

**Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō: Undercurrents
in Japanese Art and Politics from 1960 to 1975**

SHIMADA, Yoshiko

**The thesis is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the University
for a PhD award**

March 2015

Kingston University

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Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Fran Lloyd. It was she who encouraged me to write a thesis based on the research I was doing as a part of the Art of Intervention project that Fran had started along with Rebecca Jennison of Kyoto Seika University and myself in 2009. Without her guidance and advice, I could not have completed this thesis.

This work would never have been possible without the generosity of many people, especially those who were involved in the early years of Bigakkō. I am grateful for having had opportunities to meet and speak with two of the founders, Ishii Kyoji and Imaizumi Yoshihiko before their deaths. Mrs. Imaizumi was very generous in letting me look at, and later exhibit Imaizumi's personal paper, books, and diary. As there were not many documents available otherwise, these were essential to my research. Kawani Toshie was very helpful in recounting her time with Kawani Hiroshi in the late 1960s to the early 1970s.

The artists who taught at Bigakkō – Nakamura Hiroshi, Nakanishi Natsuyuki, Kikuhata Mokuma were extremely generous and patient in giving interviews. Nakamura kindly introduced me to many of his early students. Matsuzawa Kumiko generously allowed me to go through Matsuzawa's paper and vast collection of materials from the 1960s. One of my fondest memories of my research is of digging through the piles of materials in Matsuzawa family's *kura* (storage house).

I must thank all of the ex-students of Bigakkō who gave in-depth accounts of their Bigakkō experiences. Kosaka Mayu, Shirasawa Kiri and Itami Hiroshi of Matsuzawa's 'the Final Art Thoughts'; Koga Katsuo, Ishii Mayumi and Fukuda Mizue of Tateishi's miniature drawing class; Kainozawa Akira, Morikawa Sosuke, and Sakakibara Shigeko of Nakamura's painting class; Ando Yu, Katano Kazunori and Tezuka Masato of Nakanishi's 'portrait drawing' class; Minami Shinbo of Akasegawa's class; Mori Hideki of Okabe's silk screen class, and Fujikawa Kozo of Kobatake's wood carving class, for not only giving me their time, but also lending me some of their student work produced at Bigakkō. Fujikawa, the current director of Bigakkō, was very generous in giving me some contact addresses and phone numbers of many artists who taught at Bigakkō.

I would also like to thank Yoshida Yoshie and Matsuda Masao for granting me interviews. I am also grateful to Adachi Masao and Ota Masakuni for helping me get in touch with Matsuda.

I am grateful to Watanabe Kazuko of Gendaishicho-shinsha and Suyama Ikuro for giving me their accounts of Gendaishicho-sha.

KuroDalaiJee was enthusiastic and supportive of my research from the beginning and we discussed Bigakkō through emails. William Marotti of UCLA was another scholar with whom I could discuss about Bigakkō. Both gave me valuable advices on this research.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Dr. Bob Gibson, my husband, who has been supportive of this research through out, and who has helped by reading and commenting on this thesis.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the explicit interconnection of radical art and politics in Japan in the 1960s and early 1970s through an in-depth study of the alternative art school Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō (1969-75). Founded in 1969 in Tokyo in the aftermath of the student movement by the radical publishing company Gendaishicho-sha, Bigakkō was the brainchild of the director Ishii Kyoji, the editor Kawani Hiroshi, and art critic Imaizumi Yoshihiko.

Although some of the most important Japanese artists of the 1960s such as Nakanishi Natsuyuki and Akasegawa Genpei (of Hi Red Center), the painters Nakamura Hiroshi and Kikuhata Mokuma (of Kyushu-ha), and Matsuzawa Yutaka – who is regarded as a forerunner of Japanese Conceptualism – were among the teachers there, this is the first detailed study of Bigakkō. Based upon extensive primary research, including interviews with the founders, administrators, teachers and students, and the recovery of significant original material from several personal archives, I establish and assess both the school's significance in the history of Japanese art and the part it played in the country's socio-political history, which have hitherto been largely ignored.

As part of the re-construction of Bigakkō's history and teaching methods, the PhD includes practice based components: a visual chronology of Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō as a supplement to the thesis; the documentation of my-re-enactments of Nakanishi Natsuyuki's drawing class exercises at Kyoto Art Center in 2010, at Bigakkō in 2011, and in London in 2012, and documentation of two exhibitions I curated and installed: the Bigakkō section of the 'Anti-Academy' exhibition (realized between November 2013 and January 2014 at the John Hansard Gallery in Southampton, UK) and 'World Uprising' (April 2014 at Bunpodo Gallery, Tokyo), an exhibition of mail art originally conceived and realized by Matsuzawa Yutaka and his Final Art Thoughts workshop at Bigakkō in 1971 – 1973. This includes the documentation of Matsuzawa's 'Psy Room' at Suwa, Nagano.

Through this body of PhD research, I argue that the various experiments conducted by the artists/teachers at Bigakkō – with their emphasis on the revival of handwork and communal, physical experience – had the potential to bring about the

new artistic language for communication and changes. Although the Bigakkō experiment was prematurely terminated in 1975, I propose that the fundamental questions it raised are still relevant today, and their notion of embracing contradictions presents an important agency in confronting the stagnation that Japanese society faces today.

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3. CD Rom: Commentary and documentation of the following:
 - (i) 'Anti-Academy' exhibition, November 2012-January 2014, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, UK
 - (ii) Artist's Re-enactments of two drawing exercises from Nakanishi's 1972 Bigakkō drawing class instructions: 'Portrait Exercise', London 2012; 'Re-learning the Senses': Kyoto Art Center, 2010; Bigakkō, Tokyo, 2011
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Introduction

Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō (Fig. 1) was an alternative art school in Tokyo established in 1969 by Gendai Shicho-sha, a radical publishing company founded in 1957 by Ishii Kyoji (1928-2011). Its programme comprised of lectures in the morning and various workshops in the afternoon, all given or led by cutting-edge artists and thinkers from a wide spectrum – from traditional wood engraving to conceptual art, and from alchemy to anarchism. Although a school named Bigakkō still exists today, since Gendaishicho-sha pulled out of its operation in 1975 (due to financial difficulties) it has become something entirely different from the original Bigakkō that Ishii envisioned. This thesis focuses solely on the pre-1975 Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō and its wider significance within Japanese art and politics.

The time of Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō, between 1969 and 1975, marked the shift from what the Japanese sociologist Mita Munesuke calls “the era of dreams” to “the era of fictions”. Mita divides post-war Japan into three distinctive eras: “the era of ideals” (1945 to 1960); that of “dreams” (1961 to the early 1970s); and that of “fictions” (mid-1970s to the present).¹ While Mita’s scheme is inevitably a simplification of the historical reality, his metaphorical labels are helpful shorthand that convey the shifts in Japanese society following WWII.

The early post-war years in Japan were a time of newly popular ideals of democracy and socialism,² and many people strived to realize these ideals in order to achieve a better life. However, with the failure of the anti-Anpo movement to reject the renewal of the security treaty between the United States and Japan (*Nichibei Anzen Hosho Joyaku: The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security*), when the voices of millions of people could not alter ‘real politics’, it became clear that these ideals would not necessarily change the social reality. Yet people, especially the young, still had ‘dreams’ in the 1960s post-Anpo era of changing society. Their dreams no longer involved realizing the ‘ideals’ of democracy and socialism, but rather liberating themselves from the existing authority, including these ‘ideals’ themselves. They did not have concrete visions of an alternative system, and their

¹ Mita, Munesuke *Shakaigaku Nyumon* (Introduction to Sociology), (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten 2006) pp. 70-72.

² Although by no means unknown before the war, these ideas were only widely put into practice immediately after the War. See Marotti *Money, Trains, and Guillotines* Chapter 2 ‘Occupation’.

rebellion itself vanished after the police crack down that followed. This post-1968 period is often labeled the *Shirake* (apathetic) generation. People were increasingly disengaged from politics and conformed to the existing social reality. This reality itself, Mita argues, started to appear increasingly ‘fictional’ –with the advance of media technology, everyday life became saturated with artificial visual images that catered for consumer desires. Urban centres like Tokyo assumed the appearance of “clean, cool, and cute” by excluding anything that looked or smelled raw.³

These eras correspond to the economic development of Japan. The ‘ideal’ era was a time of widespread poverty as Japan attempted to recover from the ravages of war, but also a time of hope for a better material life. The ‘era of dreams’ corresponds to the extremely rapid high growth period which brought material wealth as well as conflicts and contradictions. After the ‘oil shock’ of 1973, economic growth was slower, and the economic structure shifted from the industrial sector to the service sector. Economic activities became increasingly insubstantial and speculative and, in Mita’s terms, ‘fictional’, as Japan’s economy moved away from its earlier reliance on the mass-production of consumer durables, and this shift culminated in the speculation-driven ‘bubble economy’ of the mid-1980s.

Although Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō only came into existence in 1969, toward the end of the ‘era of dreams’, its formation was, as I will argue, rooted in this era. The founders and teachers of Bigakkō, born between the late 1920s (Ishii b. 1928) and mid 1930s (Akasegawa b. 1937), began their careers in the late 1950s, and were most active in the 1960s. Ishii, who had been active in the Japan Communist Party (JCP) in the 1950s, started the Gendaishicho-sha publishing company in 1957 in protest against the rigid Stalinism of the JCP. Throughout the 1960s, Gendaishicho-sha became a hotbed of New Left ideologues, anarchists, artists and scholars of an underground culture. Kawani Hiroshi (1933-2003), and his friend art critic Imaizumi Yoshihiko (1931-2010) were among those who gathered around Gendaishicho-sha. They also published an art magazine titled *Keisho* (Form and Image) in which they advocated that artists leave the confinement of museums and galleries and actively intervene in everyday life. Their artist friends, Nakamura Hiroshi (1932-), Nakanishi Natsuyuki (1935-), Akasegawa Genpei (1937-) and others also contributed to *Keisho*.

³Mita, Munesuke. *Shakaigaku Nyumon* (Introduction to Sociology), (Tokyo:Iwanamishoten 2006) p.92.

The artists/teachers of Bigakkō on whom I focus in this study are these three artists, and Matsuzawa Yutaka (1922-2006) and Kikuhata Mokuma (1935-). They all emerged as ‘Young Turks’ in the Yomiuri Indépendants exhibitions, where their radically new works were labeled as ‘Anti-Art’.⁴ They are now all well-established figures in the Japanese art world, but during the 1960s they were mavericks who did not fit into the confinement of ‘fine art’.

I have chosen to concentrate in this thesis on the five visual artists – Nakamura, Nakanishi, Akasegawa, Kikuhata, and Matsuzawa – because of their central engagement with radical art and politics. As key members of Bigakkō, they shared the experience of significant elements of post-war Japanese avant-garde visual art, including reportage painting, the Yomiuri Indépendants, and the Anti-Art movement. These experiences set them apart from other artists who taught at Bigakkō between 1969 and 1974 such as Kobatake Hiroshi (wood carving), Tateishi Tetsuomi (miniature drawing), Okabe Tokuzo (silkscreen printing), Kimura Tsunehisa (design), Kasai Akira (butoh dance) and Kano Mitsuo (etching). These classes geared towards acquiring the respective skills in a single year, were less experimental and the curricula more straightforward. Each of these other artists had his own interesting history, especially Kasai Akira, however these lie outside the scope of this research.⁵

Prior to the formation of Bigakkō, Nakanishi and Akasegawa, along with artist Takamatsu Jiro, formed the Hi Red Center⁶ with the help of Kawani and Imaizumi, and performed various events in the streets of Tokyo in 1964. Nakamura was active in an anti-Anpo group and another anti-parliamentary-system group along with Ishii, Kawani and other Gendaishicho-sha-related intellectuals. Kikuhata, who stubbornly rejected the Tokyo art scene and questioned the value of the art made there, remained in the southernmost island of Kyushu, and immersed himself in the study of paintings by an old coalminer. Matsuzawa Yutaka was the forerunner of Japanese Conceptualism, and from 1964, ceased to make any concrete art object and

⁴ For Yomiuri Indépendants (1949-63) and Anti-Art, See Chapter 1, Anti-Art and Direct Actions.

⁵ For Kasai, See “Artist interview: A look into the choreographic work of Kasai Akira, fifty years after entering the world of Butoh” the Japan Foundation Performing Arts Network Japan, 28 February 2013. (last accessed 30 September 2014).

⁶ See Chapter 1, Ideological Perverts.

called for preparation for the predicted ‘eradication of human beings’. These individuals’ practices differ greatly, but they have in common the refusal to conform to any pre-existing concept of what art should be.

Equally important to the formation of Bigakkō was their rejection of cultural boundaries. Ishii, Kawani, Imaizumi and some of the artists created and participated in various ‘events’ during the 1960s that blurred the lines between art, everyday life, and political activism. Bigakkō also defied easy definition: it was an art school (though it was never a certified school), but it was also imagined as a ‘movement’ at a time of change. Nakamura Hiroshi, one of the artists who taught at Bigakkō, reflected:

Ishii Kyoji was a very keen observer of the time. At the time everything seemed to be sliding down to the bottomless void, we (at Bigakkō) dared to dig our heels in, to stop and think inwardly.⁷

As Ishii saw that direct political action or publication of revolutionary ideology did not lead to fundamental change, he found certain possibilities in art and education. According to Nakamura, Ishii remarked that what he was trying to do was to “change the world by changing the way the world is perceived” through art.⁸

It is within this intimately connected mesh of art and politics in 1960s Japan that this pioneering study of Bigakkō is located. To date no publication exists on Bigakkō apart from a few anecdotal essays by former teachers and students.⁹ Serious historical and sociological study of Japan in the 1960s and 1970s has started only recently. For example, the books of one of the important ideologists of the New Left Tanigawa Gan (1923-1995) have been largely out of print until the publication of a new anthology in 2009 (*Tanigawa Gan Selection*, ed. Iwasaki Minoru, Nihonkeizai hyoronsha) and though many memoirs of the period have been published recently,

⁷ Nakamura Hiroshi, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 24 June 2010.

⁸ Nakamura Hiroshi, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 26 April 2014.

⁹ Akasegawa’s Bigakkō class was mentioned in many of his books (*Sakura Gaho Taizen*, *Zenmenjikyo*, and *Pistol to Mayonnaise*, to name a few) and by his pupils Matsuda Tetsuo (*Henshukyo Jidai*) and Minami Shinbo (*Bigakkō no sanju-nen*). Kikuhata wrote about his 1970-‘71 Yamamoto Sakubei mural project class in his memoir *Hangeijutsu-Kitan*. Imaizumi wrote short articles on Bigakkō in *Alice* and *Toshoshinbun*. But Ishii, Kawani, Nakamura and Nakanishi have said little about Bigakkō in public.

there is still no definitive book on the closely interconnected history of the student movement of 1968.¹⁰

Equally, to date, no comprehensive history of Japanese art of the post-war period exists in Japanese. There were earlier pioneering exhibitions such as 'Reconstructions: Avant-Garde in Japan 1945-65' (Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 1985) and 'Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky' (Guggenheim Museum SOHO, 1994), which were both well-researched surveys of post-war Japanese art. However, because of the time-spans they focused on, the former could not cover post-1968 art, and the latter (which covered nearly half a century) was inevitably forced to emphasize breadth over depth. In the last two years an increased interest in Japanese art in the 1960s has resulted in a number of significant exhibitions such as 'Tokyo 1955-1970: A New Avant-Garde (November 2012-February 2013) at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and 'Gutai: Splendid Playground' (February – March 2013) at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, and 'Requiem for the Sun-Art of Mono-ha' at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles (February – March 2012). Their emphasize however has been to focus on certain art groups and movements such as Gutai and Mono-ha that could be comparable to their equivalents, L'informel and Minimalism, in the West. The latter two especially focused on large scale paintings, sculpture and installations (remakes) and less on ephemeral art such as performance and conceptualism. In Japan, survey exhibitions of the art in the 1960s had been rare until recently. Even such an important group as the Hi Red Center has only had its first retrospective exhibition 'Hi-Red Center: Chokusetsu Kodo no Kiseki (History of Direct Action)' this year, in 2014, at the Nagoya City Art Museum and Shoto Museum, Tokyo. As in the West, the 1960s in Japan was the decade of revolutionary movements and counter-culture, but after the heated struggle was over, the highly politicized underground culture was forgotten or – at times shamefacedly- hidden away.

The reason for this reluctance to study recent history in Japan are manifold, but may be due in large part to Japanese academia's 'allergy' to anything related to the radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s, and the Japanese art world's reluctance to

¹⁰ 1968: vols. 1 & 2 by Oguma Eiji (Tokyo: Shinyōsha 2009) aims to be comprehensive but fails to examine the cultural aspects of the late 1960s. On the positive note, his book triggered publication of several first hand accounts of the time. See for example, *Kato Tokiko 1968 o kataru* (1968 recounted by Kato, Tokiko) by Kato (Tokyo: Jokyo shinsho 2010).

acknowledge ‘political’ art and ephemeral art. Countering this tendency, KuroDalaiJee’s *Nikutai no Anarchismu* (Anarchy of the Body, 2010) is a ground breaking book that surveyed and analyzed hitherto unrecorded performance art in the 1960s and 1970s in Japan. It contains over 130 pages of minutely recorded chronology, which has been indispensable to my research, providing a wide ranging mapping of key events. As these events happened not in the usual art venues of galleries and museums but in streets and remote areas with only a few witnesses and little publicity, they were largely unrecorded and consequently have been regarded as unimportant to Japanese art history. Moreover, KuroDalaiJee’s publication places these performance events in their historical context as an undercurrent of counter-culture in 1960s Japan. The book mentions Bigakkō in relation to “direct actions” conducted by artists and activists in the 1960s. Though brief, this is the first time Bigakkō was discussed in a major art history publication.

More recently, William Marotti’s *Money, Trains, and Guillotines* published in 2013, covers some of the same artists as this study. However, the focus of his book is radical art and politics in the period between 1960 and 1965, namely Anti-Art and Anti-Anpo, and events conducted by Hi Red Center and Akasegawa Genpei. Unlike some of the previously mentioned exhibition catalogues which were general surveys of post-war art in Japan, Marotti’s book has in depth analysis of not only art but its relationship to the political history of Japan, an approach that my research has also sought to demonstrate. Although my research partly covers the same period as Marotti’s, my focus is on 1968 as an important turning point of the Japanese political and cultural history and Bigakkō as an important alternative institution of post-1968.

In addition to my primary sources (discussed below), some recent works on the New Left movement in Japan by Patricia Steinhoff of the University of Hawaii such as ‘Memories of New Left Protest’, *Journal of the German Institute for Japanese Studies* (August 2013) have been invaluable to this study, along with University of Hawaii’s *Takazawa Bunko* archive on the Japanese New Left. I heard from an ex-member of the Japan Red Army that Takazawa (a prominent journalist of New Left movement) could not find a home for his extensive collection of pamphlets, photographs, periodicals and tapes in Japan. Now they are available on line. (<http://www.takazawa.hawaii.edu>)

Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō is a forgotten chapter in Japanese art and politics and the chief aim of this thesis is to uncover this history and their teaching practices and to evaluate their relevance today. With few published sources, this research is based mainly on primary sources such as interviews, letters and other private papers, and articles and books published at that time in Japan. The current Bigakkō, which became independent from Gendaishicho-sha in 1975, and went through a major structural change in 2000 had already discarded all of its archival materials when I began this research in 2010. This presented the major challenge of locating Bigakkō material, the majority of which was ephemera and, if it still existed, was most likely to reside in personal archives, suitcases and forgotten boxes.

In order to first establish a history of Bigakkō I made contact with the founders, administrators, teachers and former students and conducted a series of extensive interviews from 2010. Prior to this research, I had attempted to look into the history of Bigakkō. In 1985, I was a student in the etching class of Yoshida Katsuro's (an ex-Mono ha artist: 1943 -1999) at Bigakkō. Although little survived of the original Bigakkō even then (Akasegawa's last year there was 1985) there remained a certain odour of the radical art school of the 1970s. I wanted to explore what it had been, and consulted Imaizumi (then the director) about the possibility of interviewing the original teachers. Imaizumi dismissed my request saying "There are many complicated issues you don't understand and, besides, I am certain that nobody will talk to you about the old Bigakkō."

Then in 2010, when I gingerly asked the original teachers for interviews, they were surprisingly willing to speak about Bigakkō. I imagine that time had made them comfortable enough to speak about their experiences and that they also wanted to preserve some record of what the original Bigakkō had been about. Nakamura repeatedly stressed to me the importance of recording the founding principles of Bigakkō as he believed them to be relevant issues sadly missing in the art education of today. Inevitably there were some contradictions between accounts, but I think these were due to partial memory loss rather than intentional fictionalization. The Bigakkō artists and founders genuinely tried to give objective accounts of what happened and I double checked details by going through pamphlets, articles, personal letters and the third party accounts where available.

