps above all visual) pleasure it gives. Thus the KKD Museum proposal says it is for everyone's enjoyment. It is to be a place where people can "rediscover" their own heritage. Its name accordingly is suggested to be the *fureai* (touch and meet) *rekishikan* (hall of history). And there should be provision for display of the creative works of today's residents here, too. As for the content of the historical display itself, Mr. Kasamatsu's iconoclastic conception is to favor a social historical view whereby the standard list of political events and personages are subordinated to the common person's point of view through the ages. Yet even in breaking with the conventional poses of museum presentation, this foregrounding of concrete, material consequence still is consistent with the detail, surface and sensuous (vs. analytical, comparative or synthesizing aim) aspect of the worldview, which is prized widely in Japan.

Finally, the KKD Museum proposal hints at the belief in the direct generative powers of geographic setting or essentialist qualities of the raw materials in an artifact. Mr. Kasamatsu's notes urge a strong reference to economic and social context in telling the town's history so as to avoid the simple juxtaposition of event and location which does nothing to stop visitors from making this kind of simple attribution of organic (it is in the air, water, light, etc) causality. The choice of *fureai rekishikan* for the museum's name also plays on the possibility of present day visitors "coming into direct contact" (with instrumental benefit, practical or pleasurable osmosis) with the town's heritage.

The proposal also mentions the role of the facility in presenting and enhancing the town in its role as "hometown" *(furusato).* This word is connected to Japanese historicity through the ideas of one's origins somehow directly and organically tied to an identifiable geographic location. The feelings of nostalgia that are stimulated also reflect Japanese meanings, which have been shaped by worldview as well as the conditions of 20th century life in an advanced industrial society. As this chapter has shown, the term *furusato* in its current incarnation is a postwar phenomenon and is tied up with the forces of urbanization, the imperative to make a pilgrimage to family origins, and the municipal promotions (and national policies) of "cultivating community" *(machi zukuri).* The KKD museum incorporates the larger trend to brake the nation-state's centralizing tendencies *(chihō no jidai,* "age of the provinces"). Similarly, the overarching and personal impact of "internationalization" processes *(kokusaika)* and growth of the "information age" *(jōhō shakai)* are other aspects connected to the idea *of furusato.*

After introducing the terrain of historical significata and groups interested in the local past, the rise of the Takefu Renaissance citizen movement will be charted in the next chapter. Then in chapter four, the KKD story will continue with the economic and political conditions surrounding the museum and the maneuvers leading to its realization. Here again, intangible matters such as worldview and rhetorical strategies of Japanese language and society will not be left out of the discussion.

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CHAPTER 3

Concerned About the Future of the Past

> M challenged the idea that Fukui prefecture has especially valued its *bunkazai* [cultural treasures] earlier than most, beginning in the Meiji period (c.1870). To the contrary, there is little interest in the local past… and *rekishi ishiki* [awareness of history] here is very *usui, amari nai* [scant, thin].
>
> —Interview, Fukui Prefectural Museum, May 1994

From the mouth of a curator this is a strong indictment indeed. But evidence of the local past, its presentation and the interest shown by segments of the population does vary. This chapter introduces the *Takefu Renaissance* citizens movement (TR) by first describing the wider field of historical interest among area individuals, as well as the historical terrain of the valley. Each topic is condensed here, but may be found described at greater length elsewhere as separate chapters (Witteveen 1997). Stories and physical traces of the local past are featured at the local history sites in the wider prefecture, and may be found across the range of historiographic genres (classes, symposia, broadcast interviews, publication, etc.). Other topics where history figures in will include education and entertainment programs on TV, along with historical references in commercial forms (souvenirs, traditional products, historical theme parks), the history found in museum displays, and lastly, the references made to local history in area events. This lead up to the Renaissance group itself provides the background for the next chapter about the group's intersection with the town government.

> Regarding the best way to make use of the long history and remaining traces of the past in Takefu: first of all he hoped the townspeople would have *jikaku* [self awareness] of the town's distinguished history; namely, within the three prefectures of the Hokuriku region, only Kanazawa-city can claim to be comparable in augustness. Of course, Takefu is outshined by places like Nara or Hida-Takayama. Ancient kofun burial mounds dot the wider region, but only Takefu has documentary claim to being an important settlement thereafter, at least since the AD 700s.
>
> —Paraphrase, Mr. Saitō Kazō, Takefu historian, October 1994

The three prefectures along the Japan Sea comprising the Hokuriku district have been called the Empire of Buddhism *[bukkyō no teikoku]*. The Shinshū sect in particular, popular among agricultural households, flourishes in this region (Sofue 1971). As an example, for its population and surface area, Fukui prefecture has three times the number of temples of all sects as does nearby Nagano prefecture. This concentration of religious structures and practitioners is particularly concentrated in Takefu. With its 14 temples and 115 shrines and a population of 25,000 in the core of the town (44 temples and 193 shrines for the 70,000 persons of the total municipality). Takefu is reminiscent of Kyoto, blessed with temples. One was founded in A.D. 739 and several others in the 15th and 16th centuries, with a few wooden buildings surviving from the 18th century. Whereas residences and family businesses have been subject to division by inheritance or confiscation by ruling powers previously, it is normally only temples and shrines, conservative by nature, which have persisted whole. As such, monuments and memorials are concentrated in these semi-public spaces. Not all markers are of religious character, since some have been erected to the memory of teachers in the fields of culture or martial arts, while others testify to victims of famine. Because of the great numbers of temples and a street plan dating from the Edo period (1603–1867), Takefu's local history features relate mainly to these precincts and to this later historical period.

Before the time of mass media and universities, it was at temples that study and diffusion of the new technologies, ideas and information from the East Asian mainland took place. Craftsmen came to work adjacent to Takefu's temples making swords, small sickles and other cutlery. Geographically, Takefu was the axis for the overland routes north-south along the valley, and east-west, from sea to the interior. And so the town served as entrepōt, with shops crowded along the small streets. It is this triple legacy of temples, crafts workers, and merchants that created the characteristic townscape of the core of Takefu still visible today.

The town's atmosphere comes from its alleys and streets, seldom straight; and from its many pre World War II wooden buildings in the traditional *machiya* style: normally two floors, narrow faces that extend back several times their frontage. A good deal of the northern part of the urban core burned down in 1913. So wooden structures there are not as old as the ones in the rest of the town center, with a large number of buildings from the 19th century still standing. The conversion to steel frame, aluminum or ceramic-faced buildings has been relatively slow in coming to the old town center. What was once seen negatively by business leaders as being old-fashioned now in the "leisure age" *[reijâ jidai]* is coming to be viewed favorably as old-fashioned by city planners and people deeply attached to the old cityscape. Thus the streetscape itself constitutes the most basic feature of the local history panorama.

The townscape is important not only for giving Takefu its physical character, but is important also psychologically. *Omoide ippai* [stuffed with

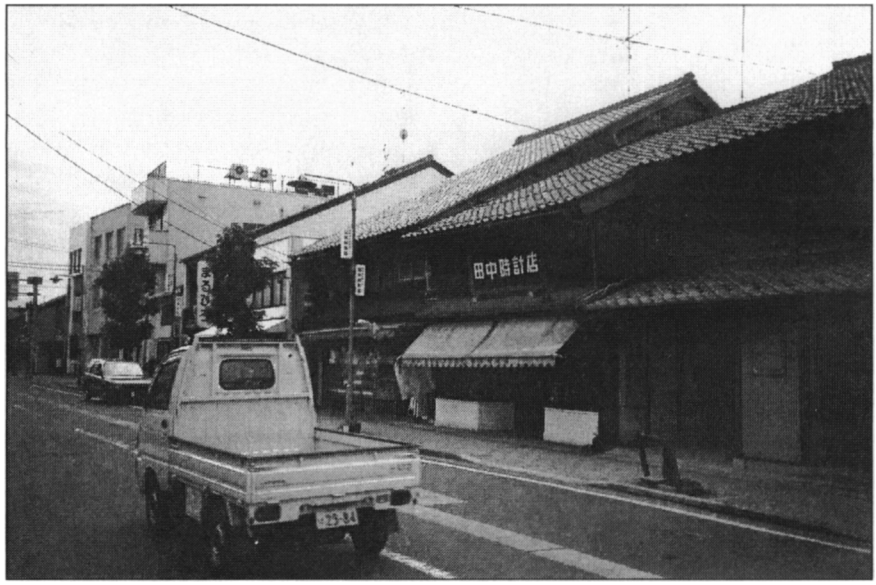

Figure 5: Creative use of old-style city residence (shop at ground floor, front): Architect Ogawa's (right) features a parking stall and narrow gallery space (route 365 south, 1995).

memories] is how Pr. Abe Takao put it during his talk at the April 1994 meeting of Takefu Renaissance. He went on to say *Takefu ningen ga kawatemo kawaranai* [even though the people of Takefu change over the years, the place and therefore its people remain the same]. That is, there is an essential something that defines the place and its people, which persists across generations and across socio-economic backgrounds. His remark was made to support the group's efforts to have the city preserve and use the oldest surviving merchant-type house, the Ōi-ke (c.1807). Its design was characteristic of the district and its size larger than average. It stood on the ancient Hokkokkaidō roadway, and was home for decades to a family's successive generations of brewers and merchants of soy sauce. Pr. Abe suggested that the historical house could serve as the embodiment of Takefu *rashisa* [Takefu-ness]; its *ochitsukusa* and its *utsukushisa* [sense of ease and beauty]. Sadly, the negotiations between owners, civil servants and elected city councilors broke down. At the end of 2000, the structure was bought up, disassembled and carted away to add character to a beer brewer's production site on the opposite coast.

The historical character of the townscape has been the basis for the city's development plan begun in 1984, called "Shape Up My Town" (original title in English), and subtitled "*rekishi to KURAFTO no machizukuri kōsō"* [economic development and community identity scheme, building on the town's history and craft traditions]. During the still prosperous 1980s this

plan called for about a dozen neighborhood projects; for example, to make room for a ruler straight 360-meter long boulevard between the train station and the central Shinto shrine, Sōja-jinja. The finishing touches were made in April 1998. Another project would seek cooperation from neighborhood residents and merchants in the town's efforts to restore the streetscape of one area to the time before tarmac and utility poles. In 1991 a three person Bureau of Economic Redevelopment was set up in the city's department of construction to carry out the projects. In 1995 only these projects closest to the city hall were nearing completion. These have been financed by the private sector. Not being purely public works projects, the city met with some resistance to the plans around the train station area (completed Spring 1999) and that of the storehouse conversion scheme in Hōrai district (largely finished fall 2000; total plan ends 2003).

The final size of the downtown development project was going to be about half the original plan. Principal reasons residents and merchants gave for withdrawing support were that status quo was fine; it would cost money to change and the risks would not warrant the sums ventured. In the end, the city did not press its plans because, as one of the civil servants in charge said, to force the project through would run the risk of alienating people. They might well sell up and go elsewhere, leaving this important part of the city hollowed out, occupied only during business hours; a lonesome prospect *[sabishii]* he said. In 1995 the roadwork projects which involve buying land, and the "community street" projects (pedestrian walkways widened, trees planted, property owners encouraged to preserve their old-style façades) had not yet begun. But the continuing decline of the national and local economy meant that by 1996 big construction projects funded with government help were underway. A big hotel, the Century Plaza, was one prominent example, adjacent to the railway station. In 1999, flanking the other side of the railway station, the Heiwado regional grocery and department store was opened, complete with multi-story parking ramp. And on the top floor of the building in 2000 a city-run day-service center for the elderly was in operation. Meanwhile, the Century Plaza opposite was the location for the city-run consumer complaints desk, an office for promoting women's equity at work, community and home (2002), and the location for community meeting rooms to support the growth and work of citizen-led, volunteer efforts in the area.

Over the years the ideas of city planning have turned about face. The *SUKURAPU ANDO BIRUDO* [scrap and build] philosophy current during the economic boom years *[keizai kōdō seichō]*, since the 1960s has given way to more thoughtful control of a town's built landscape in the 1990s. In places like Takefu, tardy in demolishing themselves, there is less of the uniformity one sees in franchises, prefabricated dwellings, neon signs and parking lots which make one place in Japan look like any other. To highlight rather than to cover up or destroy a town's idiosyncratic features has become a slogan for the 1990s. *Kosei o nobasu* [express the town's special character] is the watchword I was told by a member of the town's planning section.

So, for example, I was told of the idea to capitalize on the concentration of early 20th century storehouses *(kura)* by converting them into a into a small collection of boutiques as had been successfully tried elsewhere around the country. I was referred to the project to replant pines among selected lengths of open watercourses—some far from the actual historical locations—which had once been a hallmark of the town, but which in the summer of 1966 had been entirely removed as an impediment to cars and trucks.

What survives of historic Takefu mainly dates from the early modern period (1603–1867). It is this character which must be made use of I was told; to be put forward as part of Takefu's public face. Among the senior city planners who hold decision-making powers the old priorities and previous ways of thinking change slowly. Thus, in spite of the plans to restore the streetscape of one neighborhood at the center of the town, another project under discussion was to elaborate upon the newly opened Murasaki Shikibu Park (12th century theme) by creating a segment of old-style streetscape (e.g. 19th century theme) with shops selling souvenirs and old-time products, for example. In other words, the city has followed national trends to take stock of its townscape, if only out of necessity to appeal to shoppers of the 1990s. But one of the town's patriots pointed out to me that this talk of preserving a generic specimen of the townscape, at a place that before was rice field, at the outskirts of town, unconnected to the craft and commercial heritage of the town core, only showed disregard for supporting the living fabric of the town center as it lives on today.

The city's Bureau of Economic Redevelopment *[shigaichi saikaihatsu shitsu]* and the city's Planning Section *[kikaku chōsei ka]* were not the only groups that recognize the salience of the historic townscape. On the weekend of April 16–17, 1994, in the neighborhood at the south end of Takefu near the Kami Sōja Shrine, residents held a sort of street party; a family affair with snacks and crafts for sale. The beggar's fair or "kojiki ichi," as it was called, centered on the old buildings flanking the ancient road, the kyū hokkokkaidō, running through the neighborhood. Moving from the streetscape generally to specific sites of local history interest, a look at the walking map put out by the city Board of Education *(kyōiku iinkai)* shows that shrines and temples figure prominently. Only 3 of the 21 attractions featured are non-religious: the traces of a temple/redoubt's moat, a mazelike street crossing, and Shikibu Park.

Each neighborhood normally has a shrine it corresponds to (ujiko), so there are several facilities in Takefu. But a few of these stand out for particular mention: the central shrine of Takefu, Sōja-jinja; and the shrine dedicated to the memory of the city's first appointed daimyō, the Lord Honda Tomimasa (1572–1649). An example representative of how local history is handled at temples is Ryūsen-ji, a Sōtō-sect Zen Buddhist temple patronized by the once ruling Honda dynasty. It holds the most land among Takefu's temples. Founded in 1367, and with its *kuri* (quarters for the head priest and novices) dating to the late 18th century, Ryūsen-ji is peppered with historical significata. South of the main gate is the city's war memorial, built on temple

land. At the main gate of the temple, within its precincts, and throughout the attached graveyard are several boards explaining the significance of various features on the grounds. One of these gives the locations of the tombs of various members of the former lord's family, showing the genealogical ties of each. In the temple's storehouses are many of the ruling family's effects. A few of these articles are on permanent display in glass cases on the walls of the room enshrining the temple's founder. The 35-year old head priest of Ryūsen-ji is himself keen on local history and in October 1994, mounted an exhibition of about 300 items from the temple's coffers, including several from the Honda dynasty. Previously he also published a history of the temple for sale to visitors.

Also on the grounds are the graves of about 50 killed during the early war years mid-century, before the full scale of the destruction would be known. The temple donated part of its lands for these individual tombstones (most Japanese tombs are family rather than personal). Unlike the other features of the precinct, these are not marked by one of the priest's explanatory signboards. But every year, a week before the mid-August O-Bon holiday to remember ancestors, the *osegaki* ceremony is held at the temple to remember the dead—including these—and to pray for the repose of their spirits. During one part of the service, priests process through the graveyard, going to the tomb of the founding lord Honda, and on their return to the *honden* [main hall], filing through the rows of uniform small granite obelisks of the WWII dead.

Setsumei kanban signboards declaring the significance of a place or thing can be seen around the city. The city's board of education has erected many of these to identify *bunkazai* [important cultural property]. In a few cases they have been designated instead by Fukui's prefectural board of education, or even by the nation's Bureau of Cultural Affairs *(bunkachō).* One of the historians of the city who used to sit on the 16 member annual *bunkazai* review board thought this list of treasures barely scratched the surface of the wealth of treasures held collectively in backyard storehouses among the many old families in town. Examples of *bunkazai* in Takefu are historical documents, scrolls, sculptures, castle ruins, items associated with pre-Western mathematical techniques, an historical house, and the performances of Echizen-style manzai (musical banter).

The majority of Takefu's *bunkazai* belong to the city itself, or to the quasi-public organizations of temples and shrines. Religious paraphernalia and objects of art make up the bulk of the city's treasures. That is, it appears to be problematic to name personal property as an important cultural property (cf. in the U.S.A. the system of listed property on the national and/or state registers of historic places). The man I spoke with at the city's board of education attributed the conspicuous lack of designated buildings to the absence of an architectural historian sitting on the review board from its inception in 1967 until as recently as 1993. Another possible explanation, which he hypothesized, was that chattels are more readily classed as valued

properties than are the functional dwellings, work places and religious buildings. Or maybe the large number of temples makes it only natural that Buddhist statues and images should make up the bulk of the town's *bunkazai.*

In any case, unlike the compensations of being listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places in the U.S., there is little consequence attached to this designation in Japan. That is, unlike the property tax advantages for owners in the U.S., or the tax credits sometimes available to them for restoring historic property, Japanese holders of *bunkazai* receive no support from the city or prefecture other than coverage for any damages or necessary repairs. On the other hand, nationally designated important treasures, for example, received some money for maintenance, which is administered directly from the Bureau of Cultural Affairs.

In comparison to the number of history signboards erected by the board of education, inscribed stone markers are most numerous. These range from 30 cm high miniatures in a pint-sized garden of a restaurant, to 3-meter high tablets telling a story. They are commissioned by the city, by businesses, by parishioners or by individuals. The content may be eulogy, or poetry; it may be an old milestone or memorial to a martyr; it may mark where a past emperor slept, or a birthplace or a dwelling otherwise forgotten. But of the 162 stone markers in and around Takefu, catalogued and transcribed for the Official History of Takefu (1966), 92 are markers or monuments *(…hi)* and 34 are notable gravestones *(…haka).* Of the others 21 are inscriptions made on temple bells, nine are tower or pagoda structures (…tō), the few others include shell mounds (two), street lantern (one), and baked clay (tile) writing (two). Other markers can be seen around the streets and in residential gardens and business premises which were overlooked or not deemed important enough for inclusion in the city's official catalogue. The point is that stone markers seem to be as common as trees around the properties of Takefu. They dot the landscape, both public and private. The signboards and markers of Takefu constitute one more part of its local history features.

Since 1992 the youth division of the *Tachiaoi Kai* historical association of Takefu has organized twice-yearly walking tours. In addition to the many temples and shrines to visit, there are streets from which smiths have not yet moved to the purpose-built facilities south and west of the town center. Participants have visited these work places, retail stores, and sites once used in the past for making the town's traditional cutlery. Other places of historical interest visited around the town's core have included the ateliers of candy, furniture, cabinetry, candle, and paper lantern *(chōchin)* makers. Temples, shrines and the former residences of historical figures have also been visited. People joining the walking tours receive a handout that gives a synopsis of each of the half dozen stops. Someone using a megaphone then fleshes out these fact-sketches at each site. In the two hour Saturday morning walk of May 1994, there were about 30 school aged children and 40 adults, mainly men in their 60s or older. In November there were about 60 of each.

Other occasions to listen to the history of sites around Takefu come in the form of volunteer guides' presentations. Previously it was one of the town's historians who would be asked by the city or the Chamber of Commerce to entertain a group of visitors with stories of Takefu's past. To ease the burden and make arrangements less formal, a group of volunteers was recruited and trained by the city's Lifelong Learning Center and the town's historians. The *Takefu Kataribe* [raconteurs of Takefu], as they are called, have prepared themselves to speak at length and to be able to answer most questions about the following sites of historical interest in and around Takefu: 23 temples, shrines and historical sites in the town center, the Murasaki Shikibu park, and the Echizen no Sato history theme park, its accompanying museum and sites of historical note in the vicinity of the Ajimano village where the park is located.

A variation on the histories offered by members of Takefu Kataribe can be heard by reserving a seat on the tour bus company that includes Takefu and environs on its itinerary. According to one manual lent me by a guide, the salient topics for Takefu are its claim to being the ancient Echizen *koshi no kuni* regional capital, its association with the world famous 10th century woman novelist Murasaki Shikibu, a derelict well associated with the famous medieval sword smith credited with bringing the notable forging and cutlery industry to the town, the chrysanthemum festival held each fall, and Takefu's highly regarded version of buckwheat noodles, topped with cold stock and grated radish, bonito shavings, and some chopped leek (the honest, rustic taste of *oroshi soba).*

Every spring-usually by bus, and fall-usually on foot, elementary school children take field trips to nearby sites of educational interest. At historical sites, the explanations depend on the interpretations of the teacher. Three popular stops include the Echizen no Sato historical park, about 5 km east of the town center which takes as its theme the flowers and plants cited in the 8th century *manyō* style poems; and in particular, the several dozen works attributed to a young woman in Kyoto and her love who is thought to have been banished to the relative wilderness of the area in which the park now stands. Second is the Murasaki Shikibu Park, located in the southwest quarter of the central town and relating to the season in the late 11th century when the so-named court lady is supposed to have accompanied her father, and while living in the area is supposed to have taken specific inspiration for her famous novel, *The Tale of Genji.* A few steps from the park is the city's small gallery called *Shikura,* opened in 1993, and used for 1–2 week exhibitions by local and area artists and craftworkers.

Within easy driving distance from Takefu there are a number of historical features, as well.

Excursions From Takefu

Field trips available to places outside Takefu give day-trippers a glimpse of local history features in the wider area. For example, trips by Takefu's Life-long Learning Center (half day, 40 people, ¥2,000 each), the Tachiaoi Kai historical association (full day, 45 people, ¥7,000 each), and next-door Sabae-city's Community Education Bureau (half day, 13 people, free) allowed interested people to visit attractions around Fukui-city.

Like Japanese tours generally, these included a roll call or occasion to register one's name, greetings at the beginning and summarizing at the end by the leader or guide, closely following the jam packed schedule of stops, several participants equipped with camera and/or notebooks, some savory snacks or candy which people took along or that the tour leaders had furnished (cf. Graburn 1983, 1987, 1990; Moeran 1983). In the case of the Tachiaoi Kai's outing, a few group *kinen shashin* [memento] photos were taken. Two other things characterized these tours. Unlike the possibly less group-oriented Americans on a tour, the middle-aged and older people on these tours seemed careful not to fall behind or in any way to inconvenience the fellow tourists. Furthermore, there were few questions asked of the knowledgeable guides. Explanations seemed to be complete, if short on synthesis. This gave the effect of the detailed knowledge being "received," not open to question; it appeared to be neutral and not touched by any particular political position.

Each of the bus tours had different goals, but the variety of historical resources on the landscape that the tours encompassed is a fair sample of what can be found in the area. One tour stopped at the site of a way house kept by Takefu's former daimyō lord, a temple devoted to the memory of the Tokugawa dynasty's third national leader Tadanao, the ruins of the Heisenji medieval monastery, and Ono-city's museum. The final stop was at the memorial to Asakura Yoshikage, a local lord betrayed by relatives and forced to kill himself for defying the national unification campaign around 1600.

Another set of tours went to the historical museums in surrounding towns, a privately owned collection of religious articles, an outdoor museum of old style houses, and the head temple of the Buddhist sect that predominates in the area, Jodo Shinshū. The third group visited nearby shrines noted for devotional artwork or historic relics, a temple marking the martyrdom of three residents in 1744, local craft industry display (lacquerware), and—in passing—the traces of the wartime imperial military base.

Places to Discuss Local History

The landscape is historically inscribed with significance not only by sites, markers and tour visits, but it is also made known through publications, classes, broadcast interviews, and of course personal and household

memories. In this section some of the educational forms will be sampled to fill out the background on local history activities in the Takefu area.

Interest in local history seems to grow as one ages. Without efforts such as the walking tours organized by *Tachiaoi JUNYA Kai* (junior division), aimed at elementary school students, most people would not develop an interest in the local history for some time, often not until they would reach the age of 50 or 60. Takefu's board of education has published local history textbooks for third grade (1993) and sixth grade (1989) elementary school students. But as one parent said, there is little time left in an already crowded curriculum for local history. In junior and senior high school, the prospect of the all important entrance exams means in recent years that even less time is spent on a history that is, after all, local.

The lifelong learning center offers local history lecture series with 50–80 elderly who regularly attend. There are reading circles for old manuscripts, the public lecture at the summer meeting of the local historical society (Tachiaoi Kai), official histories by the board of education, as well as numerous village level compilations by dedicated writers, along with personal reminiscences and children's oral history projects.

Columns in the local newspapers *(Hokuriku Times, The Fukui Newspaper)* as well as regional editions of the nation dailies are another place where local history is presented; sometimes as legend, research report, or fiction. The drama of local history may be serialized, as in a novel about Takefu's first Edo era lord, Honda Tomimasa, written by the local writer Mr. Umada Masao *(The Fukui Newspaper,* 1994). Magazines and mass circulars by the town government *(kōhō takefu)* or even the electric company (Hokuriku Denryoku) may also have a section on local history. For example, more than 100 columns on local history have appeared in the J-P magazine put out by The Takefu Chamber of Commerce and Industry each month. The contributor, Mr. Yoshimoto Yoshinosuke, has spoken of the favorable comments received by interested readers, women in particular. Finally, the local history association, Tachiaoi Kai, puts on deposit its own twice-yearly newsletter at the city library for interested members of the public to peruse.

Events of Local History

Parades, performances and brief exhibitions that make reference to the local past all differ from the museums, theme parks, lecture series and tours. The former are events that are normally brief and to some extent are shaped by their audiences. Historical processions *(jidai gyōretsu* or *daimyō gyōretsu)* can be found in big cities like Kyoto (Gion Matsuri) or in small villages like Ajimano, east of Takefu and the site of the Echizen no Sato historical park.

Another kind of event that refers to the local past is musical or dance performances by preservation societies. Examples include two groups featured in the 1987 Fukui *jidai gyōretsu.* Members of Haruyama village *Daimyō Gyōretsu Hozon Kai* [Society for the Preservation of Daimyō

Figure 6: Exhibit of old shop signs, 1850–1950, in connection with the annual expo of the city's furniture makers and dealers (6/1994).

Retinues], performed by junior high school students, practiced their village's *gosaki barai* dance. Another group of men in their 30s and 40s spent evenings from March until May rehearsing their acrobatic display of parcel handling. Dressed as porters in their lord's convoy, they performed delightful feats of balance. Other groups like these may practice their town's local interpretation of the summertime Obon dance. The rustic noh theater *(dengaku)* carried out every February in the mountain village of Ikeda, 18 km east of Takefu, has been recognized nationally as an Important Cultural Property *(kokushite jūyō mukei bunkazai)*, as has been the performance of Echizen-style *manzai*, a comic banter accompanied by tambour.

A third sort of local history event is an exhibition such as the one held in Takefu on June 18th and 19th, 1994, in conjunction with the local industry's annual furniture fair. The centerpiece of the exhibition was the shop signs. These were arranged chronologically from right to left, with dates ranging from about 1860 to 1950. Shown in this way, Mr. Yokota Toshihiro, one of the organizers, said it was possible to see the cheapening of wood stock used and the transformation from generic signs (e.g. cotton, starch) to store owner names (e.g. Miyamoto's furniture) to brand names (e.g. Mitsubishi light bulbs). The change from vertical or right to left lettering to the Western-style, left to right lettering of shop signs was also evident. The use of word play and iconic signs (e.g. anvil for blacksmith) was also displayed. Finally, a few

modern-day wooden signboard samples inspired by the older forms were exhibited.

According to one of the volunteers at the reception desk, of the various elements of the exhibit the signboards themselves seemed to generate the most interest. The exhibition was considered to be a success, with the organizers planning to publish a catalogue of the signs gathered for the display. Events like the *kanban* exhibition, the performance of traditional dance and music, and the *jidai gyōretsu* parades do not last long, but they punctuate the year and add to the panorama of local history found in Fukui prefecture.

History Other Than Local

Although this chapter creates the panorama of local history forms, its sites and events, it would be remiss to ignore references to The National Story or even to some kind of world story. For Japanese society is pervaded by national mass media. Classrooms echo this even distribution of information, as teachers lead students across the country through familiar stories. The standard procedure of judging people by their examination results and school credentials *(gaku reki)* has led to goal-oriented uniformity in education, including in history classrooms. In addition to the hunger for Tokyo-centric, up to date information, and the effects of mass education, Japanese society is characterized by its well developed consumer ethic: people expect to have just about anything for a price, and any product or service should come in several grades appropriate to occasion and a person's status. In this regard, product presentation (packaging, marketing) is all-important. These three things, the Tokyo-oriented alter ego many Japanese have, a uniform and common educational content and manner, and the expectation of being able to buy something just a little different that the rest have combined to influence the streamlined national history that advertisers cite and that consumers respond to.

Souvenirs for tourists from near or far are a rich place to see this generic, disembodied past, not rooted to a specific time or particular place. For example, Japanese confectionery *(wagashi)* draws extensively on this generic world of Japanese tradition, somewhere in the past. To locals the meaning of a local reference may be pride. To others the associations are perhaps limited to national heritage. In the case of one cookie, shaped like an upside-down roof tile and "branded" with a scene from a legend of Takefu, locals might attach the citation to specific names and places they know, while visitors or far away recipients of these souvenirs might be content in the knowledge that it is metonymic of the district it comes from. Or they might be happy to be able to identify the clothing of the figure as a Heian period reference, for example. The case of the Sabae-city museum curator's *meishi* [business card] is similar. Mr. Takeuchi's *meishi* features a stylized bust of Chikamatsu, "Japan's Shakespeare," who was born and raised in what today is within the boundaries of municipal Sabae.

Boxes of local delicacies available by mail order companies and also offered from the postal service similarly may contain a cover page lettered in old type-font or by hand telling about the product, with or without a reference to locale and by implication the associated qualities imparted. But often it is the evocation of a general folk past that is the message. Costume, activity depicted, or font type may give clues to a generic era: pre-war, turn of the century, early modern, medieval, ancient, or even stone age.

In the case of traditional crafts or products, part of the appeal to shoppers is the association of some unspecified earlier age. But in the case of artwork, or performances based on the student emulating master forms (e.g. training in noh, kabuki, calligraphy, tea ceremony, poetry making, martial arts, temple or shrine building, cookery), timelessness comes not from evocation of a generic past, but rather from the inability to distinguish past and present forms clearly. Either way, as an advertisement for the generic "Edo *mae"* sushi [old time sushi of the Edo period], or in the classic lines of a fine kimono, reference is being made to a history different to local history. Instead of specific places or events, people from all over Japan are supposed to be able to respond to the historical flavor of the reference, owing to their shared educational experience, the frequent recourse to it in the mass media, and a consumer's urge to find something which sets a thing apart from the rest. What is true of products is also true of the mass entertainment found on television and on some tours.

Historical period film and television dramas *[jidai geki],* either serialized or feature length, are a staple of popular entertainment in Japan (cf. Buruma 1984, for England see Samuel 1994:14). Long running serials like *Mito Kōmon,* about a member of the ruling feudal clan who travels around the realm incognito to set matters right, may go to great lengths to approximate historical details. But the episodes are important for their narrative appeal rather than for their connection to a specific place or known event. Similarly, the swashbuckling period adventure films, the *chambara* genre, may take a well-known historical event as their point of departure, but then go on to evoke the past more generically. On the other hand, the serialized meal time drama (15 minutes at breakfast, repeated at 12:45–1:00) and the annual Sunday night prime time "Great River Drama" *(taiga DORAMA)* both stick more closely to the historical record: more "docu-drama" than period drama.

All of these types of entertainment are nationally broadcast and draw upon parts of the national story. As such these programs perform the function of reiterating the primacy of a shared identity that is national rather than regional or local. The evocation of a generic past, or one stripped of local meanings and streamlined for the national story, is the bedrock for "imagined communities" which Benedict Anderson (1983) discussed in his book by the same name (cf. Nora). This use of selectively national history complements the institutions and technologies through which the nation-state of Japan is daily reincarnated.

A look at the titles of previous *taiga DORAMAs* reveals interest concentrated in certain periods. In 1995 the 34th annual *taiga* was produced. "Yoshimune, the Eighth Shōgun" was set in the 17th and 18th centuries of the early modern period, which alone account for half of the dramas (NHK 1994:12–15). The distribution is as follows: 3 set within living memory (since the 1920s), 5 since the end of the Edo era (1867), 17 in the Edo period (3 mid-19th century, 6 mid to late 17th century, 8 early to mid-17th century as the feudal universe was forming), 4 set in the "warring states" period (16th century), 3 medieval, and 4 in the classical Heian period (8th-12th centuries).

One explanation for this general preoccupation with the Tokugawa era came from an acquaintance in his late 30s who teaches at a *juku* cram school in Sabae-city. Mr. Nishio thought there were three reasons: first, the competing visions and factional national politics of the 1990s mirrors that earlier time of intrigue and infighting. Also, much of Japanese social life and culture derives from this period, so the clues to making complicated decisions and the drama of interpersonal relations found in these productions is compelling for modern viewers. Finally, the early modern period, especially in its beginning around 1600 is fascinating for the larger than life personalities (e.g. Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu).

History also comes in the form of television quiz shows, oriented again far and way to the national rather than a regional or biographical past. Other genres are the high and middlebrow documentaries, courses from the University of the Air *[hōsō daigaku],* as well as learned investigations repackaged for easy viewing in the form of detective work by rival researchers. One series of programs included visits to original sites, handling of actual artifacts and dramatized reenactments (e.g. "Rival History," *RAIBARU nihonshi*, broadcast 5 May 1994 from 10 P.M. to 10:50 P.M. on NHK General Broadcast Station, *sōgō TEREBI).* The effect of televised, nationally minded history-as-entertainment like these upon local history activities and the interests of local residents in their own past is difficult to estimate. But the pervasiveness and popularity of history produced for broadcast cannot be overlooked. It forms part of the local history panorama.

In addition to history for television viewers, and history for souvenir shoppers or discerning consumers, there is history for travelers. Every year group tours, school outings and family trips converge on the dozen or so history theme parks around the country; or on recognized historical towns and designated preservation zones. Unlike the generic history used to sell products and the nationally oriented history of television, at some of the history theme parks great efforts have been made to draw on local history features. Yet, aside from the local people who visit the facilities, in the brief stops permitted by tour bus schedules it is likely that the park makes only a surface historic impression on people. That is, despite the immediately local ties of the park, many visitors perhaps may identify the period portrayed as representative of the time in general, rather than of the surrounding terrain in particular.

Geographically, the dozen or so theme parks are found on three of the four main islands, but mainly within easy reach of major urban centers (Sapporo, Tokyo, Nagoya, Kanazawa, Fukuoka, and Nagasaki). Grouped by historical era, half of them concern the Tokugawa period: Noboribetsu Date *jidai mura* (Hokkaidō), Nikkō *edō mura* (Tokyo area), Edo-Tokyo Museum (Tokyo), *eiga mura* (Kyoto), *edō mura* (Kanazawa), Fukuoka *rekishi no machi* (Kyūshū), *ORANDA mura* (Kyūshū). Three others focus on the *edō-meiji* transition of pre to post feudal periods: *shitamachi fūzoku shiryōkan*(Tokyo), national folkhouse & craft park (Tokyo area), and the local variations like Fukui-city's *osagoe minka en.* Five others take as their subject the years since the Meiji period at the end of the 19th century: *meiji mura* (Nagoya), *RITTORU WĀRUDO* ("little world," folk traditions of the world; Nagoya), *sekitan no rekishi mura, kaitaku no mura,* and *MAIN RANDO* ("mine land," all three in the north of the country).

Located at the southwest edge of Fukuoka-city, about 12 km from the city center, *Fukuoka Rekishi no Machi* [history town] is one example of a history theme park. According to a man working in the administrative office, it opened in 1986 aimed principally at busloads of elementary school students from the northern half of the island of Kyushu, which surrounds Fukuoka-city. General admission in 1994 for high school aged people and above is ¥800. The park is located near the top of a mountain that overlooks the city. It flanks a housing subdivision whose developer had sought out a feature like this park to lend distinction to the community. The park's makers held the vision of making Tokugawa era history palpable: to make previous forms of life come alive. To do so about 20 buildings were built or moved to the site. Over the years this pedagogical aim of the park has receded under the demands of keeping the place solvent. Accordingly the directors have adopted things that please visitors most; for example, adding a petting farm for small children.

As a local tourist attraction, the park is well designed. There are the usual theme park experiences like eating certain snack foods, buying souvenirs, posing for photographs in front of pleasing backgrounds, and collecting rubber stampings from each site in the pamphlet spaces provided. Visitors walk through examples of samurai, merchant and farmer houses. Near the entrance is a farmhouse parlor tableau of circa 1920, filled with artifacts of the time. One of the new additions is a "ninja obstacle course," allowing young people to dress up as the Edo period agents of stealth and try to find their way through a house of secret passages and other hurdles. Plans are under way to make a "temple zone" to attract New Year's Day pilgrims hoping to see each year's first day break over the metropolis off to the east. But the park's pride is its dozen salaried craftsmen and women who demonstrate and narrate as they make traditional products for sale: *miso* (savory bean paste), soy sauce, hand-loomed fabric, metal smithing, wooden toys, and so on. Only the maker of bamboo umbrellas has quit working on

site. Two of the most popular stops are the glass blower and, among young women visitors in particular, the place for dyeing T-shirts of one's own design.

Turning from places intended to be historical illustrations to ones that are old by their nature, a different picture of the past emerges. Isolated objects and buildings had for many years already been designated *bunkazai* [important cultural properties] by the government nationally (since the 1870s) and locally (largely after 1970). But the combination of public and private initiatives finally led to entire towns or neighborhoods being designated historical. In particular, preservation movements such as those in Nara and Kamakura in the mid-1960s (Kihara 1980) as well as the launch of the Japanese National Trust *[nihon NASHONARU TORASUTO*, 1968], inspired by the 100 year old English National Trust, helped to speed the national government's preservation efforts. A recent development of the late 1980s has been for the Japanese government's Agency for Cultural Affairs *[bunkachō]* to designate related groups of buildings as historical, despite an overall area having lost its original character. This is the *rekishi mure* category, with 34 groupings designated as of 1992. Geographically the nationally listed official historical locations are scattered across the islands, with a slight concentration the midsection of the main island of Honshu. The same is true of National Trust administered properties, with four of their 22 properties in the west of Kyushu island, and 12 in the central area of Honshu. Chronologically, the National Trust holdings concern the Edo and Meiji periods (middle 18th to early 20th centuries).

In some cases, people traveling to the historical towns or to the history theme parks may be able to go there by way of "Historical Routes" *(rekishi no kaidō);* not to be confused either with "History Roads" *(rekishi kaidō)* or "Heritage Streets" *(rekishi no michi).* The first is a project begun by the national government's Bureau of Cultural Affairs in 1979. The goal is to trace the great pre-modern trunk ways leading to Tokyo, as well as the branch routes; and, where the old road overlaps the present-day road, as it does the length of central Takefu, to identify it as such. In particular, structures and historical landscape features should be marked with explanation signs. It is hoped this will encourage domestic travel as well as heighten historical awareness among local residents. These recommendations were issued as advice to the prefectural governments. About 2/3 of them have complied and published the preliminary results of their meticulous surveys. But Fukui-ken is not among them. According to the Cultural Affairs section of the Fukui government, the survey should be budgeted for 1996 or 1997.

