

# Japanese demonstrations in "galapagosian" way allow continued tyranny

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## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the need for "non-violent direct action" in social movements and even that it is essential for the realization of democracy. This form of action has already been adopted in actions to prevent the construction of new bases in Okinawa, but it cannot be said that it is generally approved in the sphere of social movements in Japan. There may be quite a lot of people who consider such a way of action as too radical or illegal. Given the current mainstream view on this activities in the social movements sphere, extensive discussions would be necessary to convincingly argue this, and despite its simple purpose, it is unavoidable to use a considerable number of pages. Without an understanding of this, I believe, it is difficult to realize democracy and to achieve major social change.

I'm formerly a professor at a national university, but I do not major in social science, but in physics, so one may be suspicious about my ability to talk about this. However, at the same time, I am also an activist of the peace movement, and in 2007 I participated in the sit-in blockade

at the gate of the British nuclear weapons base in Scotland twice, and there experienced the country's detention cell. In 2015 and 2016, I participated in the sit-ins at Henoko and Takae in Okinawa. In addition, when the "incorporation" of national universities was proposed by the government in 2003, I joined the opposition movement as the secretary general of the "National Network of Opposition". Our view was that this policy weakens university autonomy and must lead to bureaucratic control besides that it would lead to budget cuts. In the olden days, I had many opportunities to think about how to truly realize democracy, including the student movement around 1970, and then involved in various social movements including the nuclear power plant issue. This essay is based on the knowledge and experience gained through such a history. I would be grateful if I could receive criticism from not only general readers but also social science experts and social activists.

## Long-lasting "tyranny"

In the long Abe administration, there were countless misconducts and allegations of misconduct by the government and by Mr.

Abe himself, such as false answers in the Diet and document falsification.

Immediately after taking over by the Suga administration, he refused to appoint a member of the Science Council of Japan, causing an incident that intervened in the personnel affairs of the academic world<sup>1</sup>.

The word "spin (control)" is used to express causing new sensational things and saturate the media with it in order to distract people from inconvenient facts or incidents for the government. In the Abe/Suga administration, new suspicions and scandals continue to play the role of "spin" for past scandals. The personnel intervention in this academic institution is a serious problem, but in fact it completely obscured the previous "Japan Life" case<sup>2</sup>. A policy that neglects the recent expansion of the new Corona pandemic, or rather fuels it, such as the "GO-TO Campaign", must be the tactics, I wonder, to keep the public attention away from these frauds.

The Abe administration's tyranny is not limited to fraud and scandals. The government's stance of not considering the lives of the people and poverty is not only a recent attack on the pockets of ordinary citizens such as the consumption tax hike, but also a long-standing policy terrifying the poor, resulting in high child poverty rate of 13.5% (2019 National Livelihood Survey by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare) as well as the neglect of the extremely low awareness of livelihood protection, which is said to be about 20% of

the number of households in need. Even with the new corona countermeasures, the containment has failed due to the policy of suppressing PCR<sup>3</sup> tests which is quite unusual in the world.

However, the public's reaction to this is slower than in foreign countries, and demonstrations rarely occur. Yes, demonstrations are certainly happening, but they're small and docile, and it has little influence on politics. In comparison, overseas, there are many examples of demonstrations affecting politics, such as the recent situation in Belarus and the move in Algeria that forced the president to resign in a peaceful demonstration in April 2019. Even in countries that are considered to be advanced democracies, massive demonstrations have had a great influence on the political scene, such as the BLM (Black Lives Matter) movement in the United States, and the "Yellow Vest" in France that withdrew the fuel tax. Japan can be said to be in a "Galapagos" state in the sense that such a thing rarely happens (in Japan, the word "Galapagos" is often used to depict the unique aspects of Japan and the Japanese.) And the general public, who is not an activist, is more aware of this. This is clear from the fact that it is not uncommon for the reaction that "if it happens in a foreign country, a riot must occur" when the Abe / Suga Cabinet's mischief is talked about. The term "riot" is used because the general public is not familiar with "full-scale"

demonstrations and strikes, and is a frank expression of dissatisfaction with the slow response of citizens to bad politics. Rather, it may be activists and sphere of social movements who are less aware of "Galapagos" state.