Through these interviews, I recovered important and unexpected original materials from personal archives that provided insights into the diverse approaches and teaching methods at Bigakkō. It also became clear through my investigation that what Bigakkō had attempted to achieve was not just to provide an alternative art education, but to continue challenging the socio-economic system, which was increasingly constraining individual autonomy via conventional education. When the revolution of 1968 came to be perceived as a failure, Bigakkō dared to go against the stream of 'harmony and progress' (a main theme of the Osaka Expo in 1970) of Japan's post-1968 capitalist society.

These research discoveries have shaped the form of this PhD which, as part of the construction of Bigakkō's history and teaching methods, also includes three practice-based components. From the beginning of the PhD as an artist and activist I wanted to include practices which responded to the history of Bigakkō in order to materialise these histories through visual images and curation. Presented alongside the written thesis, each of the practice-based components focuses on and is an outcome of different aspects of my research. The first is a text and image chronology of Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō that shows the complex interplay of art and politics during the period. This is intended to work as a supplementary visual navigation to the thesis with portraits of the participants, organizations, background, and their interweaving relationships connected through the graphic device of with red strings. Secondly, in order to research and understand how the exercises of Nakanishi's Bigakkō art class might change perceptions of the self and others, I re-enacted some of his class exercises. The documentation of these public re-enactments at Kyoto Art Center in 2010, at Bigakkō in 2011, and in London in 2012 are part of this Ph.D. Thirdly, I include the documentation of two exhibitions I curated and installed as part of this research. The 'Anti-Academy' exhibition catalogue and DVD of documentation photographs was realized between November 2012 and January 2014 at the John Hansard Gallery in Southampton, UK as part of an exhibition of three alternative art schools in the 1960s in Copenhagen (Ex-Skole), Iowa (Intermedia) and Tokyo (Bigakkō). I was responsible for the Bigakkō section for which I created a chronology wall and reconstructed some of the class exercises. The exhibition was an attempt to find contemporaneity in the experimentations on art education in three (totally unrelated) institutions. The second exhibition, 'World Uprising' was held in

April 2014 at the Bunpodo Gallery in Tokyo: an exhibition of mail art originally conceived and realized by Matsuzawa Yutaka and his 'Final Art Thoughts' workshop at Bigakkō and Bigakkō Suwa from 1971 to 1973. In the process of research, former students of Matsuzawa's and I discovered an archive of the mail art works from international artists in Matsuzawa's Suwa home. Continuing Matsuzawa's method, the exhibition also included new mail art works sent for the 'World Uprising 2014', the significance of which is discussed in Chapter 4.

In addition, in the course of my research, I realized that it was an urgent task to archive these materials as the founders Imaizumi and Ishii passed away during the research and others were at an advanced age. I therefore compiled materials left by Imaizumi with the permission of his widow and the archive will be deposited in the collection of Tokyo Bunkzai Kenkyujo (National Research Institute of Cultural Properties, Tokyo).

Together, the two parts of the thesis – the written component and the practice based work – seek to activate the history of Bigakkō and to make its legacy visible. The written component of this thesis consists of four chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter 1 surveys the pre-history of Bigakkō from 1960 to 1967, and how the individuals who later founded Bigakkō were involved in the political and artistic direct actions that marked a clear departure from the then existing artistic 'avant-garde' in Japan. Special attention is paid to *Jiritsu Gakkō* (1962-63) as a predecessor of Bigakkō in its key principles, as well as the artist group Hi Red Center and Akasegawa Genpei's 1,000 yen banknote case that demonstrates the blurring boundaries of art and the everyday, and the interrelation of artistic and political actions that became central to Bigakkō.

Chapter 2 focuses on the year 1968 – immediately before the founding of Bigakkō. The 1968 student movement was remarkable for the emergence of *Zenkyoto* (the All Campus Joint Struggle League), an autonomous organization that was very different from previous student organizations in Japan. Questions the students raised against the educational institutions (*Daigaku Kaitai* – deconstruction of Universities) and against themselves (*Jiko Hitei* – Self Denial) remained unanswered after the movement was suppressed. Here, I argue that Bigakkō was an

attempt to respond to those questions in the post-1968 situation. Further in Japanese art history 1968 is marked out as the year Mono-ha emerged. Mono-ha was notably different from 'Anti-Art' of the previous decade discussed in chapter 1, in its disengagement from everyday reality. Many of the Mono-ha artists taught at B-zemi, another alternative art school contemporary with Bigakkō. By comparing these two schools, I clarify the 'positionality' of Bigakkō.

In Chapter 3, I explore the construct of Bigakkō in depth – its aims and ideals, programme and structure; the artists involved and the content of their workshops; the students' reactions and their relationships with their teachers. The workshops discussed here are Nakamura Hiroshi's *Painting Atelier* (1969), Nakanishi Natsuyuki's *Drawing Atelier* (1969), and the *Bijutsu Enshu* (Art Exercise: 1970-71) a series of rotating workshops by the artists; Akasegawa Genpei (Picture and Letters), Kikuhata Mokuma (Yamamoto Sakubei coalmining mural), and Matsuzawa Yutaka (The Final Art Thoughts). Based largely on archival material and interviews that reflect varying viewpoints, I argue that despite the seemingly irreconcilable contradictions and diversity of these workshops, there was in fact a common ideal at play.

Chapter 4 examines the social, economical, and cultural shift in the early 1970s and how the Bigakkō experiment changed and, in a real sense, ended in 1975. Osaka Expo '70 is discussed as a significant epoch defining event. I focus in particular on Bigakkō Suwa and Matsuzawa Yutaka's ideal of the 'commune', which resonated with Ishii's ideas of the Gendaishicho-sha publishing company as a commune and of 'franchising' Bigakkō in peripheral locations in Japan.

In the conclusion, I discuss two ideals of Bigakkō in depth. One is the notion of *Tewaza* and acquisition of new perception through physical experiments, and the other is the idea of a school (or commune) as a collective of autonomous individuals with mutual respect and comradeship. Through this analysis, I discuss the inherent contradictions within these principles and within Bigakkō itself. By embracing these contradictions, and refusing rationalization, I argue, Bigakkō not only became markedly distinctive from other educational institutions of the time but also present a potential strategy to confront the stagnation of contemporary Japan. As a practicing

artist, I discuss how this notion of contradiction can positively affect the future of socially engaged art in Japan.

The PhD is therefore concerned as much with the socio-political history as with the art history of Japanese art in the 1960s and early 1970s, particularly that of hitherto unrecognized underground political and cultural movements and their interrelations. This is an important contribution both for Japanese scholars and non-Japanese scholars. As such the PhD is a contribution to knowledge in Japanese studies, art history, cultural and political studies and to critical art practice. Through this research, I argue that the various experiments conducted by the artists/teachers at Bigakkō and its seemingly contradictory complexity and richness had the potential to re-define art and its role in society. Although the Bigakkō experiment was prematurely terminated in 1975, I propose that the fundamental questions it raised and their approaches to art and life are still relevant in confronting the stagnation that Japanese society faces today.

Throughout the thesis Japanese names are given in the conventional Japanese order of family name followed by given name. All translations are mine unless otherwise credited.

CHAPTER 1: The Pre-History of Gendaishichosha-Bigakkō (1957 - 1968)

1.1 Introduction

Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō was established in 1969. However, in order to understand its significance it is necessary to go back to the establishment of Gendaishicho-sha itself in 1957. Towards the beginning of this research, Imaizumi Yoshihiko –one of the founders of Bigakkō – stated in interview that Bigakkō was a product of the era from the late 1950s and 1960s, and in order to understand it, one needed to have experienced it or to have in-depth knowledge of the period– especially of the underground artistic and political movements and their inter-relationship.

This undercurrent does not appear in official histories of the 1950s and 1960s and even when radical art is mentioned, it is regarded as rootless mimicry of Western trends. Writing on this period in 2000, for example, the art critic Ogura Toshimaru noted:

[Compared to CoBrA and its relation to the Situationist movement], in this period in Japan the anti-authoritarian, anti-academism, experimental spirit, and non-professionalism advocated by Okamoto Taro through his works and books overlap with CoBrA on the surface of his artistic practice, but unfortunately, [his approach] did not acquire a theoretical backbone. This poverty of theory may have resulted in a superficial apoliticality and radicalism in the Japanese art in the past 50 years¹¹

In this chapter, I argue that a theoretical underpinning did exist in the late 1950s and 1960s in Japan, and that the publishing and other activities centered around Gendaishicho-sha played a significant role in connecting the New Left student movement and the Anti-Art movement.

1.2 Gendaishicho-sha and the 'Sade case'

De Sade in my right hand, Dogen¹² in my left hand, and Marx in my brain
– Ishii Kyoji (*Hana niwa Kaori, Hon niwa doku o*, Gendaishicho shinsha, 2002)

¹¹ Ogura, Toshimaru. "Realism in War and Peace", *Series Memories of the 20th Century 1946-56 Reisen-Daisanji Sekaitaisen* (Cold war-the 3rd World War). Ed. Ishii Kazuo, (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbun-sha, 2000).

¹² Dōgen (1200-1253) was a Zen Buddhist monk who founded the Soto school of zen. He is perhaps most famous for his 'Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma', a collection of 95 texts on Buddhist practice and enlightenment. Ishii, after his retirement from publishing, devoted his time to translating this volume into contemporary Japanese.

The publishing company Gendaishicho-sha (A Current of Contemporary Thought Co.) was established in 1957 by Ishi Kyoji. Ishii was born in 1928 in central Tokyo and spent his youth among the post-war confusion as (in his own phrase) a ‘dealer in the black market’. He then joined the Japan Communist Party (JCP) and became a prominent member in the early 1950s. However, increasingly frustrated with the party’s rigid bureaucracy, he openly criticized the party and was stripped of his membership in 1953.¹³ He decided to fight back by publishing books critical of the vanguard party concept. His old friend Morimoto Kazuo (1927-2012), a French philosophy scholar, told him of Henri Lefebvre and other French philosophers who were critical of Stalinism and the French Communist Party. Ishii found the similar situations in France and Japan very interesting and was drawn to the works of Lefebvre, George Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, André Breton, Roland Barthes and other French thinkers, translated by Morimoto. In 1956 Ishii read an abridged translation of the Marquis de Sade’s *l’Histoire de Juliette, ou les Prosperités du Vice* (hereafter, *Juliette*) by a young Japanese scholar of French literature Shibusawa Tatsuhiko(1928-1987), and found in de Sade the ultimate utopian anarchist. He immediately asked Shibusawa to translate the whole book. In 1958, he launched Gendaishicho-sha with the publication of *Problemes actuels du marxisme* by Henri Lefebvre, translated by Morimoto, and de Sade’s *Eugenie de Franval* translated by Shibusawa. Lefebvre, De Sade and Breton were the main pillars of the early days of Gendaishicho-sha; Ishii regarded these books as an attempted to destroy both Stalinist communism and modernist intellectuals, using imagination as a weapon.¹⁴

In 1959, Shibusawa’s translation of de Sade’s ‘*Juliette*’ was published by Gendaishicho-sha, and was promptly banned as pornographic by a Japanese court. Ishii and Shibusawa were prosecuted in 1960, marking the beginning of the ten-year ‘Sade case’ court battle. Haniya Yutaka(1909-1997), a novelist imprisoned during the war for having an ‘extreme ideology’, was a key defense witness. He, Ishii and Shibusawa remained life-long friends after this trial. Ishii insisted that the trial was not a case of obscenity, but rather an example of oppression against freedom of thought. The court case was Ishii’s battleground on which to express his contempt for the bureaucratic system that tried to deny absolute freedom, and also for the

¹³ Ishii, Kyoji. “Hajimeni (in the beginning)” *Tokyo Kodo Sensen newsletter #1* (15 June, 1965): p.1.

¹⁴ Ishii, Kyoji Interview “*Jidai o kakushita henshusha dai ikkar*” (Editors who defined the era) *Editorship Vol. 1* (Osaka:Nihon henshusha Gakkai, 2011) p.30.

‘good taste’ of ‘moderate’ intellectuals who did not stand up for that freedom. Ishii and Shibusawa were ultimately found guilty.¹⁵ This case put Gendaishicho-sha in the spotlight; students and intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the increasingly conservative and shallow political and cultural situation of the post-Anpo period enthusiastically embraced the appearance of this new, radical publishing company.

1.3 1960: Anpo and its aftermath

Nichibei Anzen Hosho Joyaku (the Japan-US security treaty), commonly referred to as ‘Anpo’, was signed in 1951 at the time of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which established the post-war order in East Asia. The Anpo treaty committed the U.S. to help defend Japan if the country came under attack, and provided bases and ports for U.S. armed forces in Japan. Under the agreement, Okinawa, Ogasawara, and other small islands became protectorates of the U.S.A.¹⁶ With the renewal of the treaty coming up in 1960, the Japan Communist Party, the Japan Socialist Party and *Zengakuren* (The National Federation of Students’ Self-government Associations) organized protest demonstrations and called for strikes¹⁷ Despite the nation-wide protest, and the fact that an overwhelming majority of citizens were against renewal of the treaty, *Jiminto* (the Liberal Democratic Party) with its absolute majority, curtailed the parliamentary session of the Japanese Diet and steamrolled the bill through the Diet’s lower house on 19 May 1960. This ignited anger among ordinary citizens and more people joined the demonstrations. When the students started to stage spontaneous and more aggressive demonstrations, however, the JCP criticized them as ‘Trotskyites’ and insisted on orderly demonstration the students called ‘funeral processions’.¹⁸

The students were very frustrated, for even though the treaty had passed the lower house they believed that, with more aggressive action, it might still be possible to alter the course of events by forcing the government to dissolve the lower house. In 1959, Bund (Federation of Communists), a new-left students group critical of the

¹⁵ In the Oct.1969 Supreme court decision the defendants’ appeal was rejected and they were declared guilty. Ishii was fined 100,000 yen and Shibusawa 70,000 yen. For full account, see Sado Saiban (Sade Case) Ishii Kyoji, Gendaishicho-sha 1963.

¹⁶ For details of Anpo treaty, see: ‘Security Treaty between the United States and Japan’.

¹⁷ Steinhoff, P. “Student Protest in the 1960s”, *Social Science Japan #15* (Tokyo: The institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo: 1999) pp.3-6.

¹⁸ Takei, Kento, ed. *Anpo Toso* (Anpo struggle) (Tokyo: Gendaishicho-sha, 1961.

Japan Communist Party, took control of *Zengakuren*. Bund took the center stage with its spontaneous direct actions that marked a clean departure from the existing old party system. They overwhelmed the lines of riot police and broke into the Diet compound. Armed with clubs and water canon, the police counter-attacked the demonstrators and in the mayhem on 15 June 1960, Kanba Michiko, a female student of Tokyo University and a member of the Bund, was killed. (Fig. 2)

There was a great deal of anger among young students against not only the governing *Jiminto* party, but also against the JCP and other established Left parties, and indeed the parliament system itself. The filmmaker Oshima Nagisa was a Kyoto University student at the time of Anpo. He said:

I was angry with all the adults who constituted the society (at the time of Anpo). They were the ones responsible for the Second World War, but nobody showed real remorse. I had, and still have, deep contempt and distrust toward them.¹⁹

The failure of the anti-Anpo movement signified the clear generational division between the Old and New Left, but amongst those who had experienced the war, there emerged a group of intellectuals sympathetic to New Left students. *Rokugatsu Kodo Inukai* (June Action Committee: Fig. 3) as the group was known, was a loosely connected gathering of intellectuals and artists in support of direct actions against the Anpo treaty. Ishii said the group started almost spontaneously among his friends who hung out at the office of Gendaishicho-sha. The members were Ishii himself, Yoshimoto Takaaki (a critic and ideologue: 1924-2012), Haniya, Tanigawa Gan (1923-1995), Akiyama Kiyoshi (an anarchist poet: 1904-88), Matsuda Masao (an editor and later a film critic), Oda Tetsuro (an art critic) and the Revolutionary Artist Front member artists Nakamura Hiroshi, Katsuragawa Hiroshi, and Yamashita Kikuji, as well as some other volunteer members of *Zen-ei Bijutsu Kai* (The Avant-garde Art Association.)

Yoshimoto recalled:

[W]hat we did as *Rokugatsu Kodo Inukai* was to support Bund and their direct actions. Shima Shigeo, the secretary general of Bund at the time of Anpo, told us so-called 'intellectuals' not to try to take leadership, not to act as if we were superior to the students. The students were clearly the main players and

¹⁹ Oshima, Nagisa. "*Fukai datta Shochiku nuberubaagu no retteru* (The annoying labeling of Shochiku New Wave)" *Series: Memories of the 20th Century 1957-60 60nen Anpo/Miike Toso*. (Tokyo Maichinishinbun-sha :2000) p. 217.

they took initiative [...] The reasons why I supported Bund were, first, their action style. Their demonstrations were not the traditional lining-up, fist-in-the-air, shouting-slogans type. Theirs was more radical and disorderly. It was previously unheard of among the Japanese Left. I really liked their new approach. Another reason was they were autonomous - independent of the dogmatic control of the Soviet Union or China. I also thought this was the last chance for Japan to resist the overwhelming power of the post-war capitalist system. The JCP said Anpo enslaved Japan in subordination to the US, but for me, that was not the point. Rather, I thought Anpo would enable Japan to succeed as a capitalist nation equal to the West. Bund tried to stop this uncontrolled expansion of the capitalist system.²⁰

Some of the *Rokugatsu Kodo Inkai* members followed students into the Diet compound, where they narrowly escaped beating and arrest by the riot police. The main members of the group published an anthology, *Minshushugi no Shinwa* (The Myth of Democracy 1960), through Gendaishicho-sha, which reviewed the anti-Anpo struggle and became a best seller among students. Soon after Anpo was renewed, Bund was disbanded. As it was a loosely connected organization from the beginning, and its membership had expanded so much during the anti-Anpo campaign, it was hard to control after the target issue was gone. The majority of students returned to their normal 'campus life' to enjoy a few years of relative freedom before going onto the real world, as did most ordinary citizens – who embraced the new Prime Minister Ikeda's 'Doubling of Income Scheme'²¹ and returned to their everyday life. Still, some students carried on the quest for change and sought to pass on an autonomous student movement to the next, *Zenkyoto*²² generation.

1.4 Miike, Taisho Kodo Tai, and Koho no Kai

In 1960, in Kyushu, Japan's southernmost island, the Miike coal miners strike was raging. The miners' union's opposition to 'rationalization' of the coal mines threatened to upset Japanese employers' plans to replace coal with imported oil – the energy revolution that would fuel Japan's rise as an industrial power. Thousands of

²⁰ Yoshimoto, Takaaki. "*Nihon shihonshugi ni sakarau 'dokuritsu-sayoku'* ('Independent Left' against Japanese Capitalism)". From the series: *Memories of the 20th Century 1957-60 60nen Anpo/Miike Toso*. (Tokyo Maichinishinbun-sha :2000) P. 172.

²¹ The 'Doubling of Income Scheme' was introduced by Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato, who took over the office following PM Kishi's resignation in July 1960. His policies, which centered on economic growth and 'dialogue' with oppositional parties, brought stability to the post-Anpo turmoil.

²² *Zenkyoto* (All Campus Joint Struggle League) was a student group active at universities throughout Japan between 1968 and 1969. Unlike *Zengakuren* (the National Federation of Students' Self-government Associations), which consisted of representatives of *Jichi-kai* (Self-government Association) of universities, *Zenkyoto* was an association of students who wanted to join the struggle independently.

supporters, including union activists, intellectuals, writers and artists, traveled from all over the country to bolster the Miike picket lines. As commentators and participants repeatedly remarked at the time, the Miike dispute became an all-out struggle between labour and capital. (Fig. 4)

By the end of 1960, the Miike strike had ended with a result no different from the anti-Anpo struggle. After a second (company) union broke the picket line, increasing number of miners deserted. Seeing the weakening of the union, the Central Labour Relations Commission recommended a mediation plan, which was hugely disadvantageous to the striking miners. However, the All Japan Coalminers' Union accepted it, and the miners had no choice but to agree to the job losses. The strike had been an almost complete failure. Just as in the Anpo campaign, the mobilization of a great number of people had meant nothing; capitalists and government bureaucracy had succeeded in disempowering yet another group of workers in Japan.²³

Tanigawa Gan, a poet and activist, had set up 'circle village', a workers' cultural group, in 1958, and he became heavily involved in the Miike struggle. After the failure of the strike, Tanigawa moved to a much smaller coalmine, Taisho, and organized '*Taisho Kodo Tai*' ('Taisho Coalmine Action Brigade') to lead the struggle. *Taisho Kodo Tai* was a militant group independent of any political or union organizations, and was unique in including miners already fired by the company. They were striking not to get their jobs back, but to be compensated for the hard work and suffering in the horrific conditions of the Taisho mine. They declared: 'No more working in hell! We demand vacations!'²⁴

Organizationally, *Taisho Kodo Tai* was deliberately anarchistic. Members were not to be registered. If one claimed to be a member, he was a member. There was no hierarchal system. Each individual was an executive and a member. There was also no majority-decision system. If one wanted to do something, he and other members who agreed simply carried it out. Participating out of a sense of duty in

²³ Takei, Kento, ed. *Anpo Toso* (Anpo struggle) (Tokyo: Gendaishicho-sha, 1961) p.102-107.

