

Hanga and Manga

The aesthetic revolution in the postwar Japanese popular culture

Tsutomu Tomotsune

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

tomotsune@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT: In this paper, I will discuss the Popular Woodcut Movement that emerged in Japan following its defeat in 1945 and continued during and after the Occupation period by General Headquarters. Popular woodblock printing was developed during the Chinese Revolution in 1949 and raised issues such as the relationship between the Enlightenment and socialists' fine arts movement (*proretaria bijutsu undo*, literally "proletarian fine arts movement") or the Communist Party and popular club activities movements around then. The second part will turn to Nakazawa Keiji's *Hadashi no Gen*, also known as *Barefoot Gen: Life After a Bomb, A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima* published in 1972. Nakazawa Keiji and *Hadashi no Gen* have some connections to the Popular Woodblock Printing Movement. He is a successor of the proletarian cultural/fine arts movement before and during wartime, accepting the legacy of the generation of his father, who also was a painter and artist. *Barefoot Gen* united the bodily practice of atomic bomb victims who suffered horrible disfigurements, with the personal/public struggles, and the idea of personal vengeance and socio-ethical justice. In addition, its visual-narrative structure subverts the Kant-Heideggerian epistemological hierarchy that presupposes a developmental progress from a lower to a higher level. This epistemological hierarchy is a power structure that has been problematized by feminist discourse because of re-producing an unequal distribution of knowledge. Thus, *Barefoot Gen* is an epistemological and aesthetic achievement essential for subaltern hegemony. The postwar popular woodcut movement had a common aim with *Barefoot Gen* to resolve the unequal distribution of knowledge, sharing a legacy of modern visual movements as an incomplete visual-aesthetic

revolution. This paper claims that the postwar woodcut movement and Nakazawa Keiji's *manga* were successors of the socialist/communist cultural movement during the prewar time and they wrestle with the debates within the fine arts circles of the times.

KEYWORDS: *hanga*, Popular Woodcut Movement, *manga*, *Hadashi no Gen*, Visual-Aesthetic Revolution

論文抄録: 本稿は、1945年の日本敗戦後に形成された民衆版画運動と、1970年代から80年代にかけて少年向け漫画として連載された中沢啓治の『はだしのゲン』の二つを対象に、そこで交わされた社会主義／共産主義の立場からの民衆芸術をめぐる論争を扱う。1949年の中国革命の影響のもとで始まった戦後日本の版画運動は、日本共産党の指導する文化運動にとどまらず、大衆的なサークル運動や労働組合を巻き込んで日本全国で展開された。その版画作家たちは1945年以前にプロレタリア文化運動や美術運動の経験の有していた。プロレタリア美術運動の活動家であった父を持つ中沢啓治は、広島での原爆と被爆体験を漫画作品にすることで、日本とアメリカの戦争責任を問いかけ、商業的な成功を獲得した。版画と漫画というメディアの違いはあるが、無力なサルタンである労働者、農民、そして被爆者の表現を追求した版画運動と、父の思想を受け継いだ中沢の漫画は、両者ともに戦前のプロレタリア文化・美術運動の遺産相続人であったといえよう。本稿は、それらの表現メディアが、文化的エリートの芸術論に対抗した「下からの」表現運動を担い、美学的革命への貢献を果たしたことを示す。これによって、戦後日本の表現運動の一側面を明らかにするものである。

キーワード: 版画、漫画、民衆版画運動、はだしのゲン、美学的革命

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will discuss the popular woodcut movement that emerged in Japan following its defeat in 1945 and continued during and after the Occupation period by General Headquarters. The second part will turn to Nakazawa Keiji's *Hadashi no Gen*, also known as *Barefoot Gen: Life After a Bomb*, a cartoon story of Hiroshima published in 1972.

Popular woodblock printing was developed during the Chinese

Revolution in 1949 and raised issues such as the relationship between the Enlightenment and socialists' fine arts movement (*puroretaria bijutsu undo*, literally "proletarian fine arts movement") or the Communist Party and popular circle activities movements. The term "popular" derived from a slogan in the early 20th-century Russian revolutionary movement of Narod (towards the people) and includes working class, peasants, and underclass people. "People" here shares the same idea of the word "subaltern" in contemporary postcolonial discourse, in which subaltern means colonized populations oppressed and excluded from the elite hierarchical power (Chaturvedi, 2000). The subaltern discourse had not yet appeared as the socialists' class struggle was dominant even in the popular culture movement. Even so, the Popular Woodblock Printing Movement engaged with pre-subaltern discourse to some extent. It is significant that the movement sought peasants or laborers to be the objects of work and the makers of woodblock printing. After the movement dissolved in the late 1950s, the Popular Woodblock Printing Movement left its achievements in the national educational movement and anchored itself in postwar society.

Nakawaza Keiji and *Hadashi no Gen* have some connections to the Popular Woodblock Printing Movement. Nakazawa's father, Nakazawa Harumi, died in the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. He was a Japanese painter and activist in the socialists' fine arts movement. He engaged in the theatrical movement and was arrested in 1940 for supporting the *Shinkyō Gekidan* [New Cooperative Theatrical Company]. Nakazawa Harumi shared the same experience with activists of the woodcut movement. Nakazawa Keiji, is thus a successor of the proletarian cultural/fine arts movement before and during wartime, accepting the legacy of his father's generation.

Manga, or cartoon culture in post-war Japan, partially overlapped with the woodcut movement. However, it established itself in the midst of Japan's highly developed consuming society and became one of the staples of Japanese popular culture. Nakazawa Keiji's roots in the socialist/communist cultural movement as well as his experience as a victim of the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb were instrumental in the construction of his subjectivity as a *manga*-artist. As its background shows, *manga*-cartoon culture had a genealogical spirit of resistance stemming from the socialist/communist movement.

