

Report

Project FUKUSHIMA!

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1. Introduction

Fukushima City, August 15, 2011.

The grass at the Village of Four Seasons, a city park in the western part of Fukushima City, about 60 km north west of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, was covered by a huge Furoshiki (wrapping cloth) made of many different colored fabrics stitched together. The total area space was approximately 6000 square meters.

An outdoor music festival, free of charge, was being hosted by Project FUKUSHIMA!, an organization founded by three artists acting as joint representatives; Michiro Endo, a musician from Nihonmatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture, Otomo Yoshihide, a musician who had spent his teen years in Fukushima City, and Ryoichi Wago, a poet from and still living in Fukushima City. The heat and humidity that day were typical of summers in the valley city of Fukushima, accompanied by intermittent thunderstorms. Despite the unstable weather conditions however, a total of 13000 people from Fukushima Prefecture and beyond came to the event, while a total of 250,000 people tuned in to DOMMUNE FUKUSHIMA, the Ustream program aired live on the internet. About 200 volunteers supported the event. 25 artists and musicians, including Ryuichi Sakamoto, came to the event pro bono, to each perform their own renditions of the FUKUSHIMA situation on-stage.

I myself am from Fukushima, and having been involved in Project FUKUSHIMA! since its inception, decided to author this report to describe how Project FUKUSHIMA! came into being in response to the earthquake, and the activities that have been conducted over the past year.

2. The Project Begins

Ryoichi Wago, poet and recipient of the 4th Chuya Nakahara Award, and high-school Japanese teacher in Date City, adjacent to Fukushima City, was at his school office when the earthquake struck on March 11, 2011. The intensity of the earthquake in his home city of Fukushima City was 6 minus (Japan employs a scale of intensity in seismic events running from zero, in which the shaking is not perceptible to human beings, to seven, in which the force of the earthquake renders people immobile and

most buildings sustain damage to the walls and windows). As vital utilities, such as power and gas, stopped operating in most of the city, and frequent aftershocks continued relentlessly, Wago began communicating via Twitter from his home, five days after the quake, driven by a sense that his home of Fukushima was in danger of “being obliterated.” His *Shi no Tsubute (Stones of Poetry)*, words woven together almost every night, initially described the conditions at the evacuation centers in detail, eventually giving way to more abstract, poetry-like phrases.

Otomo was recording in a Tokyo studio, when the earthquake occurred. He frantically searched through blogs and tweets, trying to piece together what was really happening in Fukushima City, where he himself had spent his teen years, and his parents still lived. When he came across Wago’s *Shi no Tsubute*, Otomo felt as if his chest was being pierced, and fueled by Wago’s words, attempted to get in touch with him via Twitter. Wago, who had known about Otomo as a senior alumnus from his high school, responded immediately.

Michiro Endo, the other project co-founder, was in a plane headed for Kyushu for a live tour at 2:46 p.m. on March 11. After disembarking from the plane, only to learn that the earthquake and epicenter were close to his home town of Fukushima, Endo became glued to the television every free minute during his tour, giving up sleep in order to keep up with the information coming in about the nuclear power plant and his home area. Endo, who typically gives more than 100 live performances annually throughout Japan, met numerous fellow musicians during the course of his tour, who told him about the unfounded rumors about radiation concerns that were running rampant in Fukushima, and gradually came to harbor the desire to go to Fukushima to hold a free music festival. Endo contacted Otomo, who he knew to be an alumnus from the same high school, Fukushima High School, after him. When the two met in Tokyo, Endo confided in Otomo that he wanted to host a music festival on August 15. The date was important to Endo, because it was the day that the Second World War ended and the post-war period began. Post-war Japanese society, in its quest for prosperity, had built nuclear power plants, only to be completely devastated by the earthquake and power plant accident. By likening this crisis to the war, Endo was hoping to force everyone to seriously reassess the society that the Japanese people had created in the post-war years. During the conversation, Otomo held back from responding to Endo’s proposal to host a music festival, and suggested instead that they should come to a conclusion after paying a visit to Fukushima and getting a feel from the local people. One thing to note is that

since graduating from high school and leaving Fukushima, neither man had ever really thought back about Fukushima. Despite that, they were now thinking about Fukushima more seriously than ever before, in a way that they had never even considered possible before.

In April, Otomo went to Fukushima City, where his parents resided, and met Wago for the first time to discuss Endo's idea of hosting a summertime festival in Fukushima. As they continued to talk, both men, initially skeptical, began to lean towards supporting the idea.