²⁴ Tanigawa, Gan. "Eikyū bakannsu shugi (permanent vacation-ism)" *Katen* No.7 1963 25.6. *Koho no Kai*.

something you did not want to do was frowned upon. There were no regulations, and the only principle was “Do only what you want to do”. Tanigawa said:

Taisho Kodo Tai is a working class self-liberation movement based on the organizational theory of the impulse for autonomy.²⁵

After the failures of Anpo and Miike, Tanigawa's struggle at the Taisho mine gained the attention of radical intellectuals and activists in Tokyo. In an interview in 2010, Ishii recalled that Tanigawa was the only one who was doing anything interesting in that post-Anpo period, and so he went to see him in Kyushu. The two hit it off at once and got drunk together. Yamaguchi Kenji (1925-1999), a legendary anarchist who had been expelled from the JCP in 1959, became disillusioned with the anti-Anpo movement at an early stage and went to Kyushu in 1960 to support *Taisho Kodo Tai*. Back in Tokyo, he received a letter from Tanigawa asking for his help in raising funds for a communal house in Taisho. Yamaguchi formed '*Ko-ho no Kai*' ('Group of the Rear Supply Line') and provided financial and personnel support from Tokyo. Various organizations, activists, artists and intellectuals joined *Ko-ho no Kai*. The appeal for donations listed Kawani Hiroshi as one of the organizers, and Ishii, Yoshimoto, Haniya, and other political figures, as well as prominent cultural figures such as contemporary music composer Hayashi Hikaru (1931-2012) and *Noh* actor Kanze Hideo (1927-2007) as endorsers. Kawani invited Imaizumi Yoshihiko to join the group.²⁶ (Fig. 5)

It was through forming *Ko-ho no Kai* that Kawani met Yamaguchi Kenji for the first time. Although Imaizumi had met Yamaguchi while serving on the preparation committee of an exhibition for the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow in 1957²⁷ (when Yamaguchi had been a director of the JCP youth organization) they had not kept in contact. It was through *Koho no Kai* that

²⁵ Yamaguchi, Kenji. *Anarcho-communism no rekishi teki kensho* (Historical examination of Anarcho-Communism). (Tokyo: Kitafuyu shobo, 2003) p.164.

²⁶ Yamaguchi, Kenji. *Koho no Kai appeal*, a letter sent to Imaizumi Yoshihiko (Dec. 1961) Imaizumi archive, Tokyo.

²⁷ The World Festival of Youth and Students was a biannual international event, organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth and International Union of Students since 1947. During the Cold War the festivals were held in capitals of Communist/Socialist countries and were accused by the USA of being a communist propaganda tool. The Moscow festival of 1957 was the biggest event in its history, and many artists from various fields (theater, film, music, and visual art) wanted to travel to Moscow. The Japanese government, however, issued visas to only one artist from each genre. Bito Yutaka participated from Japan and received an award. (Ikeda, Tasuo. *Vue de dos de l'avant-garde*, Tokyo: Chuseki-sha, 2001. pp.61-65).

Imaizumi and Kawani became involved in the New Left movement and got to know Ishii, with whom they later founded Bigakkō.

1.5 Anti-art and Direct Action

The prevailing sentiment of the 1960s was its inclination to wholeness. It was nothing like the totality sought for by the Soviet Marxists. Rather, it was an objection to the human condition defined by capitalist society and the cultural situation increasingly subdivided and compartmentalized. [...] In the cultural field, self-containment within a genre was criticized and an original work of art was to be materialized only by rejecting the axiom of existing genres. The hierarchy of cultural production was also to be broken down, opening up a path to Anti-Art.

– Kurihara Yukio (literary critic)²⁸

In 1960 some well-known artistic groups were formed in Tokyo: The Neo DaDa Organizers²⁹; Group Ongaku³⁰; the VAN film study group³¹ and *Hanzaisha Domei* (League of Criminals 1961-63). These groups were composed of young artists and students breaking away from academism and the art-world establishment. Their main playground was the Yomiuri Indépendants exhibition, a non-juried, anything-goes annual event. The Yomiuri Indépendants exhibition was started in 1949 by the *Yomiuri* newspaper, one of the more conservative of major daily papers in Japan, a year after *Nippon Bijutu Kai* (a cultural arm of the Japan Communist Party) launched its first Nihon Indépendants exhibition. While Nihon Indépendants (fig. 6,7) was organized by artists affiliated with labour unions and workers' cultural circles, and their works tended towards Social Realism, Yomiuri Indépendants was sponsored by a major newspaper with nation-wide circulation. This attracted young artists seeking public recognition.³² (Fig. 8)

²⁸ Kurihara, Yukio “60nendai ron oboegaki (notes on the theories of 1960s)”

Accessed May 6, 2014.

²⁹ Neo Dadaism Organizers was a group of young artists formed in 1960 in Tokyo. Members included Akasegawa Genpei, Yoshimura Masunobu, Arakawa Shusaku and Shinohara Ushio and other ‘bad boys’ of the Yomiuri Indépendants exhibition. They were forerunners of junk art, action painting and performance art, but disbanded after only a year.

³⁰ Group Ongaku was an improvisational music collective whose main members were Kosugi Takehisa, Tone Yasunao and Shiomi Chieko. They were active for only two years but collaborated with other artists and groups including Akasegawa, Nakanishi and Hijikata Tatsumi.

³¹ VAN film science research institute was founded by students and graduates of Nihon University film department. Despite its official sounding name, it was actually a communal house shared by members and other young artists. One of the members was Adachi Masao, who later made the film ‘Red Army-PFLP World War Declaration’ (1970) in Palestine. Another member, Jonouchi Motoharu, filmed Hi-Red Center’s ‘Shelter Plan’ (1964) and also collaborated with Group Ongaku.

³² Ikeda, Tatsuo. *Vue de dos de L’avant-garde* (Tokyo: Chuseki-sha, 2001) p.30.

Prior to these Indépendants, the only way for young artists to exhibit in Tokyo Metropolitan Museum (which was one of the few venues for contemporary art in Japan)³³ was to be accepted to various *Kaiha* ('artist groups'), which rented the Museum for their annual exhibitions. By the end of the 1950s, these *Kaiha* had become old-fashioned and less attractive for young artists. Most of the established *Kaiha* stuck more or less to late-19th century styles of French impressionism and Fauvism, (Fig. 9) and their pyramid-style organizational structure was very rigid. The young artists no longer had the patience to persevere in this hierarchical system long enough to be permitted to take part in the annual exhibition by the *Kaiha* 'elders', and started to exhibit on their own.³⁴ Yomiuri Indépendants gave much needed freedom to these frustrated young artists. There, they did not have to follow any style or dogma and were also free from organizational and financial responsibility. Besides, they could be reviewed in a national newspaper!

The works in the early 1960s Yomiuri Indépendants exhibitions ranged from a portrait of Empress Michiko by an amateur artist to a room installation of penis-like objects hanging from the ceiling by Kudo Tetsumi, to pure junk – a pile of waste materials sent from Kyushu-ha. (Fig. 10) The critic Tono Homei, in his review of the exhibition, called Kudo's work 'junk and Anti-Art'.³⁵ (Fig. 11)

A group of unruly young artists 'raided' Yomiuri Indépendants from Kyushu in the far south of Japan. Their presence at Yomiuri Indépendants from 1957 set the new and definitive character of 'Yomiuri Indépendants art', which the art critic Nakahara Yusuke proclaimed "young, furious and rebellious" (*Bijutsu techo*, Oct. 1971). Kikuhata Mokuma, who later became a teacher at Bigakkō, was the youngest member of this group. *Kyushu-ha* (1957- 1963) was an edgy, experimental and rambunctious art group, known for its antagonism against the conservative local art scene as well as the mainstream Tokyo art world. Its wild, rough, unruly style,

³³ In 1957, the number of museums (public and private) listed in the National Convention of Art Museums was 30. Among them there were only 3 modern art museums – National, Tokyo Met., and Kanagawa. National Museum of Modern Art tended to exhibit Western modern art and more established artists, and Kanagawa primarily showed local artists. Tokyo Metropolitan Museum basically functioned as a rental space for various group exhibitions, although they had their own exhibitions occasionally. (*Geijutsu Shincho* May 1957 'Art scene is made in Ueno' pp.184-5).

³⁴ 'Post-war Japan 1950-70: Top 10 articles of *Geijutsu Shincho* in 1959. #5: "Individual rather than group – solo exhibitions at galleries overtaking Kaiha group shows"' *Geijutsu Shincho* Sep. 1991 p.132.

³⁵ Tono, Homei 'End/Beginning of Avant-garde' *Geijutsu Shincho* May 1960.

making use of everyday and industry materials, was revolutionary at that time. (Fig. 12) Its organization was non-hierarchical - members discussed and even came to blows over the direction of the group, and they often produced and signed work collectively. Kikuhata depicted the scene when he first met some of the members at work:

They were melting coal-tar pitch for road works in a drum can on an open fire. They poured it on a sheet of plywood and threw plaster and pigment on top of it, then made strokes with bamboo blooms, singing *Gunkan March* ('Warship Marching Song') throughout. I stood there flabbergasted. They turned to me laughing and said, "Isn't Art easy?"³⁶

What made *Kyushu-ha* stand out was its close relation to labour movements in Kyushu and its persistence on bringing art and life together. The leader of the group, Sakurai Takami was a union activist at the *Nishinihon* Newspaper Co., which was in the middle of a labour dispute. Most of the members of *Kyushu-ha* were not graduates of art academies but of vocational schools or teachers' colleges. All had full-time day jobs, unlike most of the members of Neo DaDa Organizers who were graduates from leading art academies in Tokyo and had families affluent enough to support them. *Kyushu-ha* members were working-class youths with a serious interest in art - not merely as 'recreation' after work but as an urgent expression coming from within the reality of their daily lives.

Kyushu-ha was formed at the time of the labour struggle at the nearby Miike coal mines. Kikuhata noted that the coal miners' struggle and their association with left-wing writers and labour activists was a major influence on *Kyushu-ha*. He said that this experience led them to re-define their defiance against authority, transcending the framework of art.³⁷ Although *Kyushu-ha* members did not depict the miners' scenes of struggle as some Social Realist artists did, their fury at the huge wave of change brought on by modernization manifested itself in their works through their choice of humble materials: tar, straw mats, jute bags, and other items from everyday life covered with smells, dirt, even urine.³⁸

The emergence of these rebellious young artists' groups is often explained by the influence of the American neo-DaDa movement and French *l'informel*, with their

³⁶ Kikuhata, Mokuma. *Sengo Bijutsu to Han-geijutsu* (Post-war Art and Anti-Art). (Fukuoka: Kaicho-sha, 1993) pp.118-119.

³⁷ Ibid. pp. 31-34.

³⁸ Ibid. pp.256-262.

new methodologies of action painting, installation, and performance.³⁹ However, art critic Takiguchi Shuzo, argues that this eruption of 'wild style' should:

[...] not necessarily be connected to *l'informel* paintings. Rather, their expressive energy found an outlet in the direct actions. *L'informel* was merely a trigger.⁴⁰

This outpouring of expressive energy had a marked similarity to the anarchic and destructive power of Bund in the anti-Anpo struggle. During the anti-Anpo campaign – unlike some architects' and designers' organizations – visual artists' groups (including these 'Anti-Art' ones) did not issue political statements against Anpo. This has led some art historians to see those young artists as essentially apolitical.⁴¹ This argument, I would say, is based on too narrow a definition of what constitutes 'the political'. By 1960, the context of 'being political' had changed among the radical youth from that of making political gestures to taking direct action. Kudo Tetsumi famously declared at a cultural-sector anti-Anpo meeting: '*Imaya Akushon aru nomi!* (Now, there is nothing left but Action!)'⁴² For him and other young radical artists, action itself was political. Bund's acute disdain for any existing institution – be it the JCP, academia, the government, capitalism – was shared by the Anti-art artists in their rejection of traditional 'good taste', academicism and the central hierarchal system of the art world. Anger, an appetite for destruction, and immediate action without any concrete vision of the future were common to both Bund and the Anti-art artists.⁴³ (Fig. 13,14)

Perhaps not all of those young artists were conscious of the political connotation of their actions (and some refused to analyze their 'impulsive' actions in any way) but the following retrospective statement by Akasegawa Genpei (then a

³⁹ Lee U-fan criticized Japanese art scene was 'developed, categorized, positioned, and evaluated in accordance to the context of European and American 'contemporary art such as l'informal and Pop Art'. Lee U-fan and Hariu Ichiro. "*Taishitsu shindan: Gendai Nihon bijutsu* (Diagnosis of Japanese contemporary art)", *Bijutsu techo*, (Aug. 1973) p. 42.

⁴⁰ Takiguchi, Shuzo. Art review, *Yomiuri Shinbun* 1 March, 1957, reprinted in *Bijutsu Techo* (Oct. 1971) p.30.

⁴¹ Ikeda, Tatsuo. *Vue de dos de L'avant-garde* (Tokyo: Chuseki-sha, 2001) p.97.

⁴² Akasegawa, Genpei. *Zenmen Jikyo* (Total confession). (Tokyo: Shobun-sha 2001) p.104.

⁴³ [Neo DaDa members, returning from Anpo demonstration on 15 June, decided to hold a party on 18 June] Yoshida Yoshie, a witness to the event, pointed out a certain complex and indirect flirtation with politics within the group's art from this point forward, now tending toward commitment, now resistance even entertaining a serious discussion over whether or not they might blow up the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Marotti, William. *Money, Trains, and Guillotines* (Duke University Press, 2013) pp.174-76.

member of Neo DaDa Organizers) contains deep thought and commitment to socio-political change:

Neo DaDa Organizer's 'organizer' part reflected the influence of Socialism within us. It has undeniably been there, and it appeared in rather raw form in the naming [...] I think he (Yoshimura) had the intention of being an organizer of some kind of movement. We were enthusiastic about destruction. We thought art was indestructible, but when we hit a canvas, it got smashed into pieces, and we created something new from the pieces. I went to see the other destructive act in front of the Diet (during an Anpo demonstration) once. I felt like saying "I leave that part to you guys". It was like we shared tasks.⁴⁴

These artists did not participate in storming into the Diet compound not because they were apolitical but because they were participating in revolution from the cultural front. As Ishii quoted Trotsky: "We shall shoot from many directions!"⁴⁵

A group that evaded easy categorization was *Hanzaisha Domei* (League of Criminals: 1961-1963). Their activities were a mixture of theater, literature, street performance, protest, crime, and pranks. Waseda University Russian literature students Hiraoka Masaaki and Miyahara Yasuharu were active Bund members during the *Anpo* struggle, and after Bund was dissolved they formed a study group devoted to the Russian avant-garde and published a newsletter titled 'Red Balloon of Criminals'. Hiraoka's declaration that the aim of *Hanzaisha Domei* was to unsettle the society in preparation for revolution by staging various 'criminal' actions, drew Ishii's attention, and he published both Miyahara and Hiraoka's essays in *Byakuya-Hyoron*, a monthly magazine of criticism published by Gendaishicho-sha in 1961. Considering that Hiraoka and Miyahara were merely twenty year-old undergraduates, it was quite a feat to be recognized by this cutting edge publisher, and through Ishii they got to know Tanigawa, Haniya and other prominent thinkers.

Although Hiraoka and Miyahara's initial intention had been political activism, they became disillusioned by the internal fights of the various political factions at Tokyo's Waseda University and sought to stage their activities in the streets of Shinjuku, including a 'die-in' performance at Shinjuku station during the Upper

⁴⁴ Akasegawa, Genpei. *Zenmen Jikyo* (Total confession). (Tokyo: Shobun-sha 2001) pp.111-112.

⁴⁵ Ishii, Kyoji. *Hana niwa kaori, hon niwa doku o* (Scent of flowers, poison of books). (Tokyo: Gendaishichoshin-sha, 2002) p.63 This is a Japanese translation of Trotsky's words.

House election of 1963.⁴⁶ Around that time they became acquainted with Imaizumi and Kawani, and through them Nakanishi, Kosugi Takehisa (b.1938: A member of Group Ongaku and frequent collaborator of Nakanishi in various events) and other avant-garde artists. In 1962, they organized a theater performance titled *Kuroku fuchidorareta bara no nureta kushami* (Wet sneeze of a black-lined rose) at Waseda University's Okuma Hall. Through Imaizumi's introduction, they asked Nakanishi, Kosugi, Kobatake Hiroshi (a sculptor and contemporary of Nakanishi at the National Academy of Art, later taught woodcarving at Bigakkō), and Takamatsu Jiro (a classmate of Nakanishi's at the National Academy of Art, and later a member of Hi Red Center) to participate. The artists agreed, but failed to attend the rehearsal and didn't appear on stage. Kobatake pushed his stone sculptures from the balcony seats, while Takamatsu extended a black rope all over the theater and Kosugi played his experimental music. Nakanishi, who was mysteriously absent during the play, painted the urinals of the men's toilet with red paint. (Fig. 15) Imaizumi wrote in his diary that he was pleased with the actions taken by the artists:

Artists' participation should not be pre-mediated harmonious collaboration, but should be a spontaneous intervention, even confrontation.⁴⁷

1.6 *Jiritsu Gakkō* (School of Autonomy) 1962-1964

I don't want to be anything! I want to be something unnamable!
It is impossible to teach or to be taught how to stand on your own feet. As is well known, a school is a boring place, but the reverse is also true.
Existing schools all try to take your money, acting as if the impossible were possible. *Jiritsu Gakkō* declares its impossibility. *Jiritsu Gakkō* is a school that should never exist. You must discard all of your useful knowledge and habits at the gate. *Jiritsu Gakkō* is the essence of contradiction and a flower of paradox. It is an unattainable school to become an unnamable person. To stand in the middle of this paradox is the only curriculum of this school.
Do you want to fight against those who enforce imperialism in the psychological realm? Do you feel suffocated with labels such as 'proletarian' and 'intellectual' pasted on your face? If you do, you are accepted to this school.

The tuition of this school is very high – perhaps it will cost your whole life.
It is roadwork for intelligence, body building of philosophy.
If you think these words are false, make your own *Jiritsu* school

(*Jiritsu Gakkō* Appeal: 1962)⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Miyahara, Yasuharu "Are wa maboroshi no kurohata data no ka – densetsu ni 4michita hanzaisha domei no kiseki" (Was it a phantom of a black flag? – a history of legendary Hanzaisha Domei) an original script emailed from Miyahara to the author. 7 September 2012.

⁴⁷ Imaizumi, Yoshihiko. Personal diary of 22 November, 1962 Imaizumi archive, Tokyo.

With this bellicose cry, *Jiritsu Gakkō* opened in 1962 in Tokyo, and it is now widely viewed as the prototype for Bigakkō. The idea of *Jiritsu Gakkō* was conceived by Tanigawa Gan and Yamaguchi Kenji while they were collaborating in support of the Taisho coal mine strike. Ishii, Kawani, Imaizumi, and Hiraoka of *Hanzaisha Domei* got involved in the start-up committee of this ‘school’; Nakamura, Nakanishi, and Kosugi, who all later taught at Bigakkō, each gave a lecture there.

Jiritsu means ‘Independence’ or ‘Autonomy’ in Japanese, and Tanigawa often used this word in describing *Taisho Kodo Tai* (*Taisho coalmine Action Brigade*). As early as 1961, when *Koho no Kai* started, Yamaguchi was already contemplating some kind of ‘school’ to inform young activists in Tokyo about the new ideas and strategies of *Taisho Kodo Tai*. In April 1962 Tanigawa and Yamaguchi sent out an invitation to their friends to discuss starting a school of political thought. The first invitation was sent out from *Koho no Kai* with Tanigawa’s basic plan, which stated that its aim was to create an autonomous organization for political actions and to nurture organizers.⁴⁹ Although it was called a ‘school’, it did not aim to have intellectuals enlighten the masses. Conversely, the masses were to become teachers. Adachi Masao, a film-maker and activist, was a student at *Jiritsu Gakkō*. He recalled Yoshimoto telling a student to listen to an artisan making his living from his skill and to learn how to make a revolution of their own.⁵⁰

The system of *Jiritsu Gakkō* set out the following:

Lecturers: Haniya Yutaka, Yoshimoto Takaaki, Fujita Shozo, Tanigawa Gan
Prospective lecturers: Abe Kobo, Hariu Ichiro, Shibusawa Tatsuhiko,
Uchimura Gosuke, Nakamura Hiroshi, Akiyama Kiyoshi, and others.
Part time Lecturers: A street peddler, the skipper of a river boat, a bar
madam, a comic, a street cleaner, artisans in small factories. In other words,
lower class laborers.
Notice:

⁴⁸ *Jiritsu Gakko Appeal*. An appeal letter sent to Imaizumi Yoshihiko, September 1962, from Imaizumi archive, Tokyo.

