Kulturwissenschaftliche Japanstudien

Herausgegeben von
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Band 13

2024
Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

Articulations of the Nuclear

Postwar Japan under the Spell of the Atomic Age

Edited by
Stephan Köhn and Katharina Hülsmann

2024
Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

Published with kind support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

Cover illustration: © Donated by Akito Kawagoe, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über https://dnb.de abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the internet at https://dnb.de.

For further information about our publishing program consult our website https://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de

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Printed on permanent/durable paper.
Printing and binding: docupoint, Magdeburg
Printed in Germany

ISSN 1860-2320
ISBN 978-3-447-12199-6

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Foreword

This publication is composed of contributions presented at the conference "Hiroshima—Nagasaki—Fukushima: Articulations of the Nuclear" which took place in May 2022 in Cologne, Germany, as well as papers that have grown out of the discussions and exchanges we had during the joint research project "Japan's Split Society: Discursive Constitution between the Atomic Bombs (*genbaku*) and Nuclear Power Plants (*genpatsu*)" of the University of Cologne and Leipzig University, funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

The research project was of course affected by the global Covid-19 pandemic. From one day to the next, global travel became impossible and research institutions and archives inaccessible. Meetings were quickly moved to the virtual realm of Zoom and other conferencing systems. Planning for future field research and in-person-exchanges was very difficult. The Department of Japanese Studies of Leipzig University under Steffi Richter and project research associate Felix Jawinski carried the torch by organizing an online lecture series with the title "Japan's Split Society Between Genbaku and Genpatsu: Media, Propaganda and Science" in the summer semester of 2021. Through this lecture series we could begin sharing our research with other scholars on an international level and, in turn, also receive their insights.

In autumn 2021, the Department of Japanese Studies at the University of Cologne under Stephan Köhn and project research associate Katharina Hülsmann, drawing on extensive preparations by research assistant Marie-Christine Dreßen, began the ambitious planning process for the first hybrid conference that would be organized by the department after pandemic travel bans had been lifted. It was a confusing time, with very few definite answers and guarantees by the administration on how and with what scope a conference could be held in May 2022. Yet, with a lot of optimism and commitment to ensuring the attendance of the conference would be as safe as possible for the in-person attendees—as well as accessible to a wide audience online—we went ahead with the planning. In February 2022, while planning for the conference was in full swing, news about Russia's invasion of Ukraine put atomic issues—such as the safety of nuclear power plants in war zones and, above all, the threat of nuclear weapons—very clearly to the fore. The research project seemed more topical than ever.

The conference did not simply consist of the papers compiled in this volume. It included an excursion to a site that serves as a symbol for recollecting the Cold War anxieties of the late 1970s: The Civilian Shelter at the Documentation

Center DOKK, which is preserved and located in the heart of Cologne, under the subway station Kalk-Post. This civilian shelter was supposed to house 2000 people for two weeks in the event of a nuclear attack on Cologne. As became evident from the guided tour through the shelter, the German government at the time tried its best to plan withstanding a possible nuclear attack—yet the chances of survival remain rather slim and there was simply no plan for what would happen once the two weeks had passed. Seeing this historical site in person and experiencing the atmosphere of the shelter illuminated the Cold War way of thinking to the conference attendees and pointed us to unresolved questions that have, once again, become pressing.

We are proud to present our research on the articulations of the nuclear in this edited volume. We would first like to thank all the contributors to the conference for sharing their research and their insights and criticisms with us: Lauren Constance, Rachel DiNitto, Marie-Christine Dreßen, André Hertrich, Christopher P. Hood, Robert Jacobs, Felix Jawinski, Franziska König, Peter Kuznick, Michele M. Mason, Hiroko Okuda, Steffi Richter, Atsuko Shigesawa, Tobias Weiss and Anna Wiemann. We would also like to thank those who helped us make the conference a success: Chantal Weber, Martin Thomas, Paul Schoppe, Imân Nur Bodenstein, Bianca M. Hanzic, Marvin Kamphausen, Eda Tanriverdi, Alison Tonnet and Sylvia Schütz. Furthermore, we would like to thank Michael Dorrity for the English language proofreading. We would also like to express our gratitude to Ursula Flache and Christian Dunkel for their guidance in researching the relevant literature—especially during the trying lockdown periods—and for making it possible to access microfilms from the Gordon W. Prange Collection and from the 20th Century Media Information Database through the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Similarly, we would like to thank the curator of the Gordon W. Prange Collection, Kana Jenkins, for providing her guidance and aiding our research at the Hornbake Library of the University of Maryland. Last but not least, we would like to extend our thanks to Luna Sartor for her extensive help with administrative matters and her diligent work in proofreading the galley proofs. Any remaining flaws in the manuscript are the editors' responsibility.