During his first visit back to Fukushima, Otomo felt that his friends and acquaintances in Fukushima were bleeding from their hearts. I myself had the same impression when talking to my friends in Fukushima. Fukushima City is about 60 km northwest of the nuclear power plant, and although it was slowly coming to light that the radiation levels were relatively high for a location that far away, there was virtually no credible information available in terms of what that radiation reading meant, and if there was any impact to human health. Even as media reports and municipal publicity newsletters echoing government statements of "no immediate impact," and "secure and safe," were being circulated, people near the nuclear power plant were losing their beloved homes and land, forced into evacuation shelters, while in Fukushima City, a clear divide was emerging between people choosing to evacuate, mainly families with small children, and those who had no choice but to stay put, all creating extreme anxiety and frustration for the people of Fukushima as the days went by with mounting despair.

Given these circumstances, Otomo and other project members were not in the least bit confident about being able to hold the festival, despite the earlier decision to do so. Other ideas, some almost impossible to take seriously, emerged, including doing a live internet performance in lieu of an audience if a large festival could not be held, or doing a guerilla live performance with Endo and Otomo in front of Fukushima Station, and even began to take on an air of feasibility. Ultimately, the desire to tell the world what was happening in Fukushima, and to give FUKUSHIMA, a name now notorious, a positive image of new hope for the future, culminated in a project kick-off meeting on May 7, with more than 50 volunteers in attendance. On the following day, a press conference was held at a hotel in Fukushima City, featuring the three joint representatives, Endo, Otomo, and Wago, raising the flag on Project FUKUSHIMA!, accompanied by a declaration of action towards the goal of hosting the festival on August 15.

The following is an excerpt from the project declaration that Endo read at the press conference.

“Even as the crisis takes away homes, we would like to have Fukushima retain ties with the outside world, in order for Fukushima to hold onto hope for life, and to think of a future for Fukushima. That is why we need this festival. We need a forum for people to come together and communicate. Through this festival, we will share with the world what Fukushima is going through now, and what it will be in the future. We are determined to change FUKUSHIMA! into a positive word.”

3. Collaboration with a Scientist

The Project had officially kicked off at a time when the radiation level in Fukushima City was high, at approximately $1.5 \mu\text{Sv/h}$ in the city center. Meanwhile, there was still a great deal of turmoil and confusion surrounding the situation. Iitate Village, located between Fukushima City and the Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant was designated as a Planned Evacuation Zone, even though it was outside of the 20km evacuation radius, due to its high radiation dosage. The Ministry of Education announced that radiation levels of up to 20mSv/y were acceptable for schools in Fukushima, prompting outcries of dismay and confusion.

Right about that time, one television program provided a beacon of hope for Otomo and the project members. The program was titled “A Network to Develop a Radiation Contamination Map,” and aired on NHK ETV on May 15. A documentary, the program followed a young radiation hygiene researcher, Dr. Shinzo Kimura in his efforts to traverse more than 2000 km within Fukushima Prefecture, tracking the radiation, and working with a network of researchers around the country to develop a detailed and precise contamination map. Seeing the harsh reality of the radiation contamination was painful, but for Otomo, this was the first piece of information that seemed truly credible, which he described was like seeing a candle in the dark. Otomo met Dr. Kimura through an introduction from the program staff, and expressed his appreciation along with a request for his support to the project. Dr. Kimura readily agreed, saying that there was bound to be a way to come up with the right measures to make the festival happen. I will never forget the tears that Otomo showed in that meeting. Since announcing the plan to host the festival, Otomo had been bombarded with criticism. Some ferociously accused him of

genocide, by trying to bring people to Fukushima. If the festival was held, there was bound to be some amount of risk of radiation exposure. Cancelling the festival would basically be tantamount to him as a musician telling the local community that their land was no longer habitable. Either way, he stood to lose, grappling blindly with the weight of the unbelievable pressure. For Otomo, the endorsement from Dr. Kimura, a scientist, meant more than anything. It felt as if the project was finally moving forward, at this stage, thanks to the addition of a reputable scientist.