Even if a demonstration or rally is held on a large scale, the media will not tell it, and most people will not know the fact, so even if you call for a new one, the people who participated before will feel powerless and the number of participants will decrease. Besides, for civil activists, the word "mobilization" ("do-in" in Japanese) is associated with bureaucracy and totalitarianism, and the systematic efforts to gather people are weak. (Mobilization is limited to the activities within each political party, such as election rallies.) Such a vicious cycle is one of the main cause that demonstrations and rallies have little power in Japan, which otherwise should be one of the important elements of democracy.

Let me consider the background of these phenomena. One may be that the universal suffrage system has been established in Japan, then many people may think that overthrowing the government or changing policies by demonstrations is the story for the less-developed countries. Second, there may be a belief that demonstrations which cause some traffic disruptions are generally unacceptable because the

Japanese national character is "gentle and obedient."

However, as mentioned above, even in advanced democracies, demonstrations have a great deal of weight in politics. It goes without saying that elections are an important factor, but in a society where wealth is unevenly distributed and therefore availability of resources for propaganda are also extremely uneven, opposition forces must have the means to make up for their institutional inferiority. Otherwise, the minority in the media space has little chance of winning in elections in a highly unfair situation of this space.

There is also great doubt as to whether Japan is a democracy. Even though the Prime Minister's transparent lies about the "Sakura wo Miru Kai" (cherry blossom viewing party)<sup>4</sup> and the facts that touch the Public Offices Election Act are so abundant, the judiciary is hardly functioning. This would rather mean that Japan is approaching a mid-dictatorship.

The second point is about "gentle and obedient national character", which I think to be rather a collective self-suggestion. In Japan, there used to be demonstrations that were not as quiet, like those struggles of the US-Japan security treaty around 1960. Going back farther, there were more than 3,000 peasants revolts (ikki) in the Edo period, and even in my home town of

Kurume, 60,000 peasants rose up in the 1754 Horeki Ikki (Horeki –revolt, or Great Revolt of Kurume Domain (han), 35 years before the French Revolution). It forced the daimyo to withdraw the poll tax. By the way, today's consumption tax is a kind of poll tax in the sense that it is levied on all the people.

Now, I will sketch my own understanding of the current mechanism of controlling the people, the importance of "non-violent direct action" to break it down and substantially restore and realize democracy, which is almost neglected in social movements sphere of Japan.

### **"Capital-Media-Power" Domination Triangle**

Japan is apparently a democracy, that is, a country where politics is carried out by the will of the people. Few people may think that this is actually done at face value, but many believe that it is generally done. In other words, it is a way of thinking that "it is the result of the elections chosen by the people" and "we cannot help accepting it." The question is whether fair and practical information is available in important political actions of the people, such as elections. Without it, the people cannot make accurate judgments in elections.

Despite freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the "fairness principle" of the Broadcasting Act, mass media such as television and newspapers are by no

means fair and do not provide sufficient information for the political judgment of the people. Far from being from this ideal, the reality seems to be that the media is systematically exploited for the ruling class of Japanese society. That trend was dominated by the long-term Abe administration, which emphasized media domination. This may be reflected by the fact that Japan fell to 66th place out of the 180 countries / regions surveyed in the 2020 "Freedom of the Press Ranking" released by the international NGO "Reporters Without Borders" in April last year<sup>5</sup>. (Of course, I don't underestimate the fact that there are many journalists in the major media struggling for freedom of the press, and I myself often get valuable information from many excellent articles and TV shows.)

Another important issue is whether the people, literally as "sovereigns" of national politics, are given the time to study, think and act on politics. Since the number of people who are worried about their lives due to the increase in non-regular workers and the decline in wages is increasing, with the long working hours peculiar to Japan in addition, people are busy managing their daily lives. Many will not be able to afford to think and investigate politics. Under such circumstances, it is easy to get caught up in a simple slogan such as "reduction of mobile phone charges" without analyzing the policy and administration as a whole.

People under these circumstances find it difficult to identify the political groups that represent their true interests, and often abstain from voting with the help of the feeling of powerlessness that is common and sometimes reinforced by the implicit suggestion of the media. Or you will be directed to a vote that the media implicitly indicates as the majority. All these keep the dominant system intact. So to speak, the current system is stabilized and "locked" manifold.