Both the History Roads and the Heritage Streets are simple tourism promotions. The former is a project initiated by the national government in its advisory role, and conducted by Fukui-ken's Department of Construction, Road-works section *(dōrō kensetsu ka).* The result has been to suggest driving courses and scenic detours to the motoring public that will take them to a series of culturally or scenically significant sites in the prefecture. Similarly, the Heritage Streets Project guides the public on preferred routes that connect

important facilities and sites. But in this case it is the city of Fukui that has carried out this project, erecting the telltale blue street signs, and promoting the routes to the public in press releases and the city's promotional literature.

Unlike the souvenirs, the television programs, and the theme parks that came from the consumer-oriented, information rich, highly (uniformly) educated people of Japan, the designated history towns and the proposed Historical Routes are still rooted in their local settings. Even if viewed as mere illustration or archetype of an era, these sites still belong to the surrounding conditions that created them. That is, no matter how many buses per day roll along the ancient road of a town or valley, the historical things found along the route will remain as testaments to another age and the particular events and people that caused the townscape or the landscape to be changed. In between these intensely local stories and the generic national ones are the historical representations found in local museums, discussed in the previous chapter.

Summing Up the Local History Panorama

The first half of this chapter has described the variety of places that refer to the local past. These range from museums, where visitors know the past through objects, to places like historical homes or ruins, where people can experience the site and its setting; and from verbal media like lectures and books to kinesthetic forms like folksong and dance performances. In Takefu the web of historical meanings extends from the physical townscape and pattern of streets on the one hand, to the imagined past of regularly televised period dramas *(jidai geki)* on the other. In summary then, how can the local history panorama be characterized?

From a comparative point of view, many forms of local history are similar in Japan and in the United States. For example, references to the past found on markers and in the streetscape itself, the use of walking tours, the historical elements found in advertisement and souvenirs, and historical dramas on television can be found in both societies. Certain things, however, seem to be more developed in Japan: e.g. community lectures, classes, publications and newsletters, and local television productions about area history. To a limited extent, the system of designating *bunkazai* [important cultural properties] has inspired people in the States similarly to nominate their own folk performers and crafts people in order to recognize and thus to publicly encourage the continuation of folk knowledge at the national level.

Other things in the Japanese local history panorama have no counterpart in the United States. The historical preservation troupes of villagers who carry on the almost proprietary forms of song or dance specific to their locale is one example. The traditional crafts for sale, not only as decorative gifts, but meant also for use (lacquerware, Japanese paper, local pottery, furniture, cutlery) is another example. The types of things to do on tours in Japan also differ to those in the U.S.: visit historical *onsen* [hot springs area], do an overnight

zazen [meditation] experience, try to make Japanese paper or *soba* [rustic noodles made of buckwheat], perform a pilgrimage to a shrine or temple (often considered efficacious for particular complaints), or tour the natural wonders of an area. All of these activities can combine elements of local history in such a way as to insinuate past into present, giving the people on tour the effect possibly of directly and physically partaking of the local past.

Looking at Takefu's local history panorama to see how widespread any one part of the local history might be, three boundaries can be distinguished. While not strictly local itself, the most commonly known part of the past is likely to be the nationally televised past of drama and documentary, quiz show and news reports of archeological or historical findings. At this level history is an object of entertainment, not noticeably connected to individual viewers. By contrast, the history found in local museums and sites (objects of study), as well as in events and directly in the town and landscape (possibly participatory or likely to be taken for granted) is a sphere of local history known to a smaller number of people. Finally, the history to be found in lectures, study groups and history tours is likely known only to a small subset of people living in Takefu, many of whom who developed their interest in the past as they have approached their 50s and 60s.

For most people in the area, awareness of the local past begins in childhood with one's household cycle of death anniversaries for ancestors (Buddhist practice), and through area events connected to history. With age, knowledge of history may extend to old buildings and notable occurrences in one's neighborhood and the surrounding environment. At the same time, exposure to the nationally broadcast and souvenir (generic) forms of history increases, as well. Then, as the load of assignments in Japanese schools grows heavier, it is only the few hours a teacher might spend each year on local history topics with the students that counterbalances the stream of national history found on television and in advertisements. In the end, after having finished school, it seems the outcome for most Japanese is the same. Television and commercial references to the past become the main source of historical knowledge and awareness until retirement, when age and a lifetime of social experience may spark interest in local history. One result of this division of historical awareness is that history as uninterrupted chronology of The Japanese Nation is put forward as the story of (generic) Everybody. The historical sites and events found in the local area are mere illustrations and subordinate facts that are suitable for recreational visits and tourist promotional efforts by businesses or government. In other words, History with a capital 'H' is about the national state of Japan. All else seems to be stuff used to economic advantage or personal pleasure today.

Overall then, the local history panorama around Takefu is hardly simple. Local interest is not moribund, but neither is local history an interest of the majority. Instead, in this ancient town surrounded by numerous historical sites and events, interest in the local past is reserved. Against this background, the organizations in Takefu concerned with local history will be introduced next.

TAKEFU'S LOCAL HISTORY GROUPS

The many people and organizations concerned with local history in and around Takefu can be divided into three sorts: offices of the municipal government whose business includes the administration of local history, townspeople joining city initiated groups, and finally, citizens who themselves have formed groups dealing with matters of local history. Other groups are not long lasting or they touch on history incidentally, rather than to discuss and explore the past actively. The organizations excluded from this chapter therefore include classes like those of the city's Life Long Education Center, gatherings of hobbyists with a historical connection such as reciters of traditional poetry, calligraphers, or singers of *utai* (the choruses of noh theater). Also omitted are the associations of traditional craft industries like the town's cutlers, roof tile makers, confectioners, cabinetmakers, and so on. While the descriptions that follow are not exhaustive, they will illustrate the variety of organizations in Takefu concerned with local history.

Municipal Offices Concerned With Takefu's Heritage

Within the municipal government of Takefu there are at least ten departments, sections, committees and offices whose work involves the administration of the town's historical features and attractions. The most directly involved with history is the *kyōiku iinkai* (Board of Education) with divisions devoted to school, sports, and cultural affairs as well as the administration of the lifelong learning center and town library. The cultural affairs division is further broken down into historical preservation and cultural promotion sides, with the later responsible for administering the new *Furusato Gallery* and the city's *Bunka Sentâ* (culture center). The 11-member *bunka shinkō ka* (Advancement of The Arts and Heritage section) spend about half of their energies on historical study, both textual and archeological, its interpretation and preservation. The other half goes to promote culture by organizing and sponsoring drama, art and lectures. In 1994 this staff included two archeologists, one historian and one art historian.

The Board of Education is responsible for many activities. For example, the archeologists are kept busy with their one or two scheduled excavations each year. Much of the labor is carried out by a handful of interested volunteers, who are retired citizens for the most part. Much of their remaining time is spent analyzing the data and preparing reports. Construction work uncovers archeological data and when contractors stop and take the trouble to contact the Board of Education the archeologists have to drop everything in the interest of time to carry out salvage excavation.

Another example of the Board of Education's history-related activity is the publication of local history primers for elementary school students, one for third graders, and the other for sixth graders. The 12 volume official history of Takefu begun in the early 1970s is now nearing completion, with the recent

publication of a volume on temple and shrine history, and the planned publication of extracts from the c.1590 land assessments register instituted nationally by the central government of the day. Another project is to replace an illustrated guide to the town's Important Cultural Properties (Takefu-shi *bunkazai chōsa iinkai*, 1979) with an updated and easier to read publication. In addition to its publications, the editorial committee for the city's history also advises members of the public, local or far away, on matters of history. They also collect whatever documents and information people might offer up. Finally, the Board of Education gives support to performances and public lectures, such as the fall symposia organized by the Takefu Renaissance citizens group.

After the Board of Education, the offices next most concerned with Takefu's history are the sections of planning *(kikaku chosei ka)*, The Takefu Tourism and Product Promotion Section *(sangyō keizai bu, kankō bussan ka)*, and the Bureau of Downtown Redevelopment *(shigaichi saikaihatsu shitsu)*. The planning section conducts surveys and makes recommendations based on national policies as well as local circumstances. The central government's advisory statement that towns should take stock of what is particular to a locale so as to emphasize individual character of a place has taken the form of development loans. Under this current community building policy of *machi zukuri*, national loans are made available for towns to identify their own historical features and special products and then to develop these resources, for example, to attract tourists; or to expand production capacity of traditional craft manufactures, or to convert historical buildings for present day uses. The desired effect of these initiatives is to create community identity or "pride of place," as Mr. Abe Takao, a professor at Hokuriku University in Kanazawa, put it. Although Takefu has not applied for one of these loans, its planning section has stopped to reconsider the "scrap and build" norm of the past decades and is now eager, as Mr. Kondō Tsutomu of the planning section indicated, to make use of the town's historical character. This is not only a matter of consumer attraction, but is also an *AMENITI* (amenity) issue.

The Bureau of Downtown Redevelopment bases its activities on a vision of the town's past contained in a pamphlet called "Shape Up My Town takefu: *rekishi to KURAFTO no machi zukuri* kōsō" (original in English, subtitle in Japanese, "Renewing Our Takefu: Scheme for development based on the town's craft tradition and rich history"). The conceptual plan calls for the historic streetscape in a few neighborhoods to be restored, as well as for the coordination of designers' visions with investors' wishes in a downtown shopping center near Takefu train station. In principle, shoppers will be attracted to the town's streets and spend money in businesses at the town center, which have lately lost ground to shopping centers with wide parking areas on the outskirts of Takefu.

The Takefu Tourism and Product Promotion Office has many responsibilities. One is to promote local manufactures like the hand-forged cutlery that has been associated with the town since the 13th century. Another

is to try to attract visitors to sites in Takefu such as the Murasaki Shikibu Park or, in cooperation with the Echizen no Sato office, to the Manyō (ancient poetry form) park east of the town center. A third is to attract visitors to the annual *kiku ningyō* exhibition of scenes in flowers (chrysanthemum effigies). The month long *kiku ningyō* has been held every October since the first one in 1952. In those hungry post-war years the exhibition of chrysanthemum flowers, hearty against the cold and emblem of the Imperial family, but also a favorite at funeral displays, was thought to be a low investment but visually impressive event for the town which was capable of drawing many visitors and making the town well-known. At that time flowers were arranged in scenes from Japanese folktales and historical events of the nation. But since 1969, the *kiku ningyō* has followed the nationally televised period serial, the *Taiga DORAMA* [Great River Drama], theme each year. The Tourism and Promotion Office, through the brochures it creates, its news releases, and its visits to the travel agencies in the metropolitan areas, builds upon the image of Takefu as a town of history.

While the Takefu Tourism and Product Promotion Office publicizes the historical features of the town to outsiders, the editorial office of *kōhō Takefu*, located across from the mayor's suite in city hall, includes facets of the town's past in its announcements to the residents of the Takefu municipal area. In this fortnightly, eight to ten page circular sometimes appear articles on events, personages, or vestiges of the past. The quarterly digest of city council proceedings, *shigikai dayori*, also has carried matters of historical interest. Citizen's questions about the administration of the city's cultural and historical heritage are answered by councilors on one page of this circular. In 1994 such matters arose in deliberations about the disposition of the historic Kōkaidō Hall (see chapter four) and the 187 year old Ōi-ke historical house. In addition to the several city offices that deal with local history, there are also the individual initiatives of the mayor and the interests of city councilors elected by the people of Takefu.

Beginning in 1989 with his election and continuing throughout his terms of office, matters of historical interest have necessarily been a part of the reigning mayor's administration. Above and beyond his ceremonial duties, the mayor is meant to oversee the welfare of Takefu today, with a view to the future as well. Several townspeople have contrasted the literary and arts oriented former mayor Kasahara with the one who followed, who they characterize by his record of deeds and words as being interested in economic development at any cost; using big public works projects and other structural investment as the first measure of progress. This echoes the "build and grow" slogan of the postwar years, which takes as its theme the triumph of engineering and construction rather than the less easily quantified improvements to the social and cultural infrastructure. In particular, the mayor and officials he appointed to assist him did not welcome the proposals to obtain and maintain the oldest merchant residence left in town, the Ōi-ke.

The Board of Education recommended the historical house be saved. Also, in September 1989, the Tachiaoi Kai historical association submitted an appeal to the mayor for the Ōi-ke's preservation. In May 1990 the mayor expressed interest in the idea and that same month an advisor from the national Bureau of Cultural Affairs *(bunka chō)* gave his blessing to the project. But the negotiations between the owners and the city administration were befuddled by the Byzantine maneuvers of the mayor's office. And the Board of Education, frustrated by the lack of good faith, suspended its efforts. Finally, councilors voted for a documentary preservation of the grounds and building to be published. Despite thoughtful letters to the editor, columnists' essays, and the recommendation of a representative of the *bunka chō,* the mayor's office would not reconsider its position. Nonetheless community support continued. In 1992 the Tachiaoi Kai was joined by the *Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru Kai* (forerunner to today's Takefu Renaissance). Then in August 1994, a group of the Ōi-ke's neighbors began to convene each month to discuss possible futures for the property.

The same city administration has taken an equally unyielding position in its handling of another matter of historical interest, the refurbishment of the Kōkaidō Hall. After feeling the public pressure to save the hall from becoming a downtown parking lot, the city councilors budgeted for its conversion into a combined exhibition hall of the city's history, a tourist information center, and a promotional display of the city's industries, traditional and modern. Then at the summer general assembly of the city council in June 1994, the mayor suddenly announced that the hall would instead be used to display a collection of oil paintings, sketches and biographical paraphernalia of the prewar painter from Osaka, Saeki Yūzō. The city was being offered the entire lot on what seemed to be unusually favorable terms. Perhaps the mayor regarded an instant art collection as an ornament to the city of today which was to be preferred to a monument to its yesterday. The councilors were surprised by this seemingly forgone decision taken by the mayor, and were not pleased by the mayor's less than forthcoming report of his negotiations.

The councilors occupy the opposite half of the assembly chamber, facing the mayor and his assistants, the chairman, and the array of department heads. Because the councilors act on behalf of their constituents, as well as in their capacity as party members and as committee members on various projects, they sometimes have different interests to the mayor. In the case of the Kōkaidō Hall, the mayor seemed ready to force through his vision of the art gallery at any cost. And the councilors had only incomplete information. So at the September and December 1994 assemblies they probed the mayor with many questions without success. This case will be examined in detail in chapter four, but as an illustration of how elected officials of the government deal with the town's past, this example indicates the less than cooperative relationship between the mayor and councilors.

Citizen Based Groups and Takefu's History

Moving from civil servants to citizens, there are two sorts of organizations concerned with local history. The city government arranges one. The other is entirely made by citizens. Of the first type at least four organizations in Takefu have been started by the city. The first one is called the *rōbō no bunkazai saguru kai* [Group for the Search of Important Cultural Property Off the Beaten Track]. Their goal was to document and identify potential *bunkazai* [designated cultural treasures], which might have been overlooked earlier by the city's Board of Education.

The second city-sponsored organization concerned with local history is the *Takefu bunka shi* [Master of Takefu History]. This two-year program was launched in April 1993, with eight men, two of them not Takefu natives. The aim is to transmit the knowledge and experience of the town's ageing historians and thus to relieve them of duties, while also ensuring a group of experts for another generation. According to Mr. Fujibashi (Life Long Learning Center Promotional Officer) and Mr. Saitō Yukio (Board of Education, Adult Education Advisor) the citizen *bunka shi* is unique to Takefu, at least within Fukui prefecture. It was not based on any model outside the prefecture, either. Neither did they know of any example in the country like it.

On the other hand, a third city-initiated program established in 1992, the *Takefu Kataribe* group of citizen volunteer guides, did have precedent elsewhere. For example, Hida-Takayama, sister city to Takefu since 1982, in neighboring Nagano prefecture has citizen tour guides. Visitors to Ono, in the mountainous interior of Fukui prefecture, are guided by members of that town's local historical association, the *fumi no kai*, which was first pressed willingly into service in 1985. Obama too, at the south end of Fukui prefecture, has had a system of guides since the early 1990s. But whereas Obama's group emerged on its own, the Takefu Kataribe had to be initiated by the town's Life Long Learning Center. Mr. Saitō thought one reason for the city having to take the lead was a generally conservative atmosphere in town. According to this way of thinking it is up to the government officials to act on behalf of the public, rather than for any private group or person to take the initiative.

The fourth example of a city sponsored, citizen based body is a consultative body. A more cynical interpretation would call it a co-optive form. Convened by the city with selected representatives from various sectors of the society (housewives union, business association, teacher's group, manufacturers circle, etc), the 20 citizens serve as a test group to the city's ideas rather than as a partner in civic decision-making. So while opinions of people outside the civil service may possibly be incorporated into the final event or program, at no time are the individuals full partners in shaping outcomes.

History-Related Groups Made and Led by Townspeople

The third sort of organization concerned with Takefu's local history are the groups of citizens who come together with shared interests, free of government affiliation. In general it is the energy and vision of one or two central figures that is responsible for creating and driving these groups (qv. Witteveen 1997:116–132). These groups range from people interested in old objects and their craftsmanship (the *MokuSeiSha),* to ones concerned with performance arts of a historical nature (the traditional banter of Echizen Manzai, folk song study circles, or Yanshiki dancers, Genji AKADEMI). Other groups like the *Tachiaoi Kai* or the local high school's historical society focus on the story of the area's past overall. Then finally there are citizen led groups concerned about the historical landscape as one part of the wider environment (Study group of Amenity of Environment of the Tannan area, or the *Ki To Kenchiku Kai*—Society for Trees and Buildings). And in a general sense the multiplicity of reunions people in Japan may attend and also the support organizations in metropolitan centers for people from the same hinterland region, the *kenmin kai,* are a kind of history-related group as well.

TAKEFU'S LOCAL HISTORY GROUPS IN SUMMARY

All together the number of Takefu people belonging to the groups concerned with the local past described here may total as many as 350, with the citizens movement Takefu Renaissance making it 425. By adding in people who are members of city-initiated groups, the total may be 450. The staff of relevant municipal bureaus makes the total approximately 500. This estimate does not include the one-night-a-year Obon and yanshiki dancers, Life Long Education Center classes on history, people who find pleasure in singing popular and folk songs on karaoke, history teachers, readers and writers of local history, or religious officials either Buddhist or Shinto who in ceremony (especially Shinto priests) or by function (Buddhist priests: death anniversaries) are connected to the local past. By the crudest estimate, this subtotal might reach 200. But when the people who collect, sell, or make traditional products; the hobbyists who practice traditional forms; and the people who participate in neighborhood Shinto festivals are added in, virtually the entire municipal area is touched by local history. Thus while interest is found in several degrees and varies from isolated and personal incidents to the whole of the local past, certainly the people of Takefu are interested in their past. Residues of the past persist in many forms. Stories and references made in sayings or citations of the past made by following an old social convention help to keep the past connected to the present. And judging from the range of historical places and events in the Takefu area, citizens have a wide choice of activities to take part in; from museum displays to neighborhood festivals, from photo retrospectives on exhibit to demonstrations of traditional crafts such as paper-making.

Overall the only organization concerned with Takefu's history in its entirety is the Board of Education. To a lesser extent the candidates in the *Takefu Bunka Shi* program, the volunteer Kataribe, and the students the Takefu High School history society also have wide ranging knowledge of the local history. Groups like Tachiaoi Kai and their "Junior" division pitched for school children, and the Genji Academy are interested in specific periods, while members of S.A.E.T. (Study group of Amenity of Environment of the Tannan area), *Ki to Kenchiku Kai*, the Ōi-ke discussion group and the *Moku Sei Sha* are interested in specific sites or artifacts of Takefu's past.

Among the groups interested in the town's history as story (a collective representation), the purposes of the past differ. For the City Hall's offices that cite the town's history, the goal is to supply an obligatory paraphrase of the history, highlighting features of distinction: old regional capital, host to 11th century novelist Murasaki Shikibu, cutlery industry, site of the Kokubun-ji medieval network of temples, peaceful feudal reign, leading manufacturer of Fukui prefecture. For the Board of Education the goal is to investigate and disseminate authoritative information about the past in several forms to members of the public of all walks of life. For Takefu High School's history society the past is a body of knowledge to explore and reflect upon. For Tachiaoi Kai the (early modern) past is something to research, assemble archives of and like the Board of Education, it is something to clarify as a final, authoritative truth. It is also, as the President, Mr. Saitō Kazō, said at the end of the field trip in September 1994, the basis for developing personal and community pride in the town *(machi zukuri).* Finally, another use of Takefu's past is to mark the anniversaries that are to be commemorated (e.g. 350 years since the first lord's death and 400 years since his arrival), thus glorifying this leader, but also by extension the town that has been passed down from those times, too.

In some of the groups above, however, the past is of more than symbolic consequence or a source for shared identity. A hint of the idea that history is an important part of today's quality of life and indeed an element of today's economic well-being is evident in several of the groups' activities. Examples include the modest activism of Tachiaoi Kai in petitioning for the preservation of the Ōi-ke historical house, the efforts of the Ōi-ke neighbors discussion group, or the more philosophically directed concern in S.A.E.T. for the natural and historical amenities of the surrounding area to be recognized and carefully maintained. The city's Downtown Economic Redevelopment Office only half-heartedly recognizes the treasure of Takefu's townscape. But to see this philosophy fully embraced, the case of Takefu Renaissance will be presented in great detail.

TAKEFU RENAISSANCE AND ITS WORK

The launch of "Takefu RUNESANS" 30 townspeople with proposals for stimulating culture

On the evening of the 25th, a group of citizens interested in using cultural matters to build community spirit gathered in the Townspeople's Hall to hold the general opening of "Takefu RUNESANS." They will be sharing opinions about how to preserve the [historical house] Ōi-ke (Wakatake neighborhood) and how to utilize the former Kōkaidō Hall, as well as making proposals of their ideas to the city government and townspeople.

—Fukui Newspaper, 27 February 1993

Takefu Runesans (TR, or Takefu Renaissance) is a remarkable group of townspeople; a phenomenon shaped both by its time and more generally by the values and conventions found in Japanese culture. People from a variety of backgrounds and expertise have come together to form a citizen movement *(shimin undo)* to supplement the city government's administration of its *bunka*, or arts and heritage. But unlike most single-issue interest groups, which disband once their goal is met, TR is engaged in several projects and has no fixed end point. One of the members, when asked about the group's tenacity in pursuing the town museum project, referred back to the time the group was formed. He said the members he knew had gone into it with the idea that it would be *RAIFU WĀKU* [life work, a labor of love]. Furthermore, the goals of enriching and revitalizing community life, culturally as well as economically and politically, are not motivated by acute distress (cf. pollution victims seeking redress, anti-nuclear protesters who live near the power generators). Elusive matters such as quality of life and protecting the town's amenities are the desired results of the organization's efforts to toughen building codes, to stimulate public discussion of matters of town government, and to encourage citizens to participate according to their abilities in the government of Takefu. In its membership, organization, vision and projects, TR is something new to Japanese life. This chapter will describe each of these aspects, thus going beyond the local history panorama and the sketch of Takefu groups concerned with the town's past given above. In addition, this chapter will introduce some of the individuals in TR who are deeply attached to the town and to its future.

Based on a deep love of this city, this organization has been established to discuss, draw up and carry out projects to make Takefu a better place to live in. Questions to consider are: what should be preserved of the old town, what should be built, and what kind of life should we try to develop.

—"Purpose," Takefu Renaissance charter, February 1993

Takefu *Runesans* held its first official meeting in February 1993. It superseded the more narrowly focused fine arts group, *Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru Kai* (TBKK, Association for the Discussion of Culture in Takefu). Within a year, membership grew from 52 to 75, of which about 18 persons

form the most active core. The three creators of TBKK and subsequently TR held in common a desire to expand the educational possibilities for townspeople of all ages, and in so doing, to foster local pride and *aichaku* (sense of attachment) to the town, its heritage and its prospects. Two of the three had the same experience of leaving the town as young adults and returning to make their home there around 1983.

> Ms. Miki used the simile of climbing a mountain and shedding baggage unwanted at the moment without thinking ahead to describe the way cityscape and community life *(RAIFU SUTAIRU)* have been sacrificed blindly to economic efficiency. Once you've reached the peak, shivering in nothing but your shorts, the things you rashly dispensed with suddenly seem important. Far better said Ms. Miki to go a bit slower, but more fully equipped into the future: although it is troublesome, do go ahead and carry along your sketch book and easel, your musical instruments and other amenities.
>
> —field notes, 15 April 1994

In the 10 or more years the TR founders were away, the townscape had changed drastically. Streets were widened in places, here and there downtown businesses closed. The fashion for covering store fronts with roll-up steel doors or grilles had spread along the commercial streets, as did the conversion from the old-style enameled or gilt wooden shopsigns to illuminated plastic ones and brightly colored awnings. The most drastic change from the early 70s to the early 80s was the buildings razed for parking lots, or destroyed in favor of the convenience and newness of simple steel and concrete buildings. Without the city maintaining a clear policy or procedure for reviewing the historical worth of buildings, owners have been uninformed and unhindered in their decisions to raze or fundamentally to alter their properties. The occasional person who would like to preserve some of the original character does not receive guidance or any form of substantive support that might encourage him or her to do so.

The group's membership is diverse, as the following cross-listing of member interests and affiliations shows: *echizen manzai* (a traditional celebratory chant-like song), *echizen uchi hamono* (hand crafted cutlery of the area), the town's furniture guild, *yanshiki* (the local folk dance), the town's early modern era and its daimyō (the Honda family), commercial revitalization of the old shopping core, historical artists/artisans of the town and *bunkazai* ("treasures") in the town, the role of temples in the town's life, and historical preservation of buildings. Members' backgrounds also vary: architect, commercial and home builder, doctor, dentist, homemaker, computer software designer, cabinet makers, chamber of commerce staff, civil servant, cook, teacher, professor (out of town), national museum curator (out of town), local history writer and columnist, shop keepers.

Membership is open to all, with the participation of certain residents actively solicited. To date many civic leaders have joined, but there are also

some notable exceptions, mainly those knowledgeable people who are also working for the city government. What the members of TR have in common is their age (40–70), their gender (90% or more men), their origins (almost entirely Takefu born and raised, or at least now living or working there). Most importantly, they seem unanimous in their stated aims: to accomplish the projects described below, to foster a wider appreciation of the townscape among residents, and to encourage a new, cooperative and open relationship between the town's administrators and its citizens, one in which the diverse expertise of residents is solicited. In particular, TR hopes to make the review of construction proposals more systematic, so as to incorporate an assessment of a building's historical value, and to encourage new buildings to be congruent with the existing streetscape.

Ms. Miki Yoshimi, Educator and Community Organizer

Like a herald for a re-born Japanese society, Miki Yoshimi was born the year that WWII ended and peace returned. Although she has lived in places across the islands, she now lives in the house in which she grew up, raising a single high school aged daughter and heir. In time perhaps her daughter, too, will marry a man willing to take on the name of Miki so that the family line may continue. Like her father, herself and her husband, Ms. Miki entered the family by adoption. The second of four children, her birth father let his childless sister two doors down raise the child as her own. So even though she was never far from her birth siblings, and remains in their vicinity now, Ms. Miki nevertheless received the undivided attention of her new parents. This no doubt contributed to the single-minded efforts at school she made.

Excelling in her classes from her earliest years, Ms. Miki also played well as a volleyball team member, in addition to frequently taking leadership roles in classroom activities. Her love of learning has continued to this day. Several years after graduating from Nara Women's College in art history, she supported her husband at Medical School by tutoring students. And between 1983 and 1991 she organized after school enrichment classes in art and literature for young people in Takefu. Later she taught Japanese to Takefu's resident Chinese vocational students for a year. Like friends and relatives in the world of art, publishing and academia, she keeps herself informed of educational developments, especially when it contains an applied or activist aspect.

The helpfulness she exhibited during her school days was the seed of what has grown with experience into one of the dominant themes in *Takefu Renaissance.* As a college student she contributed to Braille and audio conversions of Japanese literature. She also got a taste of activism when she joined others in a movement in the 1960s to have a bridge built between an island leper colony in the Inland Sea and Tokushima prefecture on the much larger island of Shikoku. Later, as more and more cases of industrial pollution began to surface, she and her husband vowed to help victims in the capacity

Figure 7: Miki Yoskimi, one of Takefu Renaissance's leaders, working at her table at home (2/1995).

of lawyers. But they realized that medical care would bring the most important relief to injured people, so they spent six years in Hokkaidō while her husband completed his medical training. Eventually he came to specialize in psychiatry and stress management, beginning with a job in the old city of Kanazawa, not far from Fukui prefecture. In 1983 he was able to gain a seat at the medical college of Fukui University, where he remained until the early 1990s when he entered private practice.

After living in the ancient cities of Nara, Kyoto, and Kanazawa, the national center of Tokyo and wide open frontier spaces of Hokkaidō, the Mikis at last moved back to the equally ancient town of Takefu. Aside from quality of life, one reason to return was to be able to care for their aging parents in the succeeding years. Ms. Miki apprenticed herself to her father and for the nine years before he died helped him to cast the *yaki in* wood brands used by the town's builders of traditional furniture. In addition to combining her interests in art history and traditional Japanese craftsmanship, the work resonated with the city's centuries of traditional metal and wood working industries, as well as the work of her older (birth) brother, a master joiner living in the same neighborhood. Today in the former workspace adjoining her house, along with various collectible ceramic pieces, she keeps a stock of the old iron *yaki in.*

Like the classic lines of her sensible, simple clothing and short pageboy hairstyle, the Miki's house reflects her tastes. The rooms are decorated with

Japanese and Western images and objects in uncluttered Japanese simplicity. Among the tableware in the kitchen are the old lacquered dishes and assorted pieces of local earthenware gathered over the years by herself and family before her. The kitchen and adjoining study with its big wooden table and case of reference books often serves as the meeting place for the TR and other small planning sessions where ideas are born around cups of tea, coffee or sake. The same refined sense that comes across in her speaking, dress and home is evident on her *meishi* [name card]. Unlike the crisp, sometimes illustrated cards commonly used these days, hers is in the style of an old woodblock, imprinted on the uneven edges of *washi* [Japanese (handmade) paper]. Above all it is Ms. Miki's personal reformist vision, colored by the craftsperson's high standards and affinity with fellow townspeople, and her optimism that contributes to the shape and character of *Takefu Renaissance.* From the time that TBKK formed, her impact on peers and the town as a whole has grown steadily, fulfilling her desire to improve the civic and cultural life of the people of Takefu now and moreover in the next generations.

The Goals of Takefu Renaissance

As the charter for TR declares, it is to function as a para-governmental organ, a meeting place for officials and interested members of the public. With civil society so restricted in Japanese life (see chapter five), the creation of a forum intermediate to official authorities and to personal affairs is especially significant. One measure of the group's success is the fact that TR has already brought together the talents of many different residents to work cooperatively toward common goals. Regardless of the realization of project goals, both TR's Miki and members of the Board of Education consider the public exchange of ideas at the regular meetings to be a worthwhile result. This was reaffirmed at the 1994 fall symposium with its theme of Takefu's own *machi shū* [civic leaders of the medieval years, and beyond]. The discussion served as a mirror, suggesting that those at the symposium were the inheritors of this noble spirit; an inheritance that could be both a source of pride and a spur to participating in Takefu's rebirth.

Apart from the group's specific projects, they would like to see the town's government reformed. If only the relationship between the government and the governed could be reconceived, then the civil servants would be able to continue doing what they do best and residents with expert knowledge or articulate opinions could supplement the discussions of decision makers. Under such a scheme, everybody would benefit from the wider knowledge base and citizen involvement in civic affairs. The reality is of course different. This is why TR would like there to be formal occasions in which citizen input is solicited. At the time of the main fieldwork in the middle 1990s, the government presented a stone face to the public so that even determined and well-meaning people, like those in TR, meet with silent, blank faces, and frustrating ambiguity. There is little incentive for public participation in civic

affairs. Nor are there institutions that link townspeople to politicians, except in the case of purely individual interests.

In the opinion of Ms. Miki, a prime example of the city leaders' inadequate cultivation of town spirit was a big event like the 1994 riverside jamboree they have sponsored annually. The intent may have been to attract visitors, to please residents and therefore to put the current government in a good light. But by using the money to cater a big party, the chance to sponsor smaller, neighborhood-based events was forgone. She emphasized that municipally sponsored events should be meant first for local people. Should outsiders find appeal too, that is fine. But it should not be the goal.

Instead of spending money and organizational energies on what amounts to the city government's promotion of itself, Ms. Miki would prefer the effort go into smaller scale projects, such as the exhibit of heirlooms kept by households which otherwise would not be known to the public. Similarly, an exhibition of the works of crafts workers in one of the traditional industries of the town (e.g. cutlery) would be worthwhile, she suggested. And in fact, TR is trying to arrange for these sorts of display. Half of the profits from sales of the 1994 calendar *(furusato Takefu nadokoro egoyomi)*, illustrated with watercolors of the famous places and performances in Takefu's heritage, were earmarked for a fund to be used for neighborhood based initiatives. TR lent its organizational expertise and gave some funding to a street fair held in April 1994 in the old neighborhood of the Ōi-ke historical house. They helped organize and research a display of the works of the local 18th century painter Serikawa Kodōsai kept by people, shrines and temples in the area.

Other components of the TR vision of local history were expressed by Professor Abe Takao of Hokuriku University in Kanazawa who is an expert on *jichi* (regional development and politics), a consultant to TR and friend of Ms. Miki Yoshimi. After the first hour of the April 1994 monthly meeting of TR, Pr. Abe was given the floor. He reflected on the past year's progress of TR and then turned to what efforts should be made next. He referred to ideas learned from the English National Trust and its local variation, the civic trust. The *shibikku torasto* (civic trust) consists of interested members of the public as well as government united with the goal of preserving and expanding the amenities of a town. In particular, there should be a clear idea of what is fitting in a place or *tei ichi* (settled or blending in with its location) as he put it. He illustrated the idea by referring to the analogy of what is traditionally thought of as the ideal husband-wife relationship, in which the wife is constantly in attendance of the man, but like the air that surrounds, is only conspicuous by her absence. So, too, the physical fabric of Takefu is vital, but noticed usually only once it is removed. The physical fabric of a town not only lends character, but also shapes the character of its residents, he suggested. Specifically, he said *Takefu ningen ga kawattemo kawaranai*. That is, as one generation gives way to the next, something essentially Takefu-ite lives on.

He also said the people living in a place owed it more than taxes. The local and national government slogan "*machi zukuri"* [cultivating community] rings hollow if it is legislated from above. Instead, each person should participate *(katsuyaku)* in the town's public life. They also should be given the opportunity to fulfill a more physical obligation to participate in civic life, to pay their debt in "sweat" *(ase o kakeru)* by lending a hand in various activities in their town's life. Finally, it was not enough merely to preserve historical traces in Takefu, he said. History needs to be incorporated into people's lives, not as a residual category but as something useful and of value to them. He was underlining the importance of seizing upon Takefu's oldest remaining merchant house, the Õi-ke, as the physical embodiment of the town's beauty *[utsukushisa]* and its inherent atmosphere of comfort *[ochitsukusa],* as well as its commercial role historically. The town's legacies must, he thought, be used somehow.

Later Pr. Abe invoked the theme of "internationalization" *(kokusaika)* as a further reason to regulate changes in one's town more carefully. For many neighboring Asian countries, the trajectory of rapid economic development in Japanese society makes it a role model. Representatives from foreign countries will come to Japan and ask how the new material wealth is used. Not to take care of Japan's own culture would perhaps be met by disbelief; but worse, could influence leaders of other countries to be lax about taking care of their own heritage.

For Japanese government leaders and citizens carelessly to continue the "scrap and build" destruction of historic traces simply cannot be allowed, Pr. Abe said. *Kokusaika* not only brings with it the obligation to behave as a responsible role model, but also the imperative to "know thyself." That is, in order for Japanese people and their leaders to embrace international differences maturely, it would not do to dispense with local forms in favor of foreign ways. Rather, participation in international arenas must be founded on the certain knowledge and love of one's own ways. Thus, perhaps less convincing to TR members than to an academic like Pr. Abe, the economic fact of Japan's place in Asia and in the world is another reason he gave to treasure and use local traces of the past. Members of TR share his philosophy of the fundamental role in *machi zukuri* of citizen involvement in controlling the built landscape. Ms. Miki composed their vision, in the formative stages, as declared in the 1993 charter. But an equally vigorous advocate of Takefu's renaissance is Mr. Inoue Kazuharu.

Mr. Inoue Kazuharu, Computer Software Consultant

The house is approached through a narrow alleyway, about 15 meters off the downtown street near city center. Mr. Inoue, his mother, his spouse and four school age children are the sixth generation to live in Takefu. Before then the Inoue line lived outside of the city. But still today they are connected to a temple 3–4 km east of the city itself, where he currently serves as an officer,

responsible in part for the temple's upkeep. A thin, taller than average man in his middle 40s, Mr. Inoue has worked out of his home office for the past 12–13 years.

He follows his father's example in many respects. His father honored his filial duty after college, eschewed the rewards of metropolitan life and applied himself to the betterment of Takefu and care of his mother. After teaching in the high school, he entered city politics, eventually rising to third in line after the mayor. By quiet example rather than persuasion, he taught his son Kazuharu to love the town and to take part in its development. In the same way, the younger Inoue decided to move back to Takefu to raise his family and to become involved in efforts to expand cultural offerings in the town. He, like his father, quit the built-up urban areas and comforts of an attractive income, instead choosing the environment and society of the place he grew up in.

For several years he wrote feasibility studies for development projects funded by the Japanese government. This brought him to Indonesia, Malaysia and The Philippines among other places. These experiences abroad and the familiarity of government work came on top of previous periods outside of Japan. He spent six months as a budget world traveler during his college days, and a few years studying agricultural development and irrigation science in the U.S.A. So it is easy to see how he can feel detached from Takefu, even as he is deeply attached to it. The knowledge and contacts gained in the metropolis allowed him to return to Takefu and to start his own business in the early 1980s.

At the back of the house and adjoining the old-style earthen, white washed storehouse *(kura)* he has made his office. Like the foreign sounding name of his company, *SIENSU KURAFTO* [Science Craft], his business, thoughts and locutions are interspersed with non-native Japanese words and ideas. Telecommuting is not yet a reality, since at least every other month he travels up to Tokyo on business, either connected to newly developed American software he's polished with more complete Japanese equivalents to the on-screen prompts, or connected to his number crunching for agricultural projects. As if this work were not enough, he is involved in numerous organizations in the city.

Mr. Inoue belongs to the merchants' circle *[shōtengai]*, CCI (Chamber of Commerce and Industry), YEG (Young Entrepreneurs Group), ward fire brigade and neighborhood association *(chonai kai)*, and the Tachiaoi Kai local history association. But by far the most fateful affiliation has been with the Takefu International Musical Festival organizing committee, begun in 1988. Messrs. Inoue, Takagi, and T.Saitō together hatched the idea, eventually attracting more than 70 members of the public to share in the work of preparing for the weeklong series of performances, large and small, formal and impromptu. From this intersection of people came several of the active members of *Takefu Renaissance*, including its guiding (e.g. Ms. Miki) and driving leaders (e.g. Mr. Yamamoto). While Mr. Inoue never mentioned

performing music himself, his love of music and appreciation of the good it would bring the town are evidenced in the festival's realization each year.