Finally, we would also like to thank Steffi Richter and Felix Jawinski for their insights and support in organizing the conference, their ongoing cooperation in this research project, and their sharing of funding for travel costs.

Cologne, March 2024

The editors

Articulations of the Nuclear: Postwar Japan under the Spell of the Atomic Age —An Introduction to this Volume—

Stephan Köhn and Katharina Hülsmann

> Our government behaved extremely cold-heartedly showing no charity towards us as victims. We were totally abandoned and forgotten. Of course, people were not aware of this fact at that time. For them, only the war was to be blamed. Nothing would change anyway, so they stopped complaining about the situation. Of course, they felt grief and resentment deep in their hearts but they were unable to find words for this feeling. Every time I think about this situation, my heart beats faster and my whole body begins to tremble. Even today, Japanese people are generally quite indifferent to the damage actually caused by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But that's not everything, even the residents of Hiroshima are indifferent. They do not want to hear any scientific explanation for the very thing that provoked their innermost fears and horrors.
>
> The damage caused by an atomic bomb is peculiar [compared to conventional bombs] insofar as it is not the day of the explosion that will become the most horrendous, but the days that follow. Because even if you survive the explosion itself, you will have no guarantee of surviving [nuclear power] overall. In some respect, it is like having cancer. You are thrown into the deepest misery, into a world of unfathomable and unprecedented confusion and horror. (Ōta 1949: 48)

In August 1949, Ōta Yōko's 大田洋子 (1903–63) short report "August 6, 8:15" (*Hachigatsu muika, hachiji jūgofun* ８月６日８時１５分) was published in the general interest magazine "Reconstruction" (*Kaizō* 改造). At the time of publication, she was undoubtedly one of the most prominent—and perhaps influential—voices from Hiroshima. Ōta Yōko had already been an accomplished writer before the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. On August 30, 1945, she published the first written report on the atomic bombing and the aftermath in the daily newspaper *Asahi shinbun* 朝日新聞 (Tokyo edition), titled: "An Unfathomable Deep Light" (*Kaitei no yō na hikari* 海底のやうな光). It was made abundantly clear to Ōta Yōko from the very beginning that writing about the atomic bomb would be anything but easy as her articulations of the nuclear immediately became a target of suspicion and suppression. Her short story "Riverbank" (*Kawara* 河原) illustrates this most clearly. The short novel ought to have been published as early as November 1946, in the first issue of the literary magazine "Novel" (*Shōsetsu* 小説). The manuscript of the entire issue was confiscated by the censors, however, and the publication inevitably delayed, such

that "Riverbank" was not ultimately published until February 1948, in the second issue of "Novel". It is striking that both Ōta Yōko's short story as well as the short novel "Back home" (*Kokoku e* 故国へ) by Tamura Taijirō 田村泰次郎 (1911–83) fell afoul of the censors. The latter was deemed to constitute "militaristic propaganda".

Ōta's "Riverbank" is quite an unusual account of August 6, 1945, as it tells the rather unpretentious story of three survivors of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima who found refuge at a riverbank. Ōta painstakingly describes their daily struggle for survival, their fears of the past, and their dreams for the future.[1] Ōta's story succeeded in the feat of speaking about a taboo without explicitly mentioning it. That is, although neither the time, the city, the atomic bomb itself, nor the aftermath are mentioned, the reader is keenly aware of the fact that the story is about the abovementioned "unknown and unexperienced confusion and terror" with which all survivors of August 6 were confronted. It is very likely that Ōta Yōko deliberately erased every written trace of the "nuclear" (i. e. atomic bomb, exposure to radiation et cetera) to avoid invoking any of the common censorship practices of the time. Needless to say, this form of "self-restraint" (*jishuku* 自粛) amounted to a form of internalized censorship practiced by many survivors, and writers, of the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9, 1945.