Professor Joseph Stiglitz, the winner of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, described the economic aspect of this situation in his paper "The American Economy Is Rigged" with the phrase "feedback loop between money and regulations"<sup>6</sup>. Money influences policy, turning economic inequality into political inequality, and vice versa, leading to stable points of the system. Back in 1949, physicist A. Einstein described the situation like this in the first issue of the American left-wing monthly magazine *Monthly Review*, including the role of the media.<sup>7</sup>

Private capital tends to become concentrated in few hands, partly because of competition among the capitalists, and partly because technological development and the increasing division of labor encourage the formation of larger units of

production at the expense of smaller ones. The result of these developments is an oligarchy of private capital the enormous power of which cannot be effectively checked even by a democratically organized political society. This is true since the members of legislative bodies are selected by political parties, largely financed or otherwise influenced by private capitalists who, for all practical purposes, separate the electorate from the legislature. The consequence is that the representatives of the people do not in fact sufficiently protect the interests of the underprivileged sections of the population. Moreover, under existing conditions, private capitalists inevitably control, directly or indirectly, the main sources of information (press, radio, education). It is thus extremely difficult, and indeed in most cases quite impossible, for the individual citizen to come to objective conclusions and to make intelligent use of his political rights.

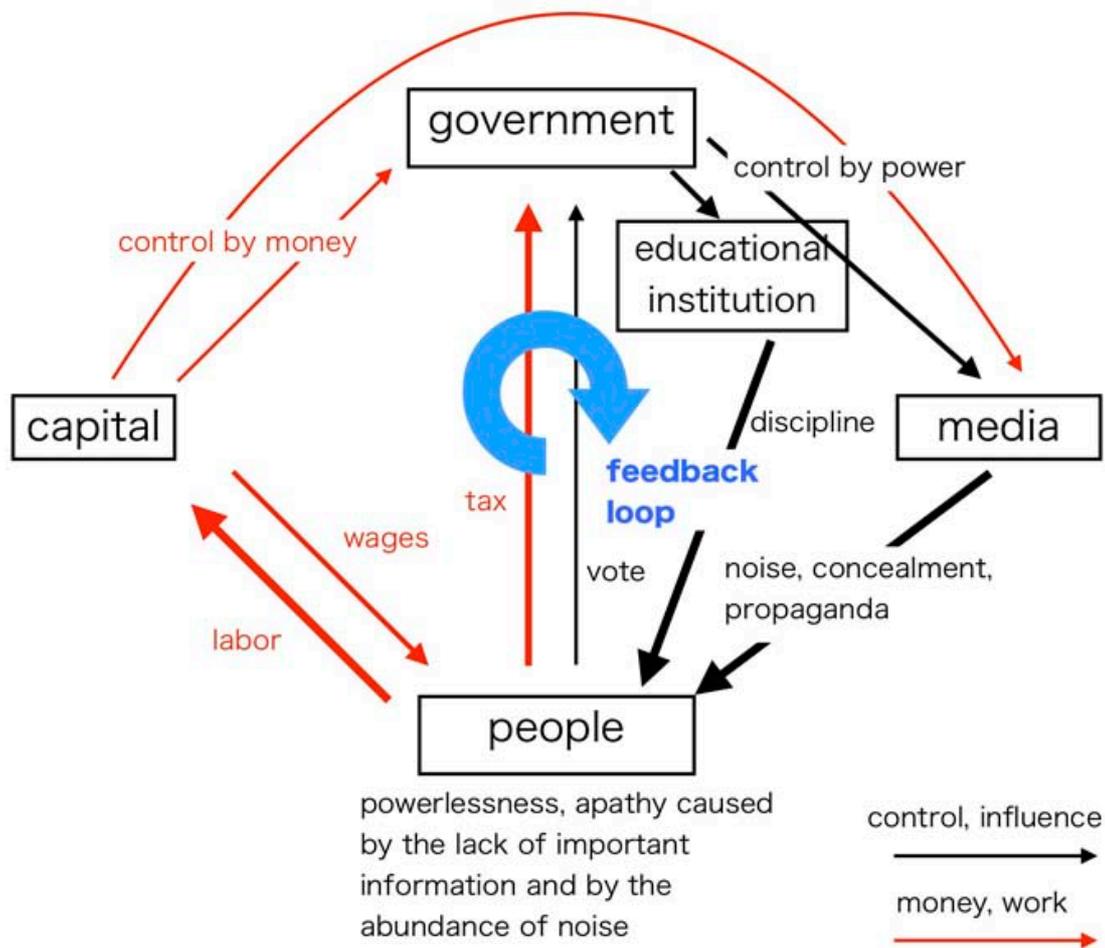
( <https://monthlyreview.org/2009/05/01/why-socialism> )