Nakazawa's standpoint is comparable with the colonized people of

Japanese imperialism even though he spoke out about Japanese people's charge of war crimes against colonized people and areas during wartime. Since he was an Atomic Bomb victim, the targets of his struggle were the military imperialism of the U.S and Japan and the *Tenno-sei* [emperor system], which was responsible for fifteen years of war in the Asia-Pacific. Furthermore, considering his father and family's experience of being suppressed by the emperor system, Nakazawa's expression of struggle is based on justice for human dignity and individual vengeance. His internal process of victimization and resentment is evident in *Hadashi no Gen*.

The protagonists of *Hadashi no Gen* are children during and after wartime. Powerless and weak children were brought to a cruel state of struggle for self-preservation by militarized police and the cold-bloodedness of neighbors and relatives. In using the children's perspective, a sense of intense victimization, and vengeance was amplified, and the cruelty inflicted on Atomic Bomb victims was directly expressed. Nakazawa succeeded commercially and *Hadashi no Gen* was published in a series of works in the popular weekly cartoon journal, *Shonen Jump* during the 1970s-80s.

Moreover, I would like to demonstrate that the success of cartoons resulted from the feature of the mixed expression of verbal and non-verbal visual effects, Nakazawa's cartoon depiction of Atomic Bomb victims implemented the same method of portraying anti-racism and emancipatory movements as that used by the ethnic and cultural minorities in the early 1970s. The technique of the cartoon developed in Japan is commensurate with the actual world initially based on the verbal and non-verbal visual effects.

A conflict, which Nakazawa shows between the struggle for public justice and personal struggle based on personal vengeance, was repeated in the new leftist movement from the late 1960s; *Hadashi no Gen* was the cultural activity that shared a socio-political role with the new leftist movement. Thus, the aim of this paper is also to trace back the scenes of cultural representation from the new leftist movement during the 1960s-70s to Japan's defeat and ensuing Occupation period, which was influenced to an extent by the directions of the Japanese Communist Party.

2. Japanese Popular Woodcut Movement Association (JPWMA)

Ota Koji (1909-1989), one of the Japanese Woodcut Movement Association founders, asked in his introductory book for children, *Yasashii Hanga Kyoshitsu* [An Introductory Classroom for Woodblock Printing] (Ota, 1984), the following question: “Have you thought that you could make woodblock printing by snow?” and answered, “A footprint traced by accident is also a woodblock printing. If you put ink on the footprint, you can make a print by warming it without freezing” (Nisei Progressives, 1952, p. 107). Here Ota summarizes a principle of the Popular Woodblock Printing Movement. Woodblock printing, copperplate engraving, or etching, from the age of Jean-François Millet or Gustave Courbet in the 19th century, had been the media for realizing realism, which refused the author’s authority, uniqueness or *tableau*-ness. It is permanently affiliated with the regional cultural movement or leftist movement. The Popular Woodblock Movement in post-war Japan had a strong experimental focus and examined history as a means to explore new principles and techniques. The Japan Woodcut Movement Association was generally called the “Popular Woodblock Printing Movement” or “New Woodcut Movement.” Hereafter, I will use the term Popular Woodcut Movement (PWM) (see also Takeyama, 2000; Tomotsune, 2010).

2.1 From Zen Nihon Shin-Mokoku Undo Kaigi (All Japan New Woodcut Movement Society) to Nihon Shin Hanga Kondankai (Japan New Woodcut Movement Social Meeting)

The first resource of PWM was a proletarian fine arts movement and activists during the pre-war time. Leading activists were: Suzuki Kenji (1906-1987), Ueno Makoto (1909-1980), Ota Koji, Iino Nobuya (1906-1987), Nii Hiroharu (1911-1974), Takidaira Jiro (1921-2009), Koguchi Itichiro (1914-1979), and Li Heibon (1922-2011). In addition was Ono Tadashige, who organized the Molding Woodcut Association in pre-war time. The *Chunichi Bunka Kenkyujo* [China-Japan Cultural Institute] was a cultural organization that cooperated with the Chinese Revolution and democratized Japan by constructing the China-Japan relationship and introducing many *Mo’koku* (woodblocks) products to Japan. Even though they are the same, I will indicate *Mo’koku* as the Chinese woodcut and *hanga* as the Japanese version.

From February 19 to 25, 1947, the China-Japan Cultural Institute

organized The Exhibition of Chinese Woodcut at Mitsukoshi department store with more than ten thousand people visiting. In the exhibition were hundreds of woodcuts works from The Eight Year Anniversary of the Anti-Japanese War in Shanghai, September 18, 1946. Mao Tsetung's methodology established Chinese woodcut based on Literary lectures, in which Mao taught to establish a style based on peasants' critique. It was initially derived from Lu Xin's idea of popular fine arts, which was instructed from a modern Japanese woodcut by the brothers Uchiyama Kanzo and Kakichi, meritorious persons of the China-Japan relationship. Uchiyama Kanzo, a bookshop owner both in China and Japan, had a close relationship with Lu Xin. In the collection of *China Woodcut in the Liberated Area* (Chu & Li, 1972) and as Gu Yuan's works show, Chinese woodcut achieved machinery beauty, realistically drawn figures and coloring with rich narratives based on folk tales. Ono Tadashige recognized that Chinese woodcut art was of higher quality than modern Japanese woodcuts, which had stagnated in terms of technological progress after establishing *sosaku hanga* [creative woodcut] in the Meiji period. The exhibition of Chinese woodcuts, including lectures and courses from May to July 1947, mobilized more than ten thousand people in Ibaraki and Tochigi. After the heated atmosphere, an idea to hold a meeting for the All-Japan New Woodcut Society was proposed. The leader of the China-Japan Cultural Institute, Kikuchi Saburo, first thought to hold it in Tokyo; however, a young poet, Hara Toyotaka, participated in the Chinese woodcut exhibition and advocated to hold it in Daigo-town, Ibaraki. Thus, it was held there on the first Anniversary after Master Lu Xin's death: All-Japan New Woodcut Movement Society, from October 18 to 19, 1947. The organizers were the China-Japan Cultural Institute, other associations of fine arts, and more minor groups of woodcuts. These groups were organized under the impact of Chinese woodcuts and related to cultural activities in urban and rural villages. At the same time, in May 1947, the Avant-Garde Fine Arts Society was established by the former *Puroretaria Bijutsuka Domei* [Proletarian Fine Arts League] members, who also withdrew from the group of Fine Arts Culture. Suzuki Kenji or Nii Hiroharu both joined the League. As such, popular democratic movements and politically leftist movements cooperated.