Two years later, in November 1948, Ōta Yōko published what is probably her best-known account on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, "City of Corpses" (*Shikabane no machi* 屍の街), printed by the renowned publisher Chūō kōronsha. However, the author herself did not practice self-restraint on this occasion, with the publisher instead removing every expression or passage that may have posed a problem in terms of obtaining the censors' approval (Nagaoka 1982: 241–67). The greatest such intervention was the removal of the entire chapter, "Apathetic faces" (*Muyoku ganbō* 無欲顔貌), which had originally contained a great deal of information—including direct citations—given by renowned scientists and well-known newspaper articles on the subject of the bombings. It would take a further two years before "City of Corpses" would finally be published unabridged by the publisher Tōga shobō in 1950.

Remarkably, Ōta decided to include a paragraph containing, of all things, large parts of the deleted chapter "Apathetic faces" in her short account of the bombing titled "August 6, 8:15". Of course, the August issue of "Reconstruction" also had to be filed for approval in July 1949. However, as can be seen from the censors' notes, Ōta Yōko's account was not classified as a violation. It was, rather, pieces such as the short stories of Satomi Ton 里見弴 (1888–1983) and Mikasanomiya Takahito 三笠宮崇仁 (1915–2016) that were "censored and deleted in part" before publication. By all appearances, the rather oppressive

climate for authors and media outlets seeking to provide accounts of the atomic bombings eased somewhat in 1949. Of course, this does not mean that censorship ceased to exist but it was no longer so rigid as to force many authors and publishers into employing such drastic forms of self-restraint when addressing the events of August 6.

The Allied Occupation of Japan officially began on September 2, 1945, and postwar censorship was institutionalized shortly thereafter with the creation of the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) on September 10. The CCD would serve to censor undesirable views supposedly contradicting or undermining Japan's transformation into a democratic state committed to freedom of speech. Censorship was—as was pointed out by Monica Braw in her seminal study—also institutionalized in the American occupation zones of defeated Germany at a very early stage of the occupation. However, in marked contrast to the German case, the scope of censorship in Japan—and thus the number of personnel involved—diverged significantly, given the intention of the Allied Powers. Braw formulates the Allied injunction in the following terms: "The whole of the Japanese people must be reformed. It would not be enough just to refuse certain publishers' licenses. All Japanese, including publicists, must be reeducated" (Braw 1986: 60).

It goes without saying that censorship was not exactly new for the Japanese population given that newspapers, magazines, film, and radio had been strictly regulated by the government during the Fifteen Years War (1931–45). Just how opaque the categories for censorship had become, however, was unprecedented. On September 15, 1945, the Liberal Democratic MP—and subsequent Prime Minister, Hatoyama Ichirō (1945: 2)—publicly rebuked the U. S. government, writing in the *Asashi shinbun* that "the Americans can no longer deny that the use of the atomic bombs and the killing of innocent civilians were even a greater violation of international law and a greater war crime than the bombings of hospital ships or the use of poison gas". Immediately thereafter, on September 19, 1945, the Allied Powers released a ten-point Press Code declaring, rather vaguely, that news would now "adhere strictly to the truth" (1) and do nothing to "disturb public tranquility" (2).[2] Needless to say, more often than not it was left to the judgement of the individual censor whether or not a certain text or picture would to be treated as a violation of the press code. Ambiguity and the unpredictability of the censors created a climate fostering self-restraint—the "educational effect" for the Japanese as Braw puts it—as an anticipatory obedience towards the occupation policy of the Allied Powers.

The CCD, which at its peak employed well over 10,000 censors controlling media and telecommunications of every ilk, was ultimately dissolved on October 31, 1949.[3] This did not mean, however, that censorship came to an end. On

the contrary, censorship under the Civil Information and Educational Section (CIE) as well as the Civil Intelligence Section (CIS) continued until the official end of the Allied Occupation in April 1952 (Etō 2015: 20). The effects of censorship on the historical awareness of an entire nation cannot be overstated. In his eponymous work, "Sealed Space for Verbal Utterances" (*Tozasareta gengo kūkan* 閉された言語空間), Etō Jun speaks to the climate created by Allied censorship in Japan (Etō 1994: 347–66). The impossibility of "articulating" supposedly contestable facts or memories paved the way for a nescience towards, and a distortion of, recent war history for broad swathes of society. The effects of censorship for the atomic bombings, in particular, were disastrous. As Shigesawa Atsuko (2010: 136–74) has pointed out, the majority of Japanese society became "ignorant" (*muchi* 無知) and "indifferent" (*mukanshin* 無関心) to the bombs, the aftermath and, above all, the victims (*hibakusha* 被爆者). The renowned author, Inoue Hisashi 井上ひさし (1934–2010), serves as an illustrative example in this context. In a round-table talk on atomic bomb literature with the famous writer, Hayashi Kyōko 林京子 (1930–2017), Inoue had to admit that he had not learned about the real extent of the devastation unleashed in Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9 in 1951 until a full six years after the bombings (Inoue et al.2004: 25).