⁴⁹ Tanigawa, Gan. “*Kenryoku Shiyo no Kairo – Jiritsu gakko o megutte*” (originally published in *Shiko*, Oct. 1962 reprinted in Tanigawa Gan selection I (Tokyo: Nihonkeizaihyouronsha) p.386.

⁵⁰ Adachi recalled he had attended a lecture by a bar madame, but Matsuda Masao, one of the organizers said these lectures by ordinary people hardly happened – perhaps only once or twice. Most of the lectures were by Yoshimoto and other well-known writers.

Adachi, M. *Eiga/Kakumei* (Film/Revolution)(Tokyo: Kawaideshoboshin-sha, 2003) p.102.

Matsuda interview with Shimada, 23 February 2013.

- i) Those who only like to chat should not apply
- ii) Disbanding – two years should be enough for this school⁵¹

Tanigawa also emphasized the ‘three-way power balance’ among three groups: teachers, administrators, and students. The students were not allowed to be passive participants but were to form a group that should have power equal to the teachers and the administrators. Tanigawa insisted that true autonomy could be attained only through severe contention among these three groups. Within a month of *Jiritsu Gakkō*’s launch, however, Imaizumi, Kawani and Hiraoka had all resigned from the administrative committee. Imaizumi wrote later that the classes, in spite of Tanigawa’s initial intention, became more or less ‘fan clubs’ of famous lecturers.⁵² There also seemed to be friction between the political thinkers and the artists, which might have triggered the resignations.

In *Keisho* #8, Nakanishi recounted the ‘lecture’ he gave at the initial meeting of *Jiritsu Gakkō*. Nakanishi volunteered when Yamaguchi asked if anyone wanted to do a lecture. Nakanishi walked around the audience with a smoke canister in his hand while Kosugi played his music piece by twining a recorded tape around his body. Yamaguchi and Tanigawa were bewildered and later at the committee meeting, they turned down any further lecture by Nakanishi. Nakanishi explained in a round table discussion:

The reason I went there (*Jiritsu Gakkō*) was that if it was supposed to be a place for discourses to collide, I could take anything there. I taught them how to make a picture with smoke screen. This is how I express myself so I just took what I do in my work. But later I heard they said it could not be a tool of communication [...] I did not go there to communicate. I thought the meeting was to bring oneself and ask others to bring themselves, which I found interesting.⁵³

Imaizumi published a short essay ‘Can there be a tool for communication?’ in the same issue of *Keisho* in which he argued that action, though seemingly incomprehensible, could be a more effective tool for communication:

⁵¹ *Jiritsu Gakko Appeal*. An appeal letter sent to Imaizumi Yoshihiko, September 1962, from Imaizumi archive, Tokyo.

⁵² Imaizumi, Yoshihiko. “*Ekakidomo no hentekorin-na arekore no maesetsu 4* (Prologue 4 of artists’ strange this-and that)” *Niodachi club* (Tokyo: 1985)
(Accessed May 6, 2014).

⁵³ Nakanishi, Natsuyuki. “*Chokusetukodo-sha no hokoku* (Report of direct action)” *Keisho* #8 (Tokyo: 1963) p.8.

[...] if they think Nakanishi's action can't be a tool for communication, then, we should doubt if communication itself could be attainable. We should break down this delusion of interpenetration and communication – I had imagined this school might be a place to stir the ideologues in a washing machine with students as detergent [...] For me, nothing conveys one's intention more accurately than a dagger suddenly thrust from behind a door [...] If you can call a sudden action that leaves a strong impact without taking a life a tool for communication, then the bankrupted ideologues can be liberated from using language as a medium.⁵⁴

Even ideologues such as Tanigawa, who condemned the notion of intellectuals trying to enlighten the masses with words, and advocated political direct action instead, could not comprehend – and perhaps even felt certain contempt for – artistic direct action. Perhaps Imaizumi and Kawani learned an invaluable lesson from this experience at *Jiritsu Gakkō*. When they started Bigakkō in 1969, they adopted some of the principles of *Jiritsu Gakkō* but put emphasis on the direct, physical interaction of teachers and students.

After the departures of Imaizumi, Kawani and Hiraoka, Matsuda Masao and Yamaguchi Kenji acted as secretaries of *Jiritsu Gakkō* until the end. It was soon realized, however, that *Jiritsu Gakkō* was turning out to be just an ordinary school, and the anticipated serious contention among students, teachers and administrators would not materialize. Disillusioned, Matsuda and Yamaguchi decided to turn the school into a place to recruit young people and groom them to become the 'foot soldiers' of direct political actions. When the National Railway union staged its first strike in December 1963, Matsuda and Yamaguchi summoned 43 students to participate; they were provided with helmets and told to confront the riot police.⁵⁵ Matsuda and Yamaguchi had by then decided that underground guerrilla action employing real violence, rather than mere demonstrations, was the only way to open up new possibilities in a stagnating political situation. This was perhaps not what Tanigawa had envisioned for the school, but he was about to quit all of his political activities as well as writing to become an executive of a language education company, TEC, in Tokyo.⁵⁶ *Jiritsu Gakkō* was finally disbanded in 1964.

⁵⁴ Imaizumi, Yoshihiko. "Karera no sore wa shiso dentatsu no gu ni narieruka? (Can theirs be a tool for communication?)" *Kisho* #8 (Tokyo:1963) pp.35-36.

⁵⁵ Matsuda, Masao. *Teroru no Kairo* (Circuit of Terror), (Tokyo: San-ichi shobo, 1969) p.237.

⁵⁶ Tanigawa retired from Taisho coalmine struggle in 1965 and came to Tokyo, accepting an offer to be an executive director of a foreign language school TEC. When a labour dispute occurred in 1970, Tanigawa crushed the 2nd union, led by Hiraoka Masaaki of ex-*Hanzaisha Domei* who got a job at TEC on Ishii Kyoji's recommendation. (Tanigawa Gan chronology: Tanigawa Gan, Tokyo:Kawade shobo shinsha, 2009. p.191.

1.7 *Shisoteki Henshitsu* (Ideological Perverts)

A key phrase of the era was *Shisoteki Henshitsu-sha* or 'ideological perverts', which was first used in a press conference by the national police commissioner. There were groups that defied categorization, such as *Hanzaisha Domei*, Gendaishicho-sha group, Van film study institute and Hi-Red Center. Previously, radical groups had been only 'politically' radical; they had no artistic interests. But things were getting confused [*midareru*] from the authorities' point of view. They felt under pressure because something incomprehensible – groups that made no clear division between politics and art – were lurking around them. We imagined what they were feeling and were inspired by it.⁵⁷

Imaizumi Yoshihiko had started '*Keisho*' magazine in 1957 with several artist friends, and took over the editorship in 1960. In 1961, Imaizumi asked Kawani, whom he met through a mutual friend, to join the magazine as an editor. Together, they turned the magazine from an amateurish artists' 'inner circle' magazine to a more theoretical, journalistic publication. Kawani said:

Keisho was the synopsis of a plan concocted at the crossing point of political direct action and art action⁵⁸

Kawani got to know Nakanishi as a neighbour in Tokyo's Oimachi district around that time. Imaizumi had already met Nakanishi and Takamatsu through an art student organization some years earlier. Imaizumi's diary reveals that throughout 1962 and '63, they met almost daily to discuss articles for *Keisho* magazine. Kawani and Imaizumi were also conspirators (sometimes accomplices) in events staged by Nakanishi and Takamatsu. One of them was the '*Yamanote* line incident' event of 1962, for which Nakanishi, Takamatsu, Kawani and others performed, unannounced, in a crowded commuter train in Tokyo. (Fig16) Imaizumi and Kawani recognized the importance of Nakanishi and Takamatsu's actions and invited them, along with Akasegawa, to a round table discussion for *Keisho* #7 and #8 (both published in 1963), which were special issues on 'direct action'. (Fig. 17) Imaizumi urged the artists to take their art out of the 'white cube' of museums and galleries and onto the streets in order to 'agitate' everyday life. However, Imaizumi warned that taking action into public spaces was not enough in itself. During the *Yamanote* line incident the passengers might have been shocked initially, but seeing the cameras (which

⁵⁷ Akasegawa, Genpei. *Zenmen Jikyo* (Total confession), (Tokyo: Shobun-sha 2001) p.128.

⁵⁸ Kawani, Hiroshi. "*Keisho ni yosete* (About *Keisho*)" *Bijutsu Techo* (October 1971) p.72.

Nakanishi and Takamatsu had asked their friends to bring along to record the event) they probably thought they were merely shooting for television or a film. The ‘normalizing’ power of everyday life should not be underestimated; when we encounter something strange, we try to reduce it to something understandable. Artists’ direct actions could soon become just another unremarkable ‘art’ event. In order to really agitate the society, one had to counter this tendency toward psychological harmonization and go beyond anything predictable.

The round table discussion reported in *Keisho* #7 and #8 led to Takamatsu, Akasegawa and Nakanishi forming Hi Red Center in 1963. The group’s name was a kind of pun on the names of the artists themselves: ‘*Taka*’ means ‘high’ in Japanese, ‘*Aka*’ means ‘red’, and ‘*Naka*’ means ‘center.’ Over a short period between 1963 and 1964 the three members of Hi Red Center conducted various ‘happenings’ and events in Tokyo. (Fig. 18) Several other people were known to be involved in the group’s activities. For example, their last event, the ‘Tokyo Cleaning Event’ of 1964, involved Kawani, Izumi Tatsu, and Tanigawa Koichi, in quite literally cleaning the streets of Ginza on their knees with mops, rags, and tooth brushes. In this ironical intervention in the public space – increasingly controlled by the authorities in the run-up to the Tokyo Olympics – traffic was brought to a standstill. (Fig. 19)

Hi Red Center’s first exhibition, ‘The 5th Mixer Plan’ of 1963, featured 1000 yen ‘banknotes’ printed by Akasegawa, who had been making invitation cards and artworks using these printed banknotes since earlier that year. In January 1964 two police detectives visited Akasegawa’s apartment. This was the beginning of the infamous ‘1000 yen banknote case’.

Prior to this police visit, a member of *Hanzaisha Domei* had been interrogated (on 27 November 1963) over alleged shoplifting. He was found in possession of a book titled ‘*Akai fusen aruiwa mesuookami no yoru*’ (‘Red Balloon or, Night of the She-Wolf’) published by *Hanzaisha Domei* (Fig. 20) A photograph in the book was considered pornographic and the police raided the houses of group members Miyahara Yasuharu and Hiraoka Masaaki. There they found a printed copy of a 1,000 yen banknote by Akasegawa. The police then raided the printer’s office and seized a photo plate of the note. As the book was a privately printed art book that circulated only among friends, it should not have been subject to prosecution, but

because *Hanzaisha Domei* was one of the groups being monitored by the authorities as ‘ideologically perverse’, Yoshioka, Miyahara and Hiraoka were arrested, and the news was well publicized in major newspapers and weekly magazines.⁵⁹ (Fig. 21) It was likely that the police made the connection between *Hanzaisha Domei* and Akasegawa, and assumed his 1,000 yen banknote had more than just artistic purposes. The reaction of the press to both cases was similarly scandalous. On 26 January 1964, the Asahi newspaper reported Akasegawa’s case as headline news, connecting it to the recent ‘Chi-37’ counterfeit banknote case.⁶⁰

In November 1965, Akasegawa and the book’s printers were prosecuted for making ‘models’ of 1,000 yen banknote. In the face of this situation, the ‘1000 yen banknote incident committee’ was formed to discuss how to deal with the case, with Kawani as chairperson and Takiguchi Shuzo and Nakahara Yusuke (both well-known art critics) as special defense witnesses; Imaizumi, Nakanishi, Takamatsu, Nakamura and other artists and art critics were also witnesses for the defense.

An appeal by the 1,000 yen note incident committee read:

Akasegawa was accused of violating the 1895 Law Controlling the Imitation of Currency and Securities. We think this law itself is a violation of Article 19 of the Constitution that protects freedom of expression. In the past, there were several court cases concerning this law, but the majority of the guilty verdicts seemed to concern political propaganda materials that obviously differed from the real currency. On the other hand, vast numbers of commercial products which imitate currency and are circulated in everyday life seem to escape such prosecution. So why was Akasegawa prosecuted? The prosecutor repeatedly questioned his motive. We must ask them their motivation for picking out Akasegawa’s among all the other imitation products⁶¹

Indeed, there seemed to be a clear intention on the part of the authorities to control the activities of these ‘ideological perverts’. After the court case opened, Akasegawa and his defense team decided to insist that his activities were just ‘art’ – which was ironical because as a member of Hi Red Center, he had been trying to break out of

⁵⁹ Miyahara, Yasuharu “*Are wa maboroshi no kurohata data no ka – densetsu ni michita hanzaisha domei no kiseki*” (Was it a phantom of a black flag? – a history of legendary Hanzaisha Domei) an original script emailed from Miyahara to the author. 7 Sep. 2012.

⁶⁰ In December 1961, a very high quality counterfeit 1,000 yen banknote was found in Akita. From then on, 343 fake notes were found in 22 prefectures. Although the Metropolitan Police Department searched in full force, the perpetrator was never found. The statute of limitation ran out in 1973. Akasegawa, Genpei. *Zenmen Jikyo* (Total confession). (Tokyo: Shobun-sha 2001) p.160.

⁶¹ Kawani, Hiroshi. *Senensatsu saiban Kondankai* (1,000 yen banknote case discussion group) poster (Tokyo: *Senensatsu saiban Kondankai*, 1965).

the confinement of 'art'. Defense lawyer Sugimoto told Akasegawa there were two possible ways for him to deal with the case. One was to deny any wrongdoing, refuse to appear in court, and to get arrested and go to jail. The other was to insist that it was 'art', plead not guilty and expand the issue in the court. Akasegawa chose the latter option, while Imaizumi wrote in jest that Akasegawa should have gone to jail like any 'pick pocket or petty thief' because of what he and Hi Red Center stood for.⁶² Although unstinting in his support for Akasegawa throughout the trial, Imaizumi was apprehensive about the way the trial had come to be all about 'art' and freedom of expression. With all its star witnesses, the trial became a legend, but in reality it did not open up a new horizon for artistic intervention. Rather, it brought an end to Akasegawa and Hi Red Center's brave artistic attempt to stir up Japanese society through direct action. After the trial, Takamatsu marched on the main road of Japanese contemporary art and ended up participating in Expo '70, Akasegawa shifted his activities to journalistic illustrations and comics, and Nakanishi, after collaborating with the *Ankoku Butoh* group led by Hijikata, went back to painting.⁶³

Meanwhile, Gendaishicho-sha also found itself subject to prosecution due to its association with Tokyo Action Front. This organization-cum-newsletter was founded in 1965 by Yamguchi Kenji, Kawani, Ishii, Matsuda and others based in Gendaishicho-sha. It advocated direct action by organized individuals acting independently of the existing political system. The first issue of 15 June 1965 included the following articles: '*From Demonstration to a Group of Personal Battles*' by Hiraoka Masaaki; '*In the Beginning*', a memoir of the immediate post-war years in Tokyo by Ishii Kyoji; '*Let's Make Life Rich*', an agitation to erase everyday life through 'happenings' and 'actions' by Anaki Teruo (a pseudonym for Kawani Hiroshi, punning on the Japanese pronunciation of 'Anarchy Terror'). (Fig. 22) On 11 November 1965, four members of Tokyo Action Front, including Matsuda Masao and Sasamoto Masanori, writer/activists of Gendaishicho-sha, were arrested in front of the Gendaishicho-sha building. They were on their way to an anti-Japan-Korea treaty demonstration and were in possession of bottles containing ammonia,

⁶² Imaizumi, Yoshihiko. "*Ekakidomo no hentekorin-na arekore no maesetsu 14* (Prologue 14 of artists' strange this-and that)" *Niodachi club* (Tokyo: 1987)
(Accessed May 6, 2014).

⁶³ Ishiko, Junzo. "Hi Red Center ni miru Bijutsu no <gendai> (<Contemporarity> of Art as seen in Hi Red Center)" *Bijutsu Techo*, (August 1971) p.196.

which the police suspected would be used against the riot police. Following their arrest, the Gendaishicho-sha building was searched on 16 November.⁶⁴

There was also a plan to attack the US embassy in protest against the Vietnam War. Imaizumi later wrote that he had planned and tried to execute that act using Hi Red Center's name, though it had nothing to do with other Hi Red Center members. He wrote:

Hi Red Center activities were winding down without fully shaking off a (protective) shell of art. The Japan-Korea treaty protest was coming to nothing, being sabotaged by both Socialist and Communist party leaders. A certain group was planning to storm into the US embassy. I thought, as it was unforeseeable how this action would change the situation, it was nothing but a 'happening', and wanted to combine this and Hi Red Center. "Join the last happening, x day at 7, in front of the US embassy. Hi Red Center"- but the group decided to cancel the plan on the night before.⁶⁵

The 'certain group' mentioned above was made up of individuals connected to Gendaishicho-sha. A letter to Kawani dated 28 April 1965 stated:

What is a war?
We must support the 'radical' war of the Vietnamese people in our own
'radical' terms. Only radical war liberates us.
Now American power is occupying Vietnam.
We will occupy America in return.

(Signed) Yamaguchi Kenji, Ishii Kyoji, Shinoda Kunio, Sasaki Shoji.
We will have a meeting about occupying the US embassy. Those activists
should all be present.
Date: 6 May, 7 P.M.
Venue: Gendaishicho-sha [a map and telephone number were included]⁶⁶

Whether their intention was a serious one or not is unclear (after all, the statement was printed and seems to have been sent to various people without much caution), but this information was leaked to the Japan Communist Party, which at once condemned the plan as an 'anti-democratic terrorist act' and passed the information to the police.⁶⁷ This must have put Gendaishicho-sha under heavy police surveillance, and thus contributed to the arrests of 11 November 1965.

⁶⁴ "Tokyo Kodo Sensen-ha no siso to kodo (Tokyo Action Front – its thought and action)", Weekly *Bunshun* (6 Dec. 1965) pp.36-38.

⁶⁵ Imaizumi, Yoshihiko. "Hi Red Center ni furete (About Hi Red Center)" *Bijutsu Techo* (October 1971) p.75.

⁶⁶ A letter to Imaizumi, 28, May 1965, from Imaizumi archive, Tokyo.

⁶⁷ Unsigned column. *Tokyo Kodo Sensen* issue #2 (July 15, 1965) p.1.

1.8 Conclusion

The first half of the 1960s saw the birth of groups that deliberately separated themselves from established structures. These included Bund – a group of politicized students that, during the Anti-Anpo movement, set itself apart from the hierarchal system of the Japan Communist Party and staged actions in the streets. Another was *Taisho Kodo Tai* in Miike – a labour group totally independent of trade unions and led by Tanigawa Gan. Also active were Neo DaDa Organizers and other groups of young Yomiuri Indépendants artists who challenged the hierarchy of the art world.

Bund was supported by radical thinkers of the time, such as Yoshimoto Takaaki, Haniya Yutaka and Tanigawa Gan, all of whom were published by Gendaishicho-sha. Likewise, the young artists' experimental works were supported and 'theorized' by Imaizumi and Kawani in *Keisho* magazine. They urged the artists to take their practice into everyday life, and to stage subversive direct action. Gendaishicho-sha, Imaizumi and Kawani played pivotal roles in bringing artistic and political radicals together at *Jiritsu Gakkō*, a school that aimed to nurture autonomous individual to be 'something unnamable'.

It is worth quoting Akasegawa's (1972) recollection of the 'close encounter' between artistic and political direct action at some length:

As the agents of direct actions of both [artistic and political] sides tried to cultivate their thoughts through actions in everyday life, they separated themselves from their respective authorized fields and went into the street.[...] In the street, they gazed at every ordinary object equally, and their gaze eventually changed the nature of those everyday spaces and objects. That was when the 'near miss' of the action of artistic expression and the action of subversion occurred; an ammonia Molotov cocktail bottle assumed the guise of an art object; demonstrators burned flags as if staging a 'happening'; anti-art 1000 yen banknotes were produced in the style of a real crime; a pornographic art film premier took on the appearance of a political riot, and so on. [...] These actions had never been 'registered' in anyone's minds before and it was hard to classify them as political or artistic incidents, or to determine who was responsible for them. It was as if many similar tails were hanging from many backsides in the street, and a dog [i.e. the police] was frantically sniffing at them to determine which tail belonged to which backside. As the dog could not uncover the nature of the tails, his illusions about them grew out of all proportion. These street actions had no names, and because of that, the dog collected every scrap of evidence carefully to determine their identity. [...] Some tails seemed to belong to the art world,

and others to the political world, and the dog began to imagine that they belonged not to these respective backsides but to the single huge arse of some unknown monster, which he named *Shiso-teki henshitsu-sha* (ideological pervert.)⁶⁸

'Being unnamable' was an effective way to carry out subversive actions in the streets of Tokyo, but at the same time it created suspicion and even fear of the part of the authorities against the agents of these actions. As a consequence, friction with the authorities was unavoidable and both Akasegawa and Gendaishicho-sha had to face prosecution could add blurring of lines of art and politics.