The Woodcut Festival had lectures for students and residents about woodcuts. Li Heibon, who had been influenced by Lu Xin's woodcut movement, came to Kobe, Japan in 1943 to work as a fine arts teacher after the Marco Polo bridge incident. He embodied a woodcut movement

by connecting activists across China-Japan relationships and even after returning to China in 1950, continued collaborating with Japanese fine arts activists, including Maruki Iri, who is remembered as a painter of *Genbaku no zu* (a series of the paintings of Hiroshima) later as well as his partner, Maruki Toshi. From the All-Japan New Woodcut Movement Society to the Japan New Woodcut Movement Social Meeting, they decided on policies and solidarity between China and Japan.

After the All-Japan New Woodcut Movement Society exhibition, a Japan New Woodcut Movement Social Meeting was organized by collecting union-based societies, club activities, and societies of professional artists and critics such as Munakata Shiko, Kubo Sadajiro, and Hijikata Teiichi.

Japan's New Woodcut Movement Social Meeting had lectures or exhibitions in various regions; however, internal conflicts soon occurred. One of the reasons was criticism from Japanese Woodcut Societies as a professional artist's group of Chinese woodcuts. Representative activists and artists participated in the meeting titled "Talking about Chinese woodcut" in 1948. Japan's New Woodcut Movement Social Meeting was initially a "United Front of Japanese Woodcut," according to Kikuchi Saburo (Iino, 2012, p. 162; reprinted from Kikuchi, 1949). The new organization aimed to endorse and authorize their movement and Chinese woodcut by professional artists. However, Onchi Koshiro, who stood on fine arts woodcut, insisted on Chinese woodcut methodology. Onchi Koshiro mentioned that Chinese woodcut was not independent as fine art; instead, it was guaranteed by other narratives or genres and said, "(woodcut) should not be substituted by literature or some other genres. The original role of fine arts must be independent by itself." Moreover, he said, "Fine arts should maintain its purity as it is . . . and artists' role is to sublime common people's interest and spirit for the molding beauty" (Iino, 2012, pp. 188-190; reprinted from Kikuchi, 1949).

Onchi thought woodcut was an independent genre as a fine art, and woodcut artists should be a demystifier to develop an aesthetic appreciation of the art form among the general public. Thus, he could not accept the idea of Chinese woodcuts, which would produce subject matter or moldings with ordinary people. However, other meeting participants did not support Onchi's standpoint on the impact of Chinese woodcuts. Some participants, such as "Takada" from the Workers Fine Arts Association, claimed that the works of the Japanese Woodcut Association were "weak for sketching." However, Iino Nobuya, who later became one of the essential activists of

PWM, supported Japanese woodcut since Japanese woodcut was yet to have such a strong cultural foundation when compared with Chinese woodcut. However, according to Iino, the Japanese woodcut movement would remove a criticism after the All-Japan New Woodcut Movement Society exhibition.

In terms of this dispute on “art for art’s sake,” Ono Tadashige admired that Chinese woodcut developed technically and elaborated new techniques of engravers and showed an insightful suggestion on Chinese woodcut, considering Onchi’s argument on fine arts, as follows:

Chinese woodcut succeeded because it emphasized woodcut, not on woodcut artists . . . but on human beings prior to woodcut. . . . What is necessary for woodcut is the spirit to show understandable drawings for ordinary people before discussing the definition of woodcut; in a word, a concern for the people should be the first (Iino, 2012, pp. 193-194; reprinted from Iino et al., 1948).

Ono refused the ideas of author-ness or tableau-based theory of fine arts; instead, he emphasized that a Chinese woodcut is headed towards the fact that woodcut is close to the human being’s fundamental expression, such as utterance and voices, or limbs of labor. However, Ono’s standpoint differed from the “art for art’s sake” argument. Due to these conflicts, the Japan New Woodcut Movement Social Meeting stopped by establishing the Japan Woodcut Movement Association in December 1949 by Suzuki Kenji, Ono Tadashige, Ota Koji, and Ueno Makoto. 1949 was a turning point since the Chinese Revolution succeeded and the Red Purge was preparing for the Korean War in 1950. Moreover, the Hitachi labor dispute, regarded as a decisive struggle of the rest of the labor disputes, had begun. Nii Hiroharu engaged in it through the fine arts movement. Woodcut activists also tried to join the struggle with *Ibaraki ken Joto* [East Ibaraki area] Peasant Union, famous for its original policies. Thus, PWM’s influence had begun spreading, focusing on “woodcut not on woodcut artists or human beings prior to woodcut.”

2.2 Japanese Woodcut Movement Association (JWMA), Independent from Chinese Woodcut

The Japanese Woodcut Movement Association (JWMA) was the North Kanto branch of Japanese Fine Arts Society (JFAS), founded in 1946. JFAS was an affiliate of the Japanese Communist Party. In the North Kanto branch, the organizers included Nii Hiroharu, Iino Nobuya, Koguchi Ichiro, and Suzuki Kenji, who was also a member of the standing committee of JFAS (see Chapter 7, Adachi, 2012).

The popular woodcut movement, led by JWMA, departed from Japan's New Woodcut Movement Social Meeting and the Japanese Woodcut Society by bringing out Chinese woodcut creativity and political criticism. It first recognized that they should be paradoxically independent of Chinese woodcut. Neither "art for art's sake" nor the Chinese revolutionary way of "serving the people" led to their uniqueness. Since the dispute about the non-representability of the people, they came in touch with the issue of subalternity, even though they did not recognize it.