The entire "nuclear issue" was an extremely sensitive matter from the very beginning. After the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, the Japanese government did its best to conceal the true nature of the "enemy's new type of bomb" (*teki shingata bakudan* 敵新型爆弾)[4] given that acknowledging the use of an atomic bomb on Hiroshima would have been tantamount to admitting the enemy's technical and strategical superiority. This, in turn, would have inevitably caused a general decline in morale on the side of the civilian population (Sodei 1975: 269). On August 11, 1945, the former "new type of bomb" was finally acknowledged for the first time as an "atomic bomb" (*genshi bakudan* 原子爆弾) in Japanese newspapers, following Harry S. Truman's famous radio address to the American people on August 9. Nonetheless, coverage in the Japanese papers on the extent of the devastation continued to downplay the extent of the damage, comparing it to that of a conventional bomb. The real effects of radiation in the aftermath of the explosions—or in Ōta Yōko's words, the main reason for the "unfathomable and unprecedented confusion and horror" among survivors—were more or less hushed up, such that knowledge about the true nature of the bomb remained restricted to the disaster areas of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Interestingly, the Cabinet Intelligence Bureau (Naikaku jōhōkyoku 内閣情報局) that was responsible for this kind of media control and censorship in Japan continued its work until its ultimate dissolution on October 1, 1945. As Takakuwa Kōkichi (1984: 35–49) has indicated, the bureau, for whatever reason, thus continued in

its unwavering control of the mass media even after the Allied Occupation of Japan officially began on September 2.[5]

It goes without saying that after the CCD was established, covering the atomic bombs became even more difficult for the media than before. Reports on the radioactive aftereffects of the bomb were strictly suppressed—in both the United States and Japan—since these kinds of reports would undermine the officially propagated image of a new and clean weapon that could be used in a just war primarily for the destruction of military targets. The famous case of the Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett illustrates just how sensitively the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers could react. Burchett had visited the devastated city of Hiroshima in August 1945 and subsequently published a report in London's *The Daily Express* on September 5, 1945, titled "The Atomic Plague", in which he wrote:

> In these hospitals I found people who, after the bomb fell, suffered absolutely no injuries, but now are dying from the uncanny after-effects. For no apparent reason their health began to fail. They lost appetite. Their hair fell out. Bluish spots appeared on their bodies. And the bleeding began from the ears, nose, and mouth. [...] All these phenomena, they told me, were due to the radioactivity released by the atomic bomb's explosion of the uranium atom. (Burchett 2008 [1945]: 3; 5)

Only one week later, on September 12, 1945, a counterstatement was published by William L. Lawrence (by order of Thomas F. Farrell from the Manhattan Project) in *The New York Times* that rejected any aftereffects of radioactivity on the human body and discredited Burchett as an unreliable source (Sasamoto 1999: 456–62).

The CCD filtered out virtually every kind of "articulation of the nuclear" that had the potential to become a powerful counter-narrative to the official version of the atomic bombings. Film materials, photographs, reports, novels, and even pieces of poetry were painstakingly scrutinized before being given approval for publication or release. Confiscated material, on the other hand, was archived in the CCD and, ultimately, brought to the United States where it became part of the Gordon W. Prange Collection (University of Maryland) after Allied Occupation reached its conclusion in 1952.

However, as we have seen in the case of Ōta Yōko's "August 6, 8:15", the CCD censorship of the "nuclear issue" grew less rigid over time. Deep-rooted distrust of former U. S. ally Joseph Stalin—undoubtedly another central motivation for concealing information about the atomic bombings and their aftereffects—as well as the fear of communism rapidly spreading throughout East Asia (including Japan), becoming the driving forces for a gradual shift in censorship practices. As early as 1959, the German-Austrian philosopher Günther Anders (1902–92)—who had visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1958—exposed the hy-

pocrisy behind the American justification that the second atomic bombing on Nagasaki was a necessary means to quickly end the war as deceptive, stating:

> It is common practice [...] to consider Hiroshima as the ultimate symbol, and therefore mention it first, as in the saying "Hiroshima and Nagasaki". However, this common practice is not justified. Because for a moralist, Nagasaki should be mentioned first. In other words, one should say instead: "Nagasaki and Hiroshima". The simple reason is that the second atomic bomb was an even greater evil than the first. [...] The 70,000 people that were murdered [...] were not murdered because they had been enemies, let alone dangerous enemies. On the contrary, they were murdered because this mass murder would make an example of them. It would assign 70,000 corpses an entirely new function. These corpses could now be used, used as a threat. (Anders 1995 [1959]: 110; 111–12)

For Anders, the atomic bombing of Nagasaki was nothing more than a threat to Joseph Stalin who had ordered his troops to invade Manchuria on August 8, 1945. It was a strategic move to keep the Soviet Union at bay. At the same time, it ushered the whole world into a new age: the Cold War.

It is, thus, not surprising that, from the very beginning, employees working for the CCD were frequently hypersensitive to any association with communism. Hirano Kyōko's study on film censorship during the occupation period takes a look at the interesting case of the 1946 documentary film "The Tragedy of Japan" (*Nippon no higeki* 日本の悲劇), directed by Kamei Fumio 亀井文夫 (1908–87). The film production was enthusiastically encouraged by the head of the motion and theater branch of the CIE at the time, David W. Conde (1906–81). The script for the film had no difficulty in passing the CIE's screening process. Problems started, however, when the CCD began to review the script again in June 1946, demanding major changes to "problematic scenes". Yet even after the changes were made, the problems did not cease. In August 1946, the film was reviewed once again by CCD censors, which ultimately resulted in a complete ban, with all copies confiscated (Hirano 1998: 210–24). The film's serious claims that many war criminals—including Emperor Hirohito—had held onto their positions, even after the war had ended, was the main reason for the extreme reaction of the CCD. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East began its activities in May 1946 and the question of war guilt, as such, was an extremely sensitive issue, both for Japanese politicians such as Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru 吉田茂 (1878–1967), and for the supreme commander of the Allied Powers in Japan, Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964). Indeed, the issue was more sensitive still, given that the Soviet Union, for example, was calling for a conviction of the emperor (and an abolishment of the emperor system). The assertations made in "The Tragedy of Japan", thus, seemed suspiciously leftist. For the sake of keeping communism at bay, the Allied Powers—or, more aptly, the American Forces in Japan—persecuted individuals that, due to their personal history in the war, were not necessarily compatible with the U. S. vision of a new

and democratic Japan.[6] Incidentally, David W. Conde himself was forced to resign from his job in July 1946—and return to the United States in spring 1947—on suspicion of being a communist (Hirano 1992: 142).

According to Matsuura Sōzō, an obvious change in censorship policies occurred in 1947 (Matsuura 1974: 299–308). In 1947, the Japanese Communist Party and the Japanese Labor Union planned a national strike for February 1 that aimed to overthrow the Yoshida cabinet. The incident became a wake-up call for the Allied Powers in terms of an urgent need to more closely examine leftist movements in the country. In the event, MacArthur was able to intervene at the very last second to avert the strike and, thus, the planned takeover of the Japanese government. The incident is often considered pivotal for the well-cited "reverse course" (*gyaku kōsu* 逆コース) in occupation policy, which led to a withdrawal of the central reforms that had been implemented at the beginning of the occupation period, and to an inevitable strengthening of right-wing, conservative forces in Japan. The "red scare" that had already come to constitute a central issue in domestic U. S. politics in the first postwar period soon took on a protagonistic role in occupation politics and censorship measures in Japan. Anti-leftist resentment during the occupation period undoubtedly reached its climax with the onset of the Korean War in June 1950 when tens of thousands of alleged communists were removed from their jobs as part of the so-called "red purge". The equation of pacifism—and later antinuclear activism—with communism became a fatal nexus that silenced many voices, including survivors of the atomic bombings.[7] In sum, the occupation period in all its hypocrisy fostered, nolens volens, a reconceptualization of history insofar as that the atomic bombings were relativized in their historical singularity due to a lack of information. Ultimately, very few military leaders were sentenced for war crimes in the Tokyo Trial and the whole nation, as such, felt exculpated from any war guilt. Indeed, the Fifteen Years War was generally misconceived as a war without perpetrators, as a series of incidents that occurred simply by chance.[8] As has been quite astutely indicated by Ariyama Teruo (2003: 9–12), the occupation period became the "incubation phase" (*senpukuki* 潜伏期) for Japan's postwar re-nationalism and self-victimization, and this despite any initial intention thereof on the part the Allied Powers. In other words, Japan had chosen a way "of remembering Japanese suffering while forgetting the suffering that the Japanese caused others" (Dower 1993: 27). In his eponymous work, Katō Norihiro speaks of the dire consequences of the "American Shadow" (*Amerika no kage* アメリカの影) that was cast over Japan in the first postwar years. According to Katō (1995: 294–300), the "democracy" that was imposed on Japan after its defeat was nothing more than an "atomic bomb-based democracy" (*genbaku minshu shugi* 原爆民主主義), which was unable to change deep-rooted fascist structures among