⁶⁸ Akasegawa, Genpei *Tsuiho sareta yajiuma* (Tokyo: Gendaihyoronsha 1972) pp.22-24.

CHAPTER 2: Questioning the System (1968-1969)

2.1 Introduction

As in the West, 1968 marked the height of the student movement in Japan. The students' organization, *Zenkyoto*, inherited its direct-action strategy from the Bund of the 1960 anti-Anpo movement, but lacked a unifying issue like Anpo. As a result, its members' revolt against authority turned into an existential questioning of education, society and their own being. The *Zenkyoto* generation overlapped with Bigakkō's student enrollment of the first few years and their revolt against the existing education system (including art academies) contributed to define Bigakkō as a possible alternative. This is what makes a closer look at the *Zenkyoto* movement highly relevant to any study of Bigakkō itself.

2.2 The *Zenkyoto* Movement

The 1968-69 university struggles are remarkable for the emergence of *Zenkyoto* (*Zengaku-kyouto-kaigi* – All-Campus Joint Struggle League), a non-sectarian radical students' organization. By 1968, *Zengakuren* (The National Federation of Students' Self-government Associations) had split into three factions, each insisting on its legitimate claim to the organization's title. One of these was led by the Japan Communist Party, another by *Kakumaru* (Revolutionary Communist Federation), and the third by an association of three other groups: *Chukaku-ha*, *Shagaku-do*, and *Shasei-do*. The three factions competed for hegemony of the students' self-government associations at major universities and became increasingly antagonistic toward one another, culminating in a number of violent confrontations.

Zenkyoto emerged as an association of individuals who wanted to take part in the movement on their own terms. Its organization was based on direct democracy: participation should depend solely on an individual's autonomous decision, and all issues should be discussed collectively. Their slogan, "In search of solidarity, without fear of isolation" was a phrase from Tanigawa Gan's poem, '*Kosakusha no shitai ni moeru mono*' (What Sprouts From a Conspirator's Corpse)' 1958. In *Zenkyoto*'s organizational theory we can perhaps see an echo of Tanigawa's *Taisho Kodo Tai* of the previous decade.

In the early stages, the students' struggle represented a protest against immediate, concrete issues such as tuition-fee hikes, misuse of educational funds, and the rigid hierarchy among teaching staff. In time, it turned to more political and ideological issues.

In 1968, the Tokyo University and Nihon University *Zenkyoto* more-or-less defined the movement, and became its icon. What had started out as a protest against concrete issues – with the participation of many so-called 'ordinary, non-political' students (i.e. those who had no previous interest in political activism) – quickly developed into a struggle against the existing social order. Once students began to question their institutions and their structure they grasped the systematic exploitation of students in the name of education. At Nihon University, the school authorities amassed over three billion yen by increasing student numbers and hiking the tuition fee, while keeping the campus infrastructure at an extremely poor standard. For example, Nihon University Faculty of Law accepted unlimited numbers of part-time students, and as a result, took on five times their enrollment capacity. In the beginning of the 1967 school year, some freshmen could not even find chairs.⁶⁹

The economic growth of the 1960s created a need for more skilled white-collar workers, and at the same time made it possible for middle class families to send their children to university. In 1968 there were 740,000 university applicants in Japan, of whom 280,000 could not secure a place.⁷⁰ The need to increase the number of university places was urgent, for university education was no longer the preserve of a tiny élite but was geared to the mass-production of useful foot soldiers (lower ranked white collar workers) for the rapidly expanding capitalist economy. Students of middle-ranked private universities could foresee their fate as salaried workers living out predictable lives as obedient cogs in a larger machine.

In many of these universities and especially at Nihon University, student self-governance was extremely limited. When Nihon University students started to demand reform, they believed that they were fighting for justice, and that their demands were entirely reasonable: disclosure of university finances, establishment of

⁶⁹ Shima, Taizo *Yasuda Kodo* (Tokyo: Chu-ko Shinsho) p.80.

⁷⁰ Ono, Akio *Zengakuren* (Tokyo: Kodansha 1968) p. 12.

an autonomous student body, and better infrastructures. Yet even these demands were met with extreme violence with university officials hiring armed thugs and right-wing students to force the protesting students out of the campus. In return, the students resorted to barricading the entrances to the school buildings and held out inside. This was the first time in history that a Japanese university campus had been occupied by students. Prime Minister Sato, a friend of Nihon University's Chancellor Furuta, was afraid of '*Sekka*' (turning-to-communism) in the universities, and saw the students' taking control of the university campus with a sense of impending crisis. On 30 September 1968, over 30,000 Nihon University students staged a 'mass negotiation' with Furuta and the administration. After twelve hours of discussion Furuta signed an agreement on nine of the students' demands. However, the following day Prime Minister Sato expressed his concern over this agreement, and on 2 October Furuta declared the deal invalid and brought in riot police to remove the barricades.⁷¹

When their protest was met with total communication failure, deception, and violence, the students realized that they were dealing with something larger than just the reform of one institution. Nihon University Zenkyoto declared in October 1968:

We now realize there is state power behind the Fukuta administration. To overthrow and bring radical changes to Nihon University administration is to destroy a corner of the reactionary education policy of this country!⁷²

It was slightly different at Tokyo University and the other élite former Imperial Universities. In January 1968, Tokyo University Medical School students' association started their protest against the unreasonable intern system (in reality, forced unpaid work) at the University hospital. They went on to criticize the system of '*Sangaku-kyodo*' ('Co-operation of university and business') in which the élite universities were to serve as research centers for business interests. This led them to question their own privileged status as students/researchers and their close association with the new capitalistic Japanese 'imperialism'. Yamamoto Yoshitaka, the chairman of Tokyo University *Zenkyoto* wrote on 10 February 1968:

⁷¹ Tarora, Joji *Kaiso no zenkyoto Undo* (Tokyo: Sairyusha, 2011) pp.236-240.

⁷² Takazawa, Koji *Shinsayoku nijunen shi – hanran no kiseki* (20 years of New Left – the history of revolt) (Tokyo: Shinsen-sha 1981) p.128.

After a demonstration, I come back to a peaceful research lab. I can't fill the gap between it and the streets. Shall I quit my studies? But isn't that just a cowardly escape from contradictions? I should examine my daily existence with a critical eye [...] then I must reject [what is in] myself that is parasitic on the society and oppositional to the proletariat, and only from there, can I practice social changes.⁷³

Jiko hitei ('self negation') became a key phrase among *Zenkyoto* students, but it did not only mean denial of the privileged position of élite Tokyo university students. Nagasaki Hiroshi, who was also an ex-*Zenkyoto* student, stated that *Jiko hitei* was not the product of a guilt complex, but liberation from social definition. This resonates with *Jiritsu Gakkō*'s 1962 appeal 'to be something unnameable. Nagasaki wrote, in his notebook of 1966, that *Jiko Hitei* was the denial of self-identity in order to be one with the masses and with their movement:

We must start from the point where our identities were broken into pieces. Our task is not to collect these pieces or find a new identity in this world. Now we must think that 'I am the world and the world is I'. We need to get rid of the modern world in which we are alienated⁷⁴

Thus it was imagined that personal freedom led directly to freedom of the masses through the revolutionary movement. Of course, it was not so in the real world, but inside the barricaded campus they could, for a moment, imagine it as a liberated commune.

Saishu Satoru, one of the leaders of Tokyo University *Zenkyoto* recalled his time inside the barricade:

[We] made objection to everything. We barricaded ourselves in. There, we were reading comics, playing the guitar, lying around. We exemplified 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat' and stopped studying and gave up the prospect of a good job. We were trying to drop out. There were signs of the germination of a counter culture, but our future was not visible, our value system became relative and confused.⁷⁵

In art academies, the students' struggles turned towards the fundamental question of their being: was there really any need for art education, or even artist or art itself? In

⁷³ Yamamoto, Yoshitaka *Kogekiteki chisei no fukken* (Restoration of aggressive intelligence) (Accessed March 6, 2014).

⁷⁴ Nagasaki, Hiroshi. 'Zenkyoto' (*Jokyo* magazine, Aug.-Sep. 2009) p.33.

⁷⁵ Saishu, Satoru. Reprinting of NHK Educational TV View • Point 'Zenkyoto and Disorder of Values' Aug. 17, 2004. (Accessed May 6 2014).

1969 at Tama Art University, Hori Kosai, who organized *Bikyoto* ('Art Joint-Struggle'), wrote:

[S]o-called cultural space can swallow anything and spit it out as 'art'. There, anything is accepted and its value relativized. Whatever space, expression, and value we try to create will be co-opted into this void unless we question and deny the basis of our artistic expression.⁷⁶

While being aware of his privileged position as an art student or artist, Hori insisted that only by consciously choosing the label of 'artist', did it become possible for individuals to have a positionality and [the ability to] destroy the system from within. In 1968 he wrote an agitation, 'Artists, awake!'

We have been fighting as 'artists' – a name we chose as a negative medium.
We will fight against the modern rationalism by destruction of the power structure of the art establishment!
We will destroy *Nitten*, *Mainichi-ten*, and other juried exhibitions, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tokyo Biennale, Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art and Osaka Expo!

(Reprinted in *Bijutsu Techo* Sep. 1969)

With this call for destruction, the students managed to bring *Nissenbi* (The Association of Commercial Artists) to dissolve itself, but they could not do much damage to the art education system itself. Perhaps the fact that they chose to fight as 'artists' ultimately limited their struggle to within the confines of 'art'. Hori later said that, in retrospect, perhaps all they had needed was a bomb to physically destroy the museum.⁷⁷

Nichigei Zenkyoto ('Nihon University Art College Co-struggle') was one of the most radical of all the art academy groups. As *Nichigei* was the only art college within an actual university (others such as Musashino and Tama called themselves art universities, but were in fact art academies) *Nichigei Zenkyoto* cooperated with students of other Nihon University faculties. Nihon University Art College had strong cinema and photography departments, and their students (and graduates) made remarkable documentations of the struggle from behind the barricades.⁷⁸ This use of

⁷⁶ Hori, Kosai. "*Nichijo no Kaitai to Kakutoku* (Deconstruction and acquisition of the everyday life)". *Bijutsu-techo* (Feb.1972): p. 49.

⁷⁷ Hori, Kosai. *Ibid*: p. 50.

⁷⁸ These films are; '*Nichidaitoso*' (Nihon University struggle), '*Nichidaitoso-2*' both by Nihon University Zenkyoto Film group 1968, and '*Shisha yo kitarite waga tairo o tate*' (The dead, come and cut off my retreat) by Goup Vision 1969.

‘new’ media made those art students an integral part of the wider struggle. Their barricade, constructed by architecture and sculpture students, was legendary in its sturdiness. (Fig. 23) Ishii Kyoji said, “I went to Tokyo University and was astonished by the flimsiness of their barricade, whereas at Nihon University Art Dept, they showed true artisanship and made an extremely strong barricade.”⁷⁹

At Nihon University, a new style of independent seminar called ‘Freedom Union’ was formed. It had not only students but also workers and citizens from outside the university as union members, and they directly hired the lecturers they wanted using union funds. The lecture themes were not compartmentalized by faculty, but were chosen to question education as a whole. Lectures were not one-way, but instead were followed by discussions, and each theme had five to ten consecutive lectures.⁸⁰ This seems to be one of the few attempts to open up new possibilities in Japanese university education, and later a similar experiment would be conducted at Bigakkō. Unfortunately, the Nihon University struggle was ultimately crushed by a large police deployment, supported by hired thugs, and this experiment was terminated.

At Tama Art University in Tokyo – barricaded in 1969 and then subject to a lock-out of students by the school authorities – some professors, including Hariu Ichiro and Saito Yoshishige, conducted their own independent seminars on and off campus in support of protesting students. However, the ‘ordinary’ (non-political) students realized that these lectures would not be counted as course credits, and ceased to attend them. Saito, a prominent artist who was 65 at that time, continued his seminar outside the campus and quit after the school was ‘normalized’. He held his seminar at B-zemi in Yokohama in 1970, and his students at Tama became Mono-ha artists and B-zemi school teachers (both are discussed later in this chapter), but Saito’s independent seminar should not be mistaken for one of the classes of B-zemi.

⁷⁹ Ishii, Kyoji, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 15 December 2010.

⁸⁰ Hariu, Ichiro. “*Barikedo no naka no geijutsu* (Art on the barricade)” *Bijutsu-techo* (September 1969) pp.162-163.

In 1969, with the submission of the *Daigakuho* legislation ('Temporary Expedient for University Management', which entitled the Minister of Education to close down universities unable to control the 'confusion') to the Diet, university authorities took a harder line with protesting students. In January 1969, an 8,500-strong riot police troop was summoned to remove students from the barricaded Yasuda Hall in Tokyo University, and after a day and half of battle all the students were arrested. The affair was televised and became a national spectacle. (Fig. 24) Other universities followed this example and, one by one, barricades were removed. *Zenkyoto* student activists were locked out, arrested, and later quietly dismissed from the universities. In most universities, there was no real reform or change. After the radical elements were removed and the destroyed classrooms refurbished, they re-opened just as before. Some students and high school graduates saw the whole process and, now disillusioned, sought for alternatives.

2.3 Mono-ha and B-zemi

The most noted event in the Japanese art world of 1968 was the emergence of Mono-ha ('School of things').⁸¹ In October of that year, Sekine Nobuo created a huge hole in the ground and piled up the excavated dirt in the same cylindrical shape next to the hole. (Fig. 25) This work, entitled 'Phase – Mother Earth', is considered as the initial work of Mono-ha. 'Mono' means 'thing' or 'material', and the group's aim was simply to bring 'things' together – as far as possible in an unaltered state – drawing attention to the interdependent relationships between these things and the space surrounding them. In their total refusal to interact with the materials, one might see the influence of *Zenkyoto*'s *Jiko hitei* (self-denial) of the role of artist – but then, they still exhibited those 'materials' as artworks and themselves as artists. Perhaps their approach was more the mark of a certain cynicism or resignation; of artists disengaging with the society and retreating into 'pure' art. Sekine's work received recognition and awards from the art establishment and similar works started to dominate the elite galleries and museums from 1969 well into the 1970s. A phrase

⁸¹ There seems to be a renewed interest in Mono-ha in the West. See 'Requiem for the Sun – The Art of Mono-ha' ed. Mika Yoshitake (Los Angeles: Blum & Poe gallery, 2012).

often used to mock the art world of the 1970s was: 'If you are not Mono-ha, you are not an artist.'⁸²

While Tokyo's Shinjuku district was burning with anti-war riots (Fig26), this cool, cerebral, and formalistic art was fêted as a new trend in the Japanese art world. It was not that there was any lack of art that engaged with the heated political situation of that time, but those works tended to be outside the confinement of gallery walls. Street performance by *Zero Jigen* ('Zero Dimention'), the tent theater of *Jokyo Gekijo* ('Situation Theatre'), *Butoh* dance by Hijikata Tatsumi, and pop art posters by Yokoo Tadanori all keenly reflected the mayhem and turbulence of the era (Fig. 27, 28, 29, 30), but this *Angura* (underground) culture was not considered equal to the fine art of high culture. In 1970, even these *Angura* artists were mobilized and co-opted into Osaka Expo '70. Vlasta Chihakova, a Czech art historian who resided in Japan during the 1960s, wrote:

Student protest was raging in the streets of Tokyo. At the same time, planning of the Osaka Expo as a festival of the new technology was on the way. In the middle of this confusion, the élite artists were talking about 'harmony' with the society in purely theoretical terms. In their attitude, they were totally apolitical.⁸³

Although most of the artists of Mono-ha had been students of Saito's seminar during the lock-out at Tama Art University, the struggle on the campus was barely reflected – if at all – in their artworks, and those were the artists who became teachers of B-zemi (1967 – 2004) an alternative art school established by Kobayashi Akio. Kobayashi had visited several art schools in the USA in the early 1960s and tried to introduce their western 'workshop' style education to Japan. An advertisement for the school in *Bijutsu techo* said:

'B-zemi School (Fujimi-cho Atelier)

We offer a basic seminar on contemporary art. We re-organized the existing art school curriculum and made it extremely compact.

The one-year, twice-a-week course offers you to know all the information and skills that need to be acquired and prepares you to shake off ordinary thinking to leap forward.'⁸⁴

⁸² Sakagami, Shinobu '*Mono-ha no Gaien*' (Outskirt of Mono-ha), originally published as an essay for Tokorozawa Biennale, 2009. (accessed 27 May 2014).

⁸³ Vlasta Chihakova "*What we left behind in the 1960s*" *Bijutsu techo* (July 1973) p.212.

⁸⁴ Advertisement page of *Bijutsu techo* (September 1969) p.233.

B-zemi teachers were: Lee U-fan, an artist whose theories guided Mono-ha; Fujieda Akio, a formalist art critic; Sekine Nobuo; sculptor Koshimizu Susumu; and other Mono-ha-related artists. B-zemi was a contemporary of, and often put on a par with, Bigakkō. However, most early Bigakkō students strongly objected to any confusion of Bigakkō with B-zemi. One ex-student commented:

[T]hose who wanted to become professional artists went to B-zemi. It was recognized by art scene insiders as the foremost of contemporary art schools, but we at Bigakkō looked down on B-zemi as something really predictable. It taught the techniques of contemporary art, whereas Bigakkō was something else – it is hard to say what [Bigakkō] was, but it was definitely not something that could be programmed and taught in the way B-zemi did.⁸⁵

B-zemi was unique in concentrating on the ‘how-to’ of contemporary art, and offered an alternative to the more conservative art academies of the time. It was innovative in its methodology, but it was not radical in its founding philosophy. While Bigakkō questioned the very notion of art in the modern age, and modernism itself, B-zemi seemed to have no qualms about placing the utmost value on the ‘newest’ contemporary art practice. While Bigakkō offered classes and lectures on varying (and sometimes contradictory) themes and methodologies – from ancient Indian philosophy to conceptualism, the curriculum of B-zemi was streamlined and uniform in its artistic style (minimalistic installation) and its belief in a linear progress of art and art history. A pioneer as it was in its educational style, B-zemi firmly existed within a conventional idea of art education. Minemura Toshiaki, who visited B-zemi stated:

There was fundamental contradiction in their belief in Art as the individual expression of artists and the communality of a school. The works of students all resembled existing style of the teachers of Mono-ha. In their pursuit of the ‘newest’, they inevitably come to be trapped in the confinement of contemporary art.⁸⁶ (Fig31)

⁸⁵ Kosaka, Mayu. Interview with Shimada. 5 March 2011.

⁸⁶ Minemura, Toshiaki “*Fujimicho atelier*” *Bijutsu-techo* (June 1971) pp. 89 and 93.

CHAPTER 3: The Making of Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō (1969-1971)

3.1 Introduction

It is probably impossible at this distance in time to gain anything like a full picture of why Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō came into being. Some of the founding figures are no longer alive, and much of the school's early documentation has been lost. That said, the previous reluctance of 'pioneers' of Bigakkō to talk about their role in what some felt had been a 'failure' seems to have diminished. Through extensive interviews I have been able to build up a better understanding of the 'who, why, and how' of Bigakkō's foundation.

3.2 Founding Bigakkō

[After Tokyo University Yasuda Hall occupation had fallen] Suddenly, we felt like we were in an air-pocket. We felt there was no use in thinking of the future, of the world. [...] We could not create anything new, and were to 'drop out' and 'eradicate ourselves'. At the same time, technology, business, and bureaucracy were running like a machine and bringing about a world in which we had no role anymore...⁸⁷ (Saishu Satoru, Tokyo University *Zenkyoto* leader)

Bigakkō started in February 1969, shortly after the fall of Yasuda Lecture Hall of Tokyo University *Zenkyoto*. The founding members of Gendaishicho-sha-Bigakkō were of the 1960 Anpo generation –or older – and were not directly involved in the student movement of 1968. Ishii said though he sympathized with the students, he had no illusions about the imminent changes and revolution some of the students envisioned. Gendaishicho-sha, with its publication of Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg, was often considered as an opinion leader or ideological vanguard of the *Zenkyoto* movement – and indeed many radical students were ardent readers of Gendaishicho-sha books. However, Ishii insisted that they never published books catering solely to *Zenkyoto* students. Unlike other 'left-wing' publishers, Gendaishicho-sha's catalogue did not consist exclusively of political theory. After Kawani joined as an editor in 1967, the company published more art-related books, such as Nakamura's monograph '*Boenkyo kara no Kokuji* (Announcement from a Telescope)', Kara Juro's (the director of Red Tent Theater) first collection of a play and essays

⁸⁷ Saishu, Satoru. "*Toso to gakumon – tadayou watashi e* (Struggle and study- towards the floating 'self')". From the series: *Memories of the 20th Century 1969-75 Rengo Sekigun-Okami no jidai* (Era of United Red Army-Wolf). (Tokyo:1999) p.18.