In an article, dated March 1, 1949, Iino Nobuya wrote, "Considering by watching Chinese woodcut," based on his concern to fix Chinese woodcut in Japan and establish Japan's expression of woodcut. He had a dispute at that time with Kikuchi Saburo.

Chinese woodcut is discussed everywhere except for the authorized art world. It looks like some fashion, which seems to influence modern woodcut and animate it, treated coldly in the art world. . . . At the same time, it comes to be evident that the contemporary Japanese woodcut is different from that of the Chinese. If we cannot analyze and change Japanese woodcuts to alternative ones based on the people and Chinese woodcuts, the future of Japanese woodcuts will be desperate.

Some artists, who had protected fine proletarian arts to the end and never lost the people around the movement, led the democratic fine arts movement. . . . Under the name of democracy, the movement of art for art's sake and modernism breathe together in the revolutionary fine arts movement. As a result, many artists look down on the woodcut movement. Instead, the mobile exhibitions of Chinese woodcuts held by organized voluntary activities are the only way to track the woodcut movement. . . . I do not regret that there is no Lu Xin in Japan. . . . If you consider the

fine arts revolution, it is required to emphasize the printed arts, which can connect the most incredible people with fine arts and make the people producers rather than limit them as audiences (Iino, 1994, pp. 223-226).

Two things could be pointed out here. First, Iino understands the singular history of Japanese woodcut, which derives from the difference in socio-historical conditions between China and Japan. Second, he defines “woodcut” as a printed art and the means to organize people through mass printing. This productivity-based idea came from Nakano Shigeharu, a representative communist intellectual and literary person. In his article “On the Paintings,” Nakano concluded that the class-based theory of fine arts should be reduced to the art of lithography (Nakano, 1978). As a peasant poet with a close relationship with Nakano, Iino followed that argument.

How have others commented on Iino’s work? Kikuchi Saburo criticized Iino in his article “The People’s Face.”

Almost the end of the last year, Iino Nobuya came to my office and showed his recent work “Peasant” by saying, “Look, it expresses peasant’s cunning character.” It was powerful for his work. Iino had worked at Goshō village in Ibaraki prefecture during the wartime by connecting with peasants and, after the defeat, engaged in the popular woodcut movement. For him, why he now tries to grasp Japanese peasants by focusing on “cunning-ness.” I was interested in it. “Peasant” is different from his other works and seems alive. The work shows the speculative-ness of peasants as producers of crops that prices should be low and unstable. However, since the work only focuses on the stupid-ness of Japanese peasants, its impression to me is cold. I want to say will be clear if you compare Iino’s work with Wong Renfeng’s *Impressions of Peasants*. I felt the two authors’ attitudes towards peasants between Japan and China differed. There is no cunning character in Wong Renfeng’s work. Instead, it shows his warm feeling towards peasants by constructing an arrangement of lines outlined by top and bottom. There is beauty since it faintly shows the revolution-ness of ignorance, in which “feudalistic” Chinese peasants were organized as an ability of revolution (Kikuchi, 1950, p. 52).

Kikuchi criticized Iino by referring to Wong Renfeng’s *peasant* and emphasized that Iino’s cunningness fell short of Wong’s revolution-ness of

ignorance. However, if Kikuchi regarded Iino's work as a careless, elite-like attitude of an intellectual artist, he would fail to catch Iino's project since Iino tried to embody the singularity that he wrote in his article. The cunningness of the Japanese peasants was Iino's understanding of singularity. Japanese peasants were immature for the revolutionary class of Iino. That immaturity is derived from the transitional characteristic of Japanese peasants, which Iino tried to figure out.

Moreover, Iino also resisted the standardized composition of Chinese woodcut, supported by the triumphant narrative of the Chinese revolution that changed ignorant peasants into revolutionary heroes. Instead of Kikuchi's idealization of the Chinese revolution, Iino paid attention to the Japanese singular condition, which presupposes an intermingling of highly developed capitalism and premodern factors as discussed in the disputes of Japanese capitalism. It is a manner of realism that Iino approached peasants based on their labors, behaviors, and facial expressions in everyday life. We could return to discuss this radical faculty of observation built through the popular woodcut movement later in the dispute between Nii Hiroharu and Ueno Makoto.

2.3 “Osunita” and an Attempt of *Gunsaku*, Cooperate-production

One of the methodologies of JWMA is *Gunsaku*, a co-operate production. *Gunsaku* refers to co-operate production by multiple woodcut artists or collective work by woodcut artists and laborers or peasants. It reflected the JFAS's “to the people” policies in 1950. The method of cooperate work was initially practiced by *Bunka-Kosakutai*, a co-operate cultural trooper, based on the Japanese Communist Party's policy of National Liberation and Revolution for Democracy after the party's split in 1950. For instance, avant-garde artists such as Katsuragawa Hiroshi published a weekly zine titled *Shukan Ogouchi*, as a work of a cooperate cultural trooper, and made a picture leaflet of gally and woodcut by seven members cooperate work. *Gunsaku* of JWMS developed the method. First, the group's name, *Osunita*, was anonymous and constituted by each member's capital letter: Oyama Shigeo, Suzuki Kenji, Nii Hiroharu, Takidaira Jiro.

In August 1950, *Osunita* published a picture book of *Hitachi Monogatari* [Hitachi Story], co-edited with All Japan Labor Unions and All Japan Iron Labor Union, and *Joto Monogatari* as the following book of *Hitachi*

Monogatari. According to them, this format was inspired by Chinese *Lianhuanhua*, a linkage picture book. Moreover, they stayed in Kemanai town, Akita prefecture, publishing *Hanaoka Monogatari* and investigated the *Hanaoka* incident, where Chinese and Korean laborers rioted in the Hanaoka Mine in July 1945. *Hanaoka Monogatari* was published in May 1951 by the China-Japan Friendship Association.