Music provides him with inspiration, too. When asked for a personal influence (other than within his own family), he cites a piccolo maker in Hokkaidō who produces perhaps only three fine hand made instruments each year. Besides the craftsman's ethic he embodies, this Mr. Yamada is also active in civil society, campaigning ardently against golf-resorts laid over the native landscape, for example. In their activism, work ethic, and promotions of music events in their respective towns, these two men are indeed alike.

If there is one thing that enervates Mr. Inoue, it is the short-term vision of the city's administrative and elected leaders. Although he does not feel able to stand alone against the ingrained conventions of municipal politics and therefore will not consider running for office, he does feel in a position to draw attention to current deficiencies. His merchant heritage teaches that 30% of proceeds should be set aside for future generations as a matter of course. And his thorough and ongoing biographic study of the 19th century native son, Matsui Kōsetsu, who promoted the town's educational, industrial, and cultural facilities, has taught him the worth of having vision.

In both breadth and distance of vision, the governing leaders of Takefu fail miserably in Mr. Inoue's eyes, not always as individuals but moreover systemically, in the whole of the political institution. In these views he is not alone, for in the discussions of TR the interests and procedures of politics regularly overlap with those of culture. One of the interesting ideas that came out of their discussions is the usefulness of historical analogies. In other words, the history of Takefu, both its physical traces and its more intangible legacies can and should provide a rich source of future economic developments.

The biography of Matsui Kōsetsu has been a personal inspiration for Mr. Inoue, both as a personage and as a figure connected to the KKD (Kōkaidō Hall), as well as to a recently demolished literary salon/garden, the Shōyōen. Likewise, the 1994 cultural symposium which TR sponsored, *Takefu's Machi Shū*, took the town's artisanal and other non-samurai civic leaders as its subject, a medieval precedent for the view of government being in partnership with townspeople which TR espouses. The theme for the next symposium was set to focus on the town's craftspeople; again, something not unrelated to the business of TR.

The lanky Mr. Inoue, often with the appearance of being short of sleep, is always well informed. In his reedy voice he is quick to join discussions during the TR meetings. In comparison to the sometimes silent, or at least cautious comments by others, his logic filled replies may give others the impression of being wordy and excitable. But judging from the group's newsletter he edits, what he has to say is sharp and to the point, possibly something other than Japanese in its very directness. References to the Internet, the recent Japanese Nobel laureate's iconoclastic remarks, and to the association he makes between TR's new logo (fig. 8, below) and Alvin Toffler's *The Third Wave*

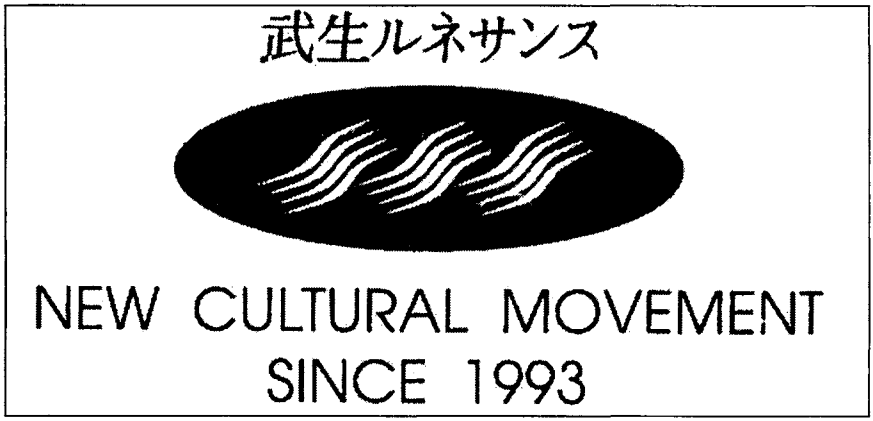

Figure 8: Logo for Takefu Renaissance, pace Alvin Toffler's book, *The Third Wave,* adopted 10/1994.

all indicate the wide ranging interests Mr. Inoue brings to TR and to his mission of bettering the town he loves so well.

Mr. Yamamoto Yūichirō, Dentist

The energetic stride of the dentist Mr. Yamamoto gives an indication of his results-oriented zeal. Although he is not taller than average, the sharp glances coming from the steel-rimmed glasses on his close-cropped head give the impression that he is a man of affairs, able to speak rapidly, with explosive manner or smooth polish as the occasion demands. Along with his walk, glance and rhetorical powers, Yamamoto *sensei'*s well-fed presence radiates success and ambitiousness. Although his 1951 birth makes him younger than the other TR leaders, in matters of negotiation and problem solving his experience and abilities make him the engine of the organization. Of course his many involvements mean less time spent with his family, which like those of Ms. Miki and Mr. Inoue includes school age children. In addition to his instrumental role in TR he is active in his neighborhood organization *(chonai kai),* the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization), Takefu medical/dental roundtable, the CCI (Chamber of Commerce and Industry), the Rotary Club, and most centrally, the recently established International Music Festival held each June in Takefu since 1989. In fact this last is what originally brought Mr. Yamamoto, Mr. Inoue and Ms. Miki together, resulting in the *Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru Kai* (TBKK).

The discussion and preparations for the city's international musical festival made acquaintances of these three, but it was their concern about the KKD, which made them friends. When opinions were divided in the music committee about the connection of the KKD to the cultural festivities being planned, these three helped to create the TBKK which later grew into TR. Mr.

Yamamoto, the most ready to roll up his sleeves and enter the fray of face to face municipal politics spoke admiringly of his two seniors, pointing out with envy their strategic and far seeing minds in contrast to the rush of his own day to day living. It is true that Mr. Inoue's philosophical and technological knack and Ms. Miki's classiness and her ability to organize events are indispensable to his own powers. But it is in combination, rather than individually, that they form the effective core they do of TR.

Like the other two, Mr. Yamamoto's experience early on shaped his current civic mindedness. In his case it was an older cousin who worked long and hard to get through medical school and complete the long hours of an internship that so impressed Mr. Yamamoto to look beyond the welfare of his own family and to consider that of a wider community. Whatever else influenced him, he is above all else pragmatic. A case in point is his reasoning about the programming for the Music Festival. After all, he said, even as you try to surpass the events of last year, you are setting a harder task for the year following! Likewise, during the question time, which followed my address to the March 1995 monthly meeting of TR, he was the one most outspoken about the disappointing version of democracy practiced by the city government. He was the one to ask me to contrast my own experiences growing up of democratic ways with the ones I observed in Takefu. Like a moth drawn to a fire, Mr. Yamamoto invariably would sharpen the edge of a discussion by tracing out the implications of the ideas into actions. Perhaps most unabashed of TR's members, he recognizes the intimate link between culture and politics. The image of a spark plug would not be an unfair summary of Mr. Yamamoto's zeal and his organizational value to TR.

THE STRUCTURE OF TAKEFU RENAISSANCE

According to the TR charter, the group will have one chief representative *(daihyō,* contact person), one chief and several other officers *(kanji,* or leaders in effect), and two highly respected persons as overseers *(kanji,* homonym to above). All of the positions are two-year non-renewable terms. Six committees were set up at the outset: 1) the project to preserve the former Kōkaidō community hall and an old merchant house, the Ōi-ke, 2) exhibitions and lectures, 3) printing of picture postcards, illustrated calendar, and (reprinting) an old map of the town, 4) publications, 5) making an historical walking tour pamphlet for use by visitors to the city's annual month-long chrysanthemum festival, 6) investigation of the "civic trust" concept (cf. the English model) and its practices. The most active of these committees is that of publications. They have produced and distributed texts of past speakers, and the advertising and guide booklets for the September symposium. They have reprinted an 1887 *shōkō binran,* the equivalent of the business telephone directory of the day, illustrating the region's shops and important facilities. Another project has been to gather information and publish something about properties recently or soon to be demolished.

Figure 9: Takefu Renaissance monthly meeting at the Takefu Cultural Hall, Ueki Masaharu, (left) presiding.

At its monthly meetings *Takefu Runesans* usually brings together 15–30 people to listen to reports by the various committees, to talk about current and future projects, and to decide how to solve problems that may have arisen. There is normally a set topic for the two-hour gathering. Examples have included planning the September symposium, learning about some facet of the local past well-known to one of the members, or the observations and counsel of Mr. Abe Takao, a professor of local government and civic vitality who is friends with one of the TR leaders. Three or four times the meeting has taken place at or followed up with a party at the country house of one of the group's leaders. This socializing cements the solidarity of the active membership.

As for the economic facts of maintaining TR, the ¥2000 annual dues provides money for mailing announcements and for renting meeting space every month, normally in the town's *Bunka Sentâ* (Culture Hall). Proceeds from sales of the 1994 and 1995 calendars have been quite large, since labor and material were donated or provided at cost. The ¥3,600,000 ($36,000) profits will begin a trust to support neighborhood festivals, exhibitions and publications. The goal is to encourage residents to build a shared neighborhood identity through various projects, for which TR can provide some funding, but more importantly, the organizational experience to help residents to carry out their designs.

THE WORKING ATMOSPHERE IN TAKEFU RENAISSANCE

Under its original mission of kindling interest among townspeople in Takefu's heritage and in the arts, members share a sense of purpose. The case of the Kōkaidō (KKD) and the Ōi-ke only added an element of urgency. And in the summer of 1994, the first hints of irregularities in the handling of the KKD conversion into town museum (at first) and later exhibition hall for Saeki Yūzō's oil paintings spurred TR into the role of watchdog for the city government's due process. In this way the theme of reform was added to the group's sense of purpose and urgency. None of these characteristics are unusual, but what makes the working of TR remarkable is a feeling of serendipity; of all members contributing their best to the group and then, fortuitously, events falling into place. One reason for this like-mindedness is of course the self-selection of members. In some cases likely candidates were identified from members' personal networks and specially invited to come and use their skills.

Pr. Abe attributed the rapid development of TR to the good relationships between its members. An auspicious fate binds members to common purpose, or as he put it, *en ga ii*. The example of rescuing archival material of one of Takefu's famous sons, Matsui Kōsetsu (1818–1885) is illustrative. On the day the estate was being demolished, Mr. Yokota, a cabinetmaker and member of TR, went over to salvage the 100 year-old sliding wood and paper doors so that he could study the technique of their construction. When he arrived, he recognized that the paper that had been used to patch the *shōji* lattice had been written on by a fine calligrapher's hand. A closer look revealed it to be letters of Kōsetsu. Mr. Yokota contacted Mr. Inoue, a keen student of Kōsetsu, and despite having been too late to block the destruction of the old grounds, soon they had recovered all of this archival material.

To say the coalescence of TR members had been fateful is not to say there is always consensus; for opinions are often divided between those who want to press on without delay, and those who hesitate lest they cause any criticism of the town government. Also, the depth of individual members' relationship with their fellows varies. Some are friends from long ago, while other friendships are newly made. But in their avowed collective goals, the most active 15–20 members do seem a well matched group of personalities and skills: people with vision as well as ones used to the hurly burly of practical affairs and problem solving.

The highly motivated and cooperative spirit of TR activities is reminiscent of the mixture of familiarity and respect found in the Japanese high school "homerooms" or after school groups working together on a project. This exuberance was evident in the November 1994 meeting when concern mounted about the government's slippery slide into the KKD as site for Saeki Yūzō's oil paintings. The inconsistencies of the official statements when held up against information gathered from independent sources were charted on a chalkboard in sequence. Heated discussion ensued as to how best to proceed

with these facts. Surprisingly, when conversation is most active, one of the very opinionated leaders will have little or nothing to contribute. Asked later, Ms. Miki said that she says enough in the preparation committee meetings beforehand and thus will speak at the full meetings held each month only when an important point has been left out or the conversation should drift too far.

This was the case after the December meeting. Having run overtime as usual, the meeting adjourned and several members gathered downstairs in the lobby of the *Bunka Sentâ* to discuss an anonymous fax that had been leaked to TR which incriminated the mayor in his choice of bidder for a giant city contract. The opinions were exchanged in a brainstorming flurry. In what is perhaps characteristic of the Japanese language, thoughts were either truncated mid-sentence, or other people would leap into the phrase to finish it for the speaker. The rest of the listeners would nod or make conversational sounds of agreement *(aizuchi).* As the pace increased in the discussion about what to do with the information, it was Ms. Miki who calmed things by quietly wondering out loud if TR did not already have more than enough work to do; that a separate group might better be formed for such investigations.

This sympatíque and egalitarian air in TR has not come about as a natural course, however. Japanese from the earliest age are taught to perceive the social world hierarchically, whether status difference is sibling order of birth, height, test rankings, school year and school reputation, or size and prestigiousness of one's employer. With the exception of fellow classmates and work colleagues inducted in the same hiring cycle, there are precious few social relations where people can freely speak as equals. The familiar set of hierarchical distinctions would normally carry over into organizations like TR, as well. Certainly the supervisory and figurehead (parental) role is given to highly respected and senior members of TR. But to discourage the usual display of social status beyond this, the group's roster does not record age or occupation, although many of the members know this much about their friends already. Entries give nothing more than name, address, telephone and/or facsimile number, acting role in TR if any, and a note of the person's special interest or any affiliation which overlaps with TR (e.g. *Yanshiki* dance preservation society, or *Tachiaoi Kai* historical society).

The egalitarian spirit cultivated among active members is illustrated in the way all join in to set up the chairs and tables for monthly meetings and then clear things away again at the end. Another example came during the May 1994 monthly meeting, which was held outdoors on the city's Mt. Murakuni, a 239-meter feature near the town center. After one member led the 15 people along a trail to a clearing halfway up the side of the peak, Mr. Saitō Kazō, one of the town's historians and TR supervisor, then pointed out the (historical) features visible below. Back at the starting point the spouse of another member had prepared a cauldron of oden, a favorite usually cold weather dish of chunked vegetables, meat, fish and shellfish slow cooked in a savory broth. All classes of people enjoy the dish itself, but it is a food popularly associated

Figure 10: Takefu Renaissance spring outing—this time reviving the picnic custom on Mt. Murakuni (5/1994).

the "ordinary people," *shomin ryōri.* After the meal and the business part of the meeting, both young and old pitched in to clear up the picnic site.

Along with their egalitarian spirit and love of the old town, *tebentō* [supply your own lunch] is another principle, which underlies the activities of TR. According to Mr. Inoue, this term comes closest as a functional translation to 'volunteer' as he came to understand it in the time he spent living in the U.S. The two key elements of the word are that participation is not motivated by the expectation of material gain, and that in fact volunteers often pay their own way, in effect giving their time as well as money. The Japanese loan word *boranchiya* (volunteer) usually includes the unpaid element, but is often performed as an obligation. For example, during scheduled seasonal neighborhood litter pick ups, each household may be supposed to supply an able-bodied member as a *boranchiya.*

What Mr. Inoue would like to see spread beyond TR and among the people of Takefu is this notion of *tebentō,* which in spirit is closer to the altruism of "volunteer" (English) than is *"boranchiya"* (Japanese). In practice, however, relations between citizens (seeker) and government (benevolent power) tend to have about them an expectation of being rewarded. He explained it this way: debts of obligation *(on)* are acquired and discharged as one acts within a web of personal connections and role definitions *(on o kashikari).* For example, if a cat is found dead in front of a person's house, Mr. Inoue thought

the person would sooner call City Hall, than to dispose of it themselves. In this respect, government is regarded as a public cow, which some canny citizens are able to milk better than others. For example if a group is formed with the purpose of edification, they might well expect to receive a city subsidy. Neighborhood associations *(chonai kai)* too tend to find ways to expend their allocated budgets with the expectation of getting as much as they can each year.

Personal networks of friends, family and acquaintances are an important resource to any organization, and no less so to TR, where members bring to the group a variety of life experiences. The production of the high quality 1994 and 1995 calendars was done through members and their connections, thus reducing costs to the bare minimum and the donated materials, volunteered time and expertise allowed the bulk of proceeds to build up TR's coffers. Relationships with members of the mass media are valued and are carefully tended as well, to the mutual benefit of both TR and the reporters investigation matters, such as the KKD affair or the progress of the Ōi-ke historical house. Then there are contacts with former classmates and people linked by shared profession. Information on matters relating to Saeki Yūzō and his paintings have come first in trickles and then streams from sources across the islands in the form of fax, letter, and telephone calls to TR leaders.

In addition to the working spirit of TR that includes sense of mission, reform, and collegial exuberance, there is also a trace of the skilled craft worker's character. That is, among at least six of the 18 most active members there is this blend of expert knowledge and artistry, pride and determination. Not only is craft work emblematic of Takefu now and in the past, but also the image of a capable person expressing him or herself through plain and honest work seems to appeal to several TR members; certainly to those half dozen who once were or are now engaged in this type of occupation.

HOW RENAISSANCE IS PERCEIVED

Over the course of the fieldwork year and in measure with their increasing involvement with the KKD-as-gallery affair, TR's public profile grew larger. In March 1994, about one year after its creation, one of the city's archeology curators working at the Board of Education described the group with a mixture of interest and worry. Interest because it was a good example of townspeople organizing themselves to build pride and knowledge of the town. Worry because, glossing his words, "some think they are too pushy" [and thus liable to cause controversy on the way to their laudable goals].

One of the curators at the Fukui prefectural museum, who knew of TR quoted an acquaintance on Takefu's Education Board who thought the group *urusai* (shrill, a nuisance); preferring instead they would realize their goals in a quiet, more reserved manner. Yet despite the wall of silence the principals met with, the members of TR who were charged with going to city hall and

making inquiries after the status of the KKD reported often being warmly received by sympathetically minded civil servants.

In a separate instance, during an interview with myself in October 1994, Mr. Kondō Tsutomu in the Planning Office spoke well of TR and similarly citizen-led initiatives aiming to participate in the town's planning, especially from the earliest, conceptual stages *[tane kara]*. In particular, he supported efforts of citizen groups which made use of the town's *kosei* (individual character) to help build community identity.

Among the majority of townspeople TR is viewed with a mixture of support and possibly annoyance. When doubts were raised about the authenticity of the Saeki Yūzō paintings and the good faith of the paintings' owner, not to mention doubts about the irregular government procedures, then TR came to the attention of most Takefu people. The symposia they had organized, the work of their publications committee, and other public events TR had cosponsored were then overshadowed by their part in monitoring the course of the KKD's handling.

At the end of December, after the group held a public meeting to discuss the KKD course of events and irregularities, TR's Inoue said he had received numerous telephone calls and faxes of support for the efforts of TR. The messages came not only from local sources, where many townspeople had until then cared or known little about the matter, but since the event was carried by NHK television and the print media, response came from all over the country. At the end of the public meeting it was decided that the several causes for complaint be submitted to the city government independently by representatives of various groups, instead of making TR the single source of government criticism.

Finally, even as the media exposed the story of the KKD to a national audience and city hall officials increased their pressure on TR's leaders, Mr. Inoue reported in March 1995 that the ordinary workers at city hall seemed to regard TR activities in a positive light. So from these few reactions, the good deeds of TR and the care taken by its spokespersons in making things clear to the press have resulted in a favorable public perception of the group. But TR may have been perceived as quirky. That is because, as members explained, most fellow townspeople fail to see why a group should take interest in civic affairs or in the town's heritage and the arts, which according to conventional thinking are the preserve of individual owners or City Hall and its Board of Education.

TAKEFU RENAISSANCE IN OPERATION

A look at the list of TR monthly meeting themes and record of other events for 1994 provides an overview to the organization's vitality and extensive activities. Below is a translation of the list, which was distributed at the November meeting (my translation).

Regular Monthly Meetings in Overview

(month)	(topic)
1	Thinking about this year's exhibition of old shopsigns
2	Learning about the *kōwakamai* (dance)
3	Telling about Takefu's past, S.Kōdō on his *The Golden Age*
4	Pr. Abe; also, talk about new trends in *machi zukuri*
5	Picnic outing, a revival of the Aoyama spring hiking custom in town
6	A look at nearby Ōmushi hamlet's 18th century painter Serikawa Kodōsai
7	The *hokke* temples and our town's premodern community leaders
8	Plans for the symposium, *machi shū* (14th-16th century community leaders)
9	Second annual civic symposium, this year's theme: *machi shū*
10	Final preparations for making the fund-raising 1995 calendar
11	Looking over the year's activities
12	Reading the old maps of Takefu

Additional Activities

1/1	1994 calendar illustration originals on display (main shrine)
2/	Mayor meets with leaders of *Takefu Runesans*
3/17	Public reading by S.Kōdō of his *The Golden Age* (main shrine)
3/19	Propose the Tachibana branch of Fukui Bank be preserved
6/18	Cosponsor "Shop Signs" exhibition, reprint "Fukui-ken Commercial Directory" (1887, illustrated)
7/8	Submit petitions to the mayor and the city council head for the establishment of a citizen/administrator joint committee to study "cultural institutions," or to discuss "uses for the KKD" (no reply)
8/5	Convene "preservation of the Ōi-ke" (at neighborhood temple)
9/3	"Ōi-ke and the building of community" televised
9/14	Print glossy booklet to accompany the evening's symposium
9/22	Cosponsor the exhibition, "Serikawa's paintings"
11/15	"The craftsman's almanac of Echizen province" (1995 calendar)

From this list it is easy to see the practical efforts TR has made to draw on the town's past in order to stimulate study and pride in Takefu. Guest speakers, local authors and accomplished artists are presented, along with publications that focus on town landmarks. Rounding out the year is recourse to the mass media and initiatives at the city hall. What is less evident from this summary, however, is the manner in which TR conducts its projects.

The methods and intent of TR were given in December 1994, during the interview of TR's leaders by NHK television reporters, just before the KKD public meeting was begun. While the camera crew got set up in the meeting chamber, across the hall in a carpeted office of the city's Culture Center, TR's president (Mr. Ueki), guarantor of integrity (Mr. Uesaka), committee officer

(Ms. Miki), a member of the publications committee (Mr. Matsui), and myself sat down to give some background to the evening's meeting and to the TR group itself. Mr. Ueki Masaharu, as spokesman, chose his words carefully, emphasizing that what was about the happen was not an inquisition. TR means no harm, but that the meeting was meant to be an honest search for options, ideas and opinions from the general public. By way of preface he sketched the group's beginnings and current projects, at which time he produced samples of the publication committee's efforts: a (watercolor) illustrated calendar for the coming year, and a copy of the republication of the 1887 commercial atlas of the prefecture (shōkō binran).

Gift giving is a well developed custom in Japanese social life, and not only do people like to receive gifts, but may sometimes expect to do so (cf. Befu 1974, 1989). The things TR has to offer are beautiful indeed and as such play a part in the life of the organization. For example, invited speakers at the monthly meetings are normally presented with a piece of cutlery, emblematic of the town's centuries old industrial tradition.

Like organizations generally in Japan, TR suffers from insularity. TR has little contact with peer organizations in other towns. What lateral connection there may be is sporadic and at the level of individuals rather than organizations. This is partly offset by the great appetite people generally have for learning the latest developments elsewhere available through bookstores, the mass media, and visits to the metropolitan centers. And thanks to their steady contact with the well traveled consultant on regional development, Pr. Abe, the group knows about citizen initiatives elsewhere, including in the signature canalway restoration in Ōmi-hachiman (cf. Kawabata 1991) and the Kurokabe glassworks arcade in Nagahama, both near Lake Biwa in nextdoor Shiga prefecture. From these and other instances, one strategy Pr. Abe advised was to try to sweep in as many townspeople as possible into TR's projects, especially civil servants.

Telecommunication technology certainly has affected the way TR operates. In particular the household facsimile machine has strengthened links within TR as well as extending the reach of its information gathering activities. Newspaper articles, photographs, queries and other documents are conveyed swiftly, surely and securely. Leaders share information such as the clipping from a regional newspaper in northeast Japan that pointed to suspicious facts when the owner of the Saeki Yūzō oil paintings earlier had tried to peddle them there. Dialogues can be carried out asynchronously; that is, when one member seeks clarification or proposes a course of action to another, no matter what the hour, the other can respond by phone, fax, or in person when circumstances permit. Without a doubt, the ability to transmit images and text instantly across town or to the other side of Japan, singly or to a distribution list, has been helpful in TR's development. It has become indispensable to the way it operates.

The telephone too is a standard part of the organization's life, often prefatory to a fax message or inquiry. Following a newspaper story, an

announcement, or an event like the fall symposium, the job of responding to the public can be a busy one indeed. It is only by virtue of being able to flexibly schedule his computer software related work and data processing that the acting *mado guchi* [point of contact], Mr. Inoue, has been able to take the callers. Then there are the calls and remarks from City Hall to pressure TR, including repeated requests for a list of members' names. Fortunately, the clear goals, fine reputations, and the fact that many of the leaders do not depend directly on the city for their business has protected the group from any possible intimation that their livelihoods might somehow be jeopardized as a consequence of their TR involvement.

In addition to the formal operations of the group, there is the informal side of it, too. As was described earlier, the members of TR are a congenial bunch. This spirit has been cultivated by gatherings that have been mainly recreational. One was an overnight trip to an art exhibition in Tokyo. Another group trip was planned for 1995. In the previous year the monthly meeting for May was held outdoors and included a short hike and meal of oden hot pot. Most monthly meetings end around 10:00 P.M. Afterwards members sometimes adjourn to a late night restaurant or to a downtown sushi shop to carry on discussions. And a few times each year, Mr. and Ms. Miki have hosted parties at a holiday house they keep about 10 km outside of town. Participants will contribute to the costs and often bring some type of drink or food as well. Being one of the few women active in TR, Ms. Miki often ends up taking upon herself the role of hostess.

Although each of the projects TR is involved in requires a different set of skills and methods, in their study of the KKD handling, the most important tool has been simply to monitor proceedings. At the winter city council meeting in December about 10 people showed up in the normally empty visitors' gallery to watch the exchange between councilors and the mayor, his assistants and the department heads. This show of force was the launching of a new organization, the *Takefu Mihari Ban* ["sentinel corps" or citizen watchdogs]. Members of TR did help to institute this group, but the two organizations were independent of each other. This was a distinction Ms. Miki was careful to draw in interviews afterwards in the *kisha KURABU* (press club) three floors below the council chamber. Citizen watchdog groups exist in metropolitan areas already, and in Kanagawa prefecture, dominated by the port city of Yokohama, they have gone as far as formally creating an ombudsman position. As the name suggests, the goal of *Mihari Ban* is to monitor council proceedings like a volunteer ethics and oversight committee and, going a step further than journalists whose job considerations restrain them, to stimulate public response on matters of consequence to citizens. Education about local government is a further aim of such groups.

Simply observing Takefu's government in action seems to have more real effect than submitting formal petitions or visiting City Hall offices in person. At least this is what Mr. Uesaka Norio remarked after sitting in on a committee meeting a few days before the winter general assembly of the

Takefu City Council. Certain councilors seemed nervous by the fact that TR was closely following the developments of the KKD affair. Mr. Uesaka said that councilors receive a salary and thus should devote their full time to studying up on the diverse issues that come before them. And yet the ones less diligent than the others were bound to feel inadequately prepared, Mr. Uesaka thought. Thus, getting members of the public to observe their town government, he thought, could only be for the best.

Mr. Uesaka Norio, Teacher and Writer

"When sunny hoe, when rainy read" *(seikō udoku)* is the figure of speech Uesaka *sensei* [respected mentor; teacher] used to describe his approach to life. He combines an interest in the quotidian and local with the professionalism of a craftsman *(shokunin*, as he says). Born as Saitō Norio in 1931, not far from where he lives now with his wife, daughter and adopted son-in-law, Uesaka sensei himself married into the Uesaka family, taking the surname of his wife in 1958. Although he was transferred to several area schools according to the prefectural Board of Education's rota, for most of his career he taught Japanese language and literature nearby at the academic tracked Takefu High School. It was here, in the midst of his duties as supervisor of the school newspaper and among colleagues who were encouraged to pursue pet research projects of their own, that he developed an interest in local personages and events of the past.

Mr. Uesaka's first big publication was a documentary of the December 1924 shipwreck of a naval ship on exercises not far from Takefu. His account of the struggle of coastal villagers to comfort the dying young men gained a national readership and confirmed his love of recording things lest they be forgotten forever. He takes his task to write in a manner that is pleasing and easy to read, told from the perspective of a researcher who is situated locally, and possibly connected personally to his subject. Since retiring at age 60, he has continued writing and editing.

From his roomy but book and manuscript filled study he was gathering material to contribute to a history of Fukui prefecture's women. Along the way he seized upon the biographical details of a well-known watercolor artist, Iwasaki Chihirō, who was born not far from his house. With some irrefutable documentary evidence he felt her claim on the mayor's proposed gallery/research archives should eclipse that of Saeki Yūzō with all of its shadowy negotiations. Other projects include three volumes of his collected essays, editing work for the regional literary magazine *nihonkai sakka*, occasional columns in newspapers and on radio, and an anthology of poems by the native son Tachibana Akemi from the mid 19th century. Tachibana's "poor in goods but rich in spirit" life story gained national attention when the U.S. President Clinton made reference to it in a 1994 address. Finally, like his senior, Saitō Kazō sensei, Mr. Uesaka has written retrospectives of local schools and societies to commemorate founding anniversaries. In Uesaka sensei's case, it

was to mark the 30 years since the founding of Fukui Higashi Yōgō Gakkō, a special needs school, where he served as vice principal toward the end of his public school teaching career.

Wearing heavy framed, tortoise shell glasses and with his wavy hair brushed strait back, Mr. Uesaka seems at ease with the world. Ensconced in his *tsuri kaeru chosho ana,* the "den of the writing carefree frog a'fishing" [nickname], he is surrounded by a lifetime of projects past, current and planned. Happiest with some tea or a can of beer and a cigarette, he says the pace only becomes more hectic after one "retires." Actually he does continue to teach once a week at a private high school with its junior college in Fukui city. His slight frame and gentle manner of speaking and way of putting things into print belie his sharp vision and zeal to delve into ever more local matters, fulfilling an urge in common with the other active members of TR to give of themselves to the town in its present and future forms. Even though he, along with the town historian Saitō sensei, occupies one of the supervisory, mainly honorary roles, Uesaka sensei repeated his admiration for the drive, vision and savoir-faire of the group's younger members.

Another example of TR's method of carefully examining the activities of City Hall is the ongoing matter of the Ōi-ke historical house. Efforts by the city to obtain the property began in earnest in 1990. But due to circumstances detailed in chapter four, the only concrete result has been a publication that preserves the building only in (virtual or) documentary form *[hozon kiroku].* Despite persistent pressure from the Tachiaoi Kai historical society, and repeated efforts led by TR, the city refuses to pursue the matter further, even though there is little basis for their city's claim that the owners have caused the impasse. At the November monthly meeting of TR, Mr. Saitō Kazō produced a copy of the city council's quarterly circular, the *shi gikai dayori,* from a few days before. This special 100th issue was printed with an eye catching pink front. Inside was a feature on the chronology of the KKD matter, presented in a simple way, giving no hint of the dubious circumstances of the Saeki Yūzō paintings offer, not to mention the less than democratic way the government had undertaken the affair. The effect was to selectively inform readers in such a way as to make the whole matter seem a fait accompli. Questions about the Ōi-ke were also featured in the same issue. Mr. Saitō, himself once personally involved in the matter, took exception to two points in the piece. In it, the councilor involved in the city's economic development planning and chair of the general affairs committee, Mr. Takamori, reported the city's reply to his question about why the city would not preserve the house. He was told, one, that the national Agency for Cultural Affairs *(bunkachō)* was not enthusiastic about it; and two, that the property owners were not responding to the city's efforts.

Both things were half right, but the half that was missing changes the true meaning. First of all, Mr. Saitō was present when the *bunkachō* representative stood in front of the historical house and pronounced it an excellent candidate to be named an Important Cultural Property. The city's *shi gikaidayori*

circular failed to say that national policy dictated that matters be pursued locally whenever possible, which is what the city hall staff seized upon in a partial way. Secondly, Mr. Saitō had spoken with the owners and knew them to be interested in seeing the place preserved for public benefit. The councilor's published reply was half true in saying that the owners were not responding, but the reason why was omitted; namely the fact that the city's efforts could not be taken seriously.

Mr. Saitō Kazō, One of Takefu's Historians

Saitō sensei wears his formidable reputation lightly. Despite a sometimes stern aspect, he is always fair in his comments, and not just in response to the strange inquiries of a foreign researcher. Born in 1922 in one of the Japanese East Asian colonies, he grew up in the quiet of prewar Takefu. He spent four years of his youth as a heavy machine gunner in the army, something that has given him many vivid memories. He had always expected Americans to be fearsome things. In one instance he remembered seeing from his post on a coastal hilltop a U.S. plane destroy a fisherman's boat and then return to try killing the drifting men. So it was at first with some chagrin that he found himself now discussing his background and interests in local history with a young American over a cup of coffee.

Mr. Saitō is one of the authorities of Takefu's history. After 40 years as elementary and high school teacher and later principal, a writer and editor of numerous publications, and consultant to the city's Board of Education, he is still very active in all matters connected with the town's past. Now in his 70s, bespectacled and thinning on top, he continues to direct the Tachiaoi Kai local historical association and to speak about the Tokugawa years, including to research the documents of that age, with two sections of *komonjo* reading groups to lead each week. Despite the hard times he and his generation have seen, he maintains a stubborn optimism.

Asked about the roots of his historical interest, he tells that his own family occupied the bottom rung of feudal retainers *(ashigari)*, entitled to a stipend of rice to feed the loyal member and his spouse. His love of the town comes with his aging and the layers of memories the streets hold; of the way people would water down the dusty streets in the evening; of the way neighbors were once more closely connected to each other; of the way old people once rated higher respect in public. Most of all, he said his interest in Takefu's past has developed with his reading through old letters and documents of the Edo era, catching a glimpse of a time so very different and yet the same as today. In his four grandchildren, his students from the past and present and his fellow townspeople he hopes a self-awareness of the town's special character will develop. Takefu is unique among area towns, he notes, for its long history as a capital, its surviving street plan and considerable number of surviving structures from long ago.

In these musings he slips into the light but firm voice of an educator. Mr. Saitō is in his element when playing his role of senior authority and popularizer of historical knowledge, but is equally ready to inject a chuckle for levity. For his great love of the town, his many contacts, wide respect and sometimes youthful willingness to consider new ideas, Saitō sensei was asked, along with his junior by 9 years Uesaka sensei, to be the "overseeing guarantor of integrity" *(kanji)* for Takefu Renaissance.

TAKEFU'S RENAISSANCE ONCE MORE

A summary of the organization and its initiatives must begin with a note of the novel character of Takefu Renaissance. Through the curious intersection of generational, demographic, educational and industrial trends a group unusual in Japanese society was able to form. The group is led by civic-minded individuals of the experimental and iconoclastic generation who were in college in the late 1960s. Like counterparts elsewhere around the country, they came back to the city of their youth as part of a national "U-turn" [U-*tân]* phenomenon. Returning after many years, the changes to the town, while later and less drastic than elsewhere in Japan, shocked them into making some effort to revitalize the regional town's economy and civic pride. The occasion of councilmen proposing the KKD be gutted for parking space sparked TR's leaders into action and, along with a small group of equally dedicated fellow townspeople, they organized a counter proposal that the facility be renovated for use as the town's museum instead. But what is exceptionable about the group is not its emergence, but the fact that it has a broad base, has a long term vision for the city, has ventured into the political arena of civil society, and shares a perceptibly collegial spirit among members.

Beginning in response to the threatened disfiguration of a local civic landmark, the KKD Hall, *Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru Kai* arose and over the course of a year evolved into the more encompassing citizen's group, *Takefu RUNESANS.* The group's declared goals included preserving the Ōi-ke historical house and getting the best possible community value out of the KKD renovation, as well as pressing for greater interest and pride among people in Takefu leading to the possibility of wider citizen participation in civic (municipally administered) affairs. To reach these ends *RUNESANS* drafted a charter and appointed officers. They conduct monthly meetings that allow discussion, brainstorming and presentations. By cultivating a collegial spirit, and being careful to soften the rough edges of status that would normally obtain, the group has been able to conduct its initiatives smoothly. The multiple outlets for their efforts include publications, public lectures, petitions, interviews with journalists, enquiries, and the use of their organizational knowledge in the service of exhibitions and neighborhood events. The net effect of TR at work in Takefu's civil society can be measured by the public perception it has won. While many townspeople, civil servants included, wonder at the trouble the group has set for itself, just as many

respect them for their professional manner, their tenacity and the focus they bring to the problems taken up.

The question of whether a similar group would have arisen without this special combination of personnel, location and sequence of events is difficult to answer. But what is certain is the novel character of the group and its potential to serve as a model for grass roots citizen's movements elsewhere in Japan. In the following chapters the case of the KKD project will be recounted in detail to further illuminate the workings of TR and the arenas they move in.

CHAPTER 4

Smokescreens and Stonewalls in the Art Museum Affair

In thinking about the intersection of local history and the politics of culture, we have seen only one half of the scene. What remains is the other half of the story in which the mayor's own machinations subverted the refurbishment of the Kōkaidō Hall in order to create instead an art museum, much to everyone's surprise. In their vigilance, *Takefu Renaissance* uncovered the mishandling of money and city council resolutions. The group's experiences with the news media, city hall staff and councilors shed light on the arena for public discussion and initiatives—the space of civil society in Japan. The previous chapters have told only half of the story of local history and the politics of renewing Takefu; namely, the world of local history activities and groups, and the regard for the past which townspeople hold. The other half of the story concerns the politics surrounding the Kōkaidō Hall (KKD) conversion into a town museum, and the uses of local history more generally to stimulate business and civic life. Each of these groups, along with the intentions and conventions they bring to the task of creating Takefu's museum are presented here, interspersed with the chronology of the KKD after December 1993. Although a sketch of these groups can be made from the words and day-to-day functions of each, an even more revealing glimpse into the politics of renewing this regional Japanese town comes from the actual sequence of events. The mayor's surreptitious perversion of the museum plan caused each of these players to amplify and exaggerate its own part. By combining scholarly observations with Takefu conversations and the chronology of the KKD affair, this chapter will pick up the story of the KKD begun in chapter two and describe the parts played by each group in this example of Japanese civil society, which itself will be the subject of the following chapter.

Sometime at the beginning of January 1994, the plan adopted by Takefu City Council to make the Kōkaidō Hall into the town museum took an imperceptible but fateful turn. Mayor Koizumi Yoshiyasu learned of the possibility of his town becoming recipient of the collected oeuvre of the prewar oil painting artist from Osaka, Saeki Yūzō, who had died before his prime in Paris. With a view to securing this prize for the town, the mayor pursued his plan covertly and without hindrance. But by monitoring the refurbishment on the KKD and the announcements made by city hall, TR discovered something was amiss. The insistence of the mayor to pursue his

agenda was equaled by the persistence of TR and resulted in a scandal, which eventually gathered national attention. By the end of 1994, with the allegations of municipal improprieties catalogued and aired at Takefu Renaissance's town hall meeting, the KKD story reached a dramatic tension. The course of the KKD affair can be broken into several phases, each taken up in further detail.