4. Preparing for the Festival

4.1 Radiation Dosage Measurement at the Venue – Fukushima Big Furoshiki

The first thing that the organizing committee did in preparation for the festival was to measure the radiation dosage of the Village of Four Seasons, located in western Fukushima City. On June 23, venue conditions were verified and measurements were taken with Dr. Kimura. The results were around $0.5\text{-}0.6\ \mu\text{Sv/h}$, which was relatively low for the city at the time, (city center readings were around $1.2\text{-}1.3\ \mu\text{Sv/h}$), and it was determined that the event could be held once a mitigation measure for the grass lawn that occupied a major part of the grounds was put into place.

While taking measurements, Dr. Kimura suggested covering the lawn throughout the park with fabric or plastic sheets. Grass tends to absorb more radiation compared to asphalt, so laying down fabric or plastic would prevent surface irradiation (having radioactive material stick to the body's surface) and the spread of radioactive substances that might otherwise be tracked to other locations on people's shoes. The radiation would still go through the fabric, so even if the ground was covered, the dosage in the atmosphere would not be reduced. But Dr. Kimura advised that it was still important to demonstrate how serious the organizers were about containing the spread of radioactive material, prompting the decision to disclose the dosage readings, and lay down fabric on the grass in order to carry out the festival.

Artist Tohru Nakazaki from Mito, who had collaborated with Otomo in past exhibits, and Kota Asano, an architect and resident of Fukushima were selected as directors in the Fukushima Big Furoshiki project. Big Furoshiki, or Oh Buroshiki, (large

wrapping fabric) in Japanese, could have a negative connotation as a euphemism for an unrealistic plan, but here we were, trying to host a festival for 10,000 people in Fukushima, even as we were confronted by uncertainty. The irony of the decision to spread a Big Furoshiki (which means to talk big about unrealistic plans) was apropos, in a way, and coupled with our desire to create something truly worthy of the Big Furoshiki, the title of Fukushima Big Furoshiki seemed more than befitting.

However, the area of the grass lawn in the park was massive, in addition to which the Big Furoshiki could not be installed until the prior to the day of the festival. We decided to collect fabric pieces ahead of time, which would be stitched together to create a large fabric of 10 meters by 10 meters, or 5 by 5 meters. Doing so would make it relatively easy to lay down the fabric without gaps on the day of the festival.

Once the call for help went out on Twitter and newspapers, many various fabric pieces were sent in, not just from the local community, but from all over the country. Often, the fabric was obviously a piece that someone had treasured for a long time, or would come with embroidered and hand-written heartwarming messages. Every time the project members opened a box and encountered a fabric with special sentiment, which was often, they were tremendously encouraged.

Using the home of Otomo's parents, a former factory, as a base, dozens of volunteers came to stitch together the fabric, working at a furious pace. Some volunteers were housewives from the area, while others came from outside of the prefecture after having seen Twitter, to engage in this sewing effort for about three weeks, night and day, even amid the intermittent aftershocks.

4.2 Radiation Seminar for Participants

Statements made by musicians appearing in a festival can often have a powerful influence starting with the audience and fans. Therefore, a month before the festival, a radiation lecture was held for the participants and staff in Tokyo. Dr. Kimura was invited as lecturer, and spoke for more than 2 hours about the basics of radiation, as well as the conditions in Chernobyl that he had researched, and Fukushima. Seeing these famous musicians, more accustomed to being on-stage and seen by others, actually sitting down at their seats and listening intently to Dr.

Kimura, was in a way, a very interesting and significant scene, although more importantly, there were many questions raised by the attendees, indicating the high level of interest in the issue of radiation.

4.3 Food Contamination and Internal Radiation Exposure

We decided to do an open recruitment of local producers and retailers for the concession stands in the food and beverage area at the festival venue. While it is not unusual to have food and beverage stalls at an outdoor festival, this one was in Fukushima, which is why numerous discussions took place about how to select the concession stand operators. For the project, the issue of internal radiation exposure through contaminated food was serious indeed, which is why the decision was made to do mandatory inspections of radiation levels for any food that the operators sold or cooked, and publish the results. Specifically, we issued certificates showing the results for stalls that had carried out the measurements, so that the audience could recognize those booths as being the official ones.

Disclosing the measurements meant that people might not purchase the food, and there were concerns that the operators would not be interested, but when we held preliminary meetings to explain our approach and seek their understanding, the operators said that they wanted to prove their products were safe to sell by providing credible measurements, so it was decided that all food for sale produced in Fukushima Prefecture would be measured for radiation in advance.