In 1950, when JCP split into *Shokan-ha* [non-mainstream faction] and *Kokusai-ha* [mainstream faction], *Osunita* belonged to *Shokan-ha* and published their works in *Jinmin bukugaku* [People's Literature], a literary journal of *Shokan-ha*. *Osunita* announced their manifesto, "The Popular Line Policy in the Fine Arts: Of *Osunita*," on *Jimin Bungaku* in February 1951.

Osunita was announced in Akahata or other media in the Spring of 1950. . . . *Osunita* is neither a personal name nor a group name of the authors. Instead, it is another name crystallized by the energy of two thousand five hundred Hitachi laborers and forty thousand Joto peasants. The energy pushed the name and was born from the Hitachi great labor dispute trial. . . . A woodcut was printed, and the others put ink on it and printed it. Through the operation, hundreds of flyers were printed just in a single night with a big chorus and decorated in the city and factory. It was a corporate work by artists, fine arts circles, and action groups. Publishing a book based on the dispute was proposed, and *Hitachi Monogatari* was born. . . .

Osunita's work is to make this way of picture books, to organize energy and cultural growth of laborers and peasants and emphasize realism's true meaning. *Osunita* might be regarded as the whole of the activities if you want. *Osunita* is not limited to painters, photographers, printing-related persons, writers, musicians, fine arts club members, and union members. Laborers and peasants who gave us criticism or opinions were also direct participants. *Osunita's* whole policy and mission are to serve the people, represent the people's interests, and produce works based on people's language, passions, and senses. Thus, anyone who wants to work this way can call it *Osunita*. Otherwise, we agree that anyone who wants to do it must call *Osunita*. We hope you go ahead (*Osunita*, 1951, pp. 81-82).

Key here is that, "members of the *Osunita* are not limited only to painters, but photographers, printing related persons, writers, musicians, fine arts circle members, and union members" and "anyone who wants to work in

the direction of this way can call it *Osunita*.” It is precisely the situation where there are “human beings before woodcut.” I will assume that Nii Hiroharu drafted this manifesto which had a role in connecting labor disputes with peasant movements described in *Hitachi Monogatari* and *Joto Monogatari*.

In regard to the relationship with the 1950 split of JCP, JWMA members reflected the division: the members of the *Osunita* belonged to *Shokan-ha* while the rest were *Kokusai-ha*, including Ueno Makoto. Iino Nobuya joined Nakano Shigeharu, who belonged to *Kokusai-ha*.

Osunita's work also attracted attention at the Japanese Woodcut Exhibition in the US in March 1952. Nisei Progressives held the exhibition as the Japanese American branch of the Progressive Party, organized for Henry A. Wallace's presidential election in 1948 (Bahr, 2007, pp. 101-114). Even after Wallace's defeat, Nisei Progressives enacted a leftist principle. They reformulated themselves as a popular organization of anti-war, anti-immigrant discrimination, and pro-communist, based on organizations during the presidential campaign in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, including the youth democrat club (Tomotsune, 2012). The purpose of the Exhibition of Japanese Woodcut was supposedly planned to make an international united front between the US-Japan leftists, activating international anti-war movements during the Korean War and the early stage of the Cold War situation.

Consequently, the exhibition was held in more than seventy locations in the US, and works were sent to *Taller de Grafica Popular* in Mexico later (however, based on my research, it does not exist there). In this US-Japan collaboration, the Japanese side organizer was Ota Koji. Moreover, after the exhibition, *15 Japanese Woodcuts* (Nisei Progressives, 1952) was published in the US, in which 15 works were selected and Charles Keller, known as a critic of the American Communist Party, wrote an introduction of high praise saying that “Anyone can make a woodcut!” (Nisei Progressives, 1952, p. 1). Although the Cominform authorized their activities, they realized an international cultural front by relating China, Japan, the US, and Mexico by using the communist network.

2.4 A Dispute on Realism

However, *Gunsaku*, a collaborative work, raised another problem: defining authorship for re-making woodcuts. In *Nihon Hanga Shinbun*, the dispute

between Nii Hiroharu and Ueno Makoto happened over authorship (Ueno & Nii, 1954). The dispute focused on the “Tape” woodcut from Nii’s original picture and Ueno’s cutting. The work aimed to protest the US’s nuclear test at Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954. The incident that *Daigo Fukuryu Maru* suffered by the nuclear inspired the works of “Gunsaku Hanga for Prohibiting Nuclear.”

Ueno conceded it failed because he could not deepen the role of the cutting artist by sticking to Nii’s original picture too much. Ueno said he tried to identify his sense with Nii’s, which was foreign to Ueno. However, the more fundamental reason was as follows:

“By arranging the relationship with other authors, *Gunsaku* can regulate the aim and make the audience a certain direction. However, each woodcut should have its independent meaning since it is not *Lianhuanhua*, a linkage picture book. Thus, the work titled “Tape” seems not to make us imagine the Bikini sea” (Ueno & Nii, 1954).

Ueno endorses his argument by referring to *Lianhuanhua*. However, he criticizes Nii’s original picture since it draws only a child who hands a tape to see someone off at the port, and its composition seems banal. It does not give us another image of the Bikini nuclear test incident.

Then Nii responded to Ueno: Nii mentions that this banal picture of a child handing a tape to someone and seeing them off gained sympathy from visitors at the Exhibition Nippon. He emphasized that a customer had used only a tape to bid farewell in a fishermen’s village in March of 1954. Furthermore, Nii claimed that the radioactive dust added significance as a symbol of a final farewell. He took pride in grasping this unique experience of the nuclear age and concluded: “An invisible reality such as nuclear bombs which is hard to bring people’s attention endangers our life and living. There are materials and pictures in reality. We need to try to learn people’s mentality, passion, behavior, and facial expression from the conflicts of reality” (Ueno & Nii, 1954).