Work to prepare the KKD for its new role as history museum began in earnest at the end of 1993. The first phase in the affair began in January 1994, when the mayor secretly began exploring the possibility of receiving the life work of the oil painting artist Saeki Yūzō. The next phase came in May, when TR confirmed its suspicions about the irregularities of the KKD refurbishment and started to probe the mayor's covert initiatives. Then in September, phase three began, when the mayor tried to move city council to his position that the KKD should now house the artistic work of the late Saeki Yūzō. City hall staff did their best to promote the idea, as well. And the news media showed little interest in the possibility of government mishandling of the matter. This phase ended with TR bringing a well-documented set of government inconsistencies to the public in a town hall meeting at the end of December 1994. There followed a cooling off period; the fourth phase of the KKD affair. Soon after the New Year's holiday the mayor showed a hint of contrition, and the city announced the paintings received to date should be returned.

Meanwhile, canvas samples were to be date tested as proof of their authenticity. Not content to let matters rest, TR helped form a committee independent of itself to look further into the apparent mishandling of the matter, chaired by Mr. Miki Tokio, who three years later would end up standing against the incumbent mayor and win. The final phase was the denouement. The falseness of the paintings had not yet been established, but following continued media coverage of the story, the city finally returned all property. In November 1995 a group of citizens, including many from TR, delivered a petition to the city hall asking for a system of information transparency and public accountability in the KKD affair. Also in November, the KKD at last opened as a combination museum (ground floor) and art gallery (second floor), though for the works of local artists and the city's own holdings. Five weeks later, in April 1996, the scientific analysis did determine some of the paintings not to be genuine works of Saeki Yūzō. In the end the mayor took little responsibility, but offered his regrets on the misadventure. Not being a litigious society, the matter was not prosecuted further. Although, on the principle of open government and information disclosure, following the election of Dr. Miki to city mayor, a new desk was set up to make government more transparent and accountable. In this connection, a post mortem of the affair with all documentation was released on the city's website in October 2001, in the first few months of Mayor Miki's second term of office.

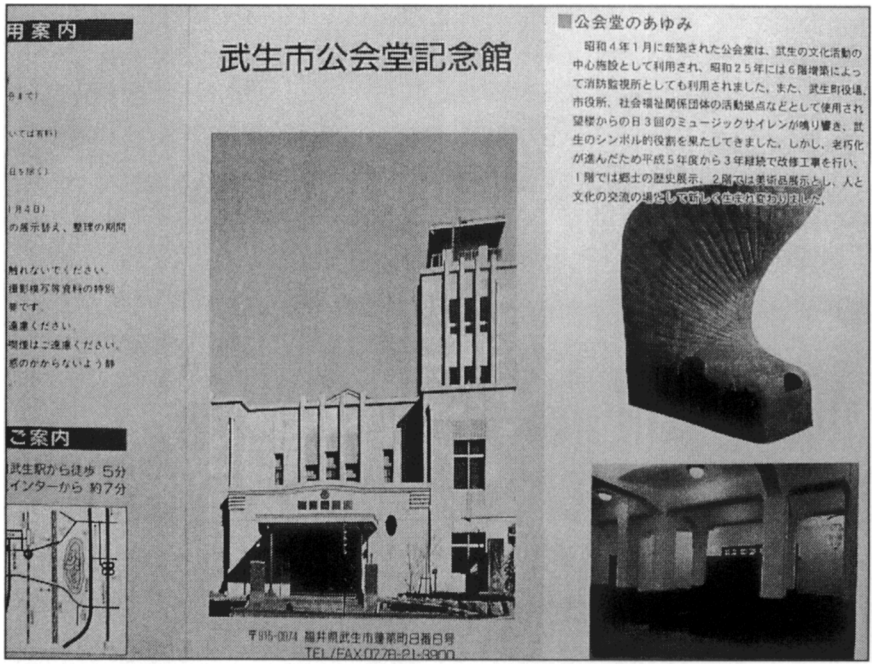

Figure 11: Glossy pamphlet for the refurbished Kōkaidō Memorial Exhibition Hall (c. 1999).

Between January and May 1994, Takefu Renaissance first discovered improprieties in the refurbishment work on the KKD. When they started to take steps to assess the problem, city hall met them with a wall of silence. Early in January the mayor had found out about the possibility of obtaining a donation of oil paintings. In February, during a meeting with representatives of TR on the subject of the KKD Museum, he mentioned as a separate issue of cultural impact the subject of artwork donations, confiding to them who would be chosen as the director of an as yet unspecified art collection. It was not until four months later, however, that the mayor told anyone publicly about his will to use the KKD to house the paintings and collected archives of Saeki Yūzō (1898–1928).

In March, the mayor secretly suspended all renovation work on the KKD. He arranged for meetings with the people interested in donating the oil paintings in March (Tokyo) and April (Tōno City, Iwate prefecture). Sometime in April, friends of TR found out about the mayor's unilateral negotiations and tipped off the group about irregularities in the dealings. The same person who had warned TR had also heard that the town of Toyama was to be fourth in this line of regional municipalities targeted, in the event that Takefu should back down. In particular, TR became concerned about the odd trail of previously attempted donations elsewhere. The first target had been

the regional town of Miyakonojō on the south island of Kyushu. This had been the home of Dr. Yoshizono Shūzō, friend to the young painter and father of Ms. Yoshizono Akiko, who now holds the paintings. When matters did not progress, Ms. Yoshizono approached the government of Tōno in northeast Japan, where she had been living for the past two years. When arrangements there did not lead to the desired conclusion, a man connected to the art business who was living in Fukui-city contacted Takefu's mayor. The secretive nature of the proceedings, along with this pattern of indiscriminately selecting possible recipient towns away from the metropolitan centers was irregular. Subsequently, doubts would compound and evidence eventually emerge that would substantiate TR's early concerns.

Meanwhile, several members of TR noticed that the normal movements of refurbishment work on the KKD seemed to have stopped. So at the end of May 1994, representatives of the group did what many townspeople considered to be none of their business. TR went to the city hall and to the Education Board to inquire further into what they had observed. No definite explanation was given. A look at the nature of Japanese bureaucracy will help explain this front of resolute unresponsiveness.

The first characteristic of Japanese civil servants is their relatively small numbers. Expressed as persons employed per 100, Japan has 4.4 government workers, Germany and the U.S. each have 8, and Great Britain 13 (Van Wolferen 1989:44). Taking the case of Takefu in 1999 (population 73,083), there are about 620 people on the city payroll, or almost .85% of the population. Compare this to a similar sized regional center in much more decentralized Sweden, Växjö (73,000), with 5,800 city employees, or almost 8% of the population.

The essential character of Japanese government stems from its historical roots (Silberman 1978). When the status of samurai ceased to be recognized and stipends, too, were discontinued at the beginning of the Meiji period (1868), many former samurai sought salaried work. They put their literacy and leadership skills, as well as their personal connections to use as civil servants of town, prefecture or nation. Their presence brought with it the attention to detail and the habit of ritualistic formality, as well as the sense of privilege that they had been accustomed to previously. In Takefu until the neighborhood borders were redefined between 1973 and 1978, and with it the elementary school catchment boundaries, the old Meiji era distinctions persisted: *higashi* (east elementary) was for samurai families, *nishi* (west) for merchant stock, *minami* (south) for trades and craft. So while discrimination may not have lasted until the boundary rationalization, one man told me that he knew of cases in the 1950s of students not going to the nearest elementary school for these long-lived reasons. The samurai ethos of the early civil servants resulted in the concentration of bureaucratic power into civil servants' own hands (Gotoda 1985:47). By carefully overseeing all legislation, at the national level at least, civil servants up to the present have made sure that they would retain ultimate control over budgetary matters

(Itami 1994:9–16, cf. Suzuta 1988, Ueda 1994b). But in the fall of 1996 the reform of central to local government relations began to be discussed in earnest by national politicians in Tokyo. Another part of this legacy has been for decisions to be arrived at not through the open contest of verbal discussion in a legislative forum, but instead on the basis of their exclusive knowledge to maneuver fluently through a maze of rules and paperwork (McKean 1981:246). Fukuzawa Yukichi, an early Meiji period reformer, and the founder of Keio University, singled out this avoidance of verbal grappling. He saw the need to cultivate public speaking skills and established a forum in the Meirokusha to provide young men the weekly occasion to speak before peers. And the first article of the Five-Article Oath of the Meiji Restoration, issued 14 March 1868 reads "Hold meetings widely and make various decisions through public debate." Certainly the culture of meetings has flourished since that time; debate less so (in Kurita 1990:128).

Standing in opposition to the samurai ethos were the merchants' values. Still today Gotoda remarks on the pride of people in the old commercial centers of Kobe-Osaka-Kyoto. They value personal ability *(jitsu ryoku)* over the entitlements of connections and titles, which have been so useful to bureaucratic careers (1985:28). Yet in spite of the traditional mistrust between merchants and bureaucrats, practical proof of the country's small but high-performance bureaucratic engine has been its rapid industrialization and, following WWII, its rapid economic reincarnation. But, as the late Itami writes, those ways were no longer suited to the 1990s. The excesses and abuses that came along with Tokyo's single-minded government of the country must now be corrected (1994:13). And owing in part to the time he spent employed in the U.S., Miyamoto writes that the time has come to transfer the operative control of the country from the civil servants to the elected officials, and indeed to the citizens themselves.

Bureaucrats the world around are bound by their nature to make procedures routine, and thus to reproduce status quo. In Japan, however, the reluctance to venture change runs even deeper. Miyamoto tells how change normally implies criticism, writing that if change coincides with a rotation in personnel, then criticism is read as a personal attack (1994:84, 161). Whether the change being made is for the better or not is a separate matter. Hence the path of least resistance is to perpetuate status quo appearances. Van Wolferen elaborates on the social process that supports gradualism and the reluctance to change procedures:

> The intimidation we find in the Japanese System may be called 'structural intimidation'…Ritual and hierarchy help preserve order, but do not guarantee security. Only power provides security in Japan In the absence of law and universal values, power is indispensable for protection. Guarding one's power is best accomplished by subtly displaying and enlarging it. And because this can be done only through informal means,

> intimidation is an unavoidable and omnipresent characteristic of Japanese society.
>
> —Van Wolferen 1989:346

Furthermore, in his remarks as a civil servant in the national government Miyamoto describes a principle of demerit to be in effect in his ministry, which is more than mere defensiveness. There is no incentive to seek improvements since change for the better is hardly acknowledged. But should the changes prove unsuccessful, this will count against those involved (1994:160). I have had confirmation of this from staff at the prefectural and city level as well.

Buruma (1994:160) found examples that showed that to challenge status quo authority in Japan was by definition subversive. With regard to assigning public responsibility today for the events of WWII, he found an interesting contrast in Germany and Japan. A German politician put his career in jeopardy for failing to give *more prominent* acknowledgement of German war responsibility when speaking publicly. The mayor of Nagasaki put his life in jeopardy when he drew attention to war responsibility. He dared to recite the Emperor's wartime role in front of the assembled members of the press (p.250) and was nearly killed by an attacker's shots a few days later. Elsewhere McKean has written of the resistance to placing blame on prominent figures or respectable organizations, thus upsetting the status quo effect. In one case, residents of a negligently polluted town were at first more likely to blame than to support their victimized neighbors. After all, how dare private individuals be so bold as to challenge the reputation of an important corporate entity, and thereby cast their own town in an unfavorable public light (1981:81).

One consequence of rigid status quo is the sense of security that superiors enjoy over their subordinates. Maruyama Masao has written that rather than to react to one's seniors, disgruntled workers in Japan are more likely to express their frustration on their own juniors in turn *(yokuatsu* ijō, quoted in Lebra 1976b:16). At the scale of institutions, when the demerit mentality militates against individual initiative, and the ethos of "village social relations" *(mura shakai)* makes individuals take peers for their point of reference rather than to direct themselves by any abstract, external guide, one result is the lack of interagency linkages (cf. on coordinating budget requests, Herzog 1993:262). Even where interests overlap, as in Fukui prefecture's "historical routes" *(rekishi kaidō)* program, run by the highway department offices, little communication occurs with the cultural affairs section, which administers the prefectural register of cultural treasures. Likewise in the academia of Japan, the practice of interdisciplinary research is neither common, nor is it particularly valued.

The bureaucracy as a whole has instrumental control over political and civic affairs, and indeed feels responsible for the moral order in discourse and practices as well (McVeigh 1994a, 1995a, 1995b). However, while civil

servants as a group may seem irreproachable, individual civil servants are highly susceptible to criticism. Aside from the demerit system within one's office and the circumspection of "village mentality" *(mura shakai)* that governs interactions, civil servants are sensitive to the impressions their words might make outside their offices. Thus, for example, when TR proposed making a bilingual book out of the descriptions in my field notes, each of the half dozen civil servants whose interviews would appear in the book were consulted about the accuracy of the (translated) field notes. But in addition to occasional corrections of substance, all of them without exception asked for changes in style as well. Preferably they wanted their identity disguised, or else that certain possibly pointed remarks be retracted or softened. In each case the person's wishes for anonymity were honored, but the nature of their reactions itself gives some idea of the exposed position they felt themselves to be in. Even though they had spoken on subjects they were knowledgeable in, perhaps they felt their words were less than flattering, or if fair, then possibly too revealing of internal affairs.

There is a seeming paradox in a (local) bureaucracy that is all knowing and all-powerful, but is at the same time vulnerable to the public perceiving fault in it. In a conversation with TR's Miki Yoshimi this condition became clearer. She spoke about the case of TR's efforts to secure the preservation of the Ōi-ke historical house in which the city hall and the education board could not come to any agreement among themselves, nor with the property owners. To paraphrase Ms. Miki, civil servants are not categorically opposed to making changes that will improve the town, but they shy away from anything that could result in criticism, either from superiors or the public. When things turn out well, the various offices are glad to associate themselves with it. But so strong is the imperative to avoid the shame brought by blame, no matter how small the risk, that more often than not people at the education board or city hall are reluctant about new ventures like the Ōi-ke preservation project. And so, there is no real paradox between the impression of all-powerful bureaucrats and their sense of weakness. The government is able to maintain the impression of omnipotence only by minimizing the chances of upsetting that appearance. The rule by bureaucrats that prevails needs to be mirrored in an apparent public record of blameless government. It is not enough to be in practical control of the country's direction. The various bureaucratic agencies must also give the appearance of control, or at least give citizens no cause to criticize their performance. In other words, the public record must at all costs give the appearance of order, consensus, and unified purpose even if the reality is not captured by such a vision. As long as the appearance of order is maintained, factual or fanciful, so too will order be accepted as being in effect.

The demographic facts of the civil servants and elected officials in Takefu also contribute to the character of the town's administration. The results of a 1999 survey of 428 of Takefu's civil servants showed a variety of patterns that may correlate generally with conservative character. For example, most are locally raised, lifelong residents (80%; or 98% if within a 35 km radius),

live in multi-generation households (50.5% cf. total prefectural rate of 39%), are themselves the oldest child and thus nominal caretaker of family line (75%), are farmers part-time (15%), are married (82%) with two or more children (75%).

Life course also has a bearing on one's outlook. At first it would seem strange that people like TR's leaders, who have lived for a time away from Takefu and then returned, should be more dedicated to the town's thoughtful development than those who have never left the place for any length of time. Yet this is an important way in which the leaders of the city and those of TR differ. The self-awareness of one's hometown that comes with living away seems to be an important factor in political outlook. In particular, in 1995 the people above the age of 75 or 80 grew up before the war and were able to travel and see the country, the colonial territories, or to go elsewhere abroad. Likewise, those born since the war ended have had the chance to broaden their horizons. Many of the most active TR members are either 70 and above, or are in their 40s and experienced the years of student protest in the 1960s during their time in college.

By contrast, those residents aged 50–70 years old had few chances to live in places outside of their own town. Freedom of movement was hindered by the war and for a time afterwards by the economic conditions. Most elected officials, bureaucratic section heads and their superiors are of this generation. On top of this generational tendency toward parochialism, the networks of personal contacts required of well connected and therefore successful politicians means that today's elected officials are almost by definition persons who have not followed careers taking them away from the area.

The different historical experience of each generation is just one set of demographic factors affecting the political sphere in Takefu. Until recently and probably still for some years to come, mayors have run not on the basis of professional managerial skills or knowledge of law making. Instead, like mayor Koizumi in Takefu, they are elected (but before 1945 appointed) on the basis of their social capital; often coming from the ranks of company presidents, doctors or professors. This is the distinction between *seijiya* (dealer in politics) and *seijika* (expert of politics), which came up in a conversation with TR's Inoue Kazuharu. He went on to say that the political academy, *Matsushita SeiKeiJuku*, established by the late president of Matsushita/Panasonic manufacturing is only now graduating its trained experts of politics *(seijika).* So it would still be a few years before such professionally trained people run for mayor in towns like Takefu.

Another consequence of generational difference is the timetable for promotions. Since advancement in the civil service is usually based on seniority rather than merit, the more progressively inclined staff at city hall will not reach supervisory levels for several years. By then they may well have lost their youthful latitude and initiative. But the time for innovative decisions that need to be taken to preserve and capitalize on Takefu's historical townscape is now. So, unless current section and department heads

borrow ideas from their juniors, the townscape may languish or worse. In addition, the negative attitude that prevails today toward thoughtfully critical debates on the character of government may change when these younger people at city hall reach an age suitable for the managerial positions, and when the next generation runs for elected offices. At present the same resentful reaction that the national government displays to foreign government criticism comes out from Takefu's civil servants under TR's scrutiny of the KKD affair. Namely, the government asks why it should change its ways; outsiders do not understand what is involved, nor should they meddle.

In early June 1994 the mayor announced to the city council his will to have the KKD made into a gallery for the works of Saeki Yūzō. One month later, after much deliberation about procedures and potential consequences and after many revisions, TR submitted an appeal to the mayor *(chinjōsho)* and a formal petition to the city council *(seigansho)* for their consideration. The latter requires sponsorship by two council members to be introduced to the assembly. And unlike the merely advisory function of the *chinjōsho,* the *seigansho* requires an acknowledgement and formal response. In practice the city council delayed their reply for many months, possibly with a view to letting the passage of time obviate the source of the petition indirectly. In the case of TR's *seigansho* of July, its pith was later extracted and stuck into the declarations of a newly formed political coalition in Takefu's City Council, the *shin seiki* ("The New Century" party), in March 1996. No full reply to the *seigansho* was properly given.

Until the end of the summer of 1994, TR continued to stand back and regard the mayor's efforts in good faith. But early in September, when another city targeted for the donation of Saeki Yūzō's oeuvre began to doubt the authenticity of the works and the reliability of their owner, Ms. Yoshizono, the KKD affair entered a new stage. It was at this point that the members of city council at last began to question the mayor's aims and his means. Their apparently tardy examination of the matter may be understood by looking at the nature of this assembly.

I originally went to the council meeting as an expedient research technique. Long before the KKD affair blossomed into an ethnographic topic of its own, I found it easier to go to the visitor gallery to hear the discussions as they took place rather than to wait for the dense and polished transcript *(gikai kiroku)* to be published. My prospective aim was to take note of speeches about existing cultural facilities such as the existing museum for the wider Takefu valley, the *Echizen no Sato Shiryōkan.* But the spectacle of the council process itself yielded several observations.

Although first impressions do not often allow accurate judgments, they do give the outlines, texture, and flavor of a subject. When I went to the receptionist at Takefu City Hall, asking directions to the council chamber, she showed some surprise. Apparently few people made this request, much less foreigners. So she telephoned the people in charge to make sure it was

permitted to observe the assembly. She handed me the receiver and, after a brief exchange to identify myself, and my affiliation (purpose), someone from the council offices came to escort me to the sixth floor of the adjacent annex where the visitor gallery was entered. Inside was a middle-aged man wearing a navy blazer, like most of the other male public servants there. His job was to register the date, time, name, address and affiliation, if any, of visitors. That completed, I was free to choose a seat from the forty-two plush, theater style seats overlooking the chamber floor below.

In front of the public seating were boxes provided for members of the print and broadcast news media, both local and national. Down below, facing the gallery, in stepped ranks were 28 seats for the department heads that administer the city, along with the mayor, his lieutenant *(joyaku)*, the recordists and the speaker of the chamber. Occupying the near side of the chamber, facing opposite the civil servants, were the 28 elected city councilors, seated in a series of gently curving semi-circles ranked up the sloped floor. With its carpeting, wood finished furniture and paneling, and high back padded swivel seats, the hall gave the pleasing effect of luxury and solemnity.

A few minutes before the scheduled start of the general assembly, the department heads entered from the side doors and the councilors from the back. A bell was rung for all to rise and bow to the front. At some sessions all present will recite Takefu's citizen pledge in unison before being invited to take their seats:

> Like the peak of Mt. Hino, we will accept high ideals and build a prosperous future.
> Like the flow of the Hino River, we will make an environment that is clean and appealing.
> With warm hearts as gentle as the chrysanthemum, we will help one another.
> Like deep-rooted bamboo, we will grow with strength and moderation.
> We will foster the culture from this old capital, and cultivating wisdom, will widen the circle of learning.
>
> —From: Pledge of Takefu Citizens *[shimin kenshō]*

At the start and after each recess a staff member makes a photographic record of all present on the floor. Then following the order of the day, mimeographed on a B4 (legal) size program of the session *(tsūkoku yōshi ichiranpyō)*, councilors approach the rostrum to state their concern, after which the administrator(s) whose jurisdiction is involved will respond. Follow up questions may come from a council member's chair directly. There seemed to be a fixed number of exchanges as well as time limit to keep the session moving.

The segment devoted to general questions *(ippan shitsumon hatsugen)* consisted of previously submitted questions which the administrators had had time to prepare answers for. The same was true of the *daihyō no shitsumon*

(questions posed by councilor committee representatives). Sometimes follow up questions could not be answered fully, so details would be promised later. This system of prearranged questions and answers seemed both efficient and sure not to cause any embarrassments. But scripted in this way, with a sheet listing topic, sponsoring council member, and administrators in charge of reply, it could not be really called debate.

The general assembly was not conducive to discovering problems, or the intrusions of personal (constituent) interests in public matters. The lifeless declamations of speakers at the rostrum only added to the sense of inconsequence in the proceedings. When I asked members of TR about this later, they were at first surprised that a person would care to make the business of the assembly their own and attend the assembly. But then they proceeded to conjecture that real negotiations took place in the mayor's rooms, or in the numerous coffee shops, bars and restaurants downtown between only those admitted to the discussion at hand *(chōgi*, a kind of government by members only). In other words, in place of debate there is deal making. In place of public discourse there is scripted declamation. Miyamoto confirms as much for the National Diet (1994:30,41).

> The *dangō sōshiki* [custom of (especially bid rigging) cliques] is the root of problems, K declaims: "the 21st century should be the age of leisure and culture, but here we are in Takefu, shackled with this cursed *dangō* system" [paraphrase]
>
> —field notes, 19 January 1995, TR monthly meeting.

In the events of the KKD affair, TR's complaints all derived from the practice of *dangō* which the likeness of democratic rule loosely overlays. Cliques and collusion *(dangō)*, the principle of pork barrel politics *(on o kashikari)*, "preparing the field" *(nemawashi)*, and the rehearsed deliberations which city council debates go through (cf. Miyamoto 1994:39) are elements of political practice that are not unique to Takefu or Japan. But based on the experiences of TR members and the observations of other researchers, political decisions do seem to be made more often on the basis of affiliations and obligations than on the persuasiveness of a discursive argument.

Although the term *dangō* usually refers to the intersection of politics and business, it can be illuminated by the example of the equally conservative world of sumō wrestling. Each wrestler's place is clearly fixed, with those on top enjoying the loyalty and attention of those below, and those below sharing in the trickle down of cash and other good things that come the way of the stable's own champion. The connections are strong and form a constellation around a single dominant figure. People colluding in *dangō* are bound in a similar routine: the processes are closed to outside observation, and decisions tend to be made ad hoc, based on immediate considerations rather than on a written set of protocols or an explicit charter.

The paucity of debate on issues and the fact that most agreements are made out of public view within the circles of *dangō* connections are the systemic problems ingrained with (local) government that TR objects to. The highly personalistic nature of *dangō* decisions means principals can resort to shorthand instead of reasoned argument. *"Oi Tanomu yo!"* (hey, just do this one thing for me, won't you) depends on status, role or personal connection of the speaker instead of expository logic for its persuasive force. Other instances of "face" rather than logic being used are when a mayor goes door to door to assuage citizen activists (McKean 1981:99), or the mixture of cajoling and pleading I observed a TR member use to cement the support of staff at the Takefu Cultural Center *(Bunka Sentā).* The power of personalistic appeal also came out in the pressure city hall put on TR leaders directly, as well as indirectly by instigating others to apply it. In addition to pleading, cajoling and chastising the leaders, those TR members who have in the past enjoyed business contracts connected to the government were conscious of the possible repercussions from their participation in the citizen organization. TR leaders were particularly asked to supply a membership list. Needless to say, none was surrendered.

The practice of *dangō* can be seen in the private sector, too. Contractors of city services may rig their bids. Then the prearranged winner will share out the rewards with the (subordinate) associates. In the fall of 1994 TR received an anonymous fax that was damaging to the mayor. It gave the details of bids received by the city from private contractors for providing trash disposal. Leaving aside the problems of unverified tips like this, the fax showed that the city did not choose the lowest bidder. After some discussion the members of TR present decided it was something appropriate for the city's own internal investigation. Besides, TR's hands were already full with the KKD investigation.

Since June 1994 was my first council meeting, I could not be sure whether what I had seen of the city assembly was either routine or exceptional. But the same dull exchanges followed again in September. A few days later, at the monthly meeting of TR, the topic of the city's less than forthcoming release of information about the KKD matter came up. Afterwards, when I pointed out the same effect at the council meetings, some of the TR members suggested I write a letter to the editor. A few weeks later, with the help of Ms. Miki's proof reading, I mailed my observations to the Takefu bureau chief of the *Fukui Newspaper*. They chose not to print it. But the next spring, after the national media attention on the KKD affair, and during the interlude while the paintings were being chemically analyzed, Ms. Miki asked if I would consider sending the letter again, this time to the local desk of the national *Asahi Newspaper.* I submitted the letter, now reworked so that it read as well as a native speaker's writing, apart from the novel content of an outlander's observations. Like their journalist counterparts, social scientists have to use care in walking the fine line between participation and observation. However, the decision to lend one's hand makes sense when the opinions are well

intended and more importantly have precedent elsewhere in the society; e.g. Ben-Ari's note on the activist emeritus professor (1991:113), or TR's own academic ally, Pr. Abe Takao of Hokuriku University. With the publication of my letter on April 25, 1995, the editorial section sent a note of thanks, a copy of the piece, and a commemorative pen. It is safe to say that the edited letter gave voice to things TR wanted to say.

> [back translation] "City Administration Is Vague, Councilors Don't Press"
> I came to Takefu last April to gather material for a dissertation. I wanted to look at the cultural and historical activities connected with Takefu.
> In the course of my study I thought of reading through the *gikai kiroku* [Council Record]. But since I read so slowly I thought it wiser to sit in on the assembly. No special permission is required, anyone is able to attend. I was the only one in the gallery. I expected the debate would be lively, but from my perspective as an American it was reserved. I was honestly disappointed.
> It all seemed to proceed like a drama completely according to script. I don't know much about the political techniques in Japan and my language ability is not perfect, so I cannot offer any real criticism. But I was amazed by the mayor's replies to the councilors, who are the townspeople's representatives.
> How did the plan come about to make the Kōkaidō into an art gallery for Saeki Yūzō, who has no links to Takefu? Who determined the value of the pieces? If they turn out to be forgeries, who will take responsibility? Several councilors asked these questions. The mayor replied in slick politeness. But from my point of view I couldn't help but wonder how it was possible that the citizen's leader could practically ignore the questions of the citizen elected representatives.
> And I wonder why the councilors didn't hound the mayor until he would answer their questions fully.
> Takefu is an old city, but without a place for archives and historical materials it is very frustrating to conduct research. Instead of a gallery for an artist with no relation to the town, I'd like to see a place where one can learn about Takefu's history.

The periodic coming and going of administrators and the occasional back-chatter of councilors were the only things breaking the scripted nature of the council meetings. At one point in the December 7, 1994 meeting a councilor asked why the five-member panel of art experts chosen by the mayor did not include a native of Fukui prefecture. The head of the education board retorted that there was none of sufficient stature, so the committee should stand just as it was, thank you very much. In the stylistic manner of a kabuki production, several councilors bellowed guffaws. This was the nearest that things came to the brawling sometimes seen on the live broadcast of the National Diet sessions in which silver haired men sometimes clambered over desks to pull a speaker away from the platform. More often, the editorial comments of the city councilors consisted of a brief comment out loud to a colleague or the sounds of approval voiced when a member was speaking at the rostrum. In

this, the city assembly was reminiscent of the British House of Commons, one of the inspirations for the Japanese deliberative assemblies.

Although the proceedings of the general assembly were for the most part prearranged and dull, there were a few unexpected turns, which even a nonnative Japanese speaker could appreciate. During the September 1994 assembly perhaps as many as a half dozen councilors had submitted questions to the mayor probing his purpose and motivation in the KKD affair. Having received little that was revealing, and the program of questions having since moved on to the apparently uncontroversial subject of budget revisions, the sponsoring councilor was able to spin a follow up question that led back to the KKD affair! Thus he challenged the mayor to tell at what moment he had developed an interest in the painter. Without hesitation, the mayor parried, and deftly echoed the information published in November's *shi gikai dayori* circular, dating his involvement from when Mr. Yamamoto had introduced him to the subject.

There is another technique similar to the Trojan Horse approach above. Instead of cloaking a barbed question in a soft cover, one person's idea may be submitted in the name of another. Or less conniving perhaps, an idea may be appropriated by another, possibly with the original author's blessing, but in any case without attribution. This modular, interchangeable, cut-and-paste approach to ideas (cf. reference or citations made in material culture) is something peculiar to Japanese politics and decision-making, at least in the estimation of TR's Inoue Kazuharu. In this case it was the thinly veiled petition *(seigansho)* of TR originally submitted to councilors and to the mayor by TR the previous July and now resurfacing eight months later.

The *seigansho* still had not received the formal discussion and the reply it was required to have. But now at the March 1995 general assembly, embedded in the position statement of the newly formed *shin seiki* coalition of councilors were the unmistakable elements of the original petition. Councilor Miyamoto asked, in the guise of his party, for five things: 1) a committee to look into the best uses of the KKD—late in the day though now it was, 2) thorough council debate *(giron sum)*, 3) the input of townspeople, 4) the formulation of a broad and long term vision for the town's future, including 5) the role of the KKD within the town's development. The Speaker of the Chamber called a brief recess. When the session resumed, the mayor agreed to the party's various proposals. But when he came to the bundle of requests concerning the KKD, he carefully halted and said that he had received numerous suggestions, which he wanted to examine carefully *(jūbun)*, thank you very much.

The mayor fluently used bureaucratic boilerplate to dull even the sharpest probes by council members. In the September 13, 1994 session a dozen members questioned him about the KKD project from all angles, but they were all met by the same blank smoothness delivered with the slick polish of consummate politesse. According to his replies, either the mayor did not know the answer himself, the action was based on the advice of a

knowledgeable consultant, or he could assure the questioner that there could not possibly be reason for concern. The net effect was one of masterful authority. In the same way, the department heads whose jurisdiction a question concerned would surrender little information to councilors. Nothing more than was necessary to minimally reply would come forth, and their words were final; bureaucrats would have their last words.

At the end of the council session, my impression was that the councilors took on the role of suppliants to the formidable public servants, rather than to act like representatives with the mandate of their constituent townspeople. The administrators across the benches on the other hand presented an aspect of infallibility. But should they be in a difficult position, they could take on a pitiful aspect. The bureaucrats would then appear as mere functionaries, carrying out their appointed tasks. They would not admit carrying responsibility or the possibility of personal interests. The most amazing thing, though, was that the councilors' volley of questions all seemed to be minor or procedural. The fundamental question of using the KKD for a gallery of Saeki Yūzō's works, and more basic still, the question of irregular process involved in the whole affair was not raised. Instead councilors asked under whose authority the works had been considered to be of value, how the decision to form the panel of art experts had been arrived at, and who would be responsible if the whole matter proved to be a sham.

Other Japan scholars have observed the scripted nature of legislative "debate," which one person in TR labeled *chaban geki* [farcical amateur dramatics]. McKean calls the public proceedings of councils a façade (1981:249): political proposals are actually formulated and negotiated outside of the assembly through the bureaucrats of city hall, and between the mayor and the political factions (p.248, cf. Gotoda 1985:13). *Okyō yomi* (sutra chanting for the repose of the departed) is the term Miyamoto (1994:30) quotes from people involved in the National Diet proceedings. It refers to the soporific, scripted nature of the exchanges between the politicians who animate a text supplied by civil servants (p.41). The desired effect of performed debates like this, he writes, is to defer individual responsibility to bureaucratic organs, to avoid damaging criticism, and ultimately to assure the status quo governance (1994:19, 212, 219).

When government is based on maintaining present appearances and accommodating constituents' demands, it is not surprising that its posture is defensive, with a manner that is reactive rather than proactive and guided by a vision (Miyamoto 1994:84). The goal of bureaucratic bodies everywhere is to secure their indefinite continuity, but in the Japanese case there seems to be especially little vision. This caused TR's Inoue Kazuharu to draw on his experience as a systems analyst and observe that ideas like "optimization" (deciding which agency should provide what portion of costs according to use-value) or "prioritization" must be unknown. He supposed that Takefu city's simple listing of budget allocations sprang from the connections of the request maker rather than from the merits of the request itself.

Paradoxically, the government operates in a top-down, command style manner, and yet the budget from one year to the next is shaped from the bottom-up. Instead of being strictly guided by the economic rationality of priorities and governing values, it is the multiple constituencies of personal ties above and below that determine the cumulative direction of the government (Herzog 1993:15). If the Western ideal is like a football team guided by its quarterback, then the Japanese political world seems to be something like the traditional battling floats of Japan, borne on dozens of loyal shoulders. Somehow the edifice moves, not actually directed by any one person, but instead propelled from below and adjusted according to the terrain and pressures encountered in the crush of competition.

Standing in contrast to Takefu's business and political leaders of today, there was a handful of men at the end of the 19th century who actively developed the town with a long term view of what might follow. Up until the war years of the middle 20th century the people who came after these industrial and cultural entrepreneurs enjoyed the fruits of the earlier planning. In his view, TR's Inoue Kazuharu thought that subsequent town leaders have failed to live up to the example of these early giants. With the spread of convenient transportation, Takefu's geographic advantage as entrepōt and market center has faded. Rather than to institute new projects, subsequent town leaders have followed the trend of regional towns elsewhere to attract manufacturers with relatively cheap wages, tax advantages, and so forth. Whatever the cause, as Mr. Inoue argues, the town's vision has been very limited during this century.

Like the bureaucracy portrayed earlier, the corps of elected representatives and the bureau heads they sit across from in Takefu's city council are a closed group, possibly preoccupied more with the form than substance of a matter. Along with the news media, the mayor's office, and TR, the townspeople of Takefu had a role to play by providing public opinion on the maneuverings of the KKD affair. During the third phase, TR's call for a community meeting to recite the course of the affair brought the weight of townspeople's normally silent witness to bear on the mayor's actions.

MAKING A CASE AGAINST THE MAYOR'S STORY

In the last four months of 1994 the mayor and organs of the city government pressed ahead with the plan to make the KKD into a gallery and research center for the works of Saeki Yūzō. Meanwhile, TR continued to monitor all media and municipal statements about the plan, and to probe the authenticity of the works themselves. They also carefully cross-checked these references with independent sources to compile a chronology leading to the current disposition of the KKD. The result was a framework loaded with questions. How, for example, could the mayor foist his idea onto the citizens without the city councilors more vigorously probing the proposal. How, in what is

supposed to be a democratic system, could the deliberations and processes of government be allowed to be so opaque?

At the quarterly city council general assembly of September, the mayor deflected all queries about the paintings and his initiatives by reason of protecting the delicate negotiations, or else by displacing the responsibility of evaluating the significance and worth of the works to a panel of not entirely disinterested experts he had convened. Finally, to ally fears and deaden future criticism, the mayor simply declared, "I will accept the responsibility," should the deal prove sham and the matter bring shame on the city [paraphrase]. Two weeks later the other two towns being considered to receive the donated paintings voted to decline the offer. But shoving aside the doubts that made these cities unsure about the donor and the works, Takefu's mayor pressed ahead.

In November, as TR's probes went further, the city's public relations machine speeded up, producing a feature story in the quarterly circular "From Your City Council" *(shigikai dayori* #100). The impression of the streamlined, pedantic presentation is of the matter being on-track; that the former plan to furnish a museum had been simply dismissed, and that the new gallery project was all but fait accompli. At the end of the month, the mayor's lieutenant *(joyaku)* moved to assure people that the city's Cultural Trust Fund would not be raided to finance the package of donated and purchased paintings, manuscripts, and other archives. About this same time, the balance of evidence against the works, the modus operandi of the mayor and his helpers, and irregularities in the negotiations caused TR to catalogue this evidence for the reference of concerned city councilors, as well as for interested citizens at large. And in time for the December general assembly of the city council, TR was spurred to organize the *Mihariban* of Takefu, a group of people interested in auditing city council meetings and other publicly accessible government functions. Their purpose was to exercise rights as citizens, motivated by the belief that the pressure of their witnessing of democracy in action will lead to a better quality of government.

Pursuing a complementary strategy to their scrutiny of town government, TR presented its findings of the KKD chronology to members of the public. Both to inform and to solicit feedback, TR arranged a public meeting at the city's Culture Center *(bunka sentā)* near the end of December. Needless to say, no officials were there in an official capacity to defend their record. Apparently unconcerned by this approaching challenge, the mayor proceeded to announce the formation of a KKD gallery planning committee a couple of days before TR's public meeting. A few days later a body of art experts unconnected to the mayor's panel, issued their own statement about the suspect authenticity of the paintings in question. From an evidentiary standpoint, the pronouncements of an independent body of art experts may have been the most damaging to the mayor's case. But the opinions of Takefu's public may have exerted more pressure from a practical standpoint. To understand townspeople's regard for the city government, it is necessary to

describe this less prominent but no less significant aspect of Japanese civil society.

Ambivalence is the best word to sum up popular attitudes to (government) authority in Japan. First, there is the legacy of Militarism that reigned from the close of the Edo era to the end of hostilities in WWII (1868–1945). And underneath this is the residue of 10 generations of Tokugawa rule, during which time uprisings by peasants in times of famine ended sometimes with executions (Walthall 1986, cf. Bowen's typology 1981:72). For example, in Takefu's Tannan valley near the hamlet of Katakami there is a monument on temple grounds marking a petition for special water rights in 1744 that cost the three supplicants their lives. The eminence of government is reinforced today in the stiff sounding locution for paying one's taxes, *osameru.* This verb is more commonly used specially to describe the act of (submissively) submitting something (usually cash) to the gods of a shrine. The expression *omakase gyōsei* [(decisions) left in the administration's hands] encapsulates this attitude of passively leaving all matters to the discretion of elected officials and civil servants. Oftentimes citizens would rather let the proverbial sleeping dogs lie, out of fear of untoward consequences, as well as from a high regard for letting those in the appropriate role go about their task unhindered, a pattern for relating to authority probably learned in classrooms (below).