As a result of the measurements, no radiation was detected in food such as pork, cucumbers, and tomatoes from 10 of the 11 operators carrying food produced in Fukushima Prefecture (*). The only radiation detected was in Fukushima's famous peaches, produced in the city, with a total of 23 becquerel/kg of cesium 134 and 137. This level was far lower than Japan's provisional criteria of 500 becquerel/kg, and substantially lower than the 70 becquerel/kg criteria used for fruit in the Ukraine, which we were also showing on the certificate per advice from Dr. Kimura. We determined that the peaches could be sold, as it was important for the project and for the peach producer alike to be honest producers and sellers by publishing the measurements of the fruit, to gain the understanding of the consumers.

* Each operator was requested to provide 2kg of food ingredients, with the measurements paid for by the project committee. The measurements were taken at

the Environmental Analysis Research Institute in Fukushima City, with an accuracy of 5 becquerel/kg as the minimum determination limit.

5. Festival FUKUSHIMA!

This section covers each of the programs on the day of Festival FUKUSHIMA!, held on August 15, 2011, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., at the Prefectural Azuma Ball Stadium and Fukushima Village of Four Seasons.

5.1 Fukushima Big Furoshiki

9 a.m., August 15. The festival started by spreading out the Big Furoshiki over the lawn that occupied large parts of the park. Experts were also there to take radiation dosage readings of the venue that day.

Over the next 2 hours, the Big Furoshiki, spanning a total of 6000 square meters, was placed over the lawn. The sight of the multi-colored Big Furoshiki spread across the entire venue was an amazing spectacle indeed. The Big Furoshiki was a message, an effort to prevent surface irradiation, and inadvertently tracking home radioactive materials, and symbolized the extraordinary nature of this festival, of being held at a venue where radioactive cesium had fallen, which no one had ever experienced before. Upon closer inspection, messages from the different people who had sent the fabric could be seen everywhere. The multi-colored fabric that had been stitched together seemed to represent the festival itself, which had been promoted and realized by individuals of different stripes coming together and connecting to form a network.

5.2 Fukushima Music Liberation Zone

At the venue covered by the Big Furoshiki, a program suggested by Otomo, called the Fukushima Music Liberation Zone was held from 11:00 to 14:00. More than 60 groups of musicians, professional and amateur, came in response to an open invitation, and spread out across the expansive venue, to each perform in their unique style, be it a music performance, or art installation.

With Otomo, Endo and other host musicians in attendance, the Music Liberation

Zone was off to a relaxed start. During the morning hours, when there were still not many in the general audience, the participants were pretty much performing as they saw fit, uncoordinated as it were, setting up shop wherever they liked, and performing at their own pace. What was noteworthy took place in the afternoon, when a passing shower struck. Until then, the groups were performing uncoordinated at the venue, which did not have many roof coverings, but in seeking shelter from the rain, they ended up huddling close together under the tents and large trees. For the first time that day, the close proximity triggered a natural conversation among the participants. Some exchanged instruments, and from almost nowhere, a performance began, leading to an improvised session right there on the spot. Where before, the individuals were all unconnected, the rain brought everyone together, resulting in the creation of music together, which was very near what Otomo had vaguely envisioned as the ideal state of the Liberation Zone. Observing the fortuitous scene brought about unexpectedly by the rain, Otomo says now that he felt at that moment that the festival would succeed.

5.3 Food and Beverage Area

At the festival's food and beverage area, 16 concession stands were set up by local restaurants and producers who had responded to the open recruitment. As explained, the 11 operators selling or using Fukushima Prefecture produced agricultural products measured their food for radiation prior to the event, and received recognition as official booths, presenting official certificates noting the measurement results (however, there were also existing concession stand operators for the park, doing business outside of the official area, selling at least some amount of food produced in Fukushima Prefecture, so it is difficult to say whether the consumers truly understood that there were officially recognized operators). Most of the official booths had no radiation detected in their food, but 23 becquerel/kg of radioactive cesium (a total of cesium 134 and 137) was detected in peaches produced by a farmer in Fukushima City. The results were published based on an agreement between both sides, but it is a fact that the disclosure of these numbers affected the sales. The need for a much deeper understanding of the criteria for food contamination, as well as the huge issue of credibility in the government's restriction levels were felt very seriously. Ironically, the peaches from 2011 were especially sweet, having been blessed with fine weather. In stark contrast to reality,

the peaches gleaming red in the basket were the picture of deliciousness, a sight that I can still recall clearly.