'*Koshimaki Osen* (Osen the Underskirt)' in 1968 and Hosoe Eiko's famous photo book '*Kamaitachi*' on the *Butoh* guru Hijikata Tatsumi in 1969. (Fig. 32, 33, 34). These were cutting edge artists who were gaining recognition among the leading critics and writers of the time such as Takiguchi Shuzo, Shibusawa Tatsuhiko and Mishima Yukio. Their anti-modern, primeval and sometimes grotesque expression was antithesis to the mainstream of art, theater and dance, and was enthusiastically embraced by the young audience.

Ishii was a keen observer of the time. Seeing the stagnation of political thought and activism, he found possibilities in art and education. Perhaps with *Jiritsu Gakkō* as a prototype, Ishii tried anew the idea of nurturing autonomous minds – this time not with political theory and lectures but with art and physical work. Nakamura said:

I think Ishii tried to challenge the post-'68 situation by re-introducing art as a tool for quiet reflection on the internal, and for changes from within. From the beginning, I think Ishii considered Bigakkō not just as an institution for art but also as a movement, where political and artistic activism, thoughts and philosophy were discussed, practiced and realized [...] at the time [when] everything seemed to be sliding down into the bottomless void we [at Bigakkō] dared to dig our heels in, to stop and think inwardly.⁸⁸

A radical publishing company was starting an art school – it was a major event for the young readers of Gendaishicho-sha books. When later asked "Why an art school?" Ishii simply said "I wanted an anti-Stalinist, anti-Imperialist art school".⁸⁹ With that he was anticipating not just a school with an 'oppositional' stance, but also a place to nurture free imagination, unspoilt by pre-existing aesthetics and structures. He claimed he had little knowledge of contemporary art *per se*, but was interested in the process of art-making (such as Kobatake's sharpening of cutting tools). Suyama Ikuro, who was an editor at Gendaishicho-sha at the time of starting Bigakkō, said that there was a 'bug' inside Ishii's consciousness whose burning desire for direct action could not be contained by book publishing alone. His involvement in the de Sade case and various political movements and organizations throughout the 1960s was a manifestation of this desire, and Bigakkō was an aspect of it.⁹⁰ When Kawani,

⁸⁸ Nakamura Hiroshi, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Tokyo, 24 June 2010.

⁸⁹ Ishii Kyoji, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Tokyo, 15 December 2010.

⁹⁰ Suyama, Ikuro "Gendaishicho-sha toiu senkou (A flash of light named Gendaishicho-sha)", *ARENA* vol. 14 (Nagoya: 2012) p.319.

who had been involved in Hi Red Center, the 1,000 yen note case, and who was an advocate of artistic direct action joined Gendaishicho-sha, Ishii's 'bug' found a new outlet in art.

Bigakkō literally means 'Bi (Beauty) Gakkō (School)'. 'Gakkō' was by 1969, however, an almost despised term, for in the era of student revolt 'schools' were to be destroyed. Bigakkō dared to call itself 'Gakkō' even though it was not even a government-certified school. It intended to bring back the idea – anachronistic to many eyes – of a school as a place of direct, intense interaction between teachers and students. In the 1969 inaugural brochure (Fig. 35), *kihon rinen* (basic principles) were set out:

- a. We position Bigakkō as the best device to comprehensively intervene in contemporary aesthetics and ethics.
- b. The Bigakkō curriculum is primarily concerned with 'Tewaza' ('handwork skills'), and training through a close relationship between teachers and students. Students are to acquire the teachers' aesthetic ideas.
- c. Therefore, if we find no appropriate teacher, there will be no class.

Kawani was responsible for selecting teachers. From his previous involvement in Hi-Red Center, *Keisho* magazine, and the 1000 yen banknote case, he had extensive connections among cutting edge artists and intellectuals. Bigakkō opened a pilot program in February 1969 with workshops in painting by Nakamura and by Nakanishi in drawing, with 15 students in each class. Imaizumi taught *Hyogen-ron* ('theory of expression') for both classes. In September of that year Bigakkō opened other 'technical' workshops – design, wood carving and mask-making, miniature drawing, copying of classic artworks, perspective drawing and pen drawing. In April 1970 Bigakkō relocated to its current premises in the Jinbōcho district, and added two more technical workshops: Okabe Tokuzo's silkscreen printing, and Kano Mitsuo's etching classes. Also added was an Art Workshop taught by three teachers in rotation: Akasegawa Genpei, Kikuhata Mokuma, and Matsuzawa Yutaka. As there was only one large room for all these workshops, each was held once a week from 1pm to 9pm. The classroom floor was covered with 80 *tatami* straw mats and the (c.115 m²) space could be divided with black and white curtains. Both students and

teachers sat or lay on the floor, using boxes designed by Nakanishi and Nakamura as workbenches. (Fig. 36)

In addition to these workshops, there were morning lectures by scholars and writers whose books were published by Gendaishicho-sha. The list of lectures given in the first year, 1969-70, included:

- Shibusawa Tatsuhiko (writer and translator of de Sade) 'Eros, Civilization and the End of the World'
- Tanemura Suehiro (lecturer in German symbolism) 'Alchemy'
- Kara Juro (playwright and the director of *Jokyo Geijo* theater troop) '*Kaden-sho* (Noh methodology)'
- Matsuyama Shuntaro (scholar of Indian philosophy) 'Symbolism in India'
- Hijikata Tatsumi (Butoh dancer) 'On the Body'
- Ideguchi Hiroyuki (translator of French philosophy) 'Atheism and Land: after Bataille and Leiris'
- Akiyama Kiyoshi (anarchist poet) 'Post-World War 1 Avant-garde Art'⁹¹

Some students came to Bigakkō only to listen to these lectures. Minami Shinbo, a first year student and now a well-known writer/illustrator, said:

[W]hat I really liked about the lectures was that they never dumbed down the subjects for the students. A lot of things were beyond my knowledge, but I tried very hard to note things down and [later] looked them up. That was the first time I seriously wanted to learn.⁹²

3.3 The Concept of *Tewaza*

[Bigakkō is] a workshop to cultivate and challenge the unborn expression - an apparatus of perpetual motion between teachers and students

- a place where hands whisper and materials murmur
- a workshop with close observation of technical rigor
- a forge to discipline thoughts and to release primitive impulses
- an organ to re-examine the inherent existence of art and artists [...]

(1969 Bigakkō manifesto by Kawani Hiroshi, the director of planning)

One of the key concepts of Bigakkō was its emphasis on *Tewaza* ('te' hand; 'waza' skill). Although this may appear rather an outdated idea, it was precisely what was missing in Japanese art academies.

The National Academy of Art was established in 1887. Initially, only *Nihon-ga* (traditional Japanese painting) was taught, but Western-style painting (or 'Yo-ga') was started in 1896 by Japanese artists who had recently returned from Europe

⁹¹ A note compiled by Ishii at the interview on 15 December 2010.

⁹² Minami Shinbo, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 8 July 2010.

having studied the French impressionist style. As those Japanese returnee artists had little classic training, there were no lessons in classic technique at the Academy. The students learned by imitating the teacher's paintings, which themselves often owed a great stylistic debt to French impressionism.⁹³ Later, as the *Yo-ga* art scene became dominated by a number of '*Kaiha*' groups (or 'salons', with large memberships of professional and amateur artists) the leading artists of these *Kaiha* became professors of the Academy.⁹⁴ (Fig. 37) Even in the mid-1950s, when Nakanishi Natsuyuki was a student at the Academy, the dominant styles there were still largely late-19th / early 20th century 'modernisms' such as Post-impressionism and Expressionism. Hayashi Takeshi (1887-1978) (Fig. 38) was a popular painter and a star professor at the National Academy from 1952 to 1963. An artist who attended the Academy at the same time as Nakanishi recalled the (non-) education she received there:

In those days, the first semester was devoted to Greek and Roman plaster statue drawing (which we also had to do for the entrance examination.) Then we moved to human model drawing in the morning and lecture classes in the afternoon. In the 4th year, we were finally allowed to do our own works. I have to say education at the Academy was worthless. The professors did not know much about basics. Prof. Hayashi was self-taught, with no formal education. [...] Every Friday, a professor came to do a critique – merely a word, but we were very nervous about it. Prof. Hayashi said something short like "This line is alive" or "Good forms" – whatever that meant. The students, who had already started their own work, paid no attention to what those old professors said. There was no technical advises. No basic trainings so you had to learn on your own. So you were free to do anything, but most were doing paintings for *Kaiha* exhibitions. If you got into one of them (usually through certain professors recommendation for making similar paintings), you could enter the *Gadan* (art world). Some refused this kind of art. They were likes of Kudo (Tetsumi), Nakanishi and Takamatsu (Jiro)⁹⁵

Vigorous technical training, close communication with professors who were practicing artists, and theoretical discussion were all missing from the existing art academies.

But Bigakkō was not just supplementing what was lacking at the Academy. What Bigakkō aimed for with their insistence on *Tewaza* was to consciously go

⁹³ For the history of the National Academy, see *Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Hyaku nen shi* (100 year history of the National Academy of Art, Tokyo). (Tokyo: Gyosei shuppan) Nov. 2003.

⁹⁴ A caricature of the *Kaiha* scene in *Geijutsu Shincho* magazine supplement 'Map of Art Scene' (January 1957: fig. 2) shows *Nitten* (a national juried art exhibition) at the top of the world, surrounded by the clouds of various *Kaiha* such as *Nika* (a modernist group), *Issui-kai* (naturalism), and followed by post-war groups such as *Nihon-Bijutsu Kai* (affiliated to the Japan Communist Party), the Modern Art Association, and young individual 'abstract' and 'new realism' artists on the ground.

⁹⁵ An interview of an artist who wish to remain anonymous. Tokyo, 28 October 2011.

against the modernist current in search of the ‘radicals’ (in the word’s original sense of ‘root’) and the primeval energy from which revolutionary creation could be born. What Ishii saw in *Tewaza* was not merely the pursuit of good artisan skills. Rather, he thought of it as a tool for acquiring ‘embodiment’ – the understanding and realization of ideas through rigorous, disciplined physical experience. To this end, Kobatake Hiroshi, a sculpture teacher at Bigakkō and graduate of the National Academy himself, re-introduced some of the traditional techniques once taught at the Academy, but long discarded. *Teita* (Fig. 39) were samples or models of some carving technique. Kobatake smuggled out plaster copies of the original *Teita* that were stored away at the Academy, and had the students of Bigakkō copy them. Kobatake class description in the brochure of Bigakkō in 1969 stated:

Art is the last realm of magic in the contemporary world. We can reach there only through physical exercise. We [study] *Teita* till our bodies remember the technique.⁹⁶

What Kobatake indicated was that the exercise was not meant to produce master craftsmen of traditional Japanese art – after all, techniques change according to the time. It was the bodily experience that students should master.

Takahiko Okada, an art critic who visited the first year classes of Bigakkō, noted there was a sense of ethics in their attitude toward art. He wrote:

Their concern with ethics is what differentiates Bigakkō from other art institutions. This attitude is an antithesis to the current mainstream art education and modernism. This ethical attitude, however, is alien to the reinforcement of a certain ideology [...] Bigakkō’s conception and operation definitely do not endorse such a fallacy. Besides, rigorous technical training itself – which is conducted in order to create imagination through close experience with materials – leaves no room for such delusions. Their emphasis on the universality of handwork skills may remind some of Bauhaus, but the atmosphere of Bigakkō reminds me of the Arts and Crafts movement of William Morris – not in the superficial similarity but in their attitudes. Morris’ ideal was not just making good products, but changing the society through development of an Art that was an expression of the pleasure of labour.⁹⁷

How the concept of *Tewaza* should be interpreted and realized in practice was up to each teacher. The artists who had atelier classes came up with their own unique

⁹⁶ Kobatake, Hiroshi, et al. “*Chokoku kyoiku no genjo* (Current situation of sculpture education)”. *Gendaichokoku* 42. (Sep. 1980): p. 4.

⁹⁷ Okada, Takahiko. “*Bigakkō-waza no shutoku ni gendaibijutsu no ariyo o saguru* (Bigakkō – Search for the existence of contemporary art through mastering skills)” *Bijutsu-techo* (June 1971): p. 99.

curriculum. As seen in the following description of each of the classes on offer, in addition to Nakamura and Kobatake's 'classical technique', atelier classes seem to have little direct relation to the idea of *Tewaza*, but Kawani and Imaizumi, who were responsible for choosing the teachers, were fully aware of each teacher's work and methodology. Just as Nakanishi demonstrated his 'smoke drawing' at a *Jiritsu Gakkō* meeting to say "I brought what I do, now show what you brought", Kawani and Imaizumi expected different elements to collide and so generate energy and intensity. They did not choose teachers who suited the idea of *Tewaza* or tried to force it as a fixed methodology, but chose ones who could bring interesting interpretations of it. As Yoshida Yoshie stated:

It may sound contradictory to Bigakkō's insistence on *Tewaza*, but I think what Bigakkō's educational emphasis was on the theorization of art rather than its methodology. Bigakkō advocated that art practice needed to have a philosophical and theoretical backbone.⁹⁸

Yoshida argued that modern art education in Japan had always been about form and methodology. Every new art movement in the West had been introduced to Japan, but most of time, the emphasis was on its formal style, rather than its philosophy. Bigakkō was to change that. Shirasawa Kiri, a student at Bigakkō in its second year, recalled that there was absolutely no fixed methodology. The teachers simply showed what they were doing as artists and then left the students to ask themselves 'Now what was that all about?'⁹⁹

3.4 Bigakkō classes: 1969-1975

Very little is known about what was done in the classes at Bigakkō in the early years, as there are few remaining records. Through interviews with former teachers and students, and some photographs and other materials they generously shared with me in the process, I have been able to establish the approach and programs of each atelier class and to reconstruct some of the exercises.

3.4.1 Nakamura Hiroshi's Atelier – Painting (1969-1970)

In Nakamura Hiroshi's painting workshop, he adopted 'obsolete', 'classical' oil painting techniques such as *grisaille*, *chiaroscuro* and *sfumato*. This may seem retrogressive or merely academic to the western mind, but Nakamura's intention was

⁹⁸ Yoshida, Yoshie, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Tokyo, 14 December 2010.

⁹⁹ Shirasawa, Kiri, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 10 July 2011.

to use western classical technique as antithetical to the modernism that dominated Japanese art academies. Nakamura claimed that since western art was introduced in the 1870s, the Japanese had always loved expressionistic paintings in which artists poured out their inner sentiment with bold strokes, heavy texture and atmospheric colours. A few artists tried to establish realist painting as a genre in Japan, but had not succeeded.¹⁰⁰ And without a strong realist tradition at the core – as there was in Europe – Japanese modern art had nothing to either build on or rebel against, only shifting from one style to another. Nakamura was not trying to establish that tradition singlehandedly at Bigakkō, but he was trying to give the students there a structure. In his class, he tried to revitalize the tradition of realism with contemporary themes. In interview he reflected:

Anachronistic means outdated, but it can also mean transcending the time. Techniques may change in line with the time, but what I was teaching at Bigakkō was not to conform to the time, rather, it was an objection to the time. Perhaps I should call it ‘Sur-chronism’, just as Sur-realism means transcending the real.¹⁰¹

As for the contemporary themes, each student was requested to make a ‘memory book’ about his or her life experience, using writing, drawings, photographs or a combination of these. (See Chapter 3 Sakakibara Shigeko’s memory book) Students were to distill from their ‘memory book’ a theme that should be personal and at the same time historical. This may sound like the making of a typical Surrealist painting, in which the artist’s ‘inner-landscape’ was depicted in a realistic manner. However, Nakamura denied this:

Surrealism is generally believed to be about bringing your subconscious out – usually in forms of strange dreams or fantasies. I disapprove of that. A painting is an absolute confirmation of external things, which are then internalized through the process of physical work. For me, painting is not about bringing out your preexisting ‘inner concept’, but transforming the ‘outside’ to ‘inside’, which again becomes ‘outside’ as an object of art (painting).¹⁰²

For Nakamura, who became known in the 1950s for his reportage-style paintings with social themes, such as ‘*Sunagawa go-ban*’ (Fig. 40), and yet claimed the absolute autonomy of painting from political dogma, as in his declaration ‘Tableau never self-criticize’ (1956), a painting should come out of the conflict between

¹⁰⁰ Nakamura Hiroshi, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Tokyo, 10 December 2012.

¹⁰¹ Nakamura Hiroshi, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Tokyo, 10 December 2012.

¹⁰² Nakamura Hiroshi, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Tokyo, 10 December 2012.

‘outside’ (the political, objective) and ‘inside’ (the personal, subjective) and establish itself as an autonomous entity independent of even the artist himself.

In order to achieve this ‘absolute confirmation of the external’, one needed to possess representational skills. One of the first exercises for Nakamura’s students at Bigakkō was to copy a black and white photograph of the Mona Lisa. This was radically different from the charcoal drawing of Greek statues they were used to doing at art academies. It is worth quoting Nakamura at length on this point:

Students who had never drawn before have this fear. In order to get rid of it, I made them copy the Mona Lisa in pencil. The most important thing was to start from the details, which was opposite to what they taught at art academies – they taught starting with rough outline and then go on to details. The students were to start with the right eye of Mona Lisa with miniscule lines. As the copy was quite small, if they were very careful they couldn’t make too many misjudgments. To make them extremely careful, I made them use 2H (hard) pencils and have them sharpened so that 2cm of the lead was exposed with extremely sharp ends. If you used too much pressure, the lead would break, but if too little, you could not leave any mark. They had to learn the right pressure by trial and error. Then they were to figure out the distance from the right eye to the left using the size of the right eye as the standard, then to the nose, mouth, and contours of the face, hair, down to the chest and hands, then to the background. With so many restrictions, they really had to concentrate, and the result was surprisingly good. It didn’t matter if they had skills or not. Only the level of concentration mattered. After this, seeing they could actually draw, they shed their fear of drawing.¹⁰³

The sample products of this class that I gathered from ex-students prove him right - despite the different backgrounds – some were already art academy graduate, others were engineering student or high school dropouts – their results were quite uniform and ‘realistic’. (Fig. 41)

Sano Shiro, who was Nakamura’s student in 1973 and now a well-known actor, recalled that Nakamura was very strict about the methodology. When a student was using bold strokes to ‘get the atmosphere’ or ‘3-dimensionality’, Nakamura barked at him to “just concentrate on the APPEARANCE and nothing else!” Sano later went on to act on films and one director told him not to bring in unnecessary emotions and characters into his lines, but just “say the line as it appears on the

¹⁰³ Nakamura Hiroshi, interview with Shimada and Roxby, Tokyo, 10 December 2012.

book". Sano said that the reality should appear when everything unnecessary was shed away, which he learned from Nakamura's teaching.¹⁰⁴

3.4.2 Nakanishi Natsuyuki's Atelier – Drawing (1969-1970)

Rotating Portrait Project

Nakanishi had a 'drawing' class focusing on portraiture, but it was far from the standard academic idea of the genre. At that time Nakanishi was collaborating with Butoh dancer Hijikata Tatsumi, and felt that this experience made him think that an artist as a teacher was akin to a choreographer or a theater director.¹⁰⁵ Nakanishi's class was based on carefully planned week-by-week exercises that came with detailed instructions. Although it was a portrait drawing class, each class started with some performative exercise to experience the space and each other's bodily presence within it. Nakanishi was then in a transitional period between the performance/action of Hi Red Center and painting, and his curriculum reflects his own struggle to let painting 'emerge'. He later claimed that it was not that he had abandoned performance; rather, he realized that everything – action, environment, the world – had already been contained within painting.¹⁰⁶

For Nakanishi's class, Bigakkō advertised for 15 students to make up five groups each of three members. Each group member was to make portraits of the others as well as a self-portrait. Altogether one group was to produce 9 portrait drawings of the human face. Nakanishi said that the important thing, for him, was the experience of previously unfamiliar people coming together in an unfamiliar space. They had come to this new school, and the only thing they had in common was the space they were occupying and the air they were breathing. In order to make the students conscious of that, some kind of action was required, which may be labeled 'performance.' The first thing they did was depicted in a text and diagram titled:

Breath of 15 plus 1 members and light of the drawing room

Process of the action

1 Buy five of the largest cellophane paper sheets you can find.

Hang them at each corner [of the space] and at the center.