Japan's political elite. The result was, thus, a political system that was neither willing to learn its lessons from the past nor was it particularly inclined to turn a new leaf for the future. However, the U. S. influence Katō depicts in his study did not diminish with the end of the occupation period in 1952 as one could be forgiven for thinking. On the contrary, its influence on domestic policy in Japan continued unabated.

For the "articulations of the nuclear", which depicted the "evil" side of nuclear power, the end of occupation marked a new era given that medical reports, eyewitness accounts, novels, and poems could be published without running the risk of censorship or confiscation. Yet, the new era brought challenges of its own for such expressions, as a new kind of "articulation of the nuclear" emphasizing the "good" side of nuclear power was now enthusiastically encouraged by the political elite. Dwight D. Eisenhower's famous speech, "Atoms for Peace", held at the Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on December 8, 1953, marked the beginning of a new nuclear age in Japan. Needless to say, the United States' commitment to providing their knowledge for the peaceful use of nuclear energy was, more or less, a reaction to the Soviet Union's commitment—declared on October 5, 1952—to supporting "the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the advancement of society". The first commercial nuclear power plant in Obninsk (near Moscow) began producing electricity on an industrial scale as early as in 1954 and it was incumbent on the United States, as such, to take action proactively in order to protect their sphere of influence, at least in the so-called Western world (Ichikawa 2016: 28–35). However, a spanner was thrown into the works for Eisenhower by the Bikini Incident in which the crew of the Japanese fishing boat Lucky Dragon Number 5 (Daigo Fukuryūmaru 第五福竜丸) was contaminated by radioactive fallout caused by the U. S. hydrogen bomb test in the Bikini Atoll in March 1954.[9] The antinuclear-weapons movement—which started with a signature campaign launched by concerned housewives of Tokyo's Suginami Ward—temporarily created a climate in which promotion campaigns for the peaceful use of nuclear energy seemed to be anything but advisable. Hence, for Japan, the plans for a tour of the exhibition, "Atoms for Peace" (*Genshiryoku heiwa riyō hakurankai* 原子力平和利用博覧会), had to be postponed to 1955 (Zwigenberg 2012).[10] Having first been displayed in Japan's larger cities, the exhibition finally was shown in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (Hiroshima heiwa kinen shiryōkan 広島平和記念資料館)—which had just opened its doors one year prior—from May 27 to June 17, 1956. The question as to whether the special exhibition ought to be held at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum at all was a controversial one, and much discussed. The initial exhibits had to be removed and stored externally to provide enough space, which simultaneously meant avoiding questions about the potential dangers of

nuclear energy that could have arisen from viewing the exhibits from the initial collection. Yet, in the end, the influence of so many supporters outweighed the critical voices, and it would seem that the success of the exhibition proved them right. With well over one hundred thousand visitors in three weeks, "Atoms for Peace" was more successful in Hiroshima than in many other cities, such as Osaka, for instance, despite the fact that the latter was, and still is, the larger of the two (Zwigenberg 2014: 123).[11]