5.4 Orchestra FUKUSHIMA!

The performance by Orchestra FUKUSHIMA!, an improvisation mega orchestra, first proposed by Otomo, was seemingly the climax of the festival, even though it was held during the afternoon hours when it was still light. Although an orchestra usually denotes a classical orchestra, this one used a very different set of various instruments. There were only a few classical instruments such as the violin, as the orchestra was made up mostly of any kind of “instrument” that could sound a sound, such as guitars, ukuleles, wind instruments, Japanese kotos, various percussion instruments, ethnic instruments, washbasins, frying pans, and even desks. There were only 2 conditions to participating. One was to be able to play a sound, and the other was to take part in the School FUKUSHIMA! School of Music, held prior to the event. About half of the participants were from Fukushima, the remainder from outside of the prefecture, from Hokkaido to the north, to Oita to the south, ranging in age from 4 to over sixty. The participants numbered a total of 220, and included complete amateurs who had never really played on a musical instrument before, to professional musicians, including Ryuichi Sakamoto, Yasuhiro Yoshigaki, and Masahiro Uemura, among others. The eclectic members of the improv orchestra followed Otomo’s lead, as he conducted giving simple cues, playing at times in a controlled rhythm, or breaking out into a disharmony of noise, hurling a mass of sound up against the Fukushima skies. At the very end, the approximately 2000 people in the audience joined the circle, and the venue was enveloped in a celebratory mood.

The Orchestra FUKUSHIMA! members residing in Fukushima have continued to offer multiple performances after the festival, in Mito, and Tokyo, an indication of the broad spread of Project FUKUSHIMA! activities.

5.5 Fukushima Gundokudan 2011 “Fukushima Renshi”

As the excitement of Orchestra FUKUSHIMA! lingered, the main stage was immediately taken over by Fukushima Renshi, initiated by Wago. A Renshi (linked poem) had been created in a workshop, the School FUKUSHIMA! School of Poetry,

held prior to the event, and the idea was to do a Gundoku (group recitation) of the poem by the 40 workshop participants (a group recitation is to read a poem out loud, similar to the chorus of a song).

In the School of Poetry, the participants first reflected back on their lives since March 11, and split up into groups of 5 to 6 people to share their experiences. They each developed a poem of 3 or 5 lines that were all linked, to express their thoughts about Fukushima. In the second session, Wago reconstructed the participants' linked poems and created the Fukushima Renshi, which the participants practiced reciting out loud, at times as a small group, or solo, in preparation for the actual festival. An interesting point to note is the profile of the participants. Unlike the School of Music, the School of Poetry participants were all living in, or from, Fukushima Prefecture. That's the reason why their strong feelings about Fukushima, devastated by the earthquake, reverberated so powerfully from each of the words that flowed. I especially remember the self introductions at the beginning of the workshop, how several members spoke of their feelings that they had likely kept bottled up inside since the quake, with tears streaming down their cheeks, and the organizers, who likewise had spent their days in Fukushima since the quake with similar feelings, listening in complete concentration, their eyes red with tears. At the end of the group recital, consisting of 20 minutes of words created entirely by the participants, Wago read out loud one additional phrase that he had added. "The future is in our hands." This phrase, which is also the slogan of the festival, uttered by the participants, who had given tearful introductions at the workshop, who were living in Fukushima in the midst of the turmoil of the nuclear plant accident, was especially moving for me, knowing how the people of this region tend to be shy, deferential, and reticent about their own thoughts. Yes indeed, the future is definitely in our own hands. To personally think, act, and develop networks. This truly was the message of the project.

5.6 Three Stages – Meltdown FUKUSHIMA!

Three stages, the Water Stage (and sub-stage), Flower Stage, and Stadium Stage, were set up in two venues, at the Village of Four Seasons and Azuma Ball Stadium about 1 km away. Titled Meltdown FUKUSHIMA! rather provocatively, the quintessential outdoor festival program in the evening hours featured a total of 25 groups of musicians, such as Ryuichi Sakamoto, Tabito Nanao, Ikuko Harada, Kenji

Endo, Zuno Keisatsu, Group Tamashii, Shibusa Shirazu, and local bands from Fukushima. As all of the artists that made an appearance cannot be mentioned here, please refer to the website for a list of musicians. The fact that the organizing staff and the musicians that made an appearance all came pro bono is indicative of how this festival was an extraordinary one even for the musicians.