The other half of the ambivalence townspeople feel toward government is the ready recourse to government services enjoyed by people who do have connections to the appropriate office holding principals, no matter how tenuous the relationship may be. Thus, in an example given by TR's Inoue Kazuharu, people in Takefu do not monitor politicians' conduct or the content of debates very closely unless it is of immediate and tangible consequence. But if there is a bit of road to be repaired or a dead pet found in the street, the same people will be quick to complain about it and to contact the town government. They will be the first to collect whatever subsidies or grants are available for residents' organizations. One consequence of this attitude is that, inverse to the U.S. pattern, Japanese voter turn out is highest for local elections, where voters can see direct connections to themselves. On the other hand, turn out is lowest for national elections (Kuroda 1974:83). This ambivalent attitude to the government—avoiding it but also demanding of it—and people's impressions of public affairs generally may contribute to a relatively low consciousness of civil society and the impression of a foreign observer that there are few common spaces or all encompassing collective interests. Whatever town or district-wide awareness may exist normally is driven by municipal agencies like the tourist promotion board *(kankō bussan ka),* library, or lifelong learning center *(shōgai gakushū SENTĀ).*

Outside the home, school is the primary model for interacting with authority figures and practicing one's comportment in public. The 240-day school year contributes to the preference for a bureaucratic ethos; the formal, ritualistic likes of which echo throughout social interactions (McVeigh 1994b,

1995a, 1998). Tracing the clearest thread between the household, school and the state is Kiefer (1970) in her article, "The Psychological Interdependence of Family, School, and Bureaucracy." Since then others have searched for clues to Japanese social life in the earliest experiences outside the home (Hendry 1986, Peak 1991, White 1993; cf. Feiler 1991).

LeTendre gives a comprehensive description of the teacher to student relationship (1994:55–56, 1999; cf. McNeil 1994:24–27). In essence it consists of learning in a top-down fashion; not from peers, laterally, or from the bottom-up. According to the "omniscient teacher" model, it is not appropriate for the junior to pose problems or to offer unsolicited ideas to the senior. In particular, questions made in a public setting that pose the risk of the authority figure not ably replying, and thus losing face, are the most dire. The reverse is also true. Teachers may spare their pupils the practice of on-the-spot questioning, because of the possibility that the pupil may look bad in front of his or her peers. Thus, stated as an ideal form, teachers should instruct; and students should learn to take detailed notes of the class period. By allowing little opportunity for the unexpected, interactions follow this pattern of structured recitation or lecture. This highly restricted channel in classroom learning may be another factor contributing to relatively low consciousness of civil society. The lack of discussion space between individuals and their authorities only safeguards the positions of those in power. In McVeigh's words, the "lack of a strong civil society which buffers the private sphere from state action (as in Euroamerican societies) enhances the power of Japan's bureaucrats" (1995a). Democratic forms and spirit are also cramped by the social microcosm in this sort of classroom environment. What was observed almost 20 years ago is largely still true today: "[T]he basic democratic values as Americans understand them—individual rights, grass roots initiative, freedom, and social justice" are not practiced in Japanese schools" (Rohlen 1983:265)

Outside of the classroom, too, this pedagogical template seems to shape learning. The field note condensed below from a historical walking tour of a Takefu neighborhood illustrates the premise that one *receives* monologic instruction rather than *engages* in educational dialogue.

> Somehow today's event seemed like just going through the paces; saying the words and telling the stories that are proper to tell, asking the persons knowledgeable on a subject to recite their parts. To me the effect was one of hollowness and ambivalence, rather than one of a coherent synthesis or consistent theme. Few questions were asked.
> The archetype for this educational tour seems to be that of formal education (what the K-12 mode is); namely, grading and tests and knowledge as discrete objects (teacher "puts peas in a can" approach to learning). A second archetype is sports, hobby, or music in which one learns by emulating and paying attention to the forms, shapes, routines (i.e. that content will somehow take care of itself).
>
> —14 May 1994, field notes, Heiwa-cho, Takefu-city

The way that outwardly meek students humbly receive their teacher's instruction is reminiscent of the *makase gyōsei* mentality [it is up to the administrators to make all decisions] found later in life among taxpayers and exhibited also by people as part of package tours. This surrender by students of the lead in learning, combined with a de-emphasis on individual achievement in favor of projects with group responsibility, results in cases such as the one told by Miyamoto about his office colleagues. When a superior asked those present at an after hours meeting where Miyamoto could be, a colleague who knew him to be at a prior engagement of a personal nature simply revealed all without reservation (1994:76). A phrase that expresses this submissive stance to government or other authority is *ken'i ni yowai* [weak against authority], which one person associated with the word "old-fashioned" in chapter two's historicity survey. Another phrase is *ken'i shugi* [authority'ism, wherein might makes right], which someone else gave as an example of what the term "feudalism" brought to mind. Elsewhere, the expression *nagai mono ni wa makareru no kangaekata* [the belief that one should avoid government affairs, for fear of ending up entwined in events and come out for the worse] conveys the same wary sentiment people hold toward the government. These few expressions and the nature of formal learning help to explain the attitude to authority found in Japanese society.

In addition to attitudes toward authority figures learned in the classroom, the emphasis on correct, approved learning means that teachers for their part will present accepted wisdom in conventional ways, probably free of skepticism in most cases. Students for their part learn to expect and value proper presentation, to emphasize form before content and detail before synthesis. This may also be said for the *hako gyōsei* approach ["administer the package," never mind its contents] to town development and museum design discussed in chapter two.

Finally, schools teach that the almighty and paternalistic authorities are not to be mistrusted. Civil servants work at city hall "for the *sake* [service of, but also for the paternalistic betterment] of citizenry," but without the "participation of the citizenry" (Isomura and Kuronuma 1974:11, emphasis added). Likewise in schools, teachers of the "hard but kind" authoritarian mold work for the *sake* of their students. In Rohlen's example from Japanese high school, cited earlier, the "orderliness in a Japanese school does not evoke some authoritarian image in the eyes of most, but rather is pleasant evidence of benevolence, high morale, and successful instruction" (1983:201).

Like any place where people have lived for many generations and built intricate webs of social relations, Takefu is layered with memories. The weight of surrounding people's opinion *[seken no me]* is palpable and townspeople's love of gossip longstanding. So word of mouth competes with the public discourse of government and news media. At times it seems the pointed commentary has the power to inhibit or to spur persons of all social strata to behave in certain ways. One example of *uwasa ga tonde iru* (gossip flying around) came in January 1995, after the undeniable damage caused to

the city government the month before in the town hall meeting that TR had sponsored about the KKD affair. TR's Inoue Kazuharu told me that he had heard the mayor would try to flee from the growing embarrassment by accepting an offer by his party to occupy the National Diet seat they held open. By the first week of February this speculation had reached the pages of the *Fukui Newspaper*. Whether it was the gossip or the newspaper's condemnation of any such proposal, in the end, the mayor did not leave his post.

The power of gossip can be found in examples outside of public officials, as well. When I naively suggested that the unprotected weathering of the historical Ōi-ke historical house could be averted through the efforts of willing volunteers and donation of materials, the members of TR looked surprised. Then someone explained that to do so would imply that the owner himself did not have the means to do the same. Left to rot, however, the interpretation was not foreclosed. After all, the owner's neglect could be seen as deliberately spiting city hall for its lack of good faith negotiations in the home's preservation.

Finally, there is the close relationship of gossip's power to the currency generated by public attention focused on a subject. This "current event" value can usefully magnify the power of gossip. For example, the people in TR were unable to pursue the KKD affair at the same time as the proposal to preserve the Ōi-ke historical home. But they did plan to make rhetorical use of the "current event" value of the KKD affair when it finally came time again to take up the case of the Ōi-ke. In other words, the group hoped to enlist popular will to sway the city leaders to adopt the Ōi-ke, as well, by using popular sympathy generated by the KKD affair and TR's concern with the town's heritage. This "current event" value is not only restricted to positive examples. Even the negative example of carelessness in permitting the 19th century Shōyō-en estate's garden to be razed, as described in a book produced by TR (1995b), could be enlisted in the group's campaign to secure the Ōi-ke's future.

In the wider frame beyond "gossip," and "current event" value, there is the awareness townspeople have of their place in the nation. In a conversation with the acting head of Takefu's library, Mr. Katō Yoshio, he speculated how the 30 year-old Echizen no Sato (historical theme garden and display hall) would have turned out differently if conceived of and built in the 1990s. One thing that has changed since the 1960s is local residents' consumer consciousness. He thought that the increase in leisure time, proliferation of mass media and the many opportunities for travel had made people much more aware of the value of attracting tourist money. If it were proposed in the 1990s the facility would therefore not be resisted by residents or be undermined as was the case previously. People are now much more aware of the image they present to visitors, and how their case appears in comparison to other places around the country, even to other places in the world. Continuing in this hypothetical vein, he thought, however, that compared with

the energetic building days of the 1960s and 70s, a general lack of political will and financial commitment required for such a facility to be made in the 1990s would prove to make it an impossibility.

Apparently of the same mind, the mayor of Takefu too held a dim view of townspeople's commitment to present their town in an appealing way. Whether it was the motivation, knowledge, or willingness to make the necessary financial commitment that was lacking, near the close of the October 1994 cultural symposium TR had organized, the mayor spoke in his address to the audience about the townspeople being poor at "selling" their town *(APĪRU SURU). I*n comparison to the other municipalities in the region and even more so with those in Japan elsewhere, he said Takefu people had made a slow and sluggish effort so far. Without more tourist attractions, a less brooding aspect to the townscape, and more vigorous campaigns to attract visitors and companies, he predicted the town would be condemned to its present course as a quiet regional town.

There are numerous examples that agree with the mayor's assessment. Staff in the city's planning office told how new initiatives often meet with opposition, if not with open resistance, then with *ashi hippari* sabotage (to have one's feet pulled from underneath oneself), or more commonly, simple neglect. New programs and new businesses both require great efforts to lure townspeople away from their accustomed routines. And the pressures and economic incentives the planning office sometimes applies do not always work as intended because of the latitude afforded by the accumulated wealth of generations of Takefu's merchant households.

The resistance to change exhibited by townspeople is confirmed at the anecdotal level, as well. The head of a school of English language based in neighboring Sabae-city described the contrast of doing business in each town. Even discounting the benefit of trustworthy personal and business connections, which he enjoyed in his native Sabae, the difference in his success at attracting new students and establishing new classes in the two towns is marked. Whereas he has been able to secure citywide contracts to send English teachers to all of Sabae's neighborhood-based *kōminkan* halls, in Takefu each hall handles the contracts individually, with none of the business going to him. When he advertises for new classes at the start of a school year in Sabae, which he characterizes as a youthful, optimistic and "cheerful" town, there are normally many applicants, ranging in age from 4 to 90. Those few replies from Takefu are more often for private lessons than for course applicants, and even those responses seem to come a month or two after the advertisement was made, he said. As a result, rather than to rent space for classes in Takefu, he invites Takefu people to join English conversation classes in the community halls of Sabae, seven km away.

Townspeople as well as politicians tend to react to events as they develop, rather than to base their actions on a policy or philosophy. One man likened the merchants of Takefu to those of the old capital in Kyoto. In speech and actions, certain ambiguousness is preserved. Nothing is ever right or wrong,

black or white. *"Honne ga nai"* ("there's no root", or rudder) is how he put it. And more often than not, when there is a decision to be made in this relativistic, case-by-case approach, people in Takefu make a public show of pessimism, despite the satisfaction they may harbor privately (Takefu ranks 3rd of 664 Japanese municipalities for quality of life, *kōhō takefu* #664, p.4). For example, when the vice president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry described plans to convert a concentration of storehouses into a period shopping facility in the town center, he told how neighborhood residents reacted with "can't be done; cost too much; revenues are declining these days…"

Ponderousness, reluctance to start something new, the weight of peers' opinions are some of the things TR faced in their prosecution of the KKD affair. These things were background to TR's larger goal of getting townspeople interested enough in the town's conditions and its special character to join in public discussion about its future direction. And, possibly as a relic of the early modern days with their mortal consequences, TR members found general resistance in their efforts to collect signatures petitioning that the city preserve the Ōi-ke historical home. To risk identifying oneself on the side critical of the government made people feel uneasy *(iyagaru).* Portions of the TR newsletter indicate these prevailing conservative attitudes:

> …given the fact that the KKD itself is now counted as one element of Takefu's cultural infrastructure, we can't just leave it up to the city to decide how it should be used. It's important that we townspeople also tell what we think.
>
> 10/95 TR Newsletter
>
> …not for each person of Takefu to sit quietly by…
>
> 7/95 TR Newsletter
>
> Furthermore, in the case of this sort of decision-making process, we have the opportunity and the duty to act our parts as citizens.
>
> 6/94 TR Newsletter
>
> [in the realization that town politics and culture are inextricable] …it seems that general agreement has been reached in Takefu Renaissance…
>
> 10/95 TR Newsletter

These quotes show the reluctance townspeople, including the 75 members of TR, have toward taking part in affairs in the public sphere. Almost by definition, public matters seem to be the prerogative of civil servants and the elected officials. The last extract (above) makes the significant connection between culture and politics. When this subject was raised almost a year before, the following sketch appeared with the enclosed caption, saying "There are also some people who say this kind of schematic representation is not relevant."

The most explicit discussion of cultural politics came from TR's leaders. They do not necessarily think of the subject in the way an academic social

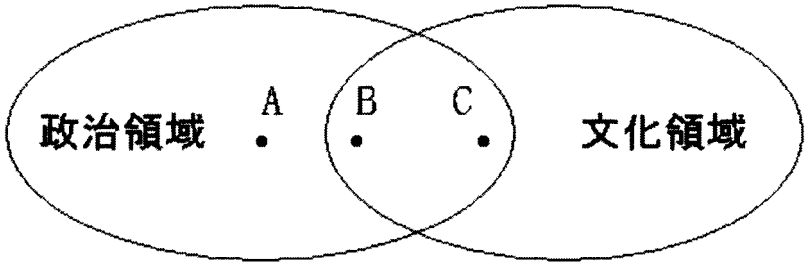

Figure 12: The intersection of politics (left) and culture (right): Have TR's initiatives strayed from 'C' to 'A'? (TR Newsletter 12/94).

analyst does, in which both political decisions as well as cultural expressions carry with them certain implications of uneven consequences for each segment of the social spectrum. Rather, the leaders of TR recognize the instrumental role that town politics plays in attaining a desired state of cultural affairs. The group's declared purpose recognizes the political nature of cultural projects. TR's goals are, namely, (1) to raise townspeople's awareness and their interest in the cultural capital of historical Takefu, (2) to stimulate townspeople to take part in the town government's deliberations about the city's future, and (3) to promote commercial and cultural revitalization of the town center by making use of the historical assets and the townscape itself. Yet the members of TR are divided between those who would have the group interact with the city government more cautiously and those more actively. For many months the group's leaders, too, were divided in their philosophy.

Mr. Yamamoto Yū'ichirō has always known the world of cultural production and political promotion to be overlapping. On the other hand, people like Mr. Inoue Kazuharu imagined only damaging entanglements if TR should enter the territory of town politics. By the time the schematic figure above came out in the group's newsletter, however, Mr. Inoue had accepted that TR's mission must include learning about the procedures of town politics, both nominal and actual. It was not enough to submit a well-designed proposal. To ensure its realization, a close watch had to be kept on the progress of the proposal. And, as the KKD affair demonstrated, some of the assumptions and conventional procedures in the town's administration required scrutiny, as well. In some cases the government's procedures warranted revamping. Mr. Saitō Kazō, one of TR's officers, summed up the connection of politics to culture in the town government by saying that in the case of the KKD, clearly it was politics that came first. Culture seemed to be an afterthought in recent events.

Related to the intersection of culture and politics is the question of appropriate "level" of culture. One of the senior members of TR, a self-educated man with a deep love of the old townscape, used the expression *HAI REBERU* (high level) on two occasions. On the first he was referring to the

mayor's wish to locate the life works and research center for Saeki Yūzō in Takefu. Being too *HAI REBERU,* he compared it to someone dressed in threadbare pants (the town of Takefu) wishing to put on a silk jacket. In the second instance he used "HAI REBERU" to refer to the intellectual heights which monthly meetings of TR sometimes went. More particularly, he thought TR's call for a town hall meeting to discuss the KKD affair was pitched too highbrow. Instead of stressing the government's travesty of democratic process, he thought that the idea of taxpayers' money being misused would be more compelling to ordinary people in Takefu.

Successful citizen movements *(shimin undo)* often enlist the help of intellectuals. Ben-Ari describes the case of a retired professor of the renowned Kyoto University who was pleased to make himself useful in this way. He deployed himself and the credential of his name card *(matsuri ageru)* in the service of a group of residents who were pushing their mayor to revise his plans so as to take the neighborhood residents' well being into account in his haste for development (1991:113). *INTERI yakuza* (intellectual gangsters) is a term for TR's most active members, coined by someone in TR who himself was once a labor leader and who the American occupation force classified as *kiken jinbutsu* (a hazardous person). He meant to suggest the relentless manner and deep resources of Japanese crime syndicates. In his metaphor, where the yakuza use (threat of) physical coercion, TR's leaders apply pressure by means of well-written sentences and reasoning that cannot be resisted. TR's publications committee is a good example of the group's multi-pronged approach to the KKD campaign.

Near the end of 1994, a few of TR's leaders asked whether I would consider publishing my field notes. After all, I had spoken with a variety of people around the city and prefecture, and as an outsider, my views could be of interest of townspeople eager to see how they are perceived. Needless to say, many of my observations were sympathetic to TR's own aims. Some of the best information consisted of TR leaders' observations about the intersection of town politics and culture. Naturally, I was eager to do what I could to give something back to the people who had shared so much with me. And because the field notes were kept on a personal computer, I was able in five or six weeks to deliver a manuscript for preparation of translation and bilingual publication (Witteveen 1995).

The book was not intended simply and solely to be a sometimes pointed picture of the city's performance. In typical TR style, it was conceived of as something more sophisticated. With both English and Japanese, they hoped the city's high school English teachers would use sections of it to teach composition. At the same time students would see how much an outsider valued the town's historical character. And, despite the small print run, it was priced within the reach of most people. Ultimately though, whether coincidental or by design, the book is a mouthpiece for TR's commendable views. Many passages quote their words, expressed as my understanding of our Japanese conversation, reconstituted from field notes recorded in English,

which were then back translated into Japanese on the facing page. In a further convolution of the source utterances, these back translations are quoted in *Futari no Saeki Yūzō* (The Two Saeki Yūzōs), written by TR's Umada Masayasu, with the help of Ms. Miki Yoshimi (1996). Their book is written in the style of highly informed conversations about the KKD affair as it develops, including the role of the media, TR and the city officials.

CONTINUING CHRONOLOGY

In the quiet days after the New Year holiday, rumors were circulating about the possibility of the mayor accepting a nomination from his party to fill a vacant seat in the National Diet. Discussion in the local newspaper warned how improper that option would seem, should such a thing come to pass. In the national media the main issue was the authenticity of the paintings, not the underlying miscarriage of democratic process or spirit, which so concerned several of the members of TR.

Finally, signaling the mayor's apparent contrition for the previous show of hubris, his assistant *(joyaku)* announced that the as-yet-not-unveiled paintings taken delivery of in December would not be kept. Near the end of January, the mayor himself said the authenticity question could not be conclusively proven either way. As for the question about his administration's handling of the entire affair, he admitted some blame of a general nature only, apologizing in hindsight for not having declared the negotiations to the townspeople from the beginning. To TR, the possibility for citizen involvement in the deliberative stage of city process, and the unsatisfactory degree of transparency in the municipal machinery are the real issues. Needless to say, the mayor acknowledged nothing out of order, status quo ante. Around this time TR helped to organize concerned citizens into the "Citizen Committee for the Consideration of the Kōkaidō Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan [art gallery] Problem" (KKD SYBJK). By the first of March they had drafted a list of specific issues to submit to the mayor to answer. In the third week of March, research funds expended, I left the field and began to rely on contacts in and outside of TR for news of subsequent developments.

At the beginning of April the mayor was hit by an expose in a local magazine *(gekkan fukui)*. It pointed to collusion of financial interests between the mayor and the heads of two local concerns, shedding further light on the peculiar nature of the paintings-for-prestige deal struck by the mayor. From this point on, through the summer months, up until the time when the scientific results would be released in the spring of 1996 under the national spotlight, the earlier tension felt by all sides seemed to relax.

In the meantime, the Planning Committee for the Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan opened its offices and the city periodically announced progress on the KKD refurbishment. TR, too, quietly pressed ahead, having already made public the problematic nature of the KKD affair and unable to do much else to influence the resolute mayor and his cadre. Their plans for the third annual cultural

symposium, intended for September 1995, had to be postponed one year in order to fully monitor the city's statements and puzzle together the exact course of events in the KKD affair. In September they revealed the picture they had pieced together at a public meeting in cooperation with the "Citizens Committee for the Consideration of the KKD SYBJK Problem."

A useful summary and window into the town government's techniques comes from the case of the Ōi-ke historical house negotiations. Built in 1807 for a brewer of soy sauce, it was the oldest surviving example of this style merchant's house in the city. In the late 1980s the six member "cultural properties nominating committee" *(bunkazai chōsa iinkai),* composed of knowledgeable local citizens and members of the city's education board *(kyōiku iinkai),* entered into negotiations with the four surviving children of the Ōi-ke household. Much to their eventual frustration, the nominating committee and the education board were caught in between the owners and the city hall administration.

The owners sought a swap of land from the city's ample holdings instead of a (taxable) cash sale. Alternatively, they would have liked to collect the proceeds from renting the land (the building donated in the bargain). This rental scheme was in effect in a similar style house 20 km to the south in the village of Imajō. The nominating committee and education board acknowledged the significance of the Ōi-ke property and urged its preservation. The city leaders stalled, but gave the impression that they were negotiating in good faith. In fact, however, there appeared to be no political will for its preservation. As a result, the owners grew tired of the process and suggested razing the place. The chairman of the committee resigned in disgust. And the man in the education board most closely connected to the negotiation process was stressed enough that, soon after the coincidence of his son's death in a traffic accident, the fact that the man killed himself cannot be seen as entirely unrelated. These unfortunate events precipitated an abrupt halt to negotiations, with the entire matter taking on a taboo aspect. The city council voted for a photographic and architectural record *(hozon kiroku)* to be made of the building, which was conducted in 1989 (Takefu-shi Kyōiku Iinkai 1992).

The city leaders resorted to disinformation to create a smooth appearance. The mayor attributed the failure of negotiations to the owners' difficult demands and their diffidence about the parcels of land shown on various occasions. But according to a handful of people in TR who have followed the Ōi-ke developments closely, the owner was not made even one bona fide offer by the mayor's office. Another example of the city offices putting out distracter disinformation appeared in the November 1994 issue of *shigikai dayori,* the quarterly digest from the city council sent to all households. The councilor charged with cultural affairs reported the city's reply to his query about where the Ōi-ke matter would go from here. The city said they had sought advice from the cultural affairs bureau of the national government in Tokyo *(bunka cho),* but that no action had been taken. Furthermore, the city's

relationship to the property holder had come into difficulty *(konnan).*But in fact, according to a member of TR still directly involved in the case, someone from the cultural affairs bureau had come from Tokyo and had remarked on the buildings' worth. But since it was a property of local significance, that negotiation and financing should be locally driven. And as for the owners' desires, it was not altogether honest to say that relations to city hall were troubled and thereby to imply that it was the property owners who were the cause, rather than the "blameless" city.

The case of the Ōi-ke historical house illustrates more than the city government's manipulation of the public record retroactively and forward in time, the use of distracter statements, and negotiation in bad faith. In the same way that words and intent, as well as appearances and actuality can diverge more widely in Japan than people are accustomed to in Western countries, it is also possible for members of the government, who are nominally at odds with a group like TR, to go out of their way to aid it materially. Thus, for example, information has been leaked to TR by sympathetic staff of the city hall and education board, while both sides maintained the appearance of minimal cooperation.

As in other societies, the politicians in Japan have developed ways to skillfully manage conflict. In a maneuver reminiscent of judō, in which the defender reaches out to the attacker, using the opponent's own inertia to deflect his advance and to effect a throw-down, the ablest public speakers are able to meet adversaries with what they wish to hear without actually promising anything (Krauss et.al. 1984:381). Miyamoto Masao, a national civil servant acquainted with the manner of politicians in both the U.S. and in Japan, made an insider's account of political and bureaucratic culture in Japan (cf. Ozawa 1994, Sakaiya 1994). In it he describes an unofficial handbook of frequently heard rhetorical expressions which act as code words, designed to give the appearance of efficiency and responsiveness while meaning very little in fact (1994:39–40). Lebra catalogues some other ways in which people seek to avoid confrontation in their conflicts (1984:55–56, cf. Yoshida 1984:85). These include feigned deafness (to ignore or shut off the source of complaint), buffering (to let a representative face the task, or displace the decision to one's superiors), containment (the strife confined to spaces out of public view), use of a conduit (to complain to mutual friend), self-directed aggression (including suicide), and resigned fatalism ("it can't be helped," *shikata ga nai).* One way to displace blame is to insinuate the problem with a current event that has generated public sentiment (Miyamoto 1994:80). Finally, in extremis, a confrontation can be avoided by not showing up at a scheduled meeting (Kuroda 1974:185). Added to these techniques are those given in Pharr's six-part "model of how conflict is to be avoided or resolved in a hierarchical society" (1990:30–31).

In addition to manipulating the public record retroactively and preemptively, municipal governments in their zeal have been known to slide past the law, if not step outside of it altogether. McKean records a case of a

mayor leap-frogging the need for debate by acting as if a decision had already been taken (1981). In the same spirit, a private company wrestling with a group of local activist residents *(jūmin undo)* tried to obviate the need for approval of their construction project by proceeding anyway. Their logic was that once the deed was done, the possibility of returning to status quo ante would have been made moot. In the same instance the citizens who resisted the city's best efforts were stripped of some of the rightful benefits they were supposed to enjoy as residents. At the national level, too, the Japanese government used this technique to apply similar pressure at the end of 1995 to landowners in Okinawa who had refused to let the U.S. military lease their land any longer. This tension between facts on the ground and rights on paper is reminiscent of the English folk knowledge that "possession is nine-tenths of the law."

The experiences of Brian Moeran, told in his account of fieldwork in Japan, sum up the main features of public authority described so far (1985:240–248). In his confrontation with local authorities about their negligence and the horrible accident of his child at school, he encountered appeals to emotion and to ad hoc settlements in place of calm reason and litigation. Public impressions were meant to be guarded at any cost, with decisions made by exclusive cliques behind closed doors. He found it impossible to pin blame on any one person or acting body. Falling into the customary posture of *omakase gyōsei* (leave things up to the governing authorities), they tried drawing him into their world of apology. 'Don't you trust us?' was a way to defy Moeran to prove his faith in the rightness of those in authority roles. Through his perspicacity, though, he learned that "trust [is] the perfect foil for deceit," while the suspicion he raised by his questioning of authorities "is the seed of alienation" (ibid:248).

After the lull of the mid-August Obon season, events once again moved ahead in the KKD affair. With only a few months left before the scheduled opening of the Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan, the National Broadcast Corporation (NHK) produced a review of the KKD affair for their *KUROZU APPU gendai* (Close in on Current Events) program. Not long after it was shown at the end of August 1995, the mayor declared that all material would be returned to Ms. Yoshizono, holder of the Saeki Yūzō material. Sealing the fate of the now abandoned gallery project, the "Citizens Committee of the Consideration of the KKD SYBJK Problem" convened a well-attended public meeting and gave a fully substantiated, comprehensive chronology of the KKD affair in the form of a table. One column tracked the city's words and deeds, another the overall chronology gleaned from the media and public records. A third column recorded the pronouncements of the select committee charged with judging the paintings. The last column gave further facts ferreted out by the detective work of TR and the "Citizens Committee for the Consideration of the KKD SYBJK Problem."

Back in 1991, when there was a proposal for making parking space out of the KKD's ground floor, nobody could have guessed that events would have

unfolded as they did. The fact that it actually did open for public use again in November 1995, was a welcome outcome and a testament to the initiative of concerned townspeople in and outside of TR, including some helpful members of the municipal bureaucracy. Though it did not open purely as a museum as had been agreed upon by the city council, the Takefushi Kōkaidō Kinenkan *(kōhō takefu* 664, p.4) did open with one floor dedicated to the display of local history and the other built to exhibit artworks owned by the city already. There was no trace of Saeki Yūzō in the building. What was surprising, however, was the fact that a citizen movement emerged with as wide and enduring a mission as TR, and the fact that their work encompassed the cultural and the political sphere of public life.

The practical result of TR's efforts was to make the city's administration honest in the KKD affair. But more significant than their perseverance and success was the fact that they seized upon the fundamental contradiction of (local) politics status quo: that it was beholden to multiple, but essentially individual interests rather than to be guided by any vision of collective interests. Perhaps of still greater significance, as a result of the KKD affair and the emergence of TR, diverse members of the public were able to come together in common cause. Interested townspeople were able to work in a rare climate, which permitted deliberation to be conducted in a professional and collegial spirit; i.e., criticism not directed ad hominem. Against the backdrop of these developments and the main players in Japanese public discourse, the next chapter will explore the wider subject of civil society more generally, and the implications that follow from the Japanese practices of civil society.

CHAPTER 5

The Significance of Japanese Civil Society

The Kōkaidō Hall (KKD) affair offers a glimpse of civil society at work. I combined observations and comments combed from field notes and the public record, along with observations of other researchers in order to form a picture of the public space occupied by the elected officials and civil servants of Takefu's government, along with the news media, town residents, and members of Takefu Renaissance (TR). But before proceeding, it is helpful to gain an overview of this public space and thus to frame the remarks that follow.

To begin with, the following terms will be placed in relation to each other: public sphere, civil society, democracy, public discourse, and social order. And then the signature elements of civil society in Japan gleaned from field notes and pointed out by scholars will be reviewed under the rubric of "First Impressions." From these the most significant practices will be examined in the section that follows, "Further Characteristics of Civil Society in Japan." Finally, the roots and ramifications of the civil society concept will be explored comparatively before summing up with a definition of Japanese civil society and its practical consequences for the involvement of the Takefu Renaissance citizens group in the KKD affair. The result should be a wide ranging look at the ways in which public discourse is shaped not only by the rhetorical skills of the principals, but also by the assumptions about what "public" signifies and the expectations each player brings to the discussion.

In his essay "Introduction. Museums and communities: the politics of public culture," Ivan Karp (1992b) clarifies many of the ideas connected to the notion of *civil society*. The term itself is more common to political science than it is to anthropology (cf. Almond and Verba 1963, 1989; Putnam 1993, 1995). It is used in various senses to mean intellectual arena, social movements, pre-political community, or something synonymous with a public sphere generally (Calhoun 1993). For Karp, who introduces an edited volume on the relationship between a museum and its communities, the term civil society has a wide, yet focused meaning. He follows Antonio Gramsci, taking it to mean the places where social order is produced and contested. It contrasts political society, which is the source for controlling and enforcing social order, and may rely on the (threatened) use of legitimate force. In short the *civil* is about discussing something, the *political* about doing something. This definition does not mean that organs of government may not also enter the

space of discussion. Rather, it means that individuals and groups such as families, neighborhoods, voluntary organizations, and professional societies are the main elements that counterpoise the government's authorized social order. Other educational institutions like museums are among the sites where the subject matter of collective interest such as shared identity and social order can be presented or be called into question.

Craig Calhoun focuses on the discursive, deliberative features in his definition of civil society. Instead of allowing agreements and action to be determined by the status of the speaker alone or by reason of the conventionality of received ideas, Calhoun writes that civil society quintessentially consists of the persuasive force of rational-critical argument (1993:269). Furthermore, being autonomous from the state is not a sufficient condition of civil society. The rational-critical arguments must also be influential on the social order. Near the end of his piece but without much elaboration, he touches on the culturally embedded nature of the civil society notion. In particular, he mentions the problems occasioned by glosses of the English word "public" in Chinese. And in her study of the historical development of the specifically Anglophone idea of civil society, Himmelfarb (1995) points to the intersection of Victorian virtues with the desire of Protestant bourgeois housewives to alleviate the ills of rapid urbanization and wage labor, along with elevation of family life to a shared, civic religion (cf. Daniels 1988).

McVeigh (1998) offers a thoughtful examination of the culturally situated nature of the idea of civil society. In his study of life in Japan, he seems to have taken the warning made by Chatterjee (1990) and others before him about using philosophy conceived in Britain, France, or Germany, for example, to assess non-Western cases. Non-Western social relations should not be exempt from the same rigorous analysis, but the baggage carried in the particular terminology is often not suitable to the specific case being examined. Chatterjee writes that too often the result is a picture defined not by what is there, but by what is found deficient to the model cases from which the source ideas derive (cf. Taylor 1992:88). McVeigh brings together an array of scholarly sources and his own observations to form an argument about the special character of civil society in Japanese life. He writes, that the ideological currents running through social life in Japan differ to those familiar in the U.S. and so, words like "civil society" and "public" must be used with care.

For one thing, actions and discourse in the public sphere in Japan seem to have a staged character. He writes that the frequent recourse to ceremonial forms of presentation along with the pervasive aspect of rituality in Japan comes from basic concepts of self in Japan, since a person defines himself or herself by reference to others. Thus the core values of particularistic relations and group dependency over those of self-autonomy often lead to opinions issued in the name of a group instead of an individual (cf. Miyamoto 1994:22). The value on empathy rather than firm impartiality accounts for ad

hoc, case by case decisions in which absolute judgment may be left suspended. And the value on hierarchy rather than egalitarianism, results in the sovereignty of received interpretations. Reduced to its minimum, McVeigh's argument focuses on the decorum and rituality of actions and words in the public sphere of Japan. By this interpretation, visual order equates with social order *(chian).* Thus the objectiveness and neutrality of formalized, ritual-like procedures takes on a moral as well as aesthetic dimension. The visual order in all its rituality, decorum and face-saving connotes moral order. As a result, the "rational-critical deliberation" that Calhoun takes as civil society's hallmark is normally invisible in Japanese public life, as chapter four's description of the players in Takefu's civil life indicates.

Having given the context and substance of civil society and pointed out how the Japanese case sheds a contrasting light on the meaning of this subject, the question still remains, how do the following terms relate: public sphere, civil society, democracy, public discourse, and social order. Once this constellation of ideas is put into a working model, the value of the insights from the KKD affair will stand out. Of the terms, I take "public sphere," space or arena to be the widest in scope. This is the place observable to members of a society that includes both halves of Gramsci's distinction, the political and the civil societies. Public sphere differs existentially from "society" in toto by excluding private matters or affairs of a personal nature, which have no intended or potential witnesses, and are not of particular consequence to others in the society. Thus a private company board meeting or a family reunion would not be considered part of the public sphere, but a meeting of a board of education or a family reunion of the U.S. President could be.

If public sphere is where the words and deeds of civil and political society can be found, then the next question to ask is who is involved. "Community" may be used for the specific group of actors in the public sphere, be they individual or collective, private entities or organs of the state. "Civil society" includes the words and deeds of all communities except the state (whose actions fall in the political half of Gramsci's distinction). The state's words may still be part of public discourse (Calhoun's rational-critical argument), or in some cases may even monopolize the evaluative layer of discourse, the "public opinion."

Summed up in the form of a single phrase, "civil society" consists of the deeds, public discourse and public opinion of various communities of interest, both individual and collective, private sector, voluntary and governmental. The other half of the public sphere is "political society." This is the province of the state, which includes its authority to use coercive force in maintaining social order. The remaining terms, "democracy" and "social order," can be fit into this picture at the same level as, but adjacent to, "public sphere." Social order may be thought of as the conditions, which the government is charged with preserving, by force if necessary, but it is also the subject of endless

discourse in civil society. In the striving for consensus and the struggle against the imposition of identity from outside, it is this very flux of deliberation that is democracy's hallmark. But democracy is just one of the philosophies and protocols which can inform both halves of a public sphere, the political and civil. The case of the KKD affair told in the previous chapter gives substance to the idea that this constellation of terms for (public) social life is indeed culturally situated. By weaving field notes with documentation in the scholarly literature on the subject of civil society in Japan, and then further discussing the special features found there, the field in which TR has been operating will be illuminated.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The notion of a civil society and the associated ideas of democracy, the Public, community and volunteerism do not have a long history in Japan. McVeigh (1998) gives a brief resume of the term, telling how this word was used before WWII by the Marxist influenced *shimin shakai-ron* (civil society school). Contrasting Marx's description of life in a capitalist society, they point out how Japan develops without an active civil society, although Uchida (1981, 1985) did acknowledge that postwar American reforms supported the development of civil society. At the same time this absence is what allowed such rapid economic development (cf. Hirata 1987).

Looking at the character of civil society in Japan from a more ethnographic point of view, the subject can be seen in closer detail. To begin with, the field in which public discourse takes place can be divided into the physical media of discussion on the one hand and the actors who are in that field, and what they have to say on the other hand. Examples of the first are print (and broadcast) media, circulars issued by a town like the *shigikai dayori* (From Your City Council) or *kōhō takefu* (Takefu Circular). The local slander and scandal sheet, *goro shinbun*, is yet another medium to circulate views. Then there are occasions like the city council assemblies, and statements made at public gatherings such as the fall culture symposium TR convenes. Finally, there is the small talk and informal exchanges between individuals *(seken banashi)* by telephone, fax, or in person *(wadai—cu*rrent events, and *uwasa—* gossip). The inspirational placards *(gaku),* charters *(kenshō)* and mission statements *(mokuhyō)* found in government, corporate, educational, cultural and household settings also enter in to the public spaces of commentary and criticism, alongside the advertisements of commercial and popular culture vying for public attention. On the other hand, examples of the actors found in the field of public discourse include the local news media, subject experts (academic, industry representatives, staff of a town's education board), public servants of city hall, and elected officials (city councilors, the mayor and his cadre). The national news media's coverage of the town of Takefu as well as the portrayal of faraway current events they bring to townspeople also belong to the town's field of public discourse.

In contrast to the many interest groups that are a part of U.S. public discourse, in Japan the public arena is practically monopolized by three elites: politicians, media, and academic people (Gotoda 1985:12, cf. Miyamoto 1994:22). A review of Takefu's annual calendar of festivities, conferences, trade fairs and so forth shows that public events are largely organized and sponsored by the city hall and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The position statements, refutations and rebuttals that make up public commentary in the U.S. are much less apparent in Japan. Gotoda writes that the free exchange of ideas, even among left wing academics, is discouraged (1985:100). And aside from opinion-editorial pieces, gossip between friends or discussion within the confines of a group's own members, citizens seldom venture into the wider space of public discourse. Miyoshi suggests that the shortage of free public venues is one of the things that discourages lively public discourse (1989:40–41). He points out that the places for public gathering are limited in Japan to halls that must first be reserved and rented. Whether this restricted physical space is a contributing cause or consequence of public discursive space in Japan is not clear.

There are differences in the participation of the sexes in the public sphere. Working at home or away, unpaid or wage earning, it is women who are most active in cultural pursuits. Traditional practices like flower arranging or kimono dressing are considered to be both practical adornments, and aesthetic and even spiritual disciplines. Following the thought that the visual dimension of rituality is where civil society of Japan inheres, perhaps these varied traditional genres may also serve as practical exercises in manipulating the social space of civil society. Other subjects such as cooking, foreign language conversation (English), and knitting also bring women of all ages together. While the class may have been the initial attraction, the social links that may form there often sustain the gatherings beyond the term of the course itself. Anecdotally, the case of a well to do woman in her late 40s illustrates this ethic of self-edification and the function of extending personal networks, which results by these cultural pursuits.

In addition to practicing modern flower arrangement, the tea ceremony (and kimono dressing) and noh chorus chants, this woman was active in the Parent Teacher Organization and housewives' union. She tutored junior high school students in English, was active in Takefu's international committee and foreign visitor's bureau, participated in the Genji Academy Study Circle and the Society for Trees and Buildings [Ki to kenchiku kai, qv. chapter three]. What is pertinent is the collection of personal connections made in these private and semi-public spheres of cultural pursuits. Nevertheless, in the more visible spaces of public discussion, this large reserve of women participating in organizations is not apparent.