On a governmental level, the path towards the peaceful use of nuclear energy in Japan had already been paved in 1954 by politician, Nakasone Yasuhiro 中曽根康弘 (1918–2019), and media mogul, Shōriki Matsutarō 正力松太郎 (1885–1969), the latter of whom history would later reveal to have been a CIA agent. These two men would together constitute the driving force for the continued promotion of peaceful nuclear energy in Japan, which had first been set in motion by the United States. The signing of the atomic energy agreement between the United States and Japan and the ratification of the Atomic Energy Basic Act (Genshiryoku kihon hō 原子力基本法) in November and December of 1955 respectively, followed by the establishment of the government's Nuclear Energy Commission (Genshiryoku iinkai 原子力委員会) in January 1956, were undoubtedly crucial steps in leading Japan toward a bright and promising nuclear-based future (*akarui seikatsu* 明るい生活).[12] However, following the Bikini Incident in 1954, Hiroshima had hosted the first World Conference on the Prohibition of Nuclear and Hydrogen Bombs (Gensuibaku kinshi sekai taikai 原水爆禁止世界大会) in 1955, going on to become a hub for antinuclear movements. Indeed, the touring exhibition had become a litmus test for Japan's disposition to the promotion of nuclear power plant construction. As shown above, Hiroshima successfully passed the test. In an article co-authored with Yuki Tanaka, Peter Kuznick summed up the issue in the following rather sober terms: "Wanting their country to be a modern scientific-industrial power and being aware of the fact that Japan lacked energy resources, the public allowed itself to be convinced that nuclear power was safe and clean. It had forgotten the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" (Kuznick / Tanaka 2011). Bizarre though it sounds from a modern point of view, in 1955, Sidney R. Yates initially proposed the construction of Japan's first nuclear power plant, of all places, in Hiroshima. Following the failure of the initiative, it was not until an entire decade later that Japan's first nuclear power plant—constructed in Tōkaimura (Ibaraki Prefecture)—began to produce electricity on an industrial scale in 1965.[13]

As we have seen, the first postwar decade saw the development of Japan—under the permanent "guidance" of the United States—into one of the world's foremost producers of nuclear energy. Indeed, the atom was irreversibly split into, on the hand, an "evil" energy epitomized by the atomic bomb (*genbaku* 原

爆) and, on the other, a form of "good" energy, represented by the nuclear power plant (*genpatsu* 原発). The former came to symbolize a remote past that humanity had now overcome, while the latter symbolized a bright and promising future. It goes without saying that this discursive splitting of the atom inevitably led to a splitting of society with, in the one corner, those for whom the aftermath of this "evil" energy was still affecting their daily lives and, in the other, those for whom a praiseworthy "good" energy signified the ultimate key to a new, electrically powered, middle-class life (Yoshimi 2012: 143–67).

The first postwar decade also saw a striking synchronicity in the development of events that seemed—at least at first glance—to have very little to do with one other. Upon closer inspection, however, it soon becomes clear that these developments were somewhat triggered by the processes depicted above. We shall now flesh out some of the most crucial of these developments with a view to gaining a better overall picture.

We begin with the transformation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki into sacred places for national mourning. The reinvention of these two cities as centers for peace accelerated a musealization of both the atomic bombings and their victims.[14] Especially in Hiroshima, the musealization of ground zero as a new center for world peace and peace tourism, respectively, had fatal consequences for those survivors that settled in various slums in the city center. The slums in question—a thorn in the side of city planners—were forcibly evacuated and dissolved in order to enable the construction of the planned peace areas (Nishii 2020: 143–49). And yet, it was primarily non-victims of the bombings (*hi-hibakusha* 非被爆者) that first availed themselves of the newly constructed commemoration spaces—including parks, museums, statues, and cenotaphs—to commemorate an emotionally shared memory.[15] The presence of the "real" victims of the bomb, as Ōta Yōko (1982 [1954]: 276–77) dryly remarked in her novel "Half human" (*Han ningen* 半人間), was apparently only necessary at the annual nationwide memorial services held on August 6 (and August 9, respectively). The musealization process ended, more or less, with the opening of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum (Nagasaki genbaku shiryōkan 長崎原爆資料館) in 1955. With the inauguration of these two institutions, August 6 and August 9 were put into a time capsule, preserved for eternity. Yet, as Fukuma Yoshiaki (2015: 84) has pointed out, this preservation—epitomized by the impressive compound of architectural entities in the two peace areas—conceals the fact that an irreversible erosion of memory had already taken place throughout Japanese society. The places of commemoration merely re-enacted a memory that had already faded away.

A second noteworthy development in this context is the social ostracism many intellectuals, artists, authors, and even survivors began to experience in