Of all the events, the most closely watched was the one-time only session by two of the joint representatives, Ryoichi Wago, and Yoshihide Otomo, along with Ryuichi Sakamoto. Wago's chilling reading of his *Shi no Tsubute*, interlaced with improvised music from Otomo's guitar and Sakamoto's piano. Despite being more than 50 minutes long, the several thousand people in the audience listened intently with bated breath, hardly moving at all. Perhaps influenced by the two musicians' improvisation, Wago's poetry recital became less about reading out loud from a script, and became more like an improvisation, of words being spun out of air. After the performance, as Wago himself commented afterwards, the performance, based on the *Shi no Tsubute* with the words "Fukushima" and "Inochi (Life)" mixed in numerous times, prompted the people of Fukushima Prefecture to think deeply about their home struck by the disaster, and also, with its mind blowing force, gave people from outside of the prefecture a direct awareness of the howls of the Fukushima people, burdened by the double and triple tragedies of the earthquake and radiation.

One unique aspect of the festival was the inclusion of the "Shinzo Kimura Report," in addition to the regular music programs, only because the festival was being held in Fukushima City at this time. Dr. Shinzo Kimura came to the main stage at the Village of Four Seasons, to give a report covering his research of Chernobyl of more than 10 years, providing comparisons to the current situation in Fukushima. Of particular note is the video message that he shared, from a couple running a medical clinic in Narodychi, a highly contaminated area about 70 km west of Chernobyl, speaking in tears to the people of Fukushima, which no doubt was a powerful message for the people of Fukushima, suffering from the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Dr. Kimura's closing remarks, that he planned to move to Fukushima, to create a research base there, were met with a huge applause from the audience.

Lastly, I would like to mention Michiro Endo's stage performance that he poured his heart and soul into. Endo had insisted on the festival being on August 15, likening the situation that Fukushima and all of Japan were in directly to the war, yet that

was not the message that he vocalized at the top of his lungs that day. But watching the siren sounded from the red megaphone held high in the air, the signature trademark of the legendary punk band, The Stalin, and the image of Endo, screaming and running around the stage, working his incredibly fit body not looking a day over sixty, it occurred to me that his show was forcing us to come face to face with the issues presented by the nuclear accident, and also carried a gentle hope for a better future.

5.7 Festival FUKUSHIMA! Synchronized and Global

The festival was centered on Fukushima, but was also positioned as a global multi-location event, encouraging events in various areas on or around August 15. Individual, groups, and live houses that supported the aim of the project responded, with 90 FUKUSHIMA! associated events in 14 countries and regions, ranging from Hokkaido to Okinawa domestically, and Asia, Europe, North America and South America globally. Unfortunately, there are only a few documented photos and videos, but the multiple locations hosting the coordinated events and their global scale can be seen on the Project FUKUSHIMA! website.

6. Activities Outside of the Festival

Since the festival enjoyed the largest scale and the most hype, many people thought that Project FUKUSHIMA! was all about the 8.15 festival, but in actuality, there were many other activities associated with the project.

There were 4 major pillars of activity by Project FUKUSHIMA! in 2011.

A forum for learning, “School FUKUSHIMA!”

Information sharing media, “DOMMUNE FUKUSHIMA!”

Window for assistance and venue to present art, “DIY FUKUSHIMA!”

“A place to meet and share hope for Fukushima, “Festival FUKUSHIMA!”

6.1 School FUKUSHIMA!

How does one continue to live in Fukushima, when the situation is as horrible as it

is? That is a direct question posed, not just within 福島 (Fukushima in Japanese kanji characters), but to Japan and the フクシマ (Fukushima in Japanese katakana characters, used for transliteration of foreign words) that belongs to it, as well as to the world and the FUKUSHIMA that is a part of it.

Creating School FUKUSHIMA!, a place for learning, was positioned as a major pillar in the project activities because we wanted to think together how to answer that pressing and fundamental question. Before and after the festival, as a part of School FUKUSHIMA!, multiple workshops for the general public were held. Diverse activities that transcended the conventional relationship between student and teacher were made possible through the experience of learning and creating together with the project musicians, poets, artists, and researchers.

The following shows documents of each of the schools that have been held so far, with the date, venue, and instructor.