The late Miyamoto Masao points out that women rarely enter politics, whether elective office or civil service (1994:64). They also hold few academic posts. Only in journalism, one of the three elites of the public arena, are there any number of women (Herzog 1993:262). And here, too, the men

are disproportionately many. On the other hand, both Tsurutani (1977:195) and Maruyama (in Miyoshi 1996:35) have pointed out the particular role women play in Japanese intellectual life. Critical thinking is mainly the preserve of middle-class housewives, whose children have entered school, and who have the time, wherewithal, and network of friends to take up various issues and think them through.

None of the main players taking up space in Japanese civil society are able to explore ideas freely and vigorously. *Academics* are on the defensive against challenges to their credibility (cf. bureaucrats, Miyamoto 1994:84), *journalists* are careful not to take any one position, and *politicians* tend to care most about the perceived personal consequences rather than substance of an issue. By contrast, housewives may engage in critical discussion of public affairs relatively free of personal stakes. However, their nascent public discourse, like that located internally in other groups of citizens, seldom enters the wider arena of public discourse. A study group may research a problem and produce a summary of its findings, but it would not likely be for general distribution. And as for the case of the *shimin undo* groups of citizen activists, which McKean (1981) wrote about, most are single-issue movements. Their criticism would be directed at the named organization or agencies involved, rather than to be addressed to any putative "community" or body politic generally.

FURTHER THINGS—TAKING THINGS PERSONALLY

In a "particularistic" society like Japan's (reminiscent of the "multi-stranded" relations in Redfield's folk-urban continuum, 1941), it is problematic to make private initiatives into a public sphere dominated by politicians, academics and the media. Aside from a lack of public credentials, the statements, counter claims, and rebuttals that follow may too easily become confused with the personality of the speaker. Since a message is so liable to be confounded with the messenger, the stakes seem too high to risk offending someone else, much less to take the chance of one's own remarks to be found wanting by peers in the full light of the public eye.

It is hard to find any neutral space for discussion of public matters. In the world of museum curators, for example, Mr. Kasamatsu of the Fukui Prefectural Museum said that to go beyond technical matters and comment on the interpretive style of a colleague could prove very difficult for social relations. Critical remarks equate with (negative) criticism, as McKean showed in her description of the way a citizen movement divided a town. Whatever middle ground there might once have been collapsed, making residents either necessarily *for* the movement and thus opposed to the town leaders, *or* vice versa (1981:85). The free exchange of ideas could be hampered, in the sense that argumentation easily collapses into ad hominem attacks. For this reason, TR took pains to keep their lines of communication open with the people at city hall. Asked of the risk that the mayor would take

personal offense at the persistent probes by the citizen's group, TR's Inoue Kazuharu said not to fear, he for one meant no harm, and was proceeding calmly and coolly *(reisei)*.

In consideration of the personal nature of critical remarks, there are certain strategies to protect the interests of people involved. One is to subordinate the content of an issue to its presentation. The result is that appropriate remarks have a ritualistic quality to them; routine, and significant not for what they say so much as for the simple fact that they are uttered. The absence of neutral space in the public arena accounts for the emphasis on appearances, according to McVeigh's thesis (1998). In a sense every space is somebody's territory. This is why formal etiquette is so important in shaping interpersonal relationships and defining one's sense of self (page 44, 98). Proper appearances and procedure reflects the desired reality and at the same time constitutes that reality, whether personal or collective.

Another way to sheathe possibly sharp remarks is for the declarations to come in the name of a group rather than an individual. An individual alone, regardless of the strength of his or her logic, occupies little social space and receives correspondingly little attention in the public sphere (Miyamoto 1994:125). For the larger space it occupies and the safety it affords its members, a group is the only way to express criticism openly (ibid:22). The predominance of groups in public discourse, however, has detractions. Miyamoto points out that accountability becomes dispersed. Credit may be taken (albeit by figureheads), but blame simply accrues to the role, not to the person occupying the leader's role. Therefore, when things go wrong, personnel may be reshuffled, but the earlier practice may continue to be perpetuated (ibid:122).

The character of the Japanese language itself figures in to the quality of public discourse in Japan, both reflecting and creating the personalizing, particularistic nature of social relations among people who conduct their lives in Japanese. A feature of interpersonal relations is the frequent construction of compound predicates to add an emotive as well as status aspect to an expression. Thus *yonde kudasatta* [(status superior) did me the kindness of reading it], while archaic sounding in English, is not uncommon in Japanese; nor is *kashite ageru* [I'll do you (status superior, yet familiar) the kindness of lending it to you]. By marking the benefit received or given (or conversely, loss suffered by way of the suffixing verb *shimau*), daily relations are habitually laden with personal acknowledgement. Things do not merely happen. Something happens and somebody gains or loses by it. In the same way, arguments are not simply made, but once made are likely to be given personal interpretation, easily collapsing into attacks ad hominem.

Added to the convention of personalized descriptions is the low value placed on crisp syllogism and clear exposition. The rhetorical power of arguments relies on emotional appeal instead of critical thinking (cf. Field 1983, Moeran 1989 regarding Japanese advertisements). Robert March calls this emotive strategy the *naniwa bushi* approach, after the ballad style

famously deriving in the urban culture of premodern Osaka (1990:22–26). This approach may come from a desire to elicit empathy by wrapping the person addressed in layers of implicature. To be labeled *rikutsuppoi* (smacking of logic) signifies a certain unfeeling coldness and distance from the person addressed. Furthermore it signifies a single, one-dimensional line of thought, not fitting a mature socially sophisticated person. In a real life example, Rosen tells about the poor election results of an uncharacteristically *issue*-oriented campaign run by the social commentator Omae Kenichi. In place of the "I'm your good neighbor" tradition, he offered "my answers to the issues" and the Tokyo voters seem to have shunned him.

In addition to the distaste for barrages of explicit logic, there may be a more instrumental reason for arguments in Japanese proceeding recursively. In a conversation with a Japanese man who had studied at a U.S. college, the subject of highly polished yet somehow hollow debate at Takefu city council came up. He pointed out the connection between careful writing and clear thinking. He had been impressed by the techniques taught to U.S. college students to structure their writing with a topic sentence, paragraphing, and hierarchical outlines. By comparison, he said, Japanese students were left to their own devices, with the more motivated ones (rote) learning by example rather than by explicit direction. No matter where the source may be located—in the grammar, stylistic tastes, or in the interpersonal relations of the *dangō* mode of political life (chapter four), the result is the same. From the conversations with members of TR, and later reading through the observation of other scholars, it seems that public discourse in Japanese society—thoughtfully articulated and impassioned though it may be—is seldom thorough going; nor is it guided by a larger plan, nor is it coldly critical.

Some of the ways in which language usage works against critical public discourse may be suggested. Like many languages, the stylistic conventions of written Japanese diverge from its spoken forms. It is not that sophisticated ideas cannot be discussed in oral form, but that the demands of a conversational setting usually result in something shallower, less ambitions, and concerned mainly with the social posturings of the principals (Miyoshi 1989:31). Such is the case with the popular form of presenting ideas called *zadankai*. Something short of a panel discussion, it is usually a conversational meeting of expert minds which has been a hugely popular way to bring sometimes complicated ideas before the readers, listeners and viewers of Japan.

To its credit, the *zadankai* succeeds in making critical texts into mass artifacts; that is, ideas with wide recognition value. Ivy describes more generally the way that the terms and writings on semiotics, structuralism, or post-structuralism were able to gain a popular readership. Some of these words become objects of fascination in the mass media, however briefly. In certain cases they may even become incorporated into popular usage just like so many other foreign words (fieldwork sample is given in the appendices). Ivy stresses that the success or failure of a critical text in becoming a mass artifact is contingent on the item being presented in an "enjoyable" form

(ibid:433, cf. "edutainment," Creighton 1994). The *zadankai* is ideally suited to this purpose. Famous experts are invited to talk about their ideas in a relaxed forum, giving readers or an audience the impression of being privileged to eavesdrop on the banter of great minds.

Kersten describes the process beginning with carefully selected speakers. The conversation is non-scholarly and stilted because of the structured shape of the session, the hierarchy among speakers and vague use of language; partly due to language practices in Japanese. The transcripts are then given to the speakers to edit before editing by the publisher (1996:6).

The *zadankai* form also has its drawbacks. Beyond the social posturing of conversation that can get in the way of serious discussion, there is also a certain vagueness inherent in artfully spoken Japanese. A conversation in Japanese is more cooperative than one in English. Speakers readily become insinuated in the exchange. Compared to English, conversational "fillers" *(aizuchi)* occur more frequently, and a speaker may stop in mid-sentence, expecting the listener to understand the rest or perhaps to supply the rest of the phrase. The course of an argument often proceeds recursively rather than as a nested set of subordinate ideas extending from a thesis statement (Moeran 1985:44). Kuroda describes the limitations of Japanese language the most directly, saying it is better suited to indirect suggestion than it is to making clear, precise statements (1974:183). And E.Hall observed that Japanese is a "high context" medium, one in which contextual clues shape conversational possibilities and may even obviate some of the need to verbalize. One implication is that discourse is of comparatively lesser importance than actions and context.

Whether at the level of single phrases (Kuroda), entire lines of reasoning (Moeran), or the oral channel itself (Miyoshi), the conventions of the Japanese language result in a comparative paucity of thoughtful public discourse. The frenetic pace of publishing *zadankai* transcripts and the speed with which foreign thinkers are translated obscures the limited vision of homegrown Japanese public discourse (Miyoshi 1991:217–232).

Moving now from the verbal medium to the wider set of characteristics of the discourse in public life, the next section will explore in greater detail the salient features of civil society in Japan that have been pointed out in the experiences of the Takefu Renaissance group, beginning with the dominance of government authorities in discussing matters of public concern.

> Mayor Koizumi… "There are valuable resources in Takefu that can only be found here. We'd like to use these to cultivate our community *[machi zukuri]*, but the most important thing is for the people who live here to know the treasures and special character of their own town. Granted this, it will be possible to cultivate our community with citizen's participation." He calls for citizen participation, cooperation, and ideas. Townspeople themselves occupy an important role.
>
> —Fukui Newspaper on the eve of TR's townhall meeting on municip al irregularities, 21 December 1994.

This quote illustrates some of the properties of the town government's standard operating procedure. First, there is the false humbleness that cloaks a paternalistic core; the pretense that the government serves the people instead of the reverse. Second, there is the belief that the declared, publicly enunciated record serves as the agreed upon perception and therefore is what ultimately matters. It may also be a matter of convenience *[katachi dake],* sometimes only tenuously related to actual conditions. Third, the kindly tone of the quote is a good example of the symbiotic relationship between the mass media and the ruling powers. Despite certain ambivalences on the two sides, the presentation of government positions in the public record may take on a higher gloss than it originally had, thanks to the journalist's polishing skill. None of these characteristics are special to Japanese society, but in combination with a set of beliefs and the elements described throughout this chapter, they do add up to a manner of civil society that may be called Japanese.

With regard to the first point, the top-down, command style of government prefaced "for the People's own good" *(shimin no tame),* it can be found at the earliest moments in classroom culture and in the lingering traces of Confucianism found across the East Asian cultural sphere. By the time people reach the Coming of Age Ceremony at 20, most seem perfectly accustomed to this archetype for relating to authority figures. One consequence is the "package tour mentality" of *omakase gyōsei,* (blindly) leaving matters in the hands of those in charge.

One example of government omniscience cited in the second chapter was in the prefectural office of cultural affairs. Here the relationship of capital city to villages and towns was posed delicately between the attitudes of paternalism and humble service. The civil servants felt a sense of service and duty to provide superior cultural opportunities to the hinterland; that is, what they felt themselves in a privileged position to know to be best for the outlying citizens. Another example of the top-down approach to administrative matters is the concept of *hako gyōsei* [govern the container, never mind the contents] pointed out in interview by curators and librarians in chapter two. A trivial case of this approach to decision making which works well is that of restaurants providing set menus *(teishoku).* Too busy to compose their own plates, diners may request set A, B or C, for example. If their friends are with them, they may take the same. If the fellow diners are junior to the first person, according to stereotype and especially if the senior is paying, it would not be strange for the subordinates to follow the leader's choice. On the other hand, a potentially disastrous example of the *hako gyōsei* mentality at work would be a case like the KKD during certain stages, such as when budgets were adopted in advance of the particulars of the facility being worked out. Form and content become disconnected or even reversed. The outcome could have been something overdone or, on the contrary, inadequate to its purpose.

A final example of the government's characteristically heavy-handed way comes in the matter of designating certain artifacts, sites, or natural features

"important cultural properties." The designation binds object and owner to a set of expectations and regulations. Declaring a tree, for example, to be in the mutual interest of all citizens now and into the future suggests in practice that it belongs now instead in the government's control. "Public" interest does go beyond private interests, but in this example, it refers not to the public, as in the English language usage of "belongs to everyone." Rather it seems to mean the public *authorities;* i.e. city hall, in this case. As one man said of his fellow townspeople's reluctance to allow their oldest trees to be surveyed as potential city-designated treasures, the perception is that they the owners will no longer be able to freely dispose of the tree as they would do. And after all, he said, a massive old *keyaki* [paulownia] does sell for a tidy sum these days.

An edition of the biweekly circular from city hall, *kōhō takefu*, nicely illustrates the city government's preoccupation with the public record, even at the expense of what may be closer to the truth. In number 663 (15 December 1995) the city gives its reckoning of the KKD affair. Despite TR's bold entry into the public sphere, there is no mention of the group's existence, let alone any acknowledgement of the role it played. There is no record of the disruption the affair caused. Instead a tidy chronology is presented in such a way as to give the impression that events came about as discrete episodic responses to circumstances, rather than as the result of any possible larger designs or intentions. In other words, there is no recognition of individual ambition or culpability. Nor is there any hint of personal stakes being involved. Finally, there is no admission of procedural infelicities or poor judgment. The next issue, number 664 (16 January 1996), publishes the year in review. Needless to say, the KKD appears only by virtue of its official opening to the public in November. There is no indication of the troubles caused by the affair. In another part of number 664 the mayor holds an audience with members who perform in The Society for the Preservation of Echizen-style Manzai, a sometimes parodic banter and dance accompanied by hand drums; a sort of medieval rap song. The mayor's words (below) seem to show him a chastened man left with less hubris now that the KKD affair had been concluded.

> When we say *machi zukuri* [cultivating "community"], it means getting local residents to participate. I believe the government and townspeople have got to join as one and go forward.
>
> —Mayor Koizumi, *kōhō takefu*, 16 January 1996, p.3

The concern of groups, and above all government, with the public record has to do not only with the primacy of proper appearances. It also has to do with circumspection and sensitivity to the impression that results. An example of the first aspect is the orderly appearance made of consensus in the official minutes of a city council assembly (Kuroda 1974:181) or the impression of decorum made by a government official's regal diction echoing in a sympathetic newspaper article. An example of the second aspect is a

conversation with a civil servant who asked me in an aside to give the town "good *PI ARU*" [PR, public relations]. Or in a city council assembly, a councilor who was arguing for elevators to be put in public facilities told how the town of Obama, with just half the population of Takefu had been able to invest in their infrastructure in this way. He implied shame on Takefu for not doing the same for its own aging population.

The public record may be manipulated not only retroactively (e.g. city council minutes), but also before the fact. The November 1994 edition of *shigikai dayori* [From Your City Council] introduced the mayor's plan to make the KKD into the Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan. The illustrated, glossy presentation gave the effect that the matter was all but complete. There was no mention of the forgery suspicions, the shady nature of negotiations, the anemic challenges made by councilors at the assembly, the circumventing of normal democratic consultative process, much less the initiatives of TR. In this way, all households registered with city hall were delivered a story meant favorably to predispose them to the mayor's project. Whatever criticisms might be raised could therefore be obviated since (it would appear to be the case that) the matter already had been decided and the facility was now virtually a reality. Even after the Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan had been repeatedly torpedoed by the results of investigations by TR and others, and even after it had been withered under the scrutiny of national media, the city hall persisted in its wishful vision of the Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan. The March 1995 *shigikai dayori* showed the KKD rechristened as the Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan, complete with the giant headline, *"atarashii machi zukuri no tane"* (the start of new community-building).

This collective circumspection is not limited to corporate or town officials, though. In a conversation with a member of TR, the mishandling of the KKD affair was recognized for the negative example it gave to the national policy of subsidiarity *[chihō bunken],* in which local officials were encouraged to take over ever more administrative responsibilities from the central government. Another TR member, though, was conscious of the fact that the experiences of their citizen group could serve as a positive national model, a prototype. In a society as centralized and riven with mass media as Japan's, local practices can easily be conveyed and copied across the nation, often to good effect.

The causal connection perceived between appearances and actuality is strong indeed. At the October 1994 cultural symposium sponsored by TR, the mayor attributed the town's past fortunes and its current prospects to its overall appearance. The many roof tiled, wood sided weathered buildings and the narrow streets that ipso facto give the town its character are also what supposedly give visitors the unflattering impression of a back-water town; of stagnation. The mayor said the town, like the people of Takefu and wider Hokuriku region of the western seaboard, has done a poor job of *APĪRU* [appealing, presenting itself attractively]. In his mind the mayor thought that the way to rid the homely, sad and lonesome *(sabishii)* image that people got

when they step outside of the train station was for the townspeople to discard their brooding nature. Since he spoke as an honored guest at a symposium celebrating the town's heritage, he did not complete his line of reasoning, but the implied next step would be to get rid of parts of the physical fabric of the townscape, at least around the train station.

One expression of the city government's sensitivity to the impression it makes and its concern with the public record has been the creation of certain "feel good" events. *IBENTO* (events) like the Winterfest and Summerfest draw tourists, demonstrate the city government's organizational powers and deep pockets. The events are designed above all to please residents. Being politically motivated, and to a lesser extent commercially driven, these *IBENTO* are top-down, command style examples of *machi zukuri* (community cultivating). Instead, as someone in TR pointed out, these sizable budgets and organizational energies could be better spent on smaller scale, neighborhood-level civic productions. Activities intended to truly "cultivate community" *(machi zukuri)* across social networks might include, for example, symposia, panel discussions, and publications of research into local lore. As it is, the city government's neighborhood-level efforts are normally confined to courses offered in the *kōminkan* (community halls) around the town.

THE NEWS MEDIA

Stepping outside the bounds of municipally edited publications, the public record is not quite as glossy. What biting words that do exist in public discourse may be found in the investigative articles of weekly variety magazines like *Playboy* [unrelated to the U.S. publication] (Fulford 1994). But these are self-contained flares that do not by themselves enter the wider arena of public opinion. So completely do the newspapers and broadcast media own the space of discourse, that only commercial advertisements, political pronouncements and scholars' observations are admitted. Hence the heightened importance of the news media in Japan and the perceptions they create. Lee (1985) has documented the news making process in Japan and observed that writers are extremely scrupulous about giving the many sides of an issue. In the end, in the name of objectivity, they give the effect of having no single standpoint, no way to offer an assessment or conclusion.

Despite their aim of being gadfly for citizen interests, journalists are mindful of the relationship of trust cultivated with politicians. Often the result is sympathetic coverage. In the case of the KKD affair, the *Fukui Newspaper* did pick up the rumor that Takefu's mayor might escape the apparent improprieties of the KKD affair by accepting the offer to represent his district as a National Dietman (3 February 1995). The journalist criticized any such attempt, hypothetical though it might be. But on the whole, several members of TR seemed to be in agreement that the local press was parochial and that it loyally (blindly) supported the status quo. One example they gave was the afterthought of an article with which the *Fukui Newspaper* (4 March 1995)

reported the petition of "The Citizens' Group for the Consideration of the Fundamental Problems of the Saeki Yūzō Art Museum" *(Saeki Yūzō bijutsukan kōsō mondai o kangaeru shimin no kai)* being delivered to city hall. Other newspapers, by comparison, had reported the reason for the petition and something of its contents.

A more serious example of journalistic myopia is the January 1995 series that the *Fukui Newspaper* ran about the KKD, Saeki Yūzō, and the steps leading up to the affair. At the January TR meeting it was pointed out that the headline of January 19th was peculiar and symptomatic of the newspaper's stance. Instead of saying the mayor had acted in an irregular manner, the newspaper said that his mistake was in being caught, thus implying that the short circuit of democratic process was within the prerogatives of the powerful; a trifling peccadillo.

As a nation Japanese are great readers of newspapers, often taking one or more subscriptions. Comparing circulation to population, there is one (mainly national) daily newspaper for every two Japanese, well above the 1:3 ratio for the U.K., U.S., or former Soviet Union (Tanaka 1985:110). With the great importance of public perceptions, and the central role that news media occupy, it is easy to see why Japanese are so news hungry. The power of making impressions on readers, for better or for worse, became apparent to me at an interview with the newspaper journalists (cf. Van Wolferen 1989:96–8, 231–5). After the December 1994 city council meeting recessed, TR's Miki Yoshimi invited me to come along while the journalists questioned her in their office one floor below the council chamber. They wanted to know the origin and aims of the newly launched *mihariban* citizen's watchdog group, and its connection to TR. Although I had seen her poised and articulate on all occasions, I was aware of the extra effort she made at this time to avoid any mistaken impression on the part of the journalists. When they asked her reaction to the mayor's hard headed insistence on pressing on with the KKD affair, despite increasing doubts, she did not offer the writer anything definite. Instead she let the facts speak for her: that more than a dozen townspeople had been interested enough to fill the visitor gallery of the council chamber. In the end, what seemed to matter most in public discourse, as indeed it does between individuals, is appearances. Even when the facts are at variance with the words, these words must be ones suitable for the occasion. The social order *(chitsujo)* in civil society is defined by the semblance of social order. In a word, appearance is all.

> *mizaru, kikazaru, iwazaru* [see no, hear no, speak no evil]
> —tableau of three monkeys, dynastic tomb for the Shoguns, Nikko
> "They think that if you straighten out your appearance, then every problem will be solved," said Hiromasa Oyama, 46, a sixth-grade teacher. "But this will solve nothing. This is just belittling us."
> … [mayor] rejects their argument that [proposed teacher] uniforms stifle creative thinking and individual expression.
> —Kevin Sullivan reporting from Habikino, suburb of Osaka (1996)

ROOTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND RAMIFICATIONS

Political scientists have compared the extent to which divergent rhetoric and reality are tolerated in various societies. That is, at different points in history and from one society to the next, the distance between authorities' declared interpretation of events and the way things look to everybody else can differ widely. The case of the KKD affair has shown how skillfully Takefu's city hall was able to manipulate its presentation of the proposed KKD conversion into an art gallery, as if it were already after the fact. One lesson that can be drawn is that so long as the publicized words and imagined social order match, even when these do not necessarily correspond to objective reality, then the look of social order is preserved.

What is peculiar to an outside observer is not just the ability to adjust the facts circulating publicly for political convenience, but moreover, the uniformity of appearances (or low tolerance of contradiction) and the monologic nature of the discourse (a low number of voices, little variation among them). By contrast, the process of government in the U.S. is less tidy, the opinions more varied, and the latitude for giving interpretations that wander from the facts much more limited. There is room for misrepresentation, but this is counterbalanced by the possibility of challenge, sometimes accompanied by legal redress.

The degree of tolerance in the fit between what is said and what is meant varies from one society to another and can be seen as a comparative political phenomenon. In the U.S. there is a certain fresh-faced earnestness about civil society. People expect a close connection between what they are told, what is meant and the actions that follow from it. While nobody in any society likes public embarrassment or undue scrutiny, as a motivating principle in the U.S., "saving face," is subordinated to truth, defined as the close fit of words, intent and outcomes. The presence of hypocrisy is regarded as a serious flaw, not as a normal condition of public affairs.

Keeping civil society tidy in any nation depends on particular standards of polite behavior. For example, noise and dirt must be controlled in the common spaces of "public." Likewise there are limits on staring, touching or even speaking to strangers. Goffman (1963) calls this a "civil inattention" so as not to threaten or feel threatened by strangers. Simmel's (1988:329) observation also touches on the intersection of the proprieties of civil society and what are considered civilized manners, in this case linked to urban living: "There is perhaps no psychic phenomenon which is so unconditionally reserved to the city as the blasé outlook" (cf. R.Williams 1976 on the trajectory of the notion of "Private," also Elias 1978 in *The Civilizing Process).* The connection between polite proprieties and civil society does not uniquely coincide in Japanese life (e.g. Barthes 1982, cf. Barthes 1974; Bourdieu 1984). But the attribution of instrumental power to carefully observed (ritualistic) decorum does seem to be especially elaborated in Japanese thinking (Hendry 1996).

Civil society implies good social manners. To the extent that it requires a culturally specific set of manners, a definition of civil society must go beyond the content of rational-critical arguments to include the standards for polite interaction found in a particular segment of the society. Thus, in a curious convolution, civil society is both the location where people hammer out cultural politics in debate, and is itself the product of cultural politics. The manner in which civil society is conducted reflects the tastes of a particular echelon of people. The distinctions made by prominent social figures in the public sphere do not come from a conspiracy to defend their status, but nevertheless do mark a certain set of standards and expectations as the preferred ones, and coincidentally are the ones most familiar to this same stratum of people. To the extent that civil society and associated manners are synonymous with middle class ways, then the hegemony described by Gramsci will obtain.

In Western countries it is undoubtedly the tastes of the bourgeoisie that dictate the boundaries and standards of civil society. Victorian England, a self-declared nation of shopkeepers, exhibited a particularly vigorous florescence of civil society. Himmelfarb writes how the home was central to life, making the family to be "something like a civic religion" (1995). By extension the same sense of communal morality was applied to society as a whole, with this projected image reaching as far away as the administration of colonies and plantations abroad. In the U.S., most of the youth (e.g. Boy Scouts, originally of England) and community service organizations (e.g. Rotary, later Rotary International) coincided with the waves of immigration between 1900 and 1930. Along with the homogenizing effect of comprehensive compulsory education, military service and popular culture, these newly arisen organizations helped to bring people together in the common cause of building civic pride and promoting civic mindedness with the aim of making good citizens (Putnam 1995).

In Japan, on the other hand, the government dominates matters of public concern. Instead of the bourgeoisie it is the bureaucratic culture and social descendants of the samurai warrior-scholar class, and possibly elements of the former nobility and aristocratic class, who dictate the proper ritualistic forms of civil society (cf. Edwards 1989 on the evolution of wedding forms in Japan, emulating this samurai class). Civil society in Japan consists of little debate that could be considered neutral, effectively detached from either government stances or family-like loyalties; neutral in the sense of being issue oriented rather than outcome oriented. Furthermore, there are few neutral spaces where public discourse can take place. This lack of neutrality in public discourse may account for the great attention on appearances, concern with ceremony and ritualistic public presentation. These characteristics are what Van Wolferen objects to in his piercing analysis of public authority in Japanese society. He points out how conflict is avoided in public by accepting contradictions and ambiguity (p. 333). Likewise, scholarly interaction is a series of one-way reports rather than dialogic argument and refutation,

because to argue is to conflict; and conflict is to be avoided. Anecdotally, from the arena of electronic lists, exchanges are likewise a series of one way arguments, rather than dialogic engagements with the issues; the classic "mizukake ronso"—throwing buckets of water at each other (Yoshida, personal communication).

Given that the space for civil society is not neutral and what can be found there is also not neutral, it seems that the preoccupation with formal (and visual) aspects of a matter leads to objectification, thereby creating a certain distancing of politeness. This objectifying effect allows some of the same things that the more neutral public discourse of civil society in Western countries does. Namely, the formalism, politeness and concern with presentation in Japanese public discourse give a sense of detachment between a person and his or her words. In the rhetoric of social relations among Japanese, this concern with form (and visual appearances generally) works like the rational-critical debate in the "neutral" public spaces of Western societies. That is, it creates a buffer between a speaker, hemmed in by immediate needs and intentions, and a topic, open to multiple meanings. McVeigh (1998) goes further, suggesting that it is not the concern with appearances and visual objectification that permits a functional equivalent to civil society. It is moreover the ritualistic and formulaic patterns of social relations that make for something functionally equivalent to civil society in Japanese life.

In Japan the often used and well known pair of complementary terms *honne* [literally, ringing true] and *tatemae* [façade, or scaffolding for use in building a front] attest to the prevalence and conventionality of this distinction in the social life of Japanese (cf. Lebra 1976c:136). While people everywhere are aware of times when the nominal and the actual diverge, the tolerance for discrepancy varies from one society to another. In Goffman's terminology, it is "working consensus" that corresponds to the notion of *tatemae* (1959:9). He writes that a semblance of agreement works when a person "conceals his own wants behind statements which assert values to which everyone present feels obliged to give lip service."

The same awareness of duplicity a Westerner would label as untruth, a Japanese might regard as the consciousness gained with maturity. After all, the reasoning goes, social affairs are delicate things and to fail to distinguish *honne* and *tatemae* is plainly unsophisticated. Without the separation of feelings and words made possible by the *honne* and *tatemae* distinction, social life could not be conducted as smoothly as it is in practice. And so, the space of public discourse in Japanese life can be characterized both by the uniformity of appearances in the public sphere and the tolerance for words to diverge from intentions. While appearances are supposed to predicate the social order *(chitsujo),* what is publicly declared may well diverge from what is actually intended.

Several corollaries follow from the belief in the primacy of public perceptions. The first is that actual appearance must *mirror* desired reality;

that the care that is taken in the decorum of civil society will effectively translate to the same desired orderliness in all departments of social life. Rohlen takes Japanese high school as his social microcosm, writing, "that orderliness in a Japanese school does not evoke an authoritarian image in the eyes of most, but rather is pleasant evidence of benevolence, high morale, and successful instruction" (Rohlen 1983:201). Furthermore, "Precision in school wide events is another sign of a school's moral state" (ibid:201). Elsewhere he describes students as being politically apathetic (ibid:210). Indeed, one of the lessons of high school in Japan more so than elsewhere seems to be that a person should conform to a precisely prescribed manner of presenting one's self and one's ideas (cf. Hall's "high context" culture).

By extension, social order resides not in the school as an anonymous body, but in the series of smaller groups to which one belongs, such as one's homeroom and afterschool activity groups. Participation in groups "is assumed to be natural, healthy, and proper. Nonparticipation, it is assumed, is accompanied by loss of self-confidence and self-worth" (ibid:203). Later Rohlen identifies recognition of social interdependence as the basis for social order in Japanese schools. "Neither ideology nor law is emphasized as the foundation of social order or meaning…Morality is based on a consciousness of social relations, an awareness of being interdependent" (p.256).

A second corollary relating to the primacy of public perceptions is that form and content are linked in such a way that maintaining proper appearances (in public discourse) is not simply a matter of decorum, or "saving (collective) face," but will actually *cause* the desired social order *(chitsujo)* to result. McVeigh (1998) demonstrates the considerable attention and expense that goes into creating proper appearances; and by implication, avoiding improper appearances. There are books about how one should speak and write, offer greetings in specific contexts. And from school age on up it is not unusual to have rules with precise measurements for clothing or how to wear one's hair, for example.

Needless to say, disruptions like public demonstrations upset the surface and therefore the central being of social order. One indicator of the all importance of appearances is that foreign recipients of research scholarships from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (formerly *Monbushō)* have been required to sign a pledge. In it they foreswear protests and similar acts against the *chitsujo* (public order). In bureaucratic circles, too, the safety that comes with conforming is a dominant theme. Miyamoto says that appearance is paramount. The formula for a successful career in the civil service is not to be late, not to ask for time off work, and not to do any real work, rather, just to give the impression of working (1994:157).

Coming from another direction, Bourdieu's analysis seems congruent with the close connection Japanese recognize between form and content, practices and significance. His notion of the physical and therefore mental routines of

daily life, called *habitus,* concerns among other things the way people learn to respect authority. He writes,

> The whole trick of pedagogic reason lies precisely in the way it extorts the essential while seeming to demand the insignificant: in obtaining the respect for form and forms of respect which constitute the most visible and at the same time the best-hidden (because most "natural") manifestation of submission to the established order…
>
> —Bourdieu 1977:94–5, original parentheses and quotation marks

Anecdotally there is abundant evidence of the great attention put on correct forms. Protocol and etiquette books for business and home life are numerous (e.g. Obunsha 1989), with abridged versions sometimes appended to telephone books or dictionaries (e.g. Sanseido 1993). In addition to the supercharged circumspection and care put into one's comportment and the presentation of one's products or services, there is the attention to form practiced in the traditional disciplines. In Japanese-style fencing, *kendō,* one element in evaluating a person's ranking is the stylized display of forms *(kata),* which incorporates the fundamental subskills necessary for the sport. *Judō, kyūdō* (archery), *kadō* (flower arranging), *sadō* (tea ceremony), *shodō* (calligraphy) are other popular disciplines which begin with an emphasis on correct form, both physically and attitudinally. The *-dō* suffix translates as "way" or "path" and the rigor demanded by the term is conveyed in the Japanese version of "well begun is half done." This belief in the instrumental power of proper form is one reason Japanese new to an avocation are willing to make a big initial investment to equip themselves to look the part they are undertaking.

The compelling force of proper routines, appropriate appearances and ceremony-like proceedings in an organization's life relate to the "high context" nature of Japanese social relations. While routinization is associated with stable social order in most societies, among Japanese people this routinization extends as far as the specific appearances and wording of public matters. E.T.Hall (1987) uses the term "high context culture" to contrast the communication styles of people from differing societies. In the Japanese case, the reliance on situational, visual cues divides interaction into a predictable set of alternatives requiring relatively little verbal variation. This may damper public discourse, but it also testifies to the primacy of appearances and situational clues. The belief that content follows from form is preserved even when something ostensibly declared (the *tatemae)* strays from what is truly meant *(honne).* To the extent that social order comes out of visual order, the two are inextricably bound, with the whole underlined by moral order. In other words social, aesthetic and moral order coincide. Stated in the negative, apparent disorder is not only aesthetically bad, but morally wrong and thought to result in social disorder. Thus the same overdetermination of bonsai plants, temple gardens, school dress codes, or restored historical homes seems also to

go into the top-down, micro-management of public affairs (cf. "wrapping," Hendry 1986).

In an equation suggested in McVeigh's work, proper appearances have both moral and ethnic (thus Japanese national) resonance, in addition to their instrumental effects on maintaining social order. He writes that adherence to decorum and manners are emblems of being a good Japanese, or at least that poor form and inattention to detail are not signs of a good Japanese (1998:62, 194; cf. Mackie, 2002: 'Japanese national' connotes male, youthful, able-bodied, heterosexual, salaried, married and so forth). Thus knowing the proper comportment and channels for pursuing a matter affirms ethnic identity. Furthermore, because of the practically mono-cultural state of the Japanese archipelago, what is ethnically resonant may easily take on the proportions of national identity. So that to behave and present oneself as a Japanese is transparently identified with being a citizen of Japan. To be law abiding, tax paying and compliant are therefore ipso facto the signs of one's self (identity). These habits are not merely the preferred behaviors of the governing authorities. Today a core of values from earlier generations is still conveyed in schools' moral education materials. In particular,

> …the values of patience, perseverance, diligence, orderliness, and hard work appear [but] …Ancestor worship, loyalty to the emperor and state, Shintoism, stories about war heroes, and unconditional obedience to one's father are no longer part of moral education.
>
> McVeigh 1998:162

That moral *goodness* underlies visual and social order is the third corollary relating to the primacy of public perceptions. McVeigh goes on to write, "bureaucrats often act as if they were responsible for the ethical fiber of the average Japanese." The state not only takes credit for the maintenance of law and order, but takes blame for social deviance. When the public sphere "belongs" to government authorities, this sense of ownership is understandable. The Japanese government considers the hours spent by students in morals classes to be very important. McVeigh writes, "Moral education is inextricably bound up with state control and images of civil society, and all the [ethics] guidebooks have prefaces warning about problems among today's misbehaving youth." Elsewhere he describes the literal, concrete referents for good morality found in guidebooks used in the morals classes of Japanese junior and senior high schools. These tracts convey the connection between correct morality, correct appearances and proper forms, and correct social order.

> The guidebooks repeatedly emphasize that there is nothing abstract about moral education…Morality should be an everyday, observable practice, acquired through "training" *(kenshū),* and related to "concrete life habits"

> *(gutaiteki na seikatsu shūkan).* Indeed, the term "to embody" or "make [values] concrete" *(gutaika suru)* is commonly used.
>
> McVeigh 1998:162.

Taken all together, these three corollaries underlie the Japanese preoccupation with uniform, well-regulated, monologic appearances. First there is the idea that *public appearances* should match the desired public perception. Second there is the idea that moral goodness and collective identity reside in *proper appearances.* And third there is the idea that *creating the likeness of social order* will somehow induce the actual realization of that order. Thus, given the great importance of proper forms, the public spaces of Japanese civil society seem to have an especially instrumental and literal significance. By contrast, the busy spaces of American civil society crowded with many interest groups and multiple forms, would seem to have no order to them. And whatever the pronouncements that do manage to attract attention will not have the same literal, iconic or emblematic significance that the Japanese statements normally do. With public spaces as divergent as the American and the Japanese, it is worth looking at the roots of the civil society concept and the subsumed ideas of civilization, democracy, the Common Good, and volunteerism.

Like other ideas and artifacts that cross great cultural distances, the translation of the term "democracy" into the Japanese context has been incomplete. The institutions and ideas present in Japan subsumed by democracy "have no prior or higher moral weight" (Rohlen 1983:264). *Minshu shugi,* the Japanese term for "democracy," literally means a system of thought derived from and concerned with "the people." But in practice, the observable structures put in place after WWII and the doxa of democracy that is nominally evident do not convey the interpretations that Americans are accustomed to. In Japanese classrooms, "the basic democratic values as Americans understand them—individual rights, grass roots initiative, freedom, and social justice" are not emphasized (ibid:265). As a result, *minshu shugi* or *DEMOKURASHI* has the opaque, abstract quality of other foreign words. "Students learn to be cooperative and polite with others, but not to sacrifice for them. They learn to recite the achievements of great men, but not to emulate them" (ibid:320).

The translation problem may originate in the circumstances of the word's importation. Following the favorable settlements from hostilities in China (1895) and Russia (1905), and after WW I, but before the devastation of the Great Tokyo Earthquake (1923), there was a flourish of economic confidence, with cultural expressions inspired by Western practices. These optimistic years are now called the period of Taisho [reign name] Democracy. A 1919 Japanese translation of the U.S. president Lincoln's 1863 Gettysburg Address was thought to epitomize democracy. Lincoln had characterized this form of government as being "of the people, by the people, and for the people." But in the back translation from the Japanese to English, the drift of the Japanese

version can be seen to have veered to the side of the governing authorities. Accordingly, Tanaka quotes the 1919 translation's "reading of Lincoln's phrase as, in essence, 'government based on the people, government for the sake of the people, and government of the people'" (1993:145). Elaborating on this idea, a just society should rest on top of the people in a "natural order" of ranked social statuses. It should be paternalistically inclined to the members of the society. And it should be about governance of, not government by, the people. "At best, the Confucian bureaucratic tradition is about paternalistic benevolence, not power-sharing with the masses," wrote Williams. "Whatever hopeful resonance the word 'public' may evoke in the English ear, it must be stressed that 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people' is not a Japanese administrative tradition" (Williams 1994:111).