¹⁰⁴ Sano, Shiro at a talk show for 'Japanese avant-garde theater poster' exhibition at Atsuko Barou gallery, Tokyo, 26 April 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Nakanishi Natsuyuki, interview with Shimada and Roxby, Ito, 11 July 2010.

¹⁰⁶ Nakanishi, interview with Shimada and Roxby, Ito, 11 July 2010.

2 Touch the paper. Breathe on the paper.
Cut one of the strings that hang the paper.
Likewise, cut the strings of the other three sheets of paper
Paste them together at the center to make a large sheet of paper

3 Fold the large sheet of paper into an Origami crane bird.

4 In this way, 'this place', in which we will make drawings together, is folded.

Spread the wings of the crane.
Notice there is a hole in the center similar to an anus.
Hung the crane from the ceiling with a string.

Insert a glass tube into the 'anus' of the crane.
A person lying on the floor takes this tube and breathes into the body of the crane.
His lungs and folded 'this place' are reconnected through a glass tube¹⁰⁷
(Fig.42)

This was followed by an exercise to examine the definition of 'face' – what a face was and where it started and ended. One exercise was for two students to face each other and put a finger into each other's mouth to feel the inner contour of the mouth, (Fig. 43) and the other was drinking milk and feeling the flow of it from the mouth to throat. (Fig. 44)

These exercise were planned to painstakingly erase the pre-existing notions of 'space', 'light', 'face', 'images', 'drawing' etc. In other words, these were exercises to question and confirm the world around 'yourself' with a new eye. Nakanishi said that for him, the most important aspect of the curriculum was how he, who once denied painting, could restore painting. He said the exercises in the curriculum might resemble performance, but they were parts of the process of making a painting emerge, and he intended the class to be an exercise of painting theory. Perhaps not all of the students understood it and one complained that he was 'used' to be a part of Nakanishi's art project. But Kawani said 'our intention was to make the second, and the third Nakanishi and Nakamura. Only after totally submerged yourself in their artistic theory, you might able to find your own practice – or you might never be able to resurface from the experience...' ¹⁰⁸ Indeed, one ex-student recalled that these exercise - something he had never experienced before – opened his eyes to think anew about what art was, but at the same time, he was

¹⁰⁷ Nakanishi, Natsuyuki. "Junkansuru shozo ga no keikaku (A plan for rotating portraits)" *Bijutsu techo* (September 1975) p. 69.

¹⁰⁸ Okada, Takahiko. "Bigakkō-waza no shutoku ni gendaibijutsu no ariyo o saguru (Bigakkō- search for the existence of contemporary art through mastering skills)". *Bijutsu-techo* (June 1971): p. 98.

totally lost and could not escape from Nakanishi's influence for a long time. He eventually found his own way and is still a practicing artist.¹⁰⁹

Re-enactment of Nakanishi exercises (see attached CD)

As an ex-student stated, these exercises had to be experienced in order to be fully understood. One exercise is for two students to draw as one, tying their left and right arms and closing their left and right eyes, and holding a long stick with a charcoal at the end. In this way the eye to hand coordination is partially disrupted and reveals the complexity of what students have assumed as natural and simple— seeing the object and drawing it. On one level, it is an exercise of re-learning the mechanism of seeing and drawing through physical experience, but on the other level, it was an exercise of communication without language. When I had a workshop at Nabeta Yasuo's 'Basic training' class in Bigakkō in December 2012, the students had difficulty starting to draw, as the pair was not allowed to communicate verbally and could not understand which part of the object the other was looking at and intending to draw. In case of some, one took initiative and the other followed, but in others, they somehow managed to reach a certain level of understanding through bodily communication. One student later sent me his thought:

It was incredible how X and I could accomplish that level of drawing. I mean for the first time in my life I was talking without saying a word out loud, I was literally talking towards her and listening to what she was trying to deliver back to me. Also I'm thinking how awkwardness between us eventually went away during the work because we had same kind of aim and attitudes towards heading for the same goal which is improving the quality of our drawing. About the workshop overall, this is a unique way to learn about life, people and yourself.¹¹⁰

Another exercise I re-enacted was a pair facing each other and putting a finger in the other's mouth. As no student wanted to do this and I could not force it as there is safety and ethics regulations now even at Bigakkō, I tried it with an artist friend and was amazed by the strange sensation. Nakanishi talked about "inner tactile sensation".

In 'Icon and Idea' by Herbert Read, he explained why the artists of the prehistoric cave drawings depicted animals so vividly realistic but human beings as abstracted stick figure. He argues that it was because they

¹⁰⁹ Ando, Yu, interview with Shimada. Saitama, 9 June 2013.

¹¹⁰ An email message to Shimada from one of the students, 20 December 2012.

recognized themselves through their inner tactile sensation. It freed me from the confinement of how to see the forms.¹¹¹

With the sensation of one's finger inside the other's and the other's in one's mouth, the boundary of inside/outside, self/others, passive/active sensation starts to blur. It is rather frustrating to explain this experience in words as indeed ex-students have said, one just has to do it to know it. This was Nakanishi's interpretation of *Tewaza* – acquiring knowledge through physical experience.

3.4.3 Bijutzu Enshu (Art Workshop) 1970-1971 (Rotating students among three teachers: Akasegawa, Matsuzawa, Kikuhata)

For this class, the students were divided into three groups with 30-35 each, and each group took classes with teachers rotating every three months. The order was Akasegawa-Matsuzawa-Kikuhata. As each teacher's teaching style was different, some students stayed with one teacher and refused to move on, while quite a few dropped out in the middle of the term. After a year, several students demanded an explanation from the administrator, and the students, the teachers and the administrators held a discussion. Imaizumi said their intention had been to generate agitation by mixing totally different and unorthodox elements, from which they hoped something new to emerge. It had been an experiment and they didn't foresee or expect any concrete results.¹¹²

Akasegawa Genpei's Class – Pictures and Letters

In April 1970, Akasegawa's appeal to the Supreme Court was dismissed, finalizing his conviction in the 1,000 yen banknote case. He received a three-month prison sentence, suspended for one year. Since the start of the trial in 1966, Akasegawa had devoted much time and thought to the case and ceased to make art other than illustrations and design works. When Imaizumi and Kawani asked him to teach at Bigakkō, he initially hesitated as he hated to talk in front of people. However, as Kawani and Imaizumi had worked for the defense team in the 1000 yen court case, he felt that he was in their debt and could not say no.¹¹³ He did one morning lecture

¹¹¹ Nakanishi Natsuyuki artist talk at Hi-Red Center retrospective, Shoto Museum, Tokyo, 2 March 2014.

¹¹² Shirasawa Kiri, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 14 August, 2012.

¹¹³ Akasegawa, Genpei. *Zenmen Jikyo* (Total confession) (Tokyo: Shobun-sha 2001) p.240.

in 1969, and agreed to teach the Art Workshop class in 1970. He continued to teach there for the next fifteen years.

After the 1,000 yen trial, Akasegawa's interest shifted from painting to printed material; perhaps this came about through the experience of determining the degree of 'real-ness' and 'false-ness' of a printed banknote during the trial. As soon as something is printed, it seems to gain greater reality or authenticity, as well as approval by authority. The Hi Red Center's 'Tokyo Cleaning Event' (1964) had an official-looking printed sign so that everyone obeyed and even thanked those involved for cleaning the Ginza streets. (Fig.45)

The issue of printed currency was still at the center of Akasegawa's interest. At Bigakkō, he instructed the students to draw a 1,000 yen note from memory. (Fig. 46) He didn't expect them to be able to draw it in detail, but their finished drawings fell drastically short of his expectation; they were nothing like the real 1000 note. One student could only write '1000 yen' in the middle of a blank rectangle. Akasegawa said:

Perhaps you think 'one should be able to do better than that', but once you try yourself, you know you can't. But in our daily lives, we are using the notes without any problem. On the frontline where the State and individuals confront one another, this illustrates very clearly how the State, using everyday life as its vanguard, penetrates through our bodies so smoothly.¹¹⁴

Kimura Takehisa, a graphic designer who taught at Bigakkō argued that paper currency was a symbolization of the State, and the design of the banknote, with its intricate geometric patterns to discourage counterfeit, and with juxtaposition of various images to abstract the State, functioned to inactivate people's imagination of the State. Just as the gold standard system was based on the prohibition of imagining anything more valuable, the design of the banknote was an artificial model of the State system that prohibits any free imagination.¹¹⁵ Akasegawa further compared the prohibition of making copies of the currency to the prohibition of pornography and

¹¹⁴ Akasegawa, Genpei. "*Sihonshugi riarizumu koza* (Capitalist realism course)" Bijutsu-techo, (July 1973) p.236.

¹¹⁵ Kimura, Tsunehisa. "*Sihonshugi riarizumu koza* (Capitalist realism course)" Bijutsu-techo, (July 1973) p.237.

debased images of the Emperor, and thus exposed the extent of the State control over people's psychology.¹¹⁶

There was no set curriculum in Akasegawa's class. Akasegawa showed and talked about what he had done and what he was interested in, such as the Hi Red Center events and the 1,000 yen case. He also taught lettering technique. At that time (just at the end of the 1,000 yen court case) he was in a stalemate as an artist and had to make a living doing lettering as a part-time job. One of the lettering exercises was to write 'HURRAH FOR THE POLICE! – We will do whatever we are told!' (Fig. 47) which he drew as an illustration for a weekly magazine in 1972 (after the United Red Army shoot-out with the police at Asama Sanso and internal killings)¹¹⁷ but which was not printed due to the editorial's self-censorship. According to Matsuda, Akasegawa's assistant, one student said "I have friends who were arrested and mistreated by the police. I can't write this." Matsuda Tetsuo replied as follows:

I understand your feeling, but what good is it now to say 'Death to the police'? Whatever you feel, the situation today is that we are inevitably forced to say 'hurrah for the police!' We need to face the current situation squarely in order to foresee the future.¹¹⁸

Akasegawa and Matsuda secretly called these students *Seiron-ha* (righteous theory faction).¹¹⁹ They were the ones who used fixed political expressions all too readily. They might be politically 'leftist', but culturally, they were revisionists blindly repeating existing phrases. Akasegawa instructed the students to speak 'not the printed words, but something more tangible – like something you can hold in your hand'¹²⁰ The lettering exercise was to forcibly make the students look at words with a fixed gaze rather than a glance, in order to make them imagine the hidden meanings beyond their appearance. As Akasegawa said, after all, the only way to

¹¹⁶ Akasegawa, Genpei. "*Sihonshugi riarizumu koza* (Capitalist realism course)" *Bijutsu-techo*, (July 1973) p. 237

¹¹⁷ Rengo-sekigun (United Red Army) killed 12 members in a mountain hideout in January to February 1972. See Steinhoff, P. *Shi e no ideorogii Nihon Sekigun-ha* (Japanese Red Army - ideology of death)

(Tokyo: Iwanami modern Paperback 2003).

¹¹⁸ Matsuda, Tetsuo. *Henshukyo Jidai* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobo 1994) p.162.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p.163.

¹²⁰ Adachi, Masao and Akasegawa Genpei. "*Shisoteki hanzaisha no yugekisenso* (Ideological perverts' guerrilla warfare)" *Eigahihyo*, Aug. 1973. Reprinted in Adachimasao Zeronen, *Eiga Geijutsu* (March 2000) p.85.

‘teach’ was not by giving instruction, but by showing students the raw materials they might otherwise not take a good look at.¹²¹

Kikuhata Mokuma's Class – Yamamoto Sakubei copy-mural painting

Kikuhata's art workshop class description of 1970 states:

This class aims to produce a large-scale mural based on about 400 pieces from over a thousand artworks by Yamamoto Sakubei, an elderly former miner who had been painting his life as a coal miner in Chikuho coalmines, altering the hardship into creative energy. Through this project, young people in their twenties will re-experience the history of the Chikuho coalmine – a former steppingstone of the development of modern capitalism in Japan – throughout the Meiji, Taisho and Showa eras. This exercise is to indicate the location of artistic theory in the future. We will focus our study on how Yamamoto's works, in the absence of academism and its dogmas, possess the element of protest against the state of contemporary art now.¹²²

Kikuhata was at first apprehensive about the notion of *Tewaza*, thinking it might bring out a certain fanatical desire for ‘purity’, on the part of the students, as well as self-indulgence. He realized soon that his fears were unfounded. However, Kikuhata reportedly informed Kawani that if Bigakkō agreed to let him make a mural of the paintings by Yamamoto Sakubei he would teach there. (Fig. 48) Kikuhata recalls in interview that until then whenever he talked about Sakubei's paintings to art people from Tokyo they looked down on them, saying these paintings are very poor quality, not art but rather mere storyboards for children. Kawani was different. He wanted to meet Sakubei himself and was very much impressed by his work. After a week it was agreed that they would provide a studio for Kikuhata's mural project at Bigakkō.¹²³

Yamamoto Sakubei had no formal art training at all, but Kikuhata saw something extraordinary in his drawings that transcended academic ‘technique’. Kikuhata talked about Sakubei's *te* (hand) in interview saying:

A hand that held a pickaxe was now holding a paintbrush, and painting a scene of him holding a pickaxe. Sakubei said he could not paint well, but he had something so much bigger and deeper. His paintings are pregnant with universality. The value of these paintings lies in their lack of technique in an ordinary sense.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ibid. p.88.

¹²² Kikuhata, Mokuma. *Sengo bijutsu to hangeijutsu* (Post-war Art and Anti-Art), (Fukuoka: Kaichōsha, 1994) p.242.

¹²³ Kikuhata Mokuma, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Fukuoka, 5 December 2012.

¹²⁴ Kikuhata Mokuma, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Fukuoka, 5 December 2012.

According to Kikuhata, the first purpose of making the mural was preservation, as Yamamoto's drawings on paper were stored in a library in Tagawa under rather poor conditions.¹²⁵ The second was their education value; Kikuhata informed the students that the only way to fully understand the value of Sakubei's art was to trace his creative process, step-by-step, with their own hands. The students went through this painstaking process for the whole year and produced nine large oil paintings that incorporated over 400 of Sakubei drawings. Most of the students had never used oil paints and Kikuhata had to teach the technique from scratch while students with some experience helped the ones without. They were to copy the drawings in oil on nine 200 *go* (about 260 x 200cm) canvases. The sequence and composition of the paintings were carefully planned. For example, the top part of a canvas was to show the above-ground work of the mine, and the lower part for those showing the underground work. Some elements of Yamamoto's drawings were enlarged and emphasized, but otherwise there were no alterations made, nor editing out of any images or words. After the compositions of the paintings were determined, with colour photographs of the drawings in one hand, students copied the outlines to twice the scale on the canvas. Then they coloured them in, again with the colour photographs in hand. They were divided into task groups so that some students specialized in particular tasks such as outlining, painting horses, or adding the words.¹²⁶

The studio was never locked and students came in and out whenever they had time. It was 1970, the year of another Anpo treaty renewal, and student demonstrations were raging outside in Shinjuku. Kikuhata recalled one student who came from the demonstration beaten by the police and drenched by water cannon. He stopped at the entrance, bowed to the studio, and went up onto the painting scaffold, still dripping with water. He was crying quietly as he painted. Kikuhata thought perhaps Sakubei's art encouraged and nursed the beaten student's mind. The paintings were depictions of hellish labour underground, but the students said they had fun painting them. Sakubei's paintings must have had something about them that was irresistible to the student activists.¹²⁷ (Fig. 49)

¹²⁵ The Sakubei drawings are now in collections of Tagawa City Museum of Coalmining History and Fukuoka prefecture University.

¹²⁶ Kikuhata Mokuma, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Fukuoka, 5 December 2012.

¹²⁷ Kikuhata Mokuma, interview with Shimada and Roxby. 5 December 2012.

When the paintings were completed, they had an exhibition in a Yotsuya gallery and invited Yamamoto Sakubei from Kyushu. Yamamoto came, sat in the middle of the students surrounded by the large paintings, drank and sang coalminers' songs together with the students. The paintings are now in the collection of Tagawa City Library in Kyushu, and Yamamoto Sakubei's coalmine drawings were designated as a Memory of the World by UNESCO in May 2010. (<http://www.y-sakubei.com/sakubei/>)

Matsuzawa Yutaka: The Final Art Thoughts Workshop

Given the marked difference (and, arguably, contradictions) between the class led by Matsuzawa Yutaka and those led by other Bigakkō teachers, it is useful to describe this class in some detail. Matsuzawa's class prospectus was set out below:

As I have been warning since 1961, the ignorance and mistakes of modern civilization have become increasingly evident. In the most sensitive area, a brave change of direction has started. If this misguided civilization can't change direction towards the Natural within, this century [and] humanity will be extinct by the year 2222.

We will develop the Final Art by mixing and changing the following 27 elements in each unit.

The 27 elements are:

- 1 Post-Minimalism
 - 2 Creativity
 - 3 Cosmos
 - 4 Mandala/esoteric Buddhism
 - 5 Eros/Thanatos
 - 6 Emptiness/Nothingness/Nil
 - 7 Science and Pseudo-science
 - 8 Futurology/Eschatology
 - 9 Information technology/Semantics
 - 10 Psychology/Sur-psychology
 - 11 Hippy/LSD
 - 12 Anarchism
 - 13 Freedom
 - 14 Utopia
 - 15 White round basic paintings collection book as the base material for creation and experimentation
 - 16 Imaginary museum
 - 17 Brainstorming
 - 18 Word mandala
 - 19 Pornography
 - 20 Braided code
 - 21 Science Fiction
 - 22 Dream recording
 - 23 Secret Societies
-

- 24 Psy experiments
- 25 Wooden flute
- 26 Chain poetry
- 27 Self-control experiment

This workshop has possibility of becoming a lasting commune of art thoughts, or of participating in other communes of the same kind.¹²⁸

As the eclectic mix of topics makes clear, this workshop class had absolutely nothing to do with *Tewaza*. Matsuzawa – considered a founding father of Japanese conceptual art – stopped making art objects of any kind in 1964.¹²⁹ His class curriculum took up a different subject each week; the students were to read about these, then one of them would make an oral presentation followed by class discussion. The very first exercise the students were asked to carry out was to ‘imagine a white circle in your head’. The next week, they were asked to imagine it a bit bigger, and the next week bigger still. By the end, the white circle should be ‘larger than the universe.’¹³⁰ (Fig. 50)

This class may appear contradictory to Bigakkō’s guiding principle, and indeed Ishii, Nakamura and Kikuhata all expressed their bewilderment when confronted with Matsuzawa’s purely conceptual work and curriculum.¹³¹ While Kobatake had said that the acquisition of skills was not in itself one of Bigakkō’s aims, Matsuzawa’s class disdained actual art-making altogether. The only concrete products of the class were language-based works – postcards, poems, pamphlets and books. Lee U-fan criticized this absence of the concrete object as ‘obsession with nihilism and death’ and ‘a mere ‘excuse for art by defeatists and escapists’ who could not face the reality of the world.’¹³²

But Lee’s dismissal of Matsuzawa’s advocacy of non-objective art may have been overly hasty. Matsuzawa had indeed called for ‘eradication of objects’, but this I argue was not a nihilistic gesture. Rather, it was a call for resistance against the prevailing materialism and environmental crisis. Far from being an ‘escapist’,

¹²⁸ Matsuzawa Yutaka ‘Final Art Thoughts Workshop’ description, Bigakko pamphlet, 1971, Kosaka Mayu collection, Tokyo.

¹²⁹ Matsuzawa Yutaka chronology, *Matsuzawa Yutaka: ψ no uchu* (Nagano: Suwagensha, 1985) p.233.

¹³⁰ Shirasawa Kiri, interview with Shimada. 14 August 2012.

¹³¹ Ishii Kyoji and Nakamura Hiroshi, interviews with Shimada and Roxby. 15 December 2010 and 10 December 2012.

¹³² Lee U-fan, Bijutsu-techo, “*Henkaku no Fuka* (Decomposition of Revolution)” (March 1971) pp.73-74.

Matsuzawa collected and studied current reports on social, political and environmental issues, and his interest in various fields of science was not dilettantism but serious and rational research on the current state of the world and humanity.¹³³

Itami Hiroshi, an ex-Bigakkō Matsuzawa class student –and one of his confidants in later years - recently wrote about ‘the origin of Matsuzawa’s ‘thoughts’:

[Through Itami’s close relationship with Matsuzawa] I had an opportunity to touch upon the origin of Matsuzawa’s thoughts: his ‘anxiety’, which Matsuzawa had never talked about in public. The ‘anxiety’ was grounded in his wartime experiences. When he was a student, he was sent to work in a factory. There, he received a draft card, but by then he was already so disgusted with the state of Japan, that he ran away – fully aware of the grave consequences. Luckily, the war ended before the military police got hold of him. From then on, his continuing anxiety about the state of the world made him contemplate two problems: One was how to bring together like-minded people to stand up for the reformation of the world, and the other was how to alter individual human consciousness. By setting out these problems in a form of art, he chose to promote reformation of the world through the awakening of human consciousness.¹³⁴

From this testimony, it seems clear that Matsuzawa foresaw a role for art as a tool in creating a new kind of collective for a better future, and that his art is very far from being ‘nihilistic.’