○School of Poetry

July 30 and August 7, 2011

Fukushima College Ekimae Campus, Fukushima City

Instructor Ryoichi Wago

○School of Music

August 7 and August 13, 2011

Iizaka Onsen Ryokan Seizan, Fukushima City

Instructor Yoshihide Otomo

○Citizen Scientist Training Program

August 3, 2011

Sahira Building 8F Meeting Room, Fukushima City

Instructor Dr. Shinzo Kimura

○Children's Radiation Class "The Curie School Elementary Class"

November 23, 2011

Village of Four Seasons, Fukushima City

Instructor Dr. Shinzo Kimura

○Yoshihide Otomo's School of Sound

December 16, 2011

Horikiri Home, Fukushima city

Instructor Yoshihide Otomo

6.2 DOMMUNE FUKUSHIMA!

As soon as the project began moving forward, Otomo, and Shoichiro Mori, a resident of Koriyama City, who would later become a branch manager, began talking about having their own media. Responding immediately to their need was artist and designer, Naohiro Ukawa, who heads up DOMMUNE (<http://dommune.com>), the predominant and most popular internet broadcasting station. Ukawa had called for assistance towards the devastated areas immediately after the earthquake, and began broadcasting requests for donations 5 days later, to address the disaster from a cultural aspect. He decided to answer Otomo's pledge by offering to set up a Fukushima station as a branch unit of the Ustream DOMMUNE station, providing broadcasting expertise, and swift and broad-ranging support. Incidentally, the Project FUKUSHIMA! speech bubble logo was designed by Ukawa.

The station was launched the night of May 8, the same day as the kick-off press conference for Project FUKUSHIMA! The studio was a modified apartment flat, made possible thanks to KOCO Radio, a community FM station in Koriyama, from which broadcasting began, once or twice a month on Sunday nights on an irregular basis.

There was a major aftershock in the middle of the first broadcast, and radiation levels for Fukushima Prefecture were announced periodically, due to the nature of the station being a simultaneous community FM station as well, making for a very tense broadcast that attracted attention from within and outside of the prefecture, in many cases garnering more than 10,000 total listeners in one broadcast. 13 programs have been aired during the year following the earthquake. The program is approximately 4 hours, with Naoto Ogawa, the Sendai Mediatheque curator,

emceeding the first half as a talk show with specific themes, interacting with guests such as the project members, local farmers from Fukushima, researchers, citizens, and the head of Iitate Village, while the second half is a live session and DJ performance given by musicians from and outside of Fukushima Prefecture. Please refer to the project website to see the previous programs.

6.3 DIY FUKUSHIMA

The project was run as not-for-profit, without sponsorship from any one company, relying mostly on grants from administrative offices, cultural foundations, and general public donations.

In order to act as window for assistance to the project, DIY FUKUSHIMA!, a content distribution forum for musicians taking an interest in the project, was set up on the official website. DIY FUKUSHIMA! was set up after being provided with a system by DIY STARS, an independent music distribution system started by singer/songwriter, Tabito Nanao, who had been working side by side with Otomo. More than 20 artists have presented their music and videos on DIY FUKUSHIMA! up until now. As of one year after the earthquake, 1,629,810 in donations have been collected. Please refer to the project website for a list of songs that have been offered (<http://www.pj-fukushima.jp/download/>).

7. Summary and the Future of Project FUKUSHIMA!

Looking back at the time when the project first began last spring, when nothing concrete about the impact of the nuclear accident was known, it feels as if the core team members, including myself, were in a state of panic, although this may sound like an exaggeration. The situation being what it was, the message of “culture has a role” that Otomo shared in his special lecture at Tokyo University of the Arts solicited a great deal of empathy, and became a post-quake guiding principle of sorts for people in the culture and arts community. Even while huddling close to the people of Fukushima, there is a way to portray a positive future vision for FUKUSHIMA, and transform the now notorious name of FUKUSHIMA. That is the role that culture serves, that neither science nor politics can achieve alone. Numerous people were inspired by Otomo’s message to raise their hands as

volunteers. The Project FUKUSHIMA! message, which was translated immediately into English, was transmitted globally, prompting an NGO based in Chernobyl to contact the organizers, and other reactions from around the world, indicating that the project was off to a good start.

The fact that Project FUKUSHIMA! achieved a level of what could be called success, despite the challenging circumstances, has a lot to do with how the core members were independent musicians. Unlike the government, administration, and corporations suffering from functional failure that can only be called systematic fatigue, unable to cope with the confusion following the earthquake, these indie musicians, namely Otomo and Endo, and other core members including an independent music label owner, were all accustomed to and skilled at acting out their intentions as individuals and networking with others. Even though they were bewildered by the deepening crisis in Fukushima, they probably found it relatively easy to take action in a way that worked with the situation. In that sense, Dr. Shinzo Kimura, who left his post at the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Japan, a research institute under the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Labor, to carry out his investigation in Fukushima immediately after the power plant accident, can be called an indie researcher. This commonality is really what brought people from so many diverse fields together under the name of FUKUSHIMA!