Since the texture and the full depth of an idea resides in small details of word image and connotation, and precisely these aspects of words are stripped in the translation to a new language, it is not surprising that *minshu shugi* diverges from "democracy," as do the many other terms rapidly imported during the first generations after the end of feudal rule in 1868. Furthermore, it is natural that the aspects of a foreign idea that have native parallels should be readily included in the imported term, but that the alien parts be ignored or excluded. This was the case with "freedom" *(jiyū).* TR's Saitō Kazō lamented the losses that followed from lifting the Confucian yoke at the end of WWII. In principle, the cardinal relationships of superior to junior (e.g. ego to spouse or sibling or the state, et cetera) were replaced by the virtues of "freedom" for all. Yet, as it is popularly interpreted, *jiyū* means the freedom from earlier strictures. But the concomitant responsibilities of maintaining civil society and engaging in individual initiative somehow did not translate. As a result "freedom" amounts to unbridled personal pleasure and very little consciousness of the costs owed in overall social order (cf. Abe 1994:206).

It is not that Japanese citizens are not permitted to participate in civil society. Rather, it is the customary expectation that the government by itself should be concerned with collective interests *(omakase gyōsei),* stanching any wider participation in Japanese civil society. Additionally, the circumspect citizens are reluctant to take a stand on anything straying from their own particularistic and pragmatic interests. By this reckoning, the actions and words of Takefu Renaissance take on even more significance. For it is a rare thing for a group to participate in civil society. Indeed it is rarer still to take the democratic spirit and processes of government as the subject of discussion; going further still, to petition that government to make specific changes to its operating procedures.

The most effective kind of democracy permits and even stimulates the voices of diverse members of the society to be heard. The folk wisdom in the U.S. that apparent confusion is one sign of a healthy democracy would seem anathema to the leaders of orderly Japanese society. Regardless of the existence of neutral space, rational-critical debate, or consciousness of a

Common Good (including awareness of superordinate "community" and a spirit of volunteerism), what would seem to be essential to a democratic spirit is for citizens to be able and willing to take part in the processes and the discussions of their civil life. People in Japan can do both of these things, but in practice they are not accustomed to adopting any abstract collective interest, unless it coincides with what they identify in and take to be their own interests. There are, for example, legislative and judicial institutions, a vigorous and vast news media with a large following, and intellectual discussions are not segregated out of the mainstream either, as is often true in the U.S.A., for example. There are residents movements *(jūmin undo)* and citizens movements *(shimin undo)*, as well as numerous study circles and hobby groups. These institutions are evidence that the attributes of democratic society are apparent in Japan, but what they mean in practice is something different from what Americans might think. Van Wolferen makes the same point about appearance and expectations familiar to Westerners in many arenas: telling how the "prime minister is not expected to show much leadership; labour unions organise strikes to be held during lunch breaks; the legislature does not in fact legislate; stock-holders never demand dividends; consumer interest groups advocate protectionism (page 24).

And again, a foreign educated Japanese who writes under a Euro-American name makes a similar observation about the practices of democracy in Japanese life.

> …In Western countries with a strong democratic tradition, democracy is not just a political system but a way of life. The people are familiar with the institutions, values and preferences peculiar to a democratic system. Japan is not without democratic traditions but these never affected the political life of the nation as a whole.
>
> Herzog 1993:9

Against these sharp assessments, there is some evidence of Japanese exploring the wider possibilities of democracy. McKean's study of environmental protest in Japan focuses on citizen movements *(shimin undo)* in the late 1970s (cf. McNeil 1994:210–213). Although far from prominent, the efforts of people she studied included examples of democratic practice: litigation, legislative lobbying, and various election tactics (1981:107). She draws a line between movements before and after 1980, because this is around the time when the formerly particularistic boundaries of protest movements were broken (p.34). Previously, a movement attracted followers who above all held the prospect of personal gain (p.82, cf. Pharr 1984:217). By 1990 a national directory of citizens and social movements listed 93 subjects (Nichigai Associates 1990). Those registering the most groups included the following movements, by approximate number:

Table 2: Most numerous citizens' movements and social movements (1990 national directory).

Anti-nuclear, Peace	225	Education Reform/Support	45
International Exchange	200	Environmental Protection	50
Women's Rights	180	Animal Rights	50
Nature Protection	125	Anti-Pollution	50
Regional Residents'	90	Sino-Japanese Friendship	50
International Cooperation	75	A-bomb Victims	50
Consumer Interests	65		

In spite of the increase in citizen movements, many are still single-issue groups, especially those classified as regional residents' movements. Once their goal has been met they will dissolve themselves.

The notion of striving for the general benefit of all citizens is still not readily appreciated. Miyamoto writes of the mix of puzzlement and admiration he received within his bureaucratic confines for his iconoclastic practices (1994:58). Likewise, the initiatives of TR have been received with encouragement as well as incredulity. For example, following the television broadcast of the town hall meeting about the KKD affair, which TR led on December 23, 1994, the leaders received a lot of positive feedback, from both in and outside the town. But many other townspeople could not comprehend why the group should be motivated when there was no apparent reward. The TR newsletter describes TR's wide-ranging investigation like this,

> Going from near to far and back again, we've expressed ourselves here and poked our heads in there; unashamed, we bear the nickname "nosey Renaissance."
>
> January 1995 TR Newsletter

Truly unusual among the various citizen movements, TR is neither defined by a single issue, nor meant to be a temporary association of like-minded individuals. Mr. Matsui Tōru said that when they joined the group it was with the understanding that it would be a *RAIFU WĀKU* (life work, a calling). Takefu Renaissance was born, charging itself with the mission of instituting more careful control of the historical townscape, revitalizing the economy and civil society of the town center, and ultimately stimulating widespread interest among their fellow townspeople in the town's direction and its administration. Through well-informed and sophisticated comments, writings and events, TR has broken through the prevailing mentality of "village-like," particularistic social relations *(mura shakai)* to get a taste of the Common Good. Under conditions of "village-like" relations, pragmatic reductionism, the mighty weight of government pronouncements, and concern with appearances, the

democratic forms in Japan have been perpetuated with varying degrees of success.

In Japanese civil society the government and journalists are the special arbiters of truth. The interest groups and associations that vie for editorial space or broadcast time in the U.S. are relatively scarce in Japan. If the U.S. is the empire of broadcasting, then Japan is the land of narrow-casting. Rather than enter an all-purpose, general "public" space, Japanese social critics or activists might address only those who are specifically implicated or intended for a message. Accordingly, any sense of super-ordinate community or putative "public good" is hard to find in Japan. Instead, an ethos of village society often prevails from one group to the next, making inter-group cooperation infrequent and any abstract collective interest anathema (Ueda 1994a). These two aspects then, the dominance of public space by the government and media, and the particularistic quality of social relations are what characterize Japanese civil society.

In the West, civil society is associated with the ideas of a common good, the benefit of the public or collective community, democracy (or at least the expression of diverse citizens' ideas), and volunteer spirit. But in Japan, these ideas take different forms, and in the absence of popular expression, the government, educators and journalists fill the public sphere with their ideas and values. Some indication of the equation of public sphere with government prerogative can be found in the overlap of words "public" *(ōyake*, not private sector, thus "of the government") and "public" (kō, of concern to all persons). These words are different pronunciations for the same written *kanji* character.

> *Ōyake.* Significantly, this word originally referred to the Imperial family. It could also denote official authority or governmental powers, and has associations of high-sounding purpose, order, fairness, and the collective good. *Ōyake* did not mean public in the sense of a social space that protected the individual from civil disturbance or state authority. In the words of Doi, it represented a "primary fraction" (i.e., the Imperial family) among a group of competing political powers and institutions. Though *ōyake* has lost its original meaning of Imperial family and acquired the sense of "public" since the war, "the old *'ōyake spirit'* still pervades the Japanese mentality" because the government is afforded much power vis-à-vis the people. *Kō.* This word…is a prefix for dozens of compounds, conveying "public," "communal," "open," "official," "legal," "governmental," or anything or anyone exposed to the collectivity. "The word 'kō' conveys a specifically illiberal weight which is untrue of the English word 'public'" (Williams 1994:111). Kō is part of the commonly used kōshū (the public; literally, "public multitude"), which is used to describe anything available to public use, such as *kōshū* denwa (public phone)…*Kōyō* (public use) means "for official use" in a business setting, as opposed to "private use" *(shiyō).* Here it is pertinent to point out that "public spirit" is *kōtokushin* (literally, "heart of civic virtues") or *kōkyōshin.* These words are rarely heard in everyday speech

Figure 13: Kanji character ‘ōyake’ or ‘kō’ found in words for ‘Public’, ‘Official’, ‘Authorities.’

> and for many Japanese possess an abstract feel, though they do appear in moral education materials.
>
> McVeigh 1998:48

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With the historical intrusiveness of the state in people’s lives and the blur of boundaries between collective, communal interests and the government’s prerogatives, it is no wonder that little consciousness of the “common good” has developed. McVeigh describes the collapse of whatever private space might separate individuals from authorities or status superiors (1998:46, 68, 192), telling how the legal history in Euro-American society has worked to minimize any gray areas between private and public spheres (page 63).

The ease with which the government dominates matters of social concern in the public sphere stems from a weakly developed notion of a “common good.” Doi writes of a “serious dearth of the type of public spirit that transcends both individual and group” (1986:42). In Herzog’s words, “the system seems to assume that the common good is the sum of all particular concerns” (1993:15). Or, according to McVeigh’s model, the common good occupies public space “in which grids demarcate agreed upon routes traveled by individuals who temporarily leave their privacy behind.” By contrast in Japan, he writes, individuals “take this privacy with them and try their hardest to coolly disregard others” (page 57).

In an article about the rising cultural nationalism among the East Asian countries, Reid (1995) quotes a Japanese academic named Katsuta Kichitarō on the essential difference in the moral code of social relations in Confucianism and Judeo-Christianity. The Judeo-Christian Golden Rule exhorts people to “do unto others as you would have done unto you.” And before these religions it was taught in the Roman and Greek civilizations before (Macrone 1993:328). In contrast to this proactive philosophy, Confucianism teaches people *not* to act in ways that would distress others. Katsuta suggests that the debate and initiatives practiced by Westerners in the name of improving their society is alien to East Asian traditions (e.g. in

Singapore, Mahbubani 1994). Yet Japanese companies built overseas have come to be sensible to the idea of being good "corporate citizens." Asao Shin'ichirō, President of The Japan Foundation reports these developments as a mark of progress: companies giving something besides wages to their host communities (in Gupta 1995:18). But fundamentally this idea is not a familiar one. Whereas Westerners strive to make their resolutions for an improved social life a reality, for East Asians the lineaments of social order are contained in the Confucian code. Everyone has a proper place to occupy so as to ensure the maintenance of social and moral order. What is most important in Japanese society therefore is that the proper forms be observed. Differing concerns with community may indeed stem from the nature of each society's religious fundament, East or West.

Christianity is a religion of strangers. From its beginning it has consisted of people bound together not by blood, ethnicity, language, or territory, but by something as abstract as beliefs. As such, the metaphor of "brothers" and "sisters" (fellow believers) laid connections laterally. The metaphors of "the father" (divine being; God) and "mother" (the church as an institution in its entirety, leadership and laity) added hierarchical aspects. But it is the lateral dimension that has crucially affected the spirit of democracy, community, volunteerism, and the Public in the West.

The collective manner of worship with fellowship in the Semitic religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) is also significant to the making of civil society in places where these institutions have flourished. In contrast, worship according to the fundamental religion of Japan, Shintō, largely consists of private expressions of gratitude and prayers for desired outcomes made by individual supplicants as they face the shrine. The Semitic religions include the practice of worshipping together as a group. In the act of gathering, people affirm their belonging and belief once more. One consequence is the effect of "public witness," whereby collectively held standards of community behavior can be reaffirmed: those that stray may feel the pressure of their peers, those that are exemplars may enjoy the praise of their fellows. Another effect of collective worship is to generate a self-sustaining institutional inertia. When worship is private, as in Shinto, believers may be remiss in their practices. But when organized into a periodic gathering, members may make a greater effort to participate. Finally, public worship creates an archetype for civil society. As a body of believers bound together voluntarily, the worshippers form a community, but one not as enveloping as a village; nor one as comprehensive as the state. Thus a congregation is an intermediate form, a precursor to the fully formed notion of the Public.

Confucianism, on the other hand, dictates that relationships take the form of short *peer* connections, rather than the more extensive and less knotted social connections of Euro-American societies, which constitute groundwork for civil society. Confucianism dictates the concentric circles of ancient obligations between self, siblings, parents, spouse, friend, and governing authority, which result in sets of dyads. There is little room for strangers,

those people who are neither kin nor acquaintance, or have no social introductions. Together with the "village-like" ethos in social life, this cone (not blanket) of connections explains the highly particularistic relationships among Japanese people.

The example TR has set may not be easy to imitate. And while the details vary from one society to another, at the most basic level, the function of civil society is similar in the U.S. and Japan. Getting more people to take part in the civil society and to get the government and schools to allow and encourage more citizen participation in civil society will not be an easy or obvious thing to do.

In both societies diverse communities of interest have to enter a common arena to define themselves and to discuss their society. The difference is that the U.S. is composed of crosscutting business, professional, ethnic, religious, and regional interest groups, along with individuals, both pundit and pedestrian, who enter the debate. In Japan's largely mono-ethnic society these groupings exist too, but what is more salient are the village-like networks of obligation. It is these reference groups that make up the community of interests that enter a common arena in Japan. Another difference between East and West is that the many groups that participate in U.S. civil society have a direct stake in a putative "common good," whereas the Japanese groups by and large have a stake only in their own immediate sphere. It is up to the ruling government to concern itself with the sum of these many individual spheres, rather than to concern itself with an abstract notion of Public Interest.

Foreign and domestic tourism, as well as study and work assignments overseas have given increasing numbers of Japanese direct personal experience of life away from Japan (Goodman 1993; Graburn 1983, 1988). More importantly, upon returning their experiences have allowed them to become self-aware of their Japaneseness and given them some points of comparison to judge the merits and faults of the wider society of Japan. At worst this has led to the *kikoku shijō mondai*, or Problems of [and about] Returnees. School age children in particular who have acclimated well to the foreign country of residence have trouble fitting into the routines and expectations of the classrooms in Japan; resulting in hurtful bullying sometimes.

At best this annual transfer of people and ideas with the outside world may lead to awareness of something like a Common Good, or at least the consciousness of something super-ordinate to their own personal universe of social connections. Certainly this has been the case of two of TR's most opinionated leaders, Ms. Miki and Mr. Inoue. Their extensive experiences away from Takefu led to their heightened self-awareness of the town's special character. They became sensible of the idea to take personal interest in the town's future, almost as an obligation of being a townsperson. The efforts of other citizen groups *(shimin undo, jūmin undo)* around the country probably come from a vision and awareness similar to that of TR's leaders. And the

vigor of all of these groups, regardless of their objects, will likely result in a heightened sense of community and Public Interest across the society.

While increasing numbers of Japanese learning about civil society abroad, the emergence of a new technology at home may also contribute to expanded Japanese civil society. Personal computers, despite a diffusion rate far below that of the U.S. may in time affect public discourse by offering a forum for discussion where content does count for at least as much as form. In addition to being cheap, quick, asynchronous and unmoored from physical place, electronic discussion lists, email and chat rooms have the virtue of masking the sender's social status as desired. This anonymity permits the (semi) broadcast exchange of opinions. The voices of government, media, and subject area experts (e.g. academics) all weigh in equally with those of citizens of all ages and socio-economic-educational profiles. Regional differences, rural-urban horizons, loyalties to corporate, religious or political positions need no longer categorize and thus discount or elevate the person's ideas (cf. Jabs 1996).

By contrast, the same technology may have less desirable effects among Americans. The popularity of virtual spaces for public discourse may drive the already individualistic Americans even further away from social interaction and lead to even more privatized lives (cf. Putnam 1993, 1995). Far from eroding civil society in Japan, however, this technology may work like a *deus ex machina,* removing the confining public pressures that come from the ethos of village-like, particularistic relations.

It is too early to know how readily this development may fracture the monologic (single) and monolithic (big) public voice of Japanese civil society into several slivers. But the significance of this media to business, education and entertainment already does portend an unavoidable impact, particularly in a land as favorably disposed to adapting new technology and dedicated to personal gain through learning as Japan (cf. Guersey 1996, Sclove 1995). If not itself a formal arena for civil society of towns, the country, or transnational communities of interest, then the communication made possible by personal computers may at least function as a seed bed for movements which later convene at a physical place and time.

In addition to notions of a Common Good, civil society and democracy, "volunteer" is another term implicated in the participation of individuals in public arenas. In Japan, the terms 'democracy' *(minshu shugi)* and 'volunteer' *(BORANCHIYA)* have both been compromised by the translation process. The term *jihatsu teki* (literally, in a self-emerging manner) is sometimes used to mean "voluntarily," as in "raise your hands *jihatsu teki ni.*" But to mean a person who donates their service to a (communal) goal, the term *BORANCHIYA* is commonly used. In practice, however, this word conjures up things like neighborhood litter patrols in which each household is expected to supply one "volunteer" (unpaid, but not necessarily of the person's own will).

The show of aid in the January 1995 Great Kobe Earthquake gave new meaning to the term *BORANCHIYA.* This city has long been home to a large and diverse population of residential foreigners. Soon after the event, numerous foreigners from around the country and abroad offered their labor, expertise, along with material and money. Japanese too, and college students in particular, joined this army of helpers. This spontaneous show of support for people in need, who occupied no place in the volunteers' immediate social universe, caused a mixture of admiration and surprise among Japanese elsewhere.

To find a functional equivalent to the term that approximates the altruistic spirit of the English term "volunteer," I asked TR's Inoue Kazuharu, who, like Alexis De Tocqueville 150 years before him, had found the concept central to understanding the social life he met in the U.S. (cf. Van Buren 1990). *Tebentō* was the meaning he said Japanese should relearn for the full meaning of "volunteer." It refers to taking part in a project by paying one's own way (literally, "sack lunch" or "Bring Your Own Booze"); not to begin with the expectation of material recompense or social gain. Yet in spite of having an amenable Japanese source concept for "volunteer," and the spectacle of volunteerism after the Great Kobe Earthquake, the term *BORANCHIYA* continues to be a partial translation (cf. McNeil 1994:213).

The idea of volunteerism relates to the spirit of democracy in two ways. First, voluntary cooperation of the members of a democratic society is needed because coercive force alone cannot ensure social order. Second, everyone benefits most when the members of the society go beyond the minimalist requirements of civil life legislated by the government and display a volunteer's readiness to participate in public affairs, taking a personal stake in the social order.

In Japan the notions of community, volunteerism, donation, et cetera are not the ones found in societies dominated by Christianity, where the beneficiary may be anonymous. Such an imagined, yet seemingly tangible entity and sense of belonging would seem hollow to most Japanese. Instead the matter becomes "volunteer *for whom"* or "donation *to whom"* Moen's study of the Japanese organic farming movement points out this preoccupation with substantive personal implication. He found that 186 of the 200 organic produce consumer group members joined because of concern for their own family's health; but that for those belonging for over two years, what was uppermost in their minds had become fulfilling the obligation of their social relationships with growers (1995:159).

Reduced to simple dichotomy, the notion of acting in a responsible, good and proper way among Japanese grows from the need to fulfill social obligations. For example, this includes the effects of acute sensitivity to peer opinion and the possibility of falling outside of relatively narrowly defined explicit expectations of preferred behavior. By contrast, Americans' notion of acting in a socially mature, proper way contains not only the urge to repay interpersonal social debts (among strangers as often as acquaintances), but

may also go beyond personal interest or social relationships to include a desire to do one's part in the wider, collective community. So while both Japanese and Americans may participate in voluntary associations for personal reasons, it seems as though it is more common among the latter to be motivated by the approbation earned by giving of themselves to some greater, non-exclusive, public good. On a side note, literally giving of oneself—namely of one's blood or organ donation—is practiced comparatively infrequently in Japan.

In a review of Kaneko's 1992 book about volunteerism in Japan, Kiyohara points to another aspect of the highly particularistic social relationships among Japanese speakers which works against any wider embrace of volunteerism. In addition to the meager value attached to unbounded, anonymous altruism, volunteers readily develop an empathy that implicates them with the subject, leaving the would-be volunteer feeling vulnerable and obligated to take the subject's problems as his or her own (in Kiyohara, 1996:18).

According to the Judeo-Christian teachings, one's deeds can be a sign of one's moral goodness. Deeds can even be the instrument leading to one's moral goodness. The Protestant Work Ethic is one example (Weber 1930). Another example is the Golden Rule found in the Bible, which exhorts followers to "do unto others as they would have done unto themselves" (Matthew chapter 7, verse 12). The result of this spiritually diagnostic work is that believers as well as those non-believers pulled along in the cultural slipstream of these religions would try to make the good society a reality on earth (Katsuta, in Reid 1995). Social practice should approximate to what is preached. Hypocrisy, falsehoods and contradictions cannot be abided.

The religious underpinning of civil society in the West is largely without support in Japan. Japanese followers of Judaism or Christianity are few indeed at less than 1% (cf. the significant numbers of converts in South Korea). Service organizations, like other legacies of form more than substance from the time of U.S. military occupation of Japan (between 1945 and 1952), while numerous, are the exception rather than part of a normative ideal in Japanese society (McNeil 1994:213). Similarly, the cultural institutions of charities and benevolent foundations which developed long ago in Japanese society in the form of mutual aid societies were restricted to neighborhood residents, (temple) parishioners, guild members, and so on. The notion of anonymous, collective benefit assumed in the interconnected ideas of democracy, volunteerism, and the Common Good has little significance in Japan. To donate anonymously to an abstract cause was and is still not a familiar idea today. Unlike the Western concept of the martyr, with its religious associations, Japanese people who sacrificed their lives did so for a specific person or some group; e.g., kamikaze pilots for the Emperor; peasant leaders for their villages (Walthall 1986). Further examples come anecdotally from conversations and observations in the field. For example, anonymous child adoptions are far outnumbered by those involving blood-relatives. And

any sense of stewardship of an anonymous, collective space such as a national park seems weakly developed as evidenced by the volume of litter.

In U.S. society the consequences of Judeo-Christian values to civil society are amplified by additional cultural imperatives that stress (good) deeds. The success of one's enterprise is not only a possible mark of godliness and a medium for channeling one's commitment to good works. Nor is one's work simply a practical way to accrue secular status in the world. A person's identity is also based on what he or she does for a living, as well as what they do avocationally. As a country filled with people who came from someplace else, people in the United States are more often defined by what they *do* than by who they *are* (e.g. name, relatives, place of origin). When strangers meet it is "doing" rather than "being" that is brought forward in the customary remark, "So, what do you do?" A relationship may develop before the individuals introduce themselves by name, and even then people who work together closely might not know the surnames of their workmates or neighbors. Although traces of the older ("being") identity remain important in the conservative contexts where power or wealth is concentrated, by and large one's identity in the U.S. comes from achieved rather than ascribed status.

The identity imperative that supports civil society in the U.S. is not the same in Japan. Instead of identity that is emergent in the actions, intentions and imagination of the person, one's identity resides in the roles occupied from one moment to the next, along with the characteristics defined by one's birth. One is still known in life and in death primarily by one's surname. Although affiliation (company name) or generic function (job name) may substitute for family name in many public contexts, the identity of a person in Japan comes mainly from who they are (socially), rather than from what they do at work or play. Since meritocracy does exist, one may be judged by performance. But to an extent greater than in the U.S., a Japanese person's life chances are determined by who he or she 15 rather than how well he or she *does.*

A preference for particularistic ties over generic ones can be seen in the creation of Japan's national state. As a sophisticated apparatus of collective identity, the nation-state came about by exploiting the genealogy of the imperial line. Each soldier, civil servant, fisherman and mother and newborn was supposed to be a blood relative of the present Emperor, whose own line was counted back some 125 generations to the times of the first gods, their creation of the archipelago and descent thereupon. Thus the pre-WWII ideology of *kazoku kokka* [family nation] made all citizens kin, who by way of the Emperor's semi-divine emergence on the islands, were also attached to the nation's soil. This persuasive appeal of particularistic ties can be seen in a phenomenon associated with the production and reproduction of national consciousness, the novel (cf. Anderson 1983). Whereas readers in the national language of other states could follow the adventures of a fellow citizen through the geographical and psychological landscape of their land, in Japan

the novel is an extension of the diary form of writing. It is a *personal* account and as such

> …has been intimate-romantic rather than national-romantic. In short, if Japanese authors of the modern era failed to create a heroic "modern" literature, it was because they failed to be spokesmen for anything larger than their own hearts.
>
> —Pulvers 1996:22

The shape of civil society, like that of democracy, differs in the U.S. and Japan. Bringing together a set of words related to the term civil society sheds light on the source and significance of the word. Unlike the East Asian term *bunmei* (civilization, literally the union of the words for *writing* and *brightness)*, the Latin based word 'civilization' makes explicit etymological reference to city life and, by extension, to residents with the special rights conferred by citizenship (e.g. belonging to the empire of Rome). The grid of archetypic Roman urban design inevitably included a square near the city heart called a forum. In this public space vendors might assemble, festivities take place, friends or enemies gather, and opinionated individuals mount a speaker's podium. In a literal sense, civil society was coterminous with the sum of public opinion heard in the forum, theater and other places of gathering in the city. Without the infrastructure and the institutions of the city, its strangers and its tapestry of personal connections, there could be no Public Benefit, Common Good, or indeed Civil Society.

After the Roman Empire expired, the Roman Catholic Church inherited the spaces urban and rural. The universal, law-like teachings of the church possibly enhanced the logo-centric, rational-critical element of civil society. But it was only with the Protestant Reformation and spread of science along with commerce, colonies, warfare and technology that the civil society of Western civilization permitted a wider social spectrum of participants. Whether or not the civil society amounted to a neutral space (midway between the familial and the state interests) for public discourse is difficult to know. A document of the time evinces today's meanings in the use of 'civil,' and 'general good.'

> Having undertaken, for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the First Colony in the Northern Parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof enact, constitute and frame such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.
>
> from the Mayflower Compact, 1620

As literacy spread in the wake of 16th century vernacular translations of the Bible first, and with the emergence of nation-states later, the literary forms of novels and newspapers added new voices to civil society. Later, the media of radio and television expanded the informed public beyond what previously had been a predominately middle class readership.

The purpose of this brief recitation is that the idea of *civil* society evolved from the specific conditions of cities, which were occupied by citizens (holders of special rights with regard to the government) and strangers. The same desire for certainty, trust and stability which migrants to cities felt must have been duplicated on a grand scale in the newly founded, immigrant filled United States of America. In his travels there in 1831 and 1832, De Tocqueville set out to gain a close up view of democracy. He concluded the will of the masses would inevitably smother any individual greatness, which to him was often to be found in an aristocracy. But he also was impressed by the variety of voluntary associations established, which he viewed as resulting from the influx of diverse peoples (De Tocqueville 1988). Both for enterprise and social pleasure communities of trust, authority and propriety had to be built rather than be inherited ready-made. The idea of the Public in Euro-American life is tied to cities, both with physical reference to the people found in a town, and later more imaginatively to a putative group, say, of readers. Thus the trajectory of the term 'civil society', as it has come to be known in the English language, from a very early time must have contained the aspects of neutrality and rational-critical discourse emphasized previously.

Civilization further intersects with ideas of *propriety.* In the courts, civil law regulates things like contracts, while criminal concerns infractions of "civilized behavior," in a loose sense. "Being civil" to one another means behaving in a reserved and possibly dispassionate way, free of the emotion and motives of particularly inclined social relations. Similarly, to identify a place or practice as "civilized" calls up specific images associated with a middle-class or learned stratum of society. Today "civilized," at least after having passed through 19th century British imperial usages, equates with bourgeois, court and noble appearances, actual or imagined. It means (self-consciously) refined, educated; recognized to be the classic or standard form.

With these two major roots, the urban and the privileged, it is not surprising that the space of public discourse for civil society in Western society should have a very different shape from the one in Japan, even though both privilege and urban life have been richly elaborated in traditional Japanese social life. Despite the many words, artifacts and practices imported and adapted to Japanese uses, it is rare for the complete implications and associated ideas of the source language to translate into Japanese life. Thus the conclusion in *Democracy in Japan* (Ishida and Krauss 1989) that the essential qualities of democracy have prevailed is overly optimistic, at least at the level of Takefu's affairs. The case of the citizen's group *Takefu Renaissance* and the KKD scandal demonstrates the importance of civil society to democratic practice; and what is more, to the associated ideas of community, the Public, and the

traditions of open debate and volunteer spirit assumed in the English language term "civil society."

The eruption of the KKD affair presented an opportunity to observe the interactions of the government, media, and townspeople in Takefu's public spaces and to think about the assumptions of civil society in Japan. Before reviewing the observations and arguments made about the terrain of civil society in Japanese life, it is worth returning to the most concrete aspects of public discourse to locate its physical presence. Although civil society is an analytic term, that covers a variety of media and messages, and is probably not a familiar term to most people, the subject it refers to is not vague or abstract. The discussion and commentary, declarations and refutations made in public spaces of a society are real enough. The significance of discourse and actions extends beyond the political splitting of hairs and the economic consequences of whoever's interpretation of a matter may come to prevail: of law makers, of commercial entities, or the prevailing views held widely by individuals.

Like the idea of civil society itself, the topics found there often have about them an amorphous quality. They might concern the intangible realm of collective representation and identity, for example. As Karp wrote of museums, the labels and categories found in exhibitions not only define whole segments of a society and periods of history, but these terms and connected discourse carry an additional significance. Collective identity implies boundaries, rights, proprieties and expectations both within the group and of the group as seen by outsiders. Thus, to study the shape of a civil society takes one to the center of what is important to the people in question. It is a research object no less fundamental than the knowledge of a society's economic supports: its technology, mode of production, and the manner of distribution that makes everything else possible.

The definition for civil society used in this chapter comes from Gramsci, who distinguished the coercive action of the state from the initiative of the populace. Karp put the idea this way: political society concerns enforcement of the social order, while civil society involves discussion of the social order. Looking from another angle, Calhoun singled out the rational-critical nature of discourse as a defining feature of civil society. Perhaps most importantly though, civil society is a neutral space, "It involves all those relationships which go beyond the purely familial and yet are not of the state" (Tester 1992:8). Understood in this way, Japanese civil society seems to consist of the family-like and the state, with little there in-between. Indeed the question arises whether this narrow space is neutral and, if so, whether arguments there are rational-critical or simply personal assertions and defenses.

Civil society is the intersection of political interests, group identities and the persuasive properties of the language in use itself. The initiatives of Takefu Renaissance to promote the KKD to be made into a town museum, and their efforts to redefine the prevailing roles of citizens, elected officials, and municipal bureaucrats took place in a variety of contexts. Their probing

questions began in planning committee meetings, were then aired at the TR monthly meetings, and were later summed up in the monthly newsletter. Their resolutions then took a multitude of final forms: petitions to the city council and mayor, town hall meetings, media appearances such as newspaper interviews, syndicated columns (Mr. Uesaka Norio), television programs (regarding the Ōi-ke historical house), invitations to speak before professional associations, publications produced for sale, and the cross-fertilizing contribution made by TR members in other organizations they belonged to. Beyond the KKD affair, civil society in Takefu includes the local and national (and via satellite broadcasts and video rentals, international) news, entertainment and educational media. Perhaps most prominently though, *government* at all levels—municipal, prefectural and national—sets the terms of debate on a given matter. This takes the form of pronouncements, publications, meetings and appearances of officials at public events.

In the end, two questions remain. First, what does civil society in Japan's democratic society consist of. Second, what consequence might this have had on the KKD proposal and the efforts of TR. Taking the first question, both general East Asian characteristics and specifically Japanese features contribute to the arena where social matters are discussed. The teachings of Confucianism with its core of five cardinal relationships have permeated all societies of the East Asian region, with several consequences. In Japan one consequence has been the unchallenged prerogative of top-down authority, with its command-style, yet paternalistically obligated aspect. Another consequence has been the vertical hierarchy of social relations, beginning with ties to one's household and reaching all the way to one's allegiance to the state. Accordingly, the crosscutting lateral linkages that might allow consciousness of a Common Good are very rare indeed. Coupled with the Confucian hierarchies of social relations, life in the East Asian sphere is further fragmented into compartments, which are governed by village-like, particularistic relations. Added to this shared East Asian heritage are some additional features of civil society particular to Japan.

The actions of the city administrators, along with the interviews I conducted with civil servants at city hall and the comments of TR members shed additional light on the nature of Japanese civil society. Using the English language concept of civil society, one cannot see very far beyond the surface of the meager spectacle that the Japanese case presents. The government, mass media and (academic) subject experts dominate public discourse, and what they have to say seems of one voice. The interpretations of citizens and nongovernmental organizations seldom carries beyond opinion-editorial pages or discussions confined to the group internally. It does not contribute to a mosaic public forum.

The main features of the space for public discourse in Japan include government bureaucrats who have inherited the elitist ways of their 19th century samurai predecessors. Officials, both career track and elected, who are in their 50s and 60s are a demographic sandwich generation (born 1935–

1945). What is significant about this is that they occupy management or leadership roles and, compared with colleagues both younger and older, they have a more restricted scope of experience with matters beyond Takefu. Few were able to live outside their own valley during their formative years. The older generation is now no longer a big part of public office today; and the younger generation, while more liberal minded and having wider horizons figuratively, is still not in leadership roles by simple reason of the seniority system of promotion.

As for the city council, little real debate seems to occur in the open waters of a general assembly meeting. Instead, substantive negotiations take place in the safer backwaters of smaller, face-to-face meetings of a highly personal nature. The webs of personal, particularistic ties among councilors and with constituents determine what decision will be adopted or rejected. Persuasion by force of reason is not unknown, but it is not the most compelling approach to argument. The importance of orderly public appearances leads to lifeless "debates" in city council, a stylistic feature that is congruent with the "received" nature of pronouncements by authorities, whether they be school masters or mayors. Another reason for the staged nature of city council debates is the prearrangement of decisions *(dangō)* and the practice of feeling out of one's political support ahead of time *(nemawashi).*

The town government as a whole can be characterized by its institutionally short-term vision and a village-like mutual ignorance between the various offices and agencies which hinders any cooperative efforts (cf. Herzog 1993:262). Another characteristic is the village-like (particularistic) relations among the public, between individual civil servants and with the public, including the prevalence of privileged cliques who devise the government's legislation and direction by *dangō* (collusion). The news media, too, play a part in civil society. But aside from sometimes scolding civic leaders, the journalists more often than not support and convey the government's positions.

Other features of the government employees are legacies of the feudal life way. This style of bureaucracy has been shaped by a disciplined, paternalistic ethic and a byzantine system of the many samurai who entered the civil service at its inception. The interpersonal characteristics found in public life also seem to be historically based in the formerly village mode of living: concern with appearances, circumspection (as a spur to keeping abreast, and at the same time, as a limiter to novel initiatives), pragmatic outlook and particularistic social relations that create an economy of mutual obligations. There are three practical consequences of these inherited practices. First there is the *dangō* system of personal connections and prearranged outcomes. Second there is the attenuation of any wide vision due to preoccupation with immediate consequences (including appearances). And third, there is the defensive posture of officials in the public arena: quick to answer complaints, but cautious about proposing anything new or strictly beyond the minimum requirements of status quo.

The other half of civil society is the general public. Except for the special case of TR, the townspeople of Takefu in general are important not for their adventures into civil society, but for being the audiences to which the government and media play. In addition to being the ones who buy the newspapers and pay taxes, the people not actively taking part in civil society are nevertheless important. If silence means consent, then their normally mute witnessing of government pronouncements, journalists interpretations, and the received knowledge of people in authority roles generally is a fundamental element in the civil society of Japan.

Townspeople can be characterized in the following way. They share ambivalence about government: it is something best to avoid, but also an ample source for subsidies and services, especially when personal connections can be exploited. In general the same village-like interpersonal characteristics found within city hall also typify life outside the civil service. Thus people are pragmatic *(gōriteki)*, rather than philosophical or preoccupied with principle. Relationships are long term and particularistic rather than purely utilitarian and short term. Finally, circumspection spurs townspeople to keep up with peers' actions and words. But it also bridles any initiative or divergence from what is considered proper and normal. A related idea is the primacy of appearances. So important is it to maintain appropriate personal comportment, social decorum, and protocol, that social order would seem to follow instrumentally from adherence to proper form. This importance extends to language use, too.

Deep-seated attitudes to language usage contribute to the value put on appearances among Japanese people and organizations more generally. For example, the importance of appearances is emphasized in a society where what is not said may be as significant as what is articulated. E.T.Hall (1987) calls Japanese a high context culture: a way of living where standard routines, a uniform range of expectations and nonverbal cues predispose conversations and upon which the talk may even depend for its full effect. Added to this structure is the complementary, low value placed on making lengthy arguments of explicit logic. The result is that very little rational-critical content in public discourse is apparent. Thus by the definition of civil society as rational-critical discourse in a "neutral" space, the display that civil society in Japan makes seems meager. What discourse there is can be understood according to the village-like social relations that prevail overall, the attention to appearance, the practices of verbalization generally, and the particular position enjoyed by authority figures.

In sum, the most remarkable part of civil society in Japan is the great attention put on preserving appearances. Decorum seems to be a sign of social order, and perhaps the means of defining social order at the same time. Far from taking social issues as the objects of debate, instead they are regarded as objêts to be treated as received knowledge, something inert and dictated by authorities; not subject to discussion. While people may tolerate a considerable gap between what is said and what is meant *(tatemae* and *honne,*

respectively), the same is not true of actions. Individuals, but above all the government, will tolerate little deviance from visual decorum and (the appearance of) proper procedure. Whether the ritualization of public arenas accounts for the otherwise highly particularistic space of discourse as McVeigh wrote, or whether it is simply another example of a delight in formalism that has run through the society from the days of samurai is not clear. What is unmistakable, however, is that civil society in Japan is characterized by a preoccupation with appearances, both literal surfaces and figurative impressions.

The other specifically Japanese aspect of civil society to remark upon has to do with the circumstances in which democracy was implanted in the government following WWII. Other societies in the orbit of East Asia have recognizably democratic forms and ideas (Ding 1994), but the circumstances in which they came about and the preexistence of amenable institutions varied by country (Ishida and Krauss 1989). Ever since delegations of Japanese began touring the industrialized nations in the early 1870s, practices thought to be useful to Japan's own development were tried and adapted to suit Japanese ways. These included a constitution, houses of legislation, and a system of courts. But it was not until the seven years of Allied (but in practical terms, American) occupation that democratic institutions were comprehensively introduced, along with land (redistribution) reforms, compulsory education, revised textbooks and curricula, universal suffrage and popular elections.

What is more, however, the ideology of democracy began to be propagated. When the occupation ended in 1952, the culture of cash spending and increasingly urbanized consumers had budded, nourished by a diet of American feature films. The same exercise of choice that shoppers could expect, they would now also have in decision making in local and national elections. The very high rates of election turnout in later years, which Kuroda noted may be related to this conjunction of shopping and voting (1974:83). But without the associated cultural meanings found in Western societies, the Japanese interpretation of the democratic forms has not carried any of the implications for volunteering, citizen participation in political matters or the notion of a Common Good or Public Interest.

Democracy in Japan undoubtedly has led to wider political participation and empowerment to members of the society. But built upon the earlier political strategies and values, it has approximated to those earlier patterns: leaders unfettered in their exercise of power, but obliged by paternalism to seek at least demonstrative benefit for the masses. Yet the political leaders are bound more deeply still by ties to colleagues' interests than to those of constituents. The consequence to civil society of democratic flesh on a prewar skeleton is that public space is still dominated by the government, journalists, and academics.

