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The topic of nuclear energy and citizenship is having a moment. In 2022, historian Sarah Robey coined the term “nuclear citizens” in her book Atomic Americans: Citizens in a Nuclear State; one year later, we have anthropologist Akihiro Ogawa’s Antinuclear Citizens: Sustainability Policy and Grassroots Activism in Post-Fukushima Japan, which introduces us to Japan’s “antinuclear citizens.” While the terms differ slightly, their meanings amount to something essentially similar yet profound: the people of the United States and Japan have come to define their civic identity in response to the nuclear policies of their respective nations.

Antinuclear Citizens traces the emergence of nuclear citizenship to the Fukushima Daiichi disaster of March 2011, after which the state invoked unprecedented authority, characterized by Ogawa as a “state of exception” (p. 5). The most notorious example of this “new normal” was the Japanese government’s decision to raise the limit of radiation exposure considered to be safe from one millisievert to twenty millisieverts per year—but only for residents of Fukushima Prefecture (p. 6). Elsewhere the limit remained one millisievert per year. So, in addition to wantonly disregarding safety, Japan distributed the risks of radiation unequally, leading Ogawa to conclude, “I believe this to be a state-structured form of violence” (p. 189).

Ogawa takes the reader on a tour of Japanese civil society and provides an enlightening exploration of how Japanese citizens have adapted to the new nuclear reality. As the government attempted to restart nuclear power plants, many Japanese responded by protesting peacefully. Chapter 2 details various demonstrations that Ogawa attended as well as his meetings with protesters to understand their grievances. He observes that most protesters came from the “precariat,” the precarious class of society relegated to part-time or temporary work with neither job security nor benefits (p. 50). Observing links between antinuclear protests
and the global Occupy movement, Ogawa explains that “the emerging resistance was not just an anti-nuclear power movement but the beginning of a large-scale protest by ordinary people against the dominant politico-economic discourse, namely, neoliberalism” (p. 59).

Other activists worked to change the laws regarding nuclear energy. Many residents of Fukushima had hoped to evacuate the region, only to learn that the government would not compensate them for such a move. Civil society saw this refusal as the government's abandonment of social responsibility and pursued the passage of a law guaranteeing the “right to evacuation” (p. 77). Supporters of this law lobbied government officials, consulted with the United Nations, and brought in experts to speak on behalf of the proposal. When the law failed to pass, they took matters into their own hands by establishing recuperation programs, where children living in irradiated areas could enjoy a radiation-free month away from Fukushima.

Chapter 4 of *Antinuclear Citizens* details efforts to create a nuclear-free Japan powered by renewable and sustainable energy, such as a solar farm at Fukushima airport as well as solar sharing, where food grows beneath solar panels, simultaneously powering and feeding local residents. If such efforts succeed, Ogawa notes, they will naturally reduce the risk of nuclear accidents while empowering local communities. After all, the electricity produced by the Fukushima Daiichi plant did not even stay in the region but instead went to Tokyo.

Japan's antinuclear citizens are also citizens of the world. Chapter 5 analyzes a transnational campaign against Japan's efforts to sell nuclear power technology to Turkey, a practice Ogawa deems “unethical” (p. 152). Why, the antinuclear citizenry asks, should the nation that suffered the 3/11 disaster sell reactor technology to an earthquake-prone country such as Turkey? In response, Turkish activists visited Japan and warned about Turkey's lack of democracy; Japanese activists visited Turkey and decried Japan's spotty nuclear record. Finally, Ogawa takes the reader to the Fukushima region itself, including a harrowing car ride along roads dotted with warnings not to lower the windows and, most memorably, a visit to the Commutan Fukushima, a state-sponsored education center that purports to explain radiation but in fact desensitizes the public to its dangers.

*Antinuclear Citizens* wonderfully illuminates the struggles and successes of Japanese antinuclear activists in an analysis that is multifaceted and boundaryless. One wishes, however, such nuance was given to the opposing side of the nuclear debate. Instead, we get a caricature of nuclear power advocates: Ogawa uses the term “nuclear village” to unhelpfully describe an amorphous group consisting of the Tokyo Electric Power Company, who thwarts antinuclearism “by buying people off with cash,” along with nuclear industry insiders, politicians, and bloodless “bureaucrats” who “sabotage” the implementation of good policy (pp. 26, 55, 84). The nuclear village apparently seeks to impose its nuclear will on Japan, but Ogawa never explains how it works. Decrying the lack of environmental and emission standards in Japan's Atomic Energy Basic Law, Ogawa simply states that “presumably there was strong pressure from the Japanese nuclear village to make such an exception for radioactive materials” (p. 207). But “presumably” is not a very convincing word here; readers have no reason to take this claim for granted.

This heavy-handedness likely stems from Ogawa's participation in antinuclear causes. In an epilogue he explains his leadership role in Citizens' Action for Fukushima Justice, an organization seeking to change radiation exposure and evacuation policy, and the book is premised on Ogawa's claim that “human beings and nuclear power cannot coexist” (p. 17). This view prevents Ogawa from recognizing that nuclear power is a
difficult dilemma rather than an absolute evil. Given the climate crisis, is it at least possible that nuclear energy is more than just a neoliberal plot? In his criticism of Turkey's attempt to purchase a nuclear power plant, Ogawa implies that Turkey should rely on coal and Russian gas, an assertion that seems problematic at best.

A telling moment is when Ogawa asked his Commutan Fukushima tour guide about the purpose of the institution. The tour guide chose his words carefully and answered, “There are no people here” (p. 190). This could have been a moment to complicate the notion of antinuclear citizenship: What does it tell us that this man finds it acceptable to work at the Commutan Fukushima in the hopes of bringing the region back to life? Was he brainwashed by the nuclear village? Or is he trying to reconcile agonizingly difficult but still honorable goals? But to Ogawa, the tour guide's comment is simply an opportunity to decry state-imposed isolation measures. In this study of antinuclear citizens, ambiguity is an unwelcome alien.

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