Nii reconfirms the principle of realism that any political meaning or reality of death should be found in the ordinary lives of people. Even though the “Tape” may seem conventional, it demonstrates the fear of nuclear bombs, military dominance over the Pacific Ocean, and the life-and-death situations in fishing. The argument is reminiscent of Courbet’s *The Stone Breakers* (1849)

or Millet's *Gleaners* (1857) which attempt to explore the sociopolitical context through everyday behaviors (Rubin, 1997). However, Nii overemphasized the theory of realism. Courbet's *The Stone Breakers* or Millet's *Gleaners* demonstrate the power to express historical moments, acting as the witness of their time, the realism that Nii idealized requires a distinguished creativity to achieve this. In other words, if a work assimilates to a longing for domestic national culture or atmosphere, it cannot expose political reality. In the next section, we will discuss another possibility of realism in Nakazawa Keiji's cartoon, *Barefoot Gen*, which realized a particular expression for the atomic bombing. The expression was not invented by collaborative effort but by individual practice. The dispute of Nii and Ueno indicated that experimental practices of PWM radicalized and democratized woodcut as a means of revolutionary movements; as Charles Keller mentioned, "anyone can make a woodcut" (Nisei Progressives, 1952, p. 1) and consequently, it was recognized that woodcut should be a witness of the time, even when constraining the woodcut artists.

2.5 The End of PWM and After

In an interview with *Ibaraki Shinbun*, Iino Nobuya described PWM in the 1950s: "What I learned from new woodcut movement, there would be no fine arts movement. Social realism is a crack of shit, and artists only have arts for art's sake, or self-establishment" (Ibaraki Shimbun, 1977; Iino, 2012, p. 204). After the 1950s, the woodcut artists of PWM intermingled with artists and other cultural movements in Eastern Europe and other Asian countries. Focusing on their works, they deepened their individuality for the remainder of the post-war period. Iino's words that "artists only have arts for art's sake, or self-establishment" were not mere banter. Instead, it can be understood as the pride of an artist who was heading toward the fine arts revolution. As a peasant poet, organizing a literature club in his birthplace, he grew his imaginary peasant world and produced works fused with folkloristic and avant-garde styles. Nii Hiroharu also published the noble and lyrical *Maokabashi Shichibushu* [Seven serial works of Maoka Bridge] in 1957. Koguchi Ichiro was internationally known for his life work series, with the theme of the *Ashio* mine pollution incident. He established his way out of realism. As well as other woodcut artists, Suzuki Kenji also established a style of intermingling with avant-garde and realism by adoring Hashiura Yasuo, a

folklorist, communist artist, and one of the members of the Yanagita Kunio school. Suzuki Kenji engaged in the Exhibition of Woodcut and Poem in 1963, held by the All-Japan Free Laborers Union, based on his research on underclass laborers in unemployment offices. These activities demonstrate that PWM artists in the 1950s, after the end of the movement, continued their struggle and the militant revolutionary works for fine art by seeking creative expressions with ordinary people.

3. *Barefoot Gen*, or Personal Struggle

Nakazawa Keiji (1939-2012), who had lived hiding the fact that he was a victim of the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb, published *Being Exposed in the Black Rain* in 1968 as his serial cartoons. With this, he began to denounce Japanese society, which had repressed the victims' lives and symbolized a new cultural movement focused on individuals' existential engagement even though Nakazawa shouldered his father's time in the socialist/communist fine art movement during the 1930s and 1940s.

Cultural expressions with a theme of war relate strongly to children. This is seen in the second folktale boom from the 1960s to the 1970s. Nakazawa's representative work, *Barefoot Gen*, is based on the children's world and appeared in *Shonen Jump* in 1973. Matsutani Miyoko, one of the leading writers of juvenile literature, published *Two Ida* in 1969, the theme of which was atomic bomb chairs. Matsutani subsequently continued on this theme in the series of Naoki and Yuko.

Additionally, Matsutani's remarkable work *Raccoon and the Older Man* was published in 1972. Based on present-day folktales gathered in the Shonai area of Yamagata prefecture, Raccoon caused trouble taking watermelons or melons from a village. Farmers suspended carbide lanterns in the fields to protect their products from Raccoon. However, someone who watched the lantern called the police since suspecting them to be a smuggler's sign, presumably "K-country," which caused a scene. However, another person said that it could be the deed of Raccoon. In conclusion, an older man said, "Since raccoons were forced to be excluded from mountains by humans, raccoon seems to claim that these mountains originally belong to them" (Matsutani, 1994, p. 457).

Nakazawa and Matsutani share a common intuition at the center of their

methodology. They dug up oppressed memories such as rapid modernization or war, especially in the case of abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korea, which threatened people's unconsciousness around these areas. This is only possible by the clear perspective of children or animals. Children who possess nothing could intuit an antagonistic relationship between the haves and have-nots. It is no coincidence that stories denouncing modernization or war experiences were championed in the *manga* aimed at boys and girls from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. Rapid land development and oblivion of the memory of total war and defeat proceeded together, prompting the restoration of oppressed memory.

3.1 Folkloristic Move of *Manga*

Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen* practices experimental techniques, different from prior works in the series of *Black*, even though these works share the same subject matter of atomic bomb victims. The world of Nakaoka Gen is filled with many onomatopes and sequences of episodes, connected by parodied *rokyoku*, *Kouta*, or popular songs. "It is the morning/five and a half o'clock/carrying a lunch box/getting out from home/dad/(...)/a lunch is/earthworms/noodle/a life of tramp/pretty hard/Monday, Tuesday/fleas there." "A beggar of eight hundred states/carrying a basket/standing at the gate/give me/food/a bunch of food/give me." "Goodbye triangle/square tofu/tofu is white/white is a rabbit/a rabbit is jumping/Jumping is a frog/frog is blue/blue is banana/banana can be peeled."