Simply paraphrasing "radio" as television or the internet seems to describe the situation today.

I tried to schematize this feedback mechanism in my own way. I propose a diagram illustrating the system of domination by the triangle of

capital-media-government power with the feedback loop including the people.

money such as political contributions and slush funds, and the control of media is



(see figure)

Many of us work under capitalists as workers and get wages. We pay taxes to the government. Surplus money is stored in the capitalists and the government, and the capitalists bribe politicians and media with this money. The government controls the media and educational institutions, and the media hides important information from us and makes various noises for this purpose. The main role of the media will be propaganda for this system. Educational institutions educate our children, "Be obedient to authority."

Bribing of government policies by the capital is mainly through legal or illegal

through advertising fees through major advertising agencies and the "program council" of each broadcasting station.

The "fuel" of this cycle is money, which drives this feedback loop. Feedback means that the output wraps around the input and becomes the output again, and that is repeated. An easy-to-understand example is howling the megaphone. When the microphone is brought closer to the speaker, the sound from the speaker enters the microphone, which is amplified by the amplifier and enters the microphone again. And the beeping continues to sound at the maximum output of the amplifier. It becomes a

"stable state" and nothing can be done. You have to switch it off or move the microphone away. Our society has fallen into such a state.

The thickness of the red arrow expresses how labor and money, which are the fuel of this cycle, are concentrated in the dominant power mechanism. Wealth is transferred to capitalists and the government as labor and taxes, but the value is not returned to the people as an equivalent amount as wages and public services. That "difference," that is, exploitation and deprivation, fuels this cycle.

### **Invisibility of labor value and tax**

First, let us consider why this "fuel" procurement, that is, the net transfer of labor and goods from the people, works well. Perhaps the biggest reason for this is that it is difficult for the public to know if there is a net transfer, and if so, it is difficult to realize it.

First of all, we have no guarantee or evidence that wages as compensation for labor are reasonable. It is easier to understand if you compare this with the case of farmers in the Edo period. At that time, it was only one's own labor and natural conditions such as weather that affected the amount of agricultural products such as rice, which was the result of labor. Naturally there would be complicated factors involved in the part

that is put on the market as commodities, but this completes at least the self-sufficient part. In addition, taxes are extremely visible as the lord takes away directly some of their products as an annual tribute. So to speak, it is extremely "transparent".

In contrast, there is no "objective" indicator of the adequacy of wages earned by workers today. Even if it is badly exploited by capitalists, the exploitation is also obscured by rhetoric (even if it is true) such as "because it is difficult to manage" or "because global competition is fierce". Since the validity of wages is unknown, the validity of the direct tax, which is deducted by the rate, must necessarily be ambiguous.

Then what leads to a more reasonable amount of wages? One major mechanism would be the supply-demand relationship in the labor market. A labor shortage puts pressure on wages to rise. However, when there are many unemployed people, this is a downward pressure. What is important here is the "balance of power" between capitalists and workers. In other words, "experimental" search for equilibrium points through equal negotiations between the two. Unlike the "invisible hand" that may work in the labor market, it is rather artificial.

An important premise in this case is that both parties can negotiate on equal footing,

but for that purpose it is essential that the labor side is organized and that the organization is not a "company union". Now, however, unions are extremely weak, or most large unions are company unions. Moreover, the majority of workers are unorganized. With this, "force balance" does not work at all. (The distant cause lies in education. Most of the teachers are not in the union, so of course they do not understand its social meaning. It must have a decisive effect on students.)