the first postwar decade. The questions of "war guilt" and "war responsibility" were a delicate matter for most people in the first postwar years. The sentences issued at the Tokyo Trial fueled, as mentioned above, the widespread idea that only a small group of fanatic military leaders was ultimately responsible for the war.[16] As Tsurumi Shunsuke (1959: 80–81) has stated, it was for this reason that bureaucrats and officials who had supported the military system lived their lives in the absence of any real guilt about the war. Especially the exoneration of the emperor at the Tokyo Trial—thanks to the enormous influence exercised by MacArthur in this very special case—reinforced this feeling of collective innocence in Japan (Kojima 1991: 81–95). If the emperor himself—the very man at the head of the military who had signed off on the war through his holy decisions (*seidan* 聖断)—is not responsible, who is?[17] In contrast to the majority of those in postwar Japanese society, intellectual circles began fiercely discussing why and how an entire nation could be seduced by military leaders. The leading literary magazines of that time, "New Literature of Japan" (*Shin Nihon bungaku* 新日本文学) and "Modern Literature" (*Kindai bungaku* 近代文学), became major battlegrounds on which the issue of the "conversion" (*tenkō* 転向) among Japan's intelligentsia during the Fifteen Years War was relentlessly debated.[18] Mutual denunciation of intellectuals and artists was quite common practice in the journals. However, the debates did not only center on the question of intellectual backwardness—that is, not being "individual" in a modern sense—but also on the extent to which modern literature had failed to become the central means by way of which intellectuals could develop "individuality" (*shutaisei* 主体性). As a result, quite a few intellectuals, artists, and authors were ostracized either by their colleagues or by their readers. Perceived as dissenting voices from the past, they appear to have reminded this new "community of memory" (*kioku no kyōdōtai* 記憶の共同体) of an uncomfortable historical episode that they had otherwise relegated to oblivion. By the mid-1950s at the latest, Japan's sense of identity as a nation full of war victims no longer left any room for debates concerning the problem of "conversion", "war guilt", or "the atomic bombings".[19]

The third development requiring explication here is the radical change of course in the educational sector. From the very beginning of the occupation period, the Allied Powers placed a focus on peace and democracy in order to prevent further indoctrination of children in Japanese schools. The Basic Act on Education (Kyōiku kihon hō 教育基本法), which came into effect in March 1947, became the legal framework for this new educational concept while the new screening system for teaching materials (*kyōkasho kentei seido* 教科書検定制度), implemented in August 1948, served as the necessary instrument for controlling teaching contents (Köhn 2022: 174–76). However, here again, the abovementioned "reverse course" in occupation policy had severe consequences, this time

for the teaching materials and the teaching staff. In line with the red purge in Japan, anti-communism became a new issue to be taught in school classes from 1950 onwards, and the supposed ideological orientation of the teachers quickly became an issue of the utmost importance (Matsui 1969: 21–23). For teachers, teaching peace, as promulgated in the Basic Act, became a highly difficult task as teachers generally ran the risk of being discredited as a communist by colleagues or parents. Especially after the Japanese government had taken complete control over the screening system for teaching materials at the end of the occupation period, the content of the textbooks began to change dramatically insofar as the new "war without perpetrators" became the predominant narrative in all officially approved textbooks. Even supplementary teaching materials required an official approval before they could be used. Knowledge about the (aftermath of the) atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as such, inevitably declined among students and August 6 and 9 were, thus, reduced to abstracts events of a remote past within the national curriculum. In June 1954, the Double Education Act (*kyōiku nihō* 教育二法)—as agreed in preliminary talks between Walter S. Robertson (1893–1970), Assistant Secretary of State, and Ikeda Hayato 池田勇人 (1899–1965), representative of prime minister Yoshida Shigeru, in October 1953—was put into effect. From then on, committed teachers had to live with the fear of losing their jobs due to alleged bias in their teaching methods. In this sense, the Ikeda-Robertson Talks, as Ishida Takeshi (2000: 260–63) has astutely pointed out, paved the way for a new kind of postwar nationalism that affected the entirety of public life. After the Guidelines for Teaching and Learning (Gakushū shidō yōryō 学習指導要領) had been accordingly "adjusted" to this new educational policy in 1958, articulations of the nuclear ultimately vanished from textbooks and classes for several years.[20]

As these three developments paradigmatically illustrate, the first postwar decade was a time in which the discursive splitting of the atom (and society) had an enormous impact on virtually all spheres of public life. With all its contradictory decisions and unpredictable changes of course, the occupation period fostered the emergence of power structures that pervaded the entirety of Japanese society for decades to come. These structures are the key mechanisms for rendering "texts" or "images" (as understood in the sense promulgated within critical culture studies) of the "good" and "evil" nuclear energy visible or invisible. In this regard, visibility should be considered just as untrustworthy as invisibility given that neither of these states are coincidental. On the contrary, they are the inevitable results of these underlying power structures. To put it differently, articulations become visible or invisible as the result of a deliberate choice for representation or suppression.