The endless songs constitute their everyday life and clear division of good and evil. The Japanese collaborators with war are described with furious facial expressions. At the same time, Gen's family, who resist the violence, are portrayed as weak, always beaten, bleeding from the forehead and mouth with gnashing their teeth as *gi-gi-gi*. Protagonists continuously repeat their words two times, "What happened, what happened" or "Forgive me, forgive me." Irritating violent exploitation, betrayal, and resentment show a cold reality of daily life, but songs gently absorb shocking scenes and change into the usual rhythm. As such, Gen and his family could survive these ghostly days. This folkloristic formulaic rhythm is a particular way of expression established in *Barefoot Gen*, just like the films of Ozu Yasujiro or Ingmar Bergman, which is why Nakazawa gained an international reputation. *Barefoot Gen* is supported by folkloristic formulaic rhythm (Kure, 2014).

3.2 Ghost-Image and Personal Struggle

There is no doubt one of the most remarkable achievements in this history of *manga* expression in post-war Japan is a cartoon figuration of atomic bomb victims where humans turned into monstrous figures, as well as Toshi and Iri Maruki's *Hiroshima Panels*, a series of paintings.

Nakazawa's figuration of atomic bomb victims was a triumphant expression, comparable to Courbet's or Millet's work. Their skin peeled back by the heatwave of the atomic bomb, drooped like a loincloth. Shards of glass covered the entire surface of the body. Nakazawa draws something inhumane, and yet they make human-like moves. The victims are de-individualized, and these abstracted and typified victims make active images through layout frames in the cartoon. Between the relations of layout frames and frames and out-of-frames, visual images of non-verbal, non-chronological logic occur. The image-movement has a great emotional impact on the reader, creating trauma-like experiences.

Nakazawa Keiji is a subaltern of the atomic bomb victim and has direct experience, but this is not the only thing that guarantees his success. As I mentioned earlier, where suppressing war memories was dominant in the late 1960s, Nakazawa needed to develop a technical effort to realize his atomic bomb experience. As Walter Benjamin once explained, political expression in pessimism will be defeated if it cannot create something more than a political metaphor. Benjamin wrote, "To organize pessimism is to expel the moral metaphor from politics and to find one hundred percent of image-space in the space of political activity" (Benjamin, 1995, p. 516).

Benjamin, who dreamed of a direct and perfect revolution by connecting image-space and collective bodies, analyzed hyper-capitalism and fascism as successful examples of the political image revolution. However, can the subaltern, who can represent themselves only through the negative definition, create perfect image-space over political space? In other words, how does one construct the counter-expression which can rule over the oppressors of the memories?

One of Nakazawa's answers was to create a figure of atomic bomb victims who turned out to be "monsters." It was to create heroes who embraced resentment against imperialism and the majority society, to perform their private struggle against them, and rule the dominant narrative by their bodily

practice. Moreover, we must pay attention to Nakazawa's other answers and cartoon creations.

One of the *Black* series, *A Shout of Black Soil* in 1972, is an outstanding work since it completed a figuration of the period. In the end, Ryuji, the protagonist, dug out the remains of the atomic bomb victim from black soil and decided to inherit the dead's will. He skims newspaper headlines, "China carried out a nuclear test again" and "The fourth defense plan fixed" at his next seat on Shinkansen with Mt. Fuji in a background landscape. Ryuji's dark, angry face is on display with a close-up shot. It is this moment that a terrorist is born. The image of outrage is repeated in the first work of the series titled "Exploring in a Black Rain" and a following work, "At the end of Black Silence," in which a dumb youth assaults the president of a munitions company called *Mitsuba*, obviously modeled by Mitsubishi Heavy Industry. *Black Rain* conjures memories of a series of bombing campaigns by the East Asia Anti-Japan Armed Front at that time, which targeted munitions companies, including Mitsubishi Heavy Industry which is one of the representative companies of munitions industry, and invites us to think that Nakazawa would show his solidarity with these militant campaigns. A revenge action against invading munitions companies was also emphasized in *Barefoot Gen* as "we will ask you to pay the debt owed for our suffering from war and the atomic bomb" (Nakazawa, 1990, p. 170). In other words, vengeance is essential to Gen's children's world.

Resentment and vengeance are organized through children's bodily affections of thieves or robbers, which is also an extension of play.

To help his sister Tomoko, a malnourished baby close to death, Gen decides to attack the US military base with his younger fellow Ryuta. Gen said, "Bastard, we will never die. We will never die if anything happens," Ryuta responded, "Sure, brother, we will do dog killer, homicide, or bandit." Moreover, facing Ka'chin, who first broke into the base and was shot, the two stiffened their resolve. Ryuta prompted, "Brother, we should get revenge for Ka'chin. We suffer seriously because Yankee (Ame-ko) dropped the atomic bomb. We are not sorry to steal milk or food from Yankee" (Nakazawa, 1975, p. 65, 70).

In the beginning, living meant a private struggle for Gen: due to his father, who was outspoken and openly anti-war, their neighbors always oppressed them. After losing his father and sisters in the atomic bomb, the rest of the family had no breadwinner, house, or land. The weak, the have-

nots with no property must snatch from other wealthy people in order to survive. Moreover, wealthy people refused to provide their sympathy for the weak, much less their possessions. When the weak's desperate petition is not compensated, their private struggle is justified, even if it is revengeful. This revengeful private struggle becomes a collective organic body like a nervous system in which a tiny stab links the body simultaneously. Thus, "take revenge" becomes an initiation or countersign to form a weak person's hooligan into a collective body.

In the story of Gen, Ryuta succeeded Gen's incarnation and killed Yakuza twice for revenge, whereas Gen became discreet as he grew. In addition, Gen's former classmate, Aihara, became a terrorist who sought his place of death as he suffered from atomic bomb disease.

Sometimes Nakazawa tries to control Gen and the children's revengeful activities of personal struggle. One example: Gen thinks highly of the former teacher and communist, Ota, since he has a "true outrage instead of praised love or kindness" (Nakazawa, 1993, p. 102). His elder brother, Koji, also calms Gen down by remonstrating him when Gen wants to go to Tokyo to seek the emperor's apology. Koji said, "I will do if I can with shouldering our mother. However, a tiny single voice cannot change anything. Each Japanese should share their anger and voice louder, and all Japanese cooperate and extinguish a fire of war and atomic bomb if the smoke comes out" (Nakazawa, 1990, p. 252). Nakazawa shows a swing between a positionality of revengeful vengeance and maturing prudence in political practice. However, he never eliminates the logic of private struggle as a sensitivity of their times.