Therefore, not only is there no guarantee of wage validity, but there is even a loss of opportunity for workers to be aware of it - the wages may be too low, namely they are exploited. If so, the validity of the tax withdrawn from it would become an even more abstract issue. Therefore, both the demands on capitalists and the levels of demands on government that takes taxes become abstract problems for ordinary people.

According to Mr. Shin Inoue of the National Federation of Public Workers<sup>8</sup>, wages have been declining only in Japan among the OECD countries for the past 22 years. The major cause is probably this imbalance of power. For decades, I haven't even heard the word worker strike from the major media. On the other hand, in Europe, strikes are common, as is often reported in the news of foreign stations that are repeated on the satellite broadcast of NHK. This difference will be a big

factor.

### **Domination over media and education**

Let me discuss about the right hypotenuse of the triangle, the effect of power on the media. Broadcasting is directly licensed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and there is no restraint on bureaucratic control because it is not a system like the independent administrative committees in Europe and the United States. At the Diet on February 8, 2016, Minister Takaichi of the Abe administration referred to the "political fairness" of the broadcast content, linked it to the license right of the broadcast, and even used the word "stop the wave". This would have acted as a threat to the media. It's not just about institutional issues. The government's media domination has become much stronger with the Abe administration, and the administration seems to be trying to "develop" it into a new form.

Shinzo Abe's intervention in the media dates back to the NHK program modification case, which came to light in 2005, but the Suga administration has inherited that tradition and is expanding further. The collusive official interview at the Prime Minister's office, which is ridiculed as the "Theatrical Company Press Club," has "evolved" into limits on time and the number of questions.

During the Abe administration, media

executives and the prime minister had a total of 82 dinners in the three years from 2013 to 2015<sup>9</sup>, and the resulting “friendship” between the administration and the major media should have affected the content of the press. For example, NHK did not report the Major rally against new US base in Henoko held in Okinawa on May 17, 2015, which assembled more than 30,000 people, in the news that night. At the Constitutional Rally held in Tokyo on the Constitution Memorial Day two years ago, 65,000 people (announced by the organizer), the largest number of people ever gathered, but NHK virtually ignored this, and the Mainichi Shimbun marginalized it as a filler article about 10 cm square. On the other hand, for entertainer scandals, TV wide shows take a disproportionate amount of time compared to other important news.

As for the viewers of the media, more and more people cannot afford to research or think about politics as people become poorer, and the main source of information may be the talk shows (wide-show in Japanese) that they watch at mealtime, or headline news on smartphones, etc.

It is presumed that the media control by capital is mainly done through the relationship of program sponsors and by the major advertising agency "Dentsu" which should be just an intermediary. The broadcast program council of each station

is expected to have a check function for the entire broadcast program (Article 6 of the Broadcasting Law "A broadcast program council will be set up to ensure the appropriateness of broadcast programs"), but the selection of its member is made by the broadcaster itself. Since there is no system to incorporate the opinions of the general public, the intention of sponsors will be reflected in this, as well as each program itself. In fact, looking at the member list of each council, the majority are business owners in the area.

In addition to this relationship with state power, the Japanese media world lacks specialized training institutions for journalists (there are very few journalism courses at universities), so they do not have specialized knowledge at the time of getting a job, and it has been pointed out that there are few reporters who have a sufficient awareness of journalism even after getting a job<sup>10</sup>.

Needless to say, the above is an overall trend, and I would like to reiterate that many excellent journalists are struggling in many ways even in such a situation.

Education system of Japan also has a long history of bureaucratic rule. The board of education was elected for only eight years after the war, and was abolished in 1956 and from that time the local government appoints the board. In addition, Article 10 of the Fundamental Law of Education of

1947 stated that "education should be carried out with direct responsibility to the entire population without being subject to unfair control." It was amended by the First Abe Cabinet, and the phrase "directly responsibly to the entire population" was deleted. However, the mainstream view is that academic freedom in Article 23 of the Constitution includes freedom of education. Moreover, in a society that claims to be democracy, it is unusual for the people not to have direct access to the Board of Education, which is the central institution of educational administration. How many people can name at least one member of the board of education in their municipality? We only see them in the news when everyone is bowing when a scandal occurred at school. Citizens' movements targeting boards of education are also barely noticeable, except for textbook issues by right-wingers. In other words, the board of education is effectively under administrative and bureaucratic control.