> The Japanese academic elite and the media in general are both marginal because they are unable to generate and control vital information leading to wealth, power, and status in society. They function merely as counter elites in Japanese society today. In terms of generating and controlling information, the administrative elite occupies the most advantageous position in Japan whereas the political elite largely consists of "imbecile lords." *[baka tonosama;* i.e. puppet-like figures]
>
> Gotoda 1985:12

CIVIL SOCIETY, TAKEFU RENAISSANCE, AND THE KŌKAIDŌ AFFAIR

November: TAKEFU'S KŌKAIDŌ KINENKAN OPENS

> A dear part of townspeople's lives since it opened in Shōwa 4 [1929], the former Kōkaidō has been reborn as a new center of culture. On the ground floor there will be a display of local historical materials and the town's temples and cultural heritage will be introduced. The second floor will exhibit artworks drawn mainly from the city's collection.
>
> "Year in Review," *kōhō takefu #664* p.4, 16 January 1996

The previous chapter gave a chronology of the KKD affair, starting from the time the original museum plan was sidetracked in January 1994. Over the next 23 months the mayor's office would do its best to make the KKD into a gallery and research institute for the late painter Saeki Yūzō. The mass media, municipal civil servants, elected city councilors, townspeople and members of TR all had parts to play in this affair. But it was TR's lead in pursuing the procedural irregularities of the mayor's project which drove the course of events leading to the city abandoning the project and returning instead to something closer to the original museum design.

The nature of Japanese civil society described in this chapter has had several consequences, both helpful and hindering to the KKD proposal and investigation that TR pursued. Beginning with the obstacles to TR's initiatives, the most obvious hindrance has been the lack of precedence and support for anybody calling the government's actions into question (cf. McKean 1981:81). Even when the wrongness of actions was clearly shown, it proved difficult to extract acknowledgement of errors by the city's leaders. Secondly, the mentality of village-like relations has meant that no matter how big the KKD affair would become, except for townspeople personally implicated, there was little popular show of solidarity with TR's efforts. Even after it was under the national media spotlight, there would likely still be townspeople unaware of the nature of the controversy. Few townspeople got involved because the KKD was not their own affair. They did not wish to challenge the government, or wish to enter the public space and so find themselves subject to scrutiny and feelings of circumspection. As a practical matter, the village-like relations meant that TR's mode of operating had to be

discrete and their inquiries had to be prefaced by personal connection whenever possible to establish rapport.

Finally, the great stress on decorum affected the government leaders' course of action. At the same time this value also influenced the decision of TR to proceed in a calm and tasteful manner. They had to be careful to preserve their image of being a comprehensively motivated group, organizer of cultural symposia, host to visiting speakers, publisher of materials of beauty (e.g. theme calendars and 19th century illustrated local commercial atlas) and learning (e.g. the story of the Shōyō-en cultural salon and garden).

Counterpoising the hindering aspects of the Japanese meaning of civil society are those that aided TR in their efforts. The news media occupy a large part of public discourse and shape public opinion. Because TR enjoyed a favorable relationship to journalists, several pieces appeared in newspapers and the broadcast media concerning TR's various projects. And since Japanese follow the news closely and have a high rate of newspaper subscription, it is likely that a large part of the people in Takefu became favorably disposed to TR.

Another important source of public discourse is government agencies. TR members and friends included municipal bureaucrats past and present. And since civil servants are able to control or counterbalance the elected political leaders and representatives, the sympathetic sources TR enjoyed in the city offices, prefectural positions and national agencies were an asset. In addition, TR took advantage of the traditional ethos of government: to compensate for its authoritarian ways with a measure of (particularistic) benevolence. By persistently drawing attention to the proposed art gallery's lack of benefit to ordinary citizens, TR struck a rhetorical chord. In particular, the creation of a Saeki gallery would preclude using the KKD for townspeople's organizations or for matters related to the town itself such as displays, scheduled meetings, or special events.

Arguments based on the force of emotion rather than logical reasoning are another aspect of civil society in Japan. TR's persuasive appeals to spare the KKD from conversion to a parking garage included references to the decades of KKD memories held by townspeople, and the fact that the bulk of the money for its making was originally donated by large numbers of townspeople. Accordingly, any proposal for the reuse of the KKD should be congruent with this background. By this reasoning, the proposal for the Saeki gallery, with no relevance to Takefu or the townspeople, should be disqualified. TR's membership crosscuts many fields and thus provides a talented pool of people with masterful rhetorical skills to draw on for its appeals to townspeople and to government personnel. No less significant than the ability to make persuasive arguments is knowledge of the proper format and manner of presenting a petition, news release, or the best channels for finding out public (government) information. For although public access to government information is increasing in principle (140 out of roughly 650 municipalities had made provisions in 1990), the procedural details have not

yet been established (Abe et.al. 1994:188). So, again, the knowledge of the teachers, managers, civil servants, writers, craftspeople, merchants, and professionals in TR has been useful to the group's entry into civil society.

The progress of TR has also been aided in part by Japanese features aside from those of the civil society. For example, the self-consciousness and circumspection found throughout the society has contributed to TR's sense of mission; or at least to the awareness that their initiatives and the lessons learned could serve as a national prototype for culturally and politically sophisticated citizen's movements. Likewise widespread is the readiness to adopt new technology and adapt it to present uses. TR members became adept at making inquiries by fax across the country, but also among themselves locally. Finally, the general sense of inquisitiveness cultivated among Japanese in early childhood and school certainly contributed positively to the healthy spirit of investigation displayed at TR monthly meetings and in fieldwork interviews.

The last aspect of civil society that worked to TR's advantage relates to the particularistic nature of "village-like" social relations. The group oriented, cooperative spirit of all of TR's projects is one example of division of labor in which tasks were efficiently delegated and members freely consulted with each other. Also, once resolved to become a TR member, individuals proved to be extremely loyal, both hardworking and dedicated to the group's goals and its cooperative spirit. The wide knowledge base of the membership was useful for the networks of social and professional connections, as well. Since, as in a village, personal relationships and informal channels of information are so important, this experience among TR's personnel was indispensable to its progress. The village-like relations that are so conducive to *dangō* decision-making color the meaning of "personal connections." Whereas in the West one may expect preferential treatment (e.g. short-cutting procedures, less formal standards) from people with whom there is an obligation or ongoing relationship, in Japan there are some added meanings. Certain personal contacts may be useful for the caché of their affiliations, which acts like an emblem to validate one's own worthiness by the way.

Personal connections in Japanese society are useful as well for the information available to a person of high social standing. For any project requires careful assessment ahead of time of others' stances to ensure successful acceptance. The most helpful connections *(KONE*, short for *KONEKUSHON)* are able to discover allies and identify obstructers, and may be able to assuage potential objectors. In a society less run through with village-like relations, the emblematic value and the forecasting powers of personal connections would not be so prominent. One implication for Japanese civil society of the emblematic and forecasting functions of personal connections is that individuals lacking the necessary connections or knowledge might feel themselves precluded from participating in discussions of public interest. Takefu Renaissance did not have this problem.

Looking at the significance of informal channels and the uses of one's personal connections in another way, the reliance on central figures may have worked to the advantage of TR. Substantive deliberations may have been exclusionary, but the concentration of influence in just a few leading figures in any one issue presented a more manageable target for TR. Because government affairs proceeded in practice not through council and committee meetings, but instead through informal negotiations (e.g. *dangō),* by first identifying the influential bureaucrats or politicians, TR could try to find ways to discretely or indirectly focus pressure there in particular, concentrating the group's efforts efficiently.

On balance, the features of Japanese civil society, both hindrances and helps, seem to have fallen in TR's favor. At least based on their successful prosecution of the KKD affair to its end, TR did effectively negotiate the terrain of civil society. But beyond this example of townspeople taking part in the course of their town's development, the wider question remains about the situated nature of the civil society concept, connected as it must be to social practices of both the time and the place. This chapter has complemented the more descriptive view in chapter four with an analytic tour of civil society in Japan. Although specific historical roots and particular cultural contingencies have been pointed out, the main subject has been the shape of Japanese civil society as it is today, inspired by the literature and also observed in examples from the Kōkaidō Affair in rural west Japan. In the concluding chapter the wider significance of these observations will be offered.

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CHAPTER 6

Takefu's Civil Society in Renaissance

A Word from the Mayor

> "It's our town, so we build it ourselves" is the basic idea and the most important thing I am working for right now…
>
> Mayor Miki Tokio, *kōhō takefu* 15 February 2000

By the time the city's proposal to destroy the old civic center had reached the newspaper, the actual decision to do so had probably already been agreed upon by the senior city councilors and the city's department heads. But as events unfolded a new element came into play. So the successes of *Takefu no bunka wo kangaeru kai* forming in an effort to stop the plan and instead to offer a fully formed design to refurbish the Kōkaidō Hall (KKD) as a local history museum are remarkable enough. The city council had approved a plan very much like the one submitted by *Takefu Renaissance* (TR), a citizen group recently renamed. Work on the *fureai rekishi kan* got underway, but within four months seemed to have stopped. TR made inquiries but the replies were irregular, so the group searched for answers elsewhere. Eventually a chronology emerged over the course of 1994, culminating in a town hall meeting at which the irregularities of mayor Koizumi were made clear. The experiences of the members of TR with the local government and news media, along with my own study and observations form the basis of this book.

What began as an account of local history presentations and meanings among residents around the valley and in Takefu-city, Fukui prefecture developed a much wider scope to look at the settings of citizen activities in public affairs, alongside the dominant players of journalists, academics and people speaking from the role of public official. The book began by describing the economic and social circumstances of the area, and continued with a look at the subject of local history around Takefu, including the historical features, the venues and people interested in the past. The story of the K33;kaidō Hall, including plans for its use as museum, fits within this physical and topical context. In the second part of the book the drama of the unfolding *Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan* (SYBJK) affair is told. It is in the actions of TR and the reactions by Takefu's elected leaders and the staff at city hall that the shape and quality of the

public area in the society becomes clear. The bigger questions can now be considered about civil society as it is practiced nowadays in Japan, and comparatively, elsewhere in the world, based on these experiences and reflections.

Turning to the lessons that the KKD case illustrates, several features of Japanese civil society become evident. Among these are the "particularistic," multi-stranded relationships between people in Japan, or the so-called "village social relations" *(mura shakai);* the dominance of government, news media (and academics) in public discussions; the rehearsed manner of city council exchanges; and the predominance of vertical rather than any crosscutting consciousness of lateral social solidarity. This last relates to the wide ranging discussion in chapter five about the concepts associated with civil society in its Western guise, which blends democracy, volunteerism, and the existence of a putative Public Good (cf. in Japan the appearance of orderliness in and of itself defined by the government authorities as "public good").

When social relations extend as they do, first along vertical rather than horizontal lines, as they do in East Asia, it is not surprising that the arena of civil society should take an outline that is distinctly different to Western experience. In these circumstances the role of public institutions like museums is also affected correspondingly. The observations in these last two chapters about the public space for discussion and action by a group like Takefu Renaissance complement the earlier chapters, which describe a statistical profile of the city and townspeople, the sphere of local history groups and the meaning of the past.

Taken together, there are three parts to this story, the ethnographic setting near the Japan Sea, the historical landscape and connections of the past to the present, and that space of civil society located between personal interests and government prerogatives. What remains is to underline the conclusions from the experience of Takefu Renaissance in the Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan affair. And finally, the chapter will end by revisiting the Kōkaidō now seven years after its opening to see what form it has taken and to inquire into the final disposition of the wrong doing in the affair.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TAKEFU RENAISSANCE STORY

The efforts of this group will serve above all as an example for other citizen groups. In the process of probing the sequence of events in the affair, the group has thrown light on the civic life of their town. And in these experiences is a hopeful counterweight to the remark by union leaders on the opposite side coast of Japan in 1980. Turner quotes their frustration when democracy does not seem to work, even when the leaders are sure that it should do (Turner 1989:299). In Takefu Renaissance at least there is a lively democratic spirit.

Remembering the limitations of fieldwork conducted by a non-native, free of Japanese expectations and assumptions, but stripped also of the fluency,

social and linguistic resources to more subtly study the subject, the question remains about what can be said about local history and the politics of renewing a regional Japanese town. Combing through the previous five chapters, a variety of conclusions can be made, given here in order of the narrowest to the widest. Confined to the sphere of social relations in Fukui prefecture and the Japanese state, the most immediate conclusion is the success of TR as an enduring form of community group and the favorable outcome of their initiatives to have the KKD reopened for use as a town museum. They were able to increase their fellow townspeople's awareness of the necessity to protect and make active use of the townscape as a shared asset. This is the hopeful beginning of their campaign to put Takefu's streetscape and history in the service of renewing the town's civic and (downtown) business life.

Moving from the ethnography to the literature it fits in to, conclusions can be drawn in three topical areas: the ethnography of Japan, historicity and specifically the historicity of the Japanese, and civil society, including Japanese civil society. Descriptions of Japanese society have tended to focus on metropolitan areas or else villages in the northeast and southwest of the main island. According to the research topics Kelly groups together in his review article, the *Takefu Renaissance* story not only brings into English language print a regional town from the "back," Japan Sea side of the country, but it also contributes more generally to studies of Heritage and Cultural Tourism, as well as to Research on Regional Japan, which Kelly characterized in one subsection as dominated by farming, fishing, and factories. Other related topics where Japan research concentrates include the differences in outlook (e.g. to ancestors and national ethnicity) of family members according to Generation and Gender, as well as research associated with Protest and Conflict Resolution (Kelly 1991).

The people of Takefu, it can be concluded from statistical measures as well as inferences, are generally at least as conservative as their countrymen, if not more so. The images of Japanese nationals valuing education and hard work and being thrifty are all the more true for the people living in Fukui prefecture, including the residents of Takefu. To the ethnographic descriptions of chapter one can be added the contribution this fieldwork makes to the study of historicity and Japanese historicity in particular. Foreign researchers have written little about the landscape of local history in Japanese society, and even less about those groups concerned with the past and its uses in the present. In addition to making these descriptions, the workings and aims of the TR group are presented, along with a project bound up closely to the group's birth and its entry into the town's, indeed nation's civil society; namely, the case of the KKD.

One of the contributions this research makes has been to comb the literature for clues to Japanese attitudes to the past and to consolidate and substantiate these scattered observations with a survey of historicity conducted in the field. Then, following the intellectual thread this time from the particular to

the general, the findings of gender and generational variations in people's understanding of the past, as well as the overlap between ideas of nature, history, and culture may suggest topics for other social scientists to explore in their own studies of historicity elsewhere.

Lastly, the study of civil society, and the actions and discourse of groups in the public life of Japanese society will be enriched by this case of renewing a regional Japanese town. Inverting the question Karp (1992) asked in his essay, this fieldwork sought not the place of a museum in the surrounding society, but rather, the influences of the surrounding social conditions and cultural conventions on a town's museum. Part of the answer will lie in the personalities of the principals. Another part rests with people's regard for the traces of the past that do remain (historicity). And a third part lies in the nature of Japanese public discourse and space of civil society.

Based on the experiences of TR in the case of the KKD, the practice and spirit of democracy, with its guarantees of free speech and popular participation in the welfare of the general body politic, differs significantly between Japan and the U.S. (cf. Pharr 1990:19). Both Japanese and Americans share a forward-looking present and future orientation, rather than to dwell on the past and to abide with it: the one comes from valuing pragmatism and the other from a legacy of immigration in which the social capital of one's roots had to be jettisoned for the promise of a better tomorrow. These different bases explain how the past is handled: dutifully in the Japanese case, and pietistically in the American. The different ground on which democracy grows in the two societies likewise accounts for the different shape of the public arena in each country. In *Democracy in Japan*, Ishida and Krauss (1989) retell the brief course of democracy in Japan, beginning in 1868, at the end of the early modern period. By the time their anthology reaches its concluding pages, they remark on the decidedly democratic character of the Japanese people, giving special mention to the comparatively low income distribution coefficient, the leading rates of higher education and literacy (p.330), and the fact that people by and large no longer feel themselves to be "subjects" of the political leaders, but instead as agents within the political system (pp.328–329). But the authors fail to include civil society in Japan as one of the desirable components of a vigorous, if untidy, democracy as understood in the West.

Some would take the ability to hear the voices of the populous as the quintessential feature of the democratic form, as part of the collective social capital of a place connected intimately to shared networks of interests which contribute to the general quality of life and ultimately to economic productivity there (Putnam 1995). In the U.S., for example, the ideas of city life, civilization, acting civil, the existence of a Common Good and conception of "public" as a community, along with the peculiar properties of Christianity (a community based first on belief, rather than lineage, ethnicity, or history; extending credit based on future promise rather than a debt based on past claim) are interwoven with a value on community, inherited from

what was until the 1940s an agrarian society. While in Japan each of these components may be found in some form, they do not intersect in the concept of civil society or public interest. The term community *[KOMYUNITEI],* for example, appeared in 1958 in a sociological article (Arakawa 1967:436) and since the 1970s has been popularly adopted as the object of "cultivating community" *[machi zukuri],* contributing a foreign sounding allure through its transliteration as "komyuniti" (cf. Ben-Ari 1991:279–281, Ivy 1995:103–105, Robertson 1991:166–169).

Japanese democracy overlies an agricultural past and the Confucian tenets, which accord all authority to status superiors. As a result, the rhetorical character of Japanese civil society has more ritualistic verbal display and less logical argumentativeness about it than the U.S. counterpart. In a society riven with contingent, particularistic relations, in which all can be reduced to a zero sum game, it is this ritual character in civil society that by its conventionality is capable of creating a small space and semblance of neutrality, according to McVeigh (1998).

There seems to be no functional equivalent of rational-critical public discourse *(tōgi)* of social consequence in Japan. Matters of public concern thus belong to public authorities in whom trust and the entitlements of role have been placed, rather than to interested members of the public directly. If a segment of the business world or the public is affected, then their representatives may be invited into the government's consultations, as much as to become enmeshed in what has called "soft social control" (Broadbent 1998, Garon 1997, Woodhall 1996) as to contribute substantively to the outcome. But public hearings, government assemblies, or press briefings are rarely the time for probing questions or thoughtful expository answers. Instead these resemble scripted recitals.

It is this rituality of social propriety that produces open space and social distance in which players may enter. As long as decorum is not violated then the orderliness and seemliness of "public" affairs can go on without disruption. In other words, it may be then that civil society is not so much a setting for stakeholders to meet and talk and tussle. In Japan civil society may instead be a place where pronouncements are authoritatively issued and inquiries are politely posed, while backstage the hard bargaining and plea making takes place, privately. Civil society both West and East are stages for drama; the one is a wrestling ring, the other is a repertory theater for familiar stories to be played out.

This firm grip of (central) government does not seem to have been eroded by the ease of personal international travel and access to information, or by the seemingly sovereign operations of large multi-national corporations, as has been the case in nation-states elsewhere in the world. The massive presence of the voice of Japanese Government is all the more surprising considering its relatively small size. Its bureaucratic payroll was quoted at #23 among OECD nations for proportion of budget consumed in 1984 (in Pharr 1990:209). What Pharr concludes of conflict resolution among Japanese

is true generally as well of the civil society, either with or without the element of conflict; namely, that the nuts and bolts of social problem solving and personalized. Whenever possible these matters are out of public view, and ideally, are confined to small gatherings of only those immediately connected to the matter.

FINAL THOUGHTS

> Japanese society suggests an alternative agenda which persuades us that aesthetic has an important relationship to social theory, that the sociology of the emotion, the body and of consumption are central to the sociological enterprise and not peripheral, that a relational model of society provides a powerful alternative to both classes and alienation models of industrial society and that the economic determinism of Marxism needs not to be replaced with cultural determinism…
>
> Clammer 1995:128

Takefu Renaissance's handling of the KKD affair does not contradict any of these assertions. The use of forms, the texture and feel of formality, as well as the attitudes that comprise the governing authorities all contribute to the dominance of civil servants in Japan's civil society. By itself the fieldwork does not shed light on the other big questions of social theory like causality or agency, the nature of the language—culture linkage, the relative respective ethnographic value of an outsider's (foreign, academic) or insider's vision, or the analytic emphasis given to rhetorical skills (culture) or power (political economy). What this study does do is to follow the events of one place and then draw on a wide body of scholarly literature, as well as the interpretations of the individuals closely connected to TR and the town government, to understand the ways in which social conditions of the town and nation, and beliefs about the past have combined to shape a vision of Takefu's historical patrimony, eventually giving form to a particular proposal for a museum to be installed in the town's pre-war civic center, the Kōkaidō Hall.

In the end, the significance of this study lies in suggesting the contours of Japanese historicity, in probing the nature of the public space for discourse in the Japanese civil society of a regional town in west Japan, and in recording the activities of the unusual citizens group *Takefu Renaissance*. Each of these subjects have been shown to have been affected by present-day social conditions as well as to have been informed by culturally specific beliefs and stylistic conventions. The significances of the TR group are several. By its successful results, manner of organization and readiness with which the members translate what they know into print and other mass media forms, the group may well come to serve as a model for community based organizations elsewhere in the country.

The prospects of Japanese creating a space for public authorities to interact with the public in a way that functions as civil society does in its Western meaning is a difficult question. But the TR case gives reason for thinking it may be so. Likewise, this case gives no conclusive answer to the question about how important local history may be in contributing to the imagery of current collective representations. But at least for places such as Takefu, where the past is still physically palpable here and there, it is true that the residents are able to locate their *kosei* (individual, defining character) in the local past and look forward both to practical gain as well as to less tangible benefits from a newly founded, rediscovered, or redefined identity.

More ambitious follow up projects would be to enlarge the inquiry into Japanese historicity by sampling for regional and rural-urban variations, as well as to control for socio-economic differences. Another important direction to follow would be to develop the idea that the ubiquitous televisual mode of representing the world and telling narratives affects the way people see themselves, and likewise come to hold expectations about how (local) history should be exhibited. The notion of invented tradition (pace Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), not only in service of the perpetuation of the Japanese nation-state, or commercial enterprise, but also at the local level would be a fruitful area of research since the mantle of "received" tradition seems to be put on so readily in Japan, and the line between fact and fiction is both wider and less distinct than in the West. Finally, there is the potential impact of the Internet technology on civil society. It has a great leveling effect on the social status of message senders and readers. Although a method for sampling and interviewing is not immediately obvious.

Experts in the societies of Korea and China could make productive comparative studies of historicity and/or civil society with the findings given here. Similarly, the variations in these subjects that might be found in the "minimal pairs" of Western societies such as the U.S. with the U.K., the Netherlands with northern Belgium or Germany (along the lines of Germanic linguistic stock) would be instructive (cf. Payer 1989). Finally, citizen movements and the arena of civil society in parts of Japan such as Nagano prefecture with its strong tradition of peasant martyrs (Walthall 1986), Okinawa with its separatist desires, Tokyo as the center-most of a centralized society, and the Kobe-Kyoto-Osaka area as a proud counterpoint to Tokyo-centrism and hot-bed of the Buraku Liberation League would yield useful examples to reinforce or to challenge the observations made in the case of TR and the KKD.

Perhaps the most ambitious line of research connected to the present study would be to make the comprehensive argument connecting collective representations found locally to those of the (ethnic) nation-state, and these in turn to ones found at the household and personal levels. Next, history as taught would be explored. It is a rich vein for received truths about the earlier society and social order and by implication it is one source for normative images of collective identity. Finally, the way that current social conditions,

together with cultural conventions for authoritative history representations (pace White 1987) define the stories recounted about the past would be examined. These intersect to form a semiotic cycle: that present-day understandings of the past are inflected by the prevailing social interests in such a way that the old days are continually revised, partly to reflect the current social order, as well as the imagined and desired social order. In other words, put at its boldest, this would be a study to test the idea that the representations of the past are integral to the production and reproduction of the present social order. But that work is several steps away from the limited case of the citizens group Takefu Renaissance and the KKD.

The Kōkaidō Hall name itself has turned out to be especially apposite to the course of events. The three kanji characters comprising the word are not ironic by themselves, referring in turn to "the public [government authorities and/or the populus]," "gathering," and "hall." But during the most active phase of its life, 1929–1990, the building was indeed the gathering place for members of the public and government. In the next phase, 1990–1993, it was "public" in the sense of its primary service being of, or pertaining to, the government administration. In its third phase, the 23 months from 1994 to 1995, the building was the subject of vigorous contentions in the fledgling civil society in Takefu, comprised of local newspapermen, townspeople, and civil servants. Since its rebirth in November 1995 and re-christening as the *Takefu-shi Kōkaidō Kinenkan* [Takefu City KKD Memorial Hall], the name Kōkaidō once again took as its operative meaning "public" in the sense of community members and other visitors, thus completing a lexical circle for the significance of "public."

The address of the hall is likewise figuratively significant. The KKD sits on the corner of an important intersection. Across the street are the massive facilities of NTT, the telephone and data carrier, symbolic of the "information society" *(jōhōka shakai).* Diagonally across from the KKD sits one of the cookie-cutter 24 hour convenience stores, symbolic of the rootless and context-free flow of global capitalism. On the corner to the east of the KKD is Fujimoto's the greengrocers, a typical mom and pop grocery store that has managed to stay in business. It is symbolic of the plethora of small business owners that under-gird the local economy. Finally there is the *Kōkaidō* itself, located on grounds where the feudal lord handled matters of adjudication and finance. Later this is where a school stood for the town's brightest. And later still the community hospital was located here. Donations by ordinary people, along with grants by the town's wealthy magnates built the KKD itself. It brought new construction principles to the town. It also brought new forms of entertainment, culture and ideas. And now by way of the Saeki Yūzō Gallery affair it has sparked the citizens group Takefu Renaissance. With the election of a former member of TR, Dr. Miki Tokio, to the office of mayor in 1997 and his re-election in 2001, the KKD can be said to have once more brought new ideas to the city, this time in the efforts of Mayor Miki to reform the civil servants and the townspeople, with initiatives for citizen participation,

transparent government, environmental preservation and social services for the elderly. So the poetic meaning of the KKD intersection is matched by the economic significance at this intersection of issues in the society of Takefu and of Japan.

In an era of widening generational differences, spreading international awareness and experiences, and the effects of consumer driven hunger for new technology that has enabled long distance commuting, commerce and communication but has also disabled and destabilized the social solidarity which *derives* from place of residence, Takefu Renaissance has seized upon this very sense of place as the starting place for reviving civic life and commercial vitality. The challenge they put forth in their 1993 charter to determine "what should be preserved of the old town, what should be built, and what kind of life should we try to develop" finally took concrete form in the extended street by street survey they conducted in conjunction with architecture students from Fukui University under Dr. Yoshida Jun. The vision and determination of Takefu Renaissance must be saluted. May Renaissance's love of Takefu help their fellow townspeople to be reborn into an age where ancient and modern do not compete, but form a whole.

The words of a city employee who writes on municipal stationery, and is himself a resident of Takefu, speak to this desire to live with the past, and to live with it well.

> As for the way that [Takefu] residents think, the richness of one's life depends on the greatness of the things in it. Their thinking is changing to value quality instead of quantity. From here on out I think it will be important for townspeople to take the pride and deep attachments they have and make use of the culture and history that defines Takefu to cultivate a sense of community *[machi zukuri]* in which they will be able to feel grace and easiness.
>
> It is nevertheless necessary to develop the city (as a place where young people feel drawn). So planning for a balance of development and preservation is a challenging matter.
>
> I myself am one of those who love the town of Takefu I live in. I will be doing my best for the future of the town. Please share any suggestions or opinions you might have.
>
> —excerpt from a young Takefu City Hall civil servant's letter to the author (fall 1995)

SEQUEL TO THE KŌKAIDŌ AFFAIR

In mid-December 1995, the city published its chronology of the affair, with no acknowledgement of TR's efforts or the admission of irregularities. In February 1996, TR's Umada Masayasu and Miki Yoshimi co-authored a book about the KKD affair in the form of conversational dialogues (Umada 1996). As of March 15th, 1996, all paintings had been returned to Ms. Yoshizono. Finally, in mid-April, about one year after testing had begun, the lab concluded that the paintings were not by Saeki Yūzō himself. They did not

date to the time Saeki Yūzō lived. Right up until he left office in May 1997, the former mayor did not take the responsibility for events as he had earlier promised the city council and townspeople. This follows the pattern for Japanese scandals sketched by Marsh: they just fade with the passing of time. "Nobody gets to the bottom of anything. Nobody expects them to" (1996:23). In the terms of a familiar expression, *"mizu ni nagaru"* (wash it away in the water; or forgive and forget). Following his narrow defeat in the May 1997 mayoral race, Mr. Koizumi is said to have taken a teaching position in China temporarily. But in late summer 1999 he was back in Takefu, meeting with old allies and calculating his chances in local government; for example in the next mayoral election in spring of 2001. The woman who peddled the paintings, Ms. Yoshizono Akiko, was charged in a criminal case and arrested in July 1999 (Fukui Newspaper).

Aside from damage to the city's public image in Japan, and the hundreds of hours of human productivity used up by the administration and TR, a lot of expense was involved. The combined cost of KKD refurbishment, alterations required by change of plan from museum to Saeki Yūzō Bijutsukan, investigation of the paintings and honoraria paid to experts totaled about ¥639,200,000 ($6.392 million). A nominal internal investigation of the handling of the KKD matter was dragged out at about the time Mr. Koizumi was leaving the mayor's office. But the clear conclusions or recommendations normally found in city reports have not been made. Then finally in the fall of 1999 one of the few new city councilors raised the question once more, now in the public eye of the local access cable channel's live broadcast of council general assembly meetings. And under the "freedom of information" system now in place the wheels began to move. Documents remaining in city records were reviewed, private details were censored and a document index and expense list was prepared for public inspection and release to the news media in time for the March 2000 city council meeting. But this story of Mayor Miki's reform efforts and the culture of city hall is a sequel for another book. Returning to the scene of struggles by *Takefu Renaissance*, as a tribute to the group's members I shall follow the tradition of Japanese wordplay and the venerable *koan*, in which a verse is not limited to its apparent meaning, let me offer a new reading of the authority deferring dictum *"sawaranu kami ni tatari nashi"* (gods left untouched will spare their wrath; "let sleeping dogs lie"). Inspired by the example of TR and the events in the wake of the KKD affair, *"sawarnu ka?* MINI *tatari nashi"* (why not have a go—at questioning the authorities—there's not the smallest "mini" retribution).

APPENDIX A

English Gloss of the Survey of Japanese Attitudes to the Past

NB: In the Spring of 1995, 300 surveys were sent through the mailing roll of the local historical society, Tachiaoi Kai, and that of the citizens' movement Takefu Renaissance. Other surveys went to a classroom of high school students at Takefu Higashi High School, and through personal acquaintances around Japan and through them to their colleagues. The rate of return at 98 forms (or about 33%) was good. The question list was first conceived in English in 1991 as part of an assignment for a graduate course on time-culture. After a year in the field I created a Japanese version, replacing some earlier questions with more focused ones. A Japanese friend helped to sharpen the sentences to make it read as intended in the original.

Survey Questions to the People of Takefu

Please circle or write your thoughts, then return this to me at the 3/11 meeting, or hand to one of the Tachiaoi Kai [local history organization] officers. If you prefer, you may send it to me directly at…

1. Which eras of Japan's long history do you find appealing? Jōmon Yayoi Kofun…[elipsis] Shōwa wartime postwar

2. The appealing eras above, what images do they hold?

3. Which eras above do you dislike? Why do you dislike them?

4. During the history lessons of your school days, what did you find interesting? What things did you find boring?

5. What sorts of things give you a feeling of history or awareness of the past? Please give specific examples such as a certain place, object, poem, song or picture.

6. Within your own life what sorts of things remind you of history or make you think of the past? For example home decorations, clothing, the foods you eat, way of speaking, hobbies.

7. When you hear the words *furukusai* [old-fashioned] or *okurete iru* [behind the times], what comes to mind? Please give specific examples (e.g. politics, persons, things, way of thinking, way of living, a certain place).

8. Please give specific examples for the expression *hōken teki* [feudalistic].

9. What do you think of as being especially Japanese [pertaining to people, actions, things]. Please give specific examples.

10. There are all kinds of expressions like *furusato no aji* [hometown taste], *Edo mae* [old Edo period style], *kamigata fū* (old Kyoto-Osaka type], *dentō teki* [traditional] which refer to the past. If there are other expressions or advertisements that make use of history's positive image, please give the specific examples that come to mind.

11. What sorts of things do you (or your friends) keep in the *kura* [home storehouse]? For example, pottery, scrolls, tea equipment, furniture.

12. Usually new things are preferred in home decorating, but in some cases old things are superior. What old things do you have to decorate your home with?

13. The value of an item increases with age. In the following examples when would you say each takes on antique or historical worth?

houses	gardens	ceramics	lacquerware
desks, chairs	Japanese swords	decorative	knickknacks
writing tools	hanging scrolls	other	

14. Whether from heirlooms (equipment, records, photos, etc), stories, or personal memory, how many generations back do you know? For example, 4 generations-household documents.

15. In Japanese life what sorts of things have specific seasonal schedules associated with them? For example changing summer to winter clothing [uniforms], start of crab season, swimming in the sea (from when the rainy season lifts until the old-calendar Obon holiday), special dishes eaten on particular days, changing home decoration with each season. What practices? When?

16. Similar to #15, in Japanese life what things make a seasonal reference? For example, the salutation in a letter or conversation, particular foods

served, Japanese style cakes, floor covering, home life and customs, and so on.

17. Probably your awareness and interest in history differs to that of your prents, and grandparents, to your children and grandchildren. Please describe these differences.

Grandparents
Parents
Children
Grandchildren

Thank you for your cooperation. If you do not mind, please fill in the details below.

Years since you have come to live in Takefu _____,
and [your present] age: _____

male ____ female ____ name _____

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APPENDIX B

Original Japanese Text Whose English Gloss is Found in the book

Japanese quotes that the author glossed in the text, given here in the original.

Page 29, Fvkui Newspaper, January 17, 1992.

ガレージ転用論議．．．．．．保存整備求める声も．．．．．．．．．．．．旧公会堂の西側の壁を一部開けて、一階部分約三百八十六平方メートルを改装し、分庁舎の公用車約二十台を収納。

Page 32, Fikui Newspaper, December 12, 1993.

議論では、「市財政が苦し中、保存改修に金をかけることはもったいない」など、批判的な意見もあったが、保存活用でまとまった。

Page 36, Kawabata Gohe book.

まちづくりとは結局、その町のもつ、"魂"の部分を伝えるためにふさわしい環境づくりをすることであり、それは、自分たちから次の世代に対する共感をこめたメッセージではないだろうか。

Page 40, Councilor Takamori, quarterly “Takefu shigikai dayori.”

保存方法について文化庁をはじめ関係機会とも協議したが、現地保存は極めて困難との結論に至った。今後は、記録保存方法で対処していく。

Page 41, *Takefu no Bunka o Kangaeru no Kai*, prospectus.

この武生を、生まれたことに誇りを持ち、住んで心地よい街にするために、市民一人一人が自分の足元を見つめ直し、何を残し、何を創りだし、どういう生活をすべきかを考え、提案し、実行しなければならない時が来ていると思います。

「武生の文化を考える会」は、故郷武生を愛する市民の意見を結集し提案するシンクタンク的存在になりたいと考えています。

歴史を抜きにして文化は成り立たないし、今、直ちにとりかからないと、また一つ武生の文化遺産を失うことになるという危険感から、大井家や公会堂の保存活用についての提案をます行います。

「武生の文化を考える会」では、「文化」を「人間の生活システムの中心にある価値」と広く捉え、武生市民が心豊かな生活できるように今後さまざまな分野についても提案するものとします。

Page 51, Townspeople's voices in the Kokaido matter.

広域圏行政が開始された時の「武生公会堂」は、武生旧市街地区のアイデンチチ確保の場所となるべきである。武生固有の文化を認識できる場所となるべきである。今から、その認識をもった「公会堂」利用を考える。．．．．．．現在でも、五分市である"越前の里郷土資料館"で「本多富正展」や「武生の町人文化展」をやること自体に無理がある。

．．．．．．やはり味真野ゆかりの越前漫才や万葉和歌や一行一挨などに関連した企画をしてこそ意味がある。

五分市にもっていかれた武生の文化財を公会堂に取り戻そう。

Page 50, Statement on the reuse of the Kakaido.

武生市は、今まで、市民の声をきくこともなく、行政独自の発想や一部関係地区住民の意見のみで事業を展開してきました。恥しいことですが、このことは市民自体が自分の利害以外には、関心を示さない民度の低さにも責任があったと思われます。

市は、既に「歴史とクラフトの街づくり」構想を発表し、「まちづくり市民会議」の方式の導入を提案しています。このことは、一千三百年の歴史を持ちながら、なにひとつ誇りになるものを持ない街、祖先から伝えられた遺産が次々に消失していく街、市街地の沈没という危険感からの発想と思われます。

この市民意識の向上の趣旨に沿い、今こそ、良識的な市民の声が市政の中に反映される文化行政、ベストでなくても、ベターな意見を発表する「市民会議」が、市にとっても、市民にとっても必要と思われます。

「武生の文化を考える会」は、この公会堂問題を、市民として、どういう町づくりをするかの方向を問われる試金石として捉えています。

市民とともに生きた公会堂です。市民を含めたプロジェクトチームをつくり、市民の果たすべき役割と行政の果たすべき役割を十分検討した上で、計画を練ることを請願したいと思いますので、是非、ご賛同下さい。

Page 52, "afterword" form Proposal for Fundamental…

．．．．今回、「ルネサンス」が提案する根本理念は、市民と行政と専門家の三者が協力して公会堂修復を行うということです。

本来ならば、この三者で十分な討議がなされたうえで予算の計上があるべきなのですが、実際は逆になっています。来年の六月完成ということで二億円の予算が計上されているようですが、まだ十分な討議がなされていない現在においては、この二億円はまず、公会堂修復のコンセプトがどの様

continuing page 52 “afterword” from Proposal for Fundamental…

になっても、変り得ない部分、たとえば外装とか玄関ホールなどに使うべきだろうと思います。全体の完成まで五年ぐらいかけるつもりで、後の世に武生の宝として残るような修復をしたいものです。修復にあたり、文化庁の近代建築の担当官に相談し、その指示を仰ぐ必要があると思います。修復工事を進めつつ、早急に市民と行政と専門家の三者からなる「構想委員会」を組織し、公会堂をどう生かすかの案を練るべきだと思います。展示部分などについては予算も含めて市民が協力するという方法もあるでしょう。

文化の町武生のしての今後の歩みを考えますと、二本の柱だてが必要かと思います。一つは武生に国府が置かれたという史実を明らかにしていくこと。もう一つは近世以降の武生の商業および文化面での繁栄の足跡を明らかにすること。そのためには、どうしても埋蔵文化財センターと郷土博物館と文書史料館が必要になってくると思います。こういう展望から公会堂をどう生かすかを考えるべきでしょう。

今私たちは何年もかけていい建物を造りあげてきた先人の哲学を学びたいものだと思います。

（三木世嗣美）

Page 56 “Proposal of Fundamental Concepts for reuse of…

「町並み保存」という出発点から全国画一的な町を作るのではなく武生独自の「誇り」と「なじみ」のある町づくりへと発展させていきたいものである。

武生の文化政治の発祥の一つである公会堂を過去の思い出と共に保存し、積極的な再生をはかることで我々の時代の新しい付加価値をつけ加え武生の町の新たなるシンボルとして次の時代に残して行くことが我々の責任である。

Page 57, Yomiuri Newspager, February 28, 1993

一階に郷土歴史などの学習コーナーやギャラリー、二階には歴史資料や遺跡の出土品などを保存展示する方針で、市はできるだけ創建当時の面影を伝えるものにしたいとしている。

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