It is also important to note that after the NHK program, “ETV Special – Sending Hope from the Land of Fukushima – Project FUKUSHIMA!’s Campaign” was aired on October 9, many opinions were expressed, mostly on Twitter. The festival had been held following the aforementioned steps of publishing the venue radiation levels, and using the Big Furoshiki, but the broadcast triggered another wave of criticism against the very act of hosting the festival in Fukushima, for the reason that it increased unwarranted exposure to radiation.

On the project side, the issue of radiation and unnecessary exposure had been debated multiple times. The information posted on the website, mitigation with the Big Furoshiki, the School FUKUSHIMA! programs such as the “Citizen Scientist Training Program,” and “Children’s Radiation Class,” the dozens of hours of dialogue during DOMMUNE FUKUSHIMA! all came down to our thoughts about how to live FUKUSHIMA, to find wisdom and to have discussions. The festival itself was a part of that endless dialogue, and furthermore, in my mind, is the very

act of living. Although it is not possible to respond to each and every one of the criticisms that were raised, I accept them all with sincerity, and plan on putting them to use in our future activities.

I personally feel that the word ふくしま Fukushima when voiced by the three co-founders each had a slightly different nuance in meaning. Ryoichi Wago is very much rooted in his local community, choosing to live in Fukushima even after winning one of contemporary poetry's most prestigious awards. Michiro Endo, despite being over sixty years of age, is constantly on the road, giving more than 100 live performances every year in every corner of Japan. Yoshihide Otomo's global music activities have taken him to hundreds of countries and regions in the last decade. If I were to write it out, Wago's was “福島 (in kanji),” Endo used “フクシマ (in katakana)” and Otomo employed “FUKUSHIMA (in English).” As it were, even though I was a part of the project, this subtle gap felt a bit out of place to me until around the time of the festival. When one says “Fukushima” in Fukushima, it can mean Fukushima City, or Fukushima Prefecture, depending on the context. The fact that ASA-CHANG, a musician from Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture, created Project FUKUSHIMA! IWAKI!!, a movement that parallels Project FUKUSHIMA! but pays tribute to his hometown of Iwaki demonstrates how the meaning of the word Fukushima is different depending on the region within Fukushima Prefecture. And then, from a global perspective, the word Japan, in some cases, is likely to be considered synonymous with FUKUSHIMA, which since the nuclear accident, has become world-famous. This difference in meaning exists for all who share “Fukushima” with infinite degrees of varying gradation in between.

Can it be said then, perhaps, that all of us who live in this wretched world after the nuclear accident and the spewing of radiation across this small country and the surrounding oceans, actually share this “Fukushima Zone” with Japan, and the entire world. The boundaries of the Fukushima Zone are not like the administrative borders, and are most likely different from one individual to the next. How do we grasp the “new daily reality” that Otomo speaks about, amid the complex gradation of the Fukushima Zone? To be safe or dangerous, decontaminate or evacuate, pro or anti-nuclear... This is a simplistic dichotomy that we must not fall prey to, since the major challenge that we face, as we live through this new reality, is to have the ability to persist in debating, and continue to contemplate.

As we mark one year from the quake, I actually feel that each person's Fukushima, and the respective meanings that form the gradation, are actually the strength of Project FUKUSHIMA! How can different beings coexist, and create a positive future together? While facing the harsh reality in Fukushima, we must also, to use Wago's words, "not put a lid on Fukushima," but connect the inside and the outside of Fukushima, even hold festivals at times, learn, exchange opinions, and disseminate, in order to paint a new future, as that is exactly the aim of Project FUKUSHIMA!

Project FUKUSHIMA! will go into its second year, even as the situation in Fukushima continues to change, forcing us to continuously think, since we cannot afford to rest. The first goal is to be recognized as an NPO legal entity, by the end of the year, for which the procedure has been started. A festival is being planned for the summertime again, but will not be the same offering nor at the same venue. For now, the plan is to extend the duration to 12 days, with a diverse content menu and scale in multiple locations, although there is not much that can be shared at this point. Please stay tuned for our future activities. And please also think from your own perspective about the various problems that FUKUSHIMA has brought to light.

A new future is trying to begin in FUKUSHIMA.

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