### **Collective self-suggestion that "Japanese are entirely obedient"**

The main purpose of this paper is to state the importance of "non-violent direct action" in social and political movements, but many of the reactions to such claims are "not supported by the general public" and "it doesn't suit the mild character of the Japanese people." And the latter is often cited as the reason for the former. However, I haven't heard much about the

objective examination of how correct the evaluation that "Japanese are entirely obedient " is.

Looking back on the past, it is clear from the history that more than 3,200 peasant uprising cases (ikki) have occurred throughout the Edo period that the Japanese people have never been entirely obedient in the past. The same is true in my home town Kurume. The second volume of "History of Kurume City" (published by Kurume City, 1982) describes in detail the 1754 "Horeki Ikki" (Kurume Domain Great Ikki), which is said to be one of the largest in Japan. According to this book, a rally on the bank of the Chikugo River, which was set up by farmers who opposed the poll tax "Ninbetsu-gin" newly launched by the Daimyo (feudal lord) of the Arima han (domain), was as large as 60,000 people in one document. Hosei Hahakigi's novel "Stars in Heaven, Flowers on Earth", which is based on this ikki and the 1728 Kyoho Ikki, vividly depicts the activities of these farmers.

There is no doubt that today's Japanese are "submissive and docile" compared to their bold ancestors, but by no means are of biological nature, but exclusively of culture. In my opinion that is by "collective self-suggestion."

The cultural apparatus for that purpose (collective suggestion) has been carefully

devised over time. The historical facts of such a riot could have been used as materials for dramas and movies, but such famous works have rarely been seen so far. Akira Kurosawa's "Seven Samurai" can be mentioned in the sense that it depicts the independence of farmers. Instead, the Mito Komon drama is representative of what has been and is still widespread for decades. Also, when it comes to historical dramas on television, almost all of them are from the perspective of those in power, and the people depicted are only supporting characters.

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to sit with a researcher in Japanese history, and I heard that there have been almost no researchers who study ikki (peasant uprising cases) for decades. The fact that the studies in this field have been sluggish for decades is equivalent to the Japanese closing their eyes on the source of knowledge about it, since ikki is probably the greatest expression of the resistance and power of the people in the feudal era. Learning is one of the important sources of culture and would have had a great influence on theater and novels. This would mean that for decades the Japanese had little opportunity to come into contact with works that were inspired by the collective power of the people. Hosei Hahakigi mentioned above was indignant at "writers who do not write for the common people" in a reporter interview when he received the Yoshikawa Eiji Prize

for Literature<sup>11</sup>. And this disruption of the culture and tradition of ikki must have affected the people's movements, the movement sphere and the activists. Instead, it was the Mito Komon drama, which was the "moral pornography"<sup>12</sup> as an ideological device made by Matsushita Electric, which boasted tremendous influence, and even the Communist Party newspaper "Shimbun Akahata" (literally Newspaper Red Flag) has a lantern for this drama repeatedly. This cultural device unknowingly injects the toadyism ideology to people that "the highest power is good, and in the end you should rely on the government."

### **Coping with Arrest**

In democracies such as Western Europe, even if they are arrested for peaceful demonstrations, they are often released overnight. In fact, in my experience, all the arrested Japanese teams, including myself, were released within 24 hours when we blockaded the gates of the British nuclear weapons base<sup>13</sup>. In Japan, on the other hand, police can detain for up to 23 days. This is virtually an imprisonment and can have a significant impact on real life. So the risk of arrest is unacceptable without great preparedness. And in this way, power exerts a threatening effect on the citizens, and the citizens are hindered from the freedom of action that affects society, which deserves to be called a "demonstration." Therefore, unless this situation is changed, the resistance of

citizens and the diversity and power of expression forms cannot be acquired.