3.3 Labor as Endless Snatching

Yamaguchi Kenji, an anarchist and an outstanding organizer of the post-war new left movement, wrote a witty article in 1962 summarizing a psycho-political situation after the Ampo struggle in 1960 and preached a breakthrough meaning of personal struggle. Yamaguchi wrote:

When I tried to explain the words "labor as self-alienation," as one of many fashionable expressions, to a coal miner, he decisively asserted, "you say I, a coal miner, is thieved? You are wrong. A robber is me. All labor is robbing." . . . We once had Ampo We once had Ampo Struggle. Is it over now? Now it exists as a "private struggle." Does it mean that the Ampo struggle

originally existed only as a private struggle?

Moreover, the private struggle continues now. There is an Ampo trial and, consequently, people who are identified as defendants. Their struggle is definitively private. If you say that “what you lose is only an iron chain,” the chain here attributes to yourself. In a rebellion, you have nothing to lose. There is a brick on which all your time and space lie. As a brick, you cannot charge in a rebellion, and you are not charged. Instead, you are nothing but a brick to break ahead of your ally or enemy. Instant labor or endless snatching is a private struggle (Yamaguchi, 1960, pp. 33-39).

According to Yamaguchi, snatching is a private struggle and instant labor to take revenge on one’s enemy. It is instantly practical even if it relates to productive labor since labor is always bodily and instrumental. Otherwise, a brick thrown in a rebellion is a personal grudge against the affluents, which needs neither political metaphor nor logic of public interest. In the age of digital globalization, in which class struggle further complicated the matter, proletarian of wage labor and the struggle of existence against the affluents who had land and Capital continue. From Gen’s world and the children’s perspective, the enemies were evident: war, atomic bombs, and Japanese and US imperialism. These enemies not only exploited but also hurt and damaged the people. For *Barefoot Gen* in the early 1970s, despite the decay of memory, as previously mentioned, children’s experiences prevented it from declining since conflicts between haves and have-nots remained so plain for them to see. War, disease, or primitive accumulation are more straightforward and more general for children, turning to direct conflicts and personal struggles. Gen’s struggle for revenge becomes very ordinary with no atonement against the affluent.

4. Conclusion: Subaltanist’s Aesthetic Education of *Hanga* and *Manga*

At the end of the story, Gen heads towards Tokyo from Hiroshima to be an independent sign maker. Ryuta and Katsuko killed a Yakuza member and fled to Tokyo. They had no regret, resentment, or political motivation. Katsuko justifies their escape: “The people, who masked a justice and made money from the war without working, should be murderers and be imprisoned.”

“First of all, the emperor must be imprisoned.” In addition, Gen adds to her and says, “You are an important example to testify how horrible the atomic bomb is, and a witness to recuperate humans on the earth. You are an admirable person and help people rather than the emperor. It is wasteful to imprison you. You must be confident of escaping!” (Nakazawa, 1987, p. 242). Their straightforward bodily existences with personal struggles make future creativity that accompanies the aesthetic structure of the *manga* narrative. *Manga* is a media centering on the bodies of the protagonist heroes that narrativize the story based on their perspective, and only their performance can develop the story. Including Gen, *manga* is suited to shape heroes such as lonely, isolated “terrorists,” which is determined by the epistemological structure of *manga*. The success of *Barefoot Gen* was conditioned by coinciding with the media’s subject matter and material methodology, one that established a prominent political space to reinterpret the actual political situation appropriately.

I will summarize the epistemological significance of the work here. *Barefoot Gen* united the bodily practice of atomic bomb victims who suffered horrible disfigurements, with the personal/public struggles, and the idea of personal vengeance and socio-ethical justice. In addition, its visual-narrative structure subverts the Kant-Heideggerian epistemological hierarchy that presupposes a developmental progress from a lower to a higher level. This epistemological hierarchy is a power structure of gender that has been problematized by feminist discourse because of re-producing an unequal distribution of knowledge. Thus, *Barefoot Gen* is an epistemological and aesthetic achievement essential for subaltern hegemony.

The postwar popular woodcut movement had a common aim with *Barefoot Gen* to resolve the unequal distribution of knowledge, sharing a legacy of modern visual movements as an incomplete visual-aesthetic revolution. This legacy is seen in the Iino-Kikuchi dispute, where it was argued whether peasant representation was cunning or revolutionary ignorance. We could confirm again that Nakazawa Keiji was a successor of the socialist/communist cultural movement that his father, Nakazawa Harumi, had participated in, his works tackle the trial and error of fine arts philosophy.

In the recent dominance of moneyed Capital and globalized financial capitalism, capitalists and the affluents have lost any concern about direct, material production and labor. It consequently shuts down any channel to

recognize the connection between neighbors' hatred or racism, class struggle, and capitalism. The debts derived from financial commodity bankruptcy are not conceived to stem from the relation of capital-wage labor or labor union matters. Thus, the anxiety of debts is permanently reduced to a personal struggle not to a system of financial capitalism. We need a wake-up call to connect the tasks of class struggle, environmental issues of global financial capitalism with personal struggle, resentment, and vengeance. The history of woodcut and manga-cartoons hold the keys for us to learn this lesson.

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Professional Profile

Tsutomu Tomotsune is Professor of School of Japan Studies at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. His research focuses on the Japanese intellectual history and minority issues, especially the issue of *buraku* in modern Japan. He is the author of several books, including *Sengo Buraku Kaiho Undo-shi* (On the Postwar History of Buraku Emancipation Movement, 2012) and *Yume to Bakudan: Subaltern no Hyogen to Toso* (Dream and Bomb: Subaltern's Expressions and Struggles, 2019).