That requires a pioneering spirit after all, and the authority will only fear the power of its citizens if they are no longer afraid of arrest. Immediately after the nuclear accident at Fukushima Dai-ichi in 2011, when the demonstration against the nuclear power plant became popular, a philosopher Kojin Karatani said, "By demonstrating, it will change to a society where people demonstrate"<sup>14</sup> in response to the question "Does the demonstration change society?" Following that phrase, it is important to "change to a society where people are not afraid of arrest." In other words, it is necessary to reduce the number of people who misunderstand police officers' orders as "law." If the number of arrested persons is huge in a large-scale demonstration, it will be difficult to secure a detention center for the arrested persons. So to speak, "I'm not scared if everyone is arrested." Persons in power will fear people when they are no longer afraid of arrest. In fact, in the case of the British anti-nuclear movement that I was involved in, arrest was a "catch-and-release" game because there were so many arrests that the judicial system would be paralyzed if they were detained and tried properly. Thanks to that, the detention of the Japanese team ended overnight.

However, in Japan, such a situation

cannot be expected immediately, and if arrested, one must be prepared for long-term detention. This is by no means an acceptable risk for those with a job. However, now that baby boomers, including myself, who have experienced "university struggles" have retired, there is a large group of "free people." Some of these people may be able to accept the risk, such as not having a family member who needs protection like long-term care.

Some may wonder if occupying the road is illegal. That's true, but it becomes clear at festivals that roads aren't just used for traffic. It is usually illegal if you do not follow the normal procedure, but it should be judged in consideration of necessity and legitimacy. In some cases, it is unavoidable as a means of expression for the people.

In the pandemic of the Novel Coronavirus since last year, collective action on the streets carries the risk of infection, but at the same time the restrictions on "freedom of expression" must be minimal. In order to achieve both of these, a social-distanced demonstration, that is, a form of spreading and marching all over the main street, is indispensable. Rather, it should be an opportunity to regain the "original" style of demo.

Arrests in nonviolent social movements are often due to disagreements between acting citizens and police officers over the interpretation of laws and constitutions. A

police officer must make a judgment based on appearances, and the police officer's order must not be mistaken for the law itself. Ultimately, the judiciary will decide, so it is important that the citizens who act do not run away if the police blame them. Even if it is non-violent, direct action is a double-edged sword that can be abused as a challenge to democracy.

### **To make a difference**

How can we unlock the control structure by the "triangle" mentioned above? Of course, in the end, elections must create a parliament that truly represents the interests of the people. The question is, can the oppressed and ignored people win the election just by focusing on it? In my opinion, simply campaigning during elections is unlikely to win. The ruling political parties, such as the Liberal Democratic Party, use the overwhelming advertising power shown by the thick dashed line in the above diagram to carry out propaganda explicitly and implicitly in the daily life. Rather than as outright political messages in words, these propagandas are delivered to the public in a form that permeates the entire culture, including casual utterances in dramas and TV talk shows. Dentsu and others will play a major role in this. It would be difficult and virtually impossible for the opposition to confront this same way.

The form of action of the people that can counter this is "direct action" regardless of

times and places. The premise for the price of labor, that is, wages, to approach a fair amount is the balance of power between labor and management, and the effective means for that is the direct action in union activities, that is, strikes. Demos and gatherings are the ones that strongly express group intentions in general civic movements, but the current Japanese media does not publish even large-scale gatherings in the news, or even if they deal with it, it is at best a filler article, implicitly classifying into trivial things. In order to, so to speak, force this into the media, nonviolent direct action such as occupying the main street is essential.

As mentioned earlier, the media has virtually ignored the 60,000-person rally to support the Constitution in Tokyo in May 2019. If this was done by occupying the Sukiwabashi intersection of Yurakucho instead of the usually deserted Tokyo Rinkai Disaster Prevention Park, it should have been noticeable, and it would affect traffic, so the media couldn't ignore it.

The benefits of such direct action are not just media exposure. Participants' own "empowerment" is also a big factor. Occupying the boulevard gives people a festive sense of openness. It is unlikely that such an event will soon lead to a satisfaction of demands, even partially, but at least it gives a sense of fulfillment that it has had an impact on the real world. According to Michael Randle<sup>15</sup>, who

theorized the role of direct action in democracy, "even where it does not, or succeeds only partially (in achieving its objective), the cohesion generated within the group taking collective action can enhance individual and group self-confidence and self-respect, and open up new possibilities for democratic participation at the grass roots." An easy-to-understand story is a sense of accomplishment that 1000 people marched to occupy the main street and the traffic stopped for an hour. The Japanese civil movement, which emphasizes good manners too much, will hate such behavior. But one should be aware that it narrows the range of expression at the same time. It may be seen as rude to the general public, but at the same time it should convey the strength of the group's determination. The "message" to be conveyed to people is not just something that can be replaced with letters, but the determination and preparedness of the participants are also important, and the message will be stronger if it is an action prepared for arrest.

Until now, most leftists and liberals, including activists, seemed to think that such "radical" behavior would meet the rejection of the public, but in reality it is not. In the movement against the restart of the nuclear power plant, the citizens continued to block the straight road leading to the Oi nuclear power plant for

more than a day and night on June 30, 2012, and Deputy Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Makino had to make a detour to the nuclear power plant to witness the restart. At the time of the Security Law consideration in the Diet in 2015, not only the road was occupied before the Diet, but also the road in front of the hotel in Yokohama where the Diet hearing had been held was blocked by the citizens to prevent the participating members from returning to the Diet. It should also be noted that in these cases, media coverages including newspapers were favorable<sup>16</sup>. For many years in Okinawa, the construction of US bases has been delayed by the sit-in of citizens in the form of blocking passageways to the construction site. In short, we should change the people's "market view" of the social movement just by "doing it". People are vulnerable to established facts — no matter it's good or bad.

In conclusion, it is important for the social movements sphere to move into the NVDA realm at the risk of arrest in large-scale demonstrations and change the public's "market view" of demonstrations. This will make the demonstrations to truly gain political power, stop tyranny, and eventually lead to social change. On the contrary, if the current situation is left unchecked, considering the recent precarious situation, it may end up in a war.

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- <sup>1</sup> The Science Council of Japan is a representative organization of the Japanese scientist community that makes policy recommendations independent from the government.
- <sup>2</sup> A huge fraud case of bankrupt Japan Life, which is said to have collected about 210 billion yen from a total of about 10,000 people nationwide. Connection of arrested former chairman with Mr. Shinzo Abe is suspected since the invitation letter of the "cherry blossom viewing party" sponsored by the then Prime Minister Abe was used to solicit customers.
- <sup>3</sup> PCR is for Polymerase Chain Reaction and used as the most accurate and reliable test for diagnosing COVID-19 infection.
- <sup>4</sup> A series of issues surrounding the cherry blossom viewing party hosted by the Prime Minister of Japan. It surfaced in May 2019 of the second Abe administration. Conflicts with the Public Offices Election Act, the Political Funds Control Act, and the Public Offices Election Act have been pointed out.
- <sup>5</sup> Asahi Shimbun, article dated April 21, 2020. See "Freedom of the press, 66th in Japan,'Attack on SNS to criticize the administration".
- <sup>6</sup> Joseph Stiglitz, "Structured Economy," Nikkei Science, May 2019 issue.
- <sup>7</sup> Click here for the full text: <https://monthlyreview.org/2009/05/01/why-socialism>  
The full text of the Japanese translation is posted. <http://ad9.org/pegasus/historical/whysocialism.html>
- <sup>8</sup> Shin Inoue's tweet on June 25, 2020  
<https://twitter.com/inoueshin0/status/1276007885617520642>
- <sup>9</sup> Weekly Post June 19, 2015 Issue
- <sup>10</sup> Kaori Hayashi et al., "Work Life Imbalance of TV Press: Interview Survey of 30 Men and Women in 13 Stations or Theirs," Otsuki Shoten, 2013.
- <sup>11</sup> Yukan Fuji zakzak, dated May 14, 2018.
- <sup>12</sup> Koichi Toyoshima, "Escape from 'Liberal in the Brain'", Social Review (Ogawamachi Planning) No. 139, p. 13, October 2004.
- <sup>13</sup> Koichi Toyoshima "How 12 Japanese Citizens Blocked the British Nuclear Base", Sekai (Iwanami Shoten), January 2008
- <sup>14</sup> Kojin Karatani "Society where people demonstrate", Sekai (Iwanami Shoten) September 2012 issue
- <sup>15</sup> Michael Randall "Civil Resistance" Fontana Press, 1994
- <sup>16</sup> The road blockade in front of the Yokohama hearing was reported favorably by West Japan and other newspapers on September 17, 2015. The Japan Times has a photo on the top of the front page.