As discussed in chapter 2, the post-1968 situation was one of stagnation and confusion, and many young people were searching for an alternative to the rigid social structure altogether. One of the students of Matsuzawa’s Final Art Thought workshop of 1973 wrote his motivation to attend the class:

In 1968-69, when Zenkyoto movement was at its height, I was in the middle of it. I experienced the whole arc of the movement’s rise and eventual fall. Afterward, I only felt a sense of inevitability and apathy. What I learned was that our struggle failed not because of the police crackdown but because we could not connect to others even when we tried using every kind of language. My construct (illusion) was utterly shattered by the realization of this loss of language, not by the disillusionment about university education. Having lost the tool of communication dismantled all the preconceptions of my existence. I holed up within myself and wandered aimlessly around Okayama-Kofu-Tokyo for some years as if I were in a dream. [...] I still utter words, seeking

¹³³ From visits to Matsuzawa’s house in Suwa, November 2013 and January, April 2014.

¹³⁴ Itami, Hiroshi, “*Matsuzawa Yutaka – sono shiko no genten* (Matsuzawa Yutaka – the origin of his thoughts)” *Aida* (#214 20 July 2014) pp.6-8.

for something. I maybe repeating the same thing, but I still want to hang on to language. I chose the Final Art Thoughts class hoping it would be a site where I might find my language.¹³⁵

This sense of communication failure did not first arise post-1968. Already in 1963, Imaizumi had criticized the political ideologues' dependence on language, and their inability to see artistic action as a tool for communication (Chapter 2 *Jiritsu Gakkō*), but the sense of loss was more acute for the *Zenkyoto* students after both their political direct actions and their 'language' failed to establish communication with others. And yet, as the student quoted above states, some still had hopes of finding their own, new language for a new kind of communication.

In a discussion at the Nirvana exhibition at Kyoto City Art Museum in 1970,¹³⁶ (Fig. 51) Matsuzawa advocated forming a 'free commune' – 'free' in a sense that it should not have a rigid organization, and also 'free' of any kind of conventional artistic formality. Matsuzawa's 'free commune' was a space where diverse expressions could co-exist, communicate and intermingle without losing autonomy. This could be achieved through minimum use of language, sound, gestures and other ephemeral actions, but ultimately through the omnipotence of thought alone. This might sound like a Utopian dream, but Matsuzawa built a tangible commune through his teaching, performance and mail art. This networking and the sense of community was aptly explained by Yoshida Yoshie, who participated in 'On-e' (Sound meeting: Fig. 52) of various artists and friends in a forest behind Matsuzawa's house in 1971:

It was not planned to be a lasting commune. The diverse expressions co-existed in time and space. And yet, there was a certain connectedness – tangible communication between us. [...] Looking at our [social] situation now, it is not difficult to see how the diverse expressions got divided and suffocated in each individual space, and the expression itself being too much focused on the formality and confined in its hierarchy. This structure of

¹³⁵ "Naze Saishuubijutu Kobo o erandaka (Why I chose to come to the Final Art Thoughts class)" a written statement by a student, 1973. Matsuzawa archive, Nagano.

¹³⁶ Nirvana' in August 1970, was the first exhibition of Japanese conceptualist artists such as Matsuzawa, Mizukami Shun of Play group, Horikawa Norio of GUN group, Kawazu Hiroshi and others. Matsuzawa and Mizukami were the organizers. The exhibition lasted only three days, from 12 to 14 August. On the first day, the exhibition was held in a large room on the 2nd floor of Kyoto City Art Museum, and then on the second day one half of the room was closed off. On the third day it was moved to a small adjoining room, and then it disappeared entirely. Most of the works were language based (written on paper) or documentations of events or actions. The participants all stayed at the same hot spring inn and had discussions (or 'teach-ins') every night. It was also accompanied by a symposium. (Mizukami Jun. (accessed on 15 Aug. 2014))

control and isolation is reflected in the discommunication in our society. The 'On-e' gathering was an attempt at an 'anti-civilization' alternative commune. I would like you to understand that it was not about art or music, nor was it about religion.¹³⁷

In a way, Matsuzawa's 'free commune' resonates with the ideal of *Jiritsu Gakkō* – a coalition of autonomous minds, without any hierarchal structure. Perhaps Matsuzawa was the most radical of the teachers at Bigakkō, not only because of his advocacy of the eradication of art object, but also because of his anarchistic perception of the world and his strong belief in absolute freedom. While Matsuzawa's class did not conform to Bigakkō principles of *Tewaza*, his teaching was close to what Ishii envisioned as 'art as a tool for quiet reflection on the internal, and for changes from within'. Kawani was responsible for choosing Matsuzawa as a teacher and he must have been fully aware that despite the seemingly contradictory style, his teaching was on a par with Bigakkō principles.

3.5 The relationship among student, teachers and the administration

3.5.1 Students

The students of Bigakkō differed in age, in background, and in motivation, but after interviewing students of the first few years and going through remaining student lists and registration cards, I could identify three more-or-less distinct groups or categories. The first was made up of students and graduates of other art institutions who were disillusioned by the education offered there – or not offered, in some cases, due to the campus barricades or lockouts. Another group was made up of those who were attracted by the politics and philosophy of Gendaishicho-sha. Of these, many were activists and ex-student radicals. The third group was made up of young people who sought an alternative to their predictable and increasingly controlled everyday lives. The first year student (and current director of Bigakkō) Fujikawa Kozo said of his motivation for enrolling:

My father had an ice shop [and] worked very hard every day. During summer he sold ice and in winter charcoal – but those were already out-dated. After refrigerators and oil heaters, nobody bought ice and charcoal from shops. I did not want to live like my father. I did not want to toil long hours everyday for so little return and prospects. He was a stubborn, hard-working, quiet type who didn't understand why I wanted something more than a job and a quiet

¹³⁷ Yoshida, Yoshie Ryubo no kaiho-ku (Liberated zone of wanderers), (Tokyo: Sansaisha, 1977) p.82.

everyday life. I had no particular desire to become an artist or designer, but I wanted something totally different from my family environment.¹³⁸

In earlier days, for most of the children of small shop owners, farmers, craftsmen, and so forth, it was inevitable that they would take over the family business. The 'economic miracle' of the 1960s, however, brought a huge change to the demographics of the labour-force. Young, unskilled manual workers flooded into big cities from rural areas, where they were exposed to the exploding youth culture and could take up an alternative life style unthinkable in their home areas. Nakanishi said it had been Ishii's intention in founding Bigakkō to provide an alternative educational opportunity for those young workers.¹³⁹

Unlike all but a very few 'schools' in Japan (then or now) Bigakkō had neither eligibility requirements nor an entrance examination for those who wished to enroll. The number of students was limited to 250 (about 15-20 per class) in order to maintain a close teacher-student relationship.

A 1970 magazine article about Bigakkō wrote of the second year students:

The youngest is 17 and the oldest is 39. Most are between 20 and 21. Some have no previous [artistic] experience and others are graduates from art academies. Some failed to enter the academies, and others have regular day jobs. When I (the reporter) asked Kobatake what kind of students made up the majority, he said: "A lot of them are bums and hippies – in a word, delinquents. They don't fit into the social system – which is a basic talent for an artist, of course."¹⁴⁰

Listed below are details of the students of the first classes (Nakamura and Nakanishi Ateliers - 15 in each class) in February 1969. No other detailed list was available as the whole archive of student enrollment cards has been discarded, but many former students I interviewed said the first year's enrolment was more or less representative of the early years of Bigakkō.

¹³⁸ Fujikawa Kozo, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 3 July 2010.

¹³⁹ Nakanishi Natsuyuki, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Ito, 11 July 2010.

¹⁴⁰ Staff writer. "Hippy shijuku 'Bigakkō' taiken nyugaku (Trial enrollment to hippy private art school 'Bigakkō' *Weekly Playboy* no. 22, 9 June 1970 p.86.

Gender	Age	Education/work experience
Male	21	high school graduate, various working experiences
Female	21	Nihon Women's University, Faculty of Domestic Science student
Male	25	high school graduate, Tokyo Art Gakuen (Vocational school) dropout
Male	21	Jochi University student. Also studied art at YMCA and Vantan design school
Male	27	Hokkaido University Faculty of Veterinary Science dropout, self-educated in oil painting, water colour, etching, pen drawing
Male	22	Tokyo Jindai High School graduate. Chofu city office worker
Male	25	Musashino Art University correspondence course dropout, Works at Hakuhodo Ad agency. Bijutsu Bunka Kai member, exhibited at Nika exhibition
Male	21	Chuo University High School graduate, Yoyogi Seminar oil painting student
Male	22	Chiba Higashi High School graduate, Manga Daigaku student
Male	22	Aichi Toyokami High School graduate, Manga Daigaku student
Male	23	high school graduate, patisserie chef with little experience
Male	18	high school dropout
Male	23	Tokyo University of Education, Faculty of Fine Art (Oil Painting) 4 th year student
Male	23	Hiroshima Sanyo High School graduate, Irino Art school 2 nd year student, also works at an ad agency as a designer.
Female	30	Graduate from National Academy of Art, Tokyo
Male	22	high school graduate, worked as an artists' assistant, had a solo show at Ogikubo gallery
Male	20	Suidobata Art School student, 6 years experience in oil painting
Male	22	Musashino Art University, 3 rd year student
Male	26	Shizuoka Fuji High School graduate, Bunka Gakuin Faculty of Fine Art dropout, Tokyo Art Gakuen dropout, worked as a Christian missionary, as a milk delivery man, and as a driver
male	20	Kyoto Hiyoshigaoka High School of Art and Craft graduate, worked as a ranch hand, textile designer, window decorator
male	20	Tokyo Katsushika High School graduate, after failing art academy entrance examinations, works at family business, exhibited at Modern Art exhibition
male	26	Tokyo Aviation High School graduate, Suidobata art school silkscreen print student
male	20	Suidobata Art School graduate
male	21	Osaka Toyonaka High School graduate
female	21	Musashino Art University Faculty of Fine Art, oil painting student
male	21	Oita Turumigaoka High School graduate, exhibited at some Kyushu local art exhibitions
male	22	Ebara High School graduate, works at Mikasa Shobo publishing Co. sales department
famel	31	Nihon Women's University graduate, works at Fujimori Kenjiro architectural office, exhibited at Kokutai exhibition
female	28	National Academy of Art in Tokyo graduate school student. Participated in various group exhibitions
fenake	21	Kobe Jinko High School graduate, works at Nippon Service Ticket office

Male/Female ratio 5:1;

Average age: Male 22,2; Female 25,4

Education: High school dropouts (1), High school graduates (8), Vocational school students (6), Vocational school dropouts (3), Vocational school graduates (3), University students (5), University dropouts (2), University graduates (3)¹⁴¹

3.5.2. Bigakkō and Gender

It is notable that female students, though fewer in number, were older and had conspicuously higher education and experience than male students. The enrollment was supposed to be 'first come, first served', but there were interviews with the teachers and administrators, and some earlier students stated that in certain classes female students were not very welcome as they were considered unfit for rigorous training, so only those women who showed strong potentials and had already had experiences were chosen. Although this is only a list of the first classes, the male students outnumbered females by about three to one in most of the classes in the first few years.¹⁴² There were no female teachers – in fact it was not until 2000 that Bigakkō recruited its first female teacher. Even considering the times, Bigakkō's 'masculinity' was noticeable. This perhaps reflected the atmosphere of the student movement in the 1960's, which was dominated by male leadership and which showed little concern for women's and minority issues.

All the same, we should not too hastily dismiss Bigakkō as just another example of the male chauvinism of the 1960s generation. The following case of Sakakibara Shigeko, an older female student of Nakamura class in 1971, shows that there was a germ of feminist art practice in the process of education at Bigakkō.

Sakakibara Shigeko was born and raised in Iida, Nagano, 200km north-west of Tokyo. Her father was a newspaper journalist with the *Shinano Mainichi* newspaper, and was sympathetic to the Japan Communist Party and to local avant-garde artists. Her elder brother entered Tokyo University of Education and was an active participant in the anti-Anpo student movement in 1960.

Sakakibara came to Tokyo in 1960 after graduating from high school. She was the youngest sibling and felt she had to be independent of her ageing parents. On

¹⁴¹ The figures are after Imaizumi Yoshiiko's *Hyogenron* class students list with their personal history. 1969, Imaizumi archive, Tokyo.

¹⁴² Imaizumi Yoshiiko, interview with Shimada. 28 June 2010.

a neighbour's introduction, she started to work at a design company and moved to her brother's apartment in Koenji, Tokyo. After the Anpo debacle, her brother became disillusioned with the Japan Communist Party and, along with his friends, left the party in search of a more radical group. Some of these friends came to stay on and off at the apartment in Koenji, and Sakakibara worked to support them financially, and later married one of her brother's friends, also a student activist. In most of the design offices she worked at, she was the only woman. She said she was unaware of gender discrimination as she did the same work as the others in the office. She also participated in union activities and other political events.

Sakakibara had always wanted to study art, and in 1969 she attended an illustration school. She was not satisfied with it, and moved to Bigakkō in 1971 as she knew Nakamura's work. The turning point for her was making a 'memory book'. The class started in April, and the students were requested to make a 'memory book' during the summer vacation in July-August. Re-examining her life changed her attitude toward art-making. She said that up until then, she had rather aimlessly been making conventional paintings of still life, scenery, and portraits, but this exercise made her re-think the purpose of expressing herself.

Her 'memory book' has many entries about her father, who was ill at that time, and also a female figure (herself) in dream-like situations (Fig. 53 – a, b, c) She said she was aware of feminism in the early 1970s and was interested, but didn't take an active part as she was too busy with other activities. She became pregnant while she was working on a large-scale painting based on the 'memory book', which was an imposing portrait of her father. She was uncertain about becoming a professional artist as she had to work and raise a family. There were periods of not making any art, but she always returned to painting. She was always active in a local politics in Kunitachi, a western suburb of Tokyo, and became a city representative in the 1990s as a member of a local women's group.¹⁴³ In a separate interview, Nakamura said he thought Sakakibara was one of the best students and she could have become a successful artist if her circumstances had allowed.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Sakakibara, Shigeko, interview with Shimada. 30 January 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Nakamura Hiroshi, interview with Shimada. 26 April 2014.

Sakakibara's 'memory book' and paintings clearly show the signs of a budding feminist artist. Although Nakamura was not aware of this himself, his 'memory book' exercise – in which individual experience is the raw material for art-making – has much in common with the feminist idea that 'the personal is the political'.

3.5.3 Teacher-Student-administration relationships

One thing that Bigakkō inherited from Jiritsu-Gakkō was the idea of a school existing on a balanced axis of teachers, student and administrators interaction. The administrators had ideals as stated in the manifesto, but the interpretation of those ideals was up to the teachers. The administrators had no part in programming the curriculum – apart from the appointment of the teachers. The teacher-student relationship was to be a particularly close and intense one, resembling the traditional relationship of master and apprentice. But unlike the rigid hierarchy of artisan training, the teacher-student roles at Bigakkō were sometimes interchangeable. Akasegawa called himself *senseito* (an self-coined label derived from *sensei* (teacher) and *seito* (student)),¹⁴⁵ as he learned just as much from his students. A student of Okabe's silkscreen class noted that some students with knowledge of new techniques taught instead of the teacher.

Though the classes were held only once a week, they lasted for eight hours, and students and teachers generally went out together afterwards to eat and drink. Several former students recalled that they had learned more from these after-class conversations with their teachers than from the class itself.¹⁴⁶ Imaizumi said that the most important criterion in choosing the teachers at Bigakkō was that they be able to lay bare to the students everything of themselves and their art-making. Teachers were not to dispense measured doses of pre-existing knowledge, but to – as it were – *expose* themselves.¹⁴⁷ As some of the teachers had very strong personalities and idiosyncratic ideas about art-making, keeping a measured distance from them was a delicate issue for the students. Indeed, one ex-student claimed that his experience

¹⁴⁵ Minami Shinbo, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Tokyo, 8 July 2010.

¹⁴⁶ Meeting with ex-students of Bigakkō (Kosaka Mayu, Shirasawa Kiri, Katano Kazunori, Mori Hideki, Kuroda Noriko, Itami Hiroshi) Tokyo, 17 December 2011.

¹⁴⁷ Imaizumi Yoshihiko "Bigakkō o kataru (Talk on Bigakkō)" *Bigakkōtsushin* #3. (Nov. 5. 1981)

with such dominant characters was almost traumatic, and it took a long time to recover from it.¹⁴⁸ Kikuhata wrote:

I only knew my way of painting. Sometimes, the students got consumed by me. Well, most of the time I consumed *them*. The core of one's originality should be the remaining bones after the rest had been consumed by me. I just showed them *myself* as a painter, the way I was. I didn't teach them anything, but the only way to make the students learn was not to teach.¹⁴⁹

The relationship between student and administration was more complex. As had been learned from the failure of *Jiritsu-Gakkō*, pre-established 'harmonious' relationships among the three elements (i.e. students, teachers and administrators) could lead to the dis-articulation or even disintegration of the institution as a whole. The administrators did not readily dispense participatory rights to the students; they had to struggle to win these, and Ishii – a veteran political activist who had been a key member of the JCP in Tokyo during the 1950s – was a hard obstacle for the students to overcome.

While the teachers and administrators were of the 1960s Anpo generation (i.e. those born roughly between the early to mid-1930s and 1940s) who had memories of WWII and went through extreme hardship and numerous political upheavals in their early lives, the students belonged to the *Dankai* ('baby boom') generation (defined in Japan as those born between 1945 and 1949) who grew up in the midst of economic expansion – and consequently, in relative material comfort – and increasingly stabilized and controlled social construct. Although the students had great respect for – and willingness to study under – the older generation, there seems to have been an undeniable difference in their attitudes to and perceptions of art and life; this may well have contributed to a certain 'generational' discord between them.

One episode that illustrates quite well the relationship between the administration and the students was the building, by one individual student, of a barricade at the entrance to Bigakkō in October 1969. 'K.' (who wishes to remain anonymous) said that in spite of the renowned radicalism of Gendaishicho-sha, only ten or so students participated in street demonstrations. Most students were too busy

¹⁴⁸ Student A who wishes to remain anonymous, interview with Shimada. 21 July 2012.

¹⁴⁹ Kikuhata, Mokuma. "*Ekakino Koppo* (The Way of Painter)". *Hosho gekkan* (March 1998): p.13.

with their assignments to take direct political action, or were simply apolitical. K. participated in various demonstration as a non-sectarian 'Black helmet' activist and tried to start a protest action within Bigakkō. He and three other students demanded 24-hour access to classrooms, time and space for all the students to interact, and student input into choosing the lecturers. They tried to institute 'collective bargaining' with Ishii, but were refused. While others debated endlessly over negotiations and strategies, K. decided to go alone for direct action. He used forty workbenches to make a 6m x 2,5m barricade in front of the entrance door of Bigakkō, and holed up inside. (Fig. 54)

Bigakkō at that time was located on the first floor of a family-owned building, with the family living below. They found out about the barricade early the next morning and called Kawani who, along with two employees of Gendaishicho-sha, rushed to Bigakkō, demolished the barricade and kicked in the door. Kawani said it was lucky the family hadn't called the police. With the tight police control on student actions, and Gendaishicho-sha under constant surveillance by the public safety agency, K. could have been arrested. Later, Ishii agreed to meet with K. and promised some reform of the lecture classes, with student now free to request repeat lectures on their own initiative. Kawani and Ishii recognized the daring of K.'s action and afterwards took him under their wing.¹⁵⁰ This incident illustrates how the administrators tried to encourage (or even provoked) the students to challenge them and valued ones who dared to stand up to them. Disappointingly, there were only very few who dared to do it – most of them kept respectful distance from the administrators who were more experienced and seemed much older than their actual age differences. Minami Shinbo recalled that although he was invited to drop in, he could not bring himself to casually visit the administration office. As for the barricading, Minami was aware of it but as he was totally contented with Bigakkō administration, he could not think of any demand for the administrators.¹⁵¹

While the administration did not readily cater for the students' needs, they kept close eyes on the students' welfare. Imaizumi's correspondences with students reveal that he wrote to absent students every week and encouraged them to continue,

¹⁵⁰ K(who wishes to remain anonymous) interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 20 January 2013.

¹⁵¹ Minami Shinbo, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Tokyo, 8 July 2010.

sometimes offering advices and small amounts of financial support. When some of the students went on street demonstrations, Ishii made them memorize the number of the advocate Sugimono, who defended Akasegawa's 1,000 yen banknote case, just in case they got arrested. Kawani, who was frequently present at many of the classes, seemed to hand-pick some of the interesting students and brought them into his small circle of friends.¹⁵² Thus the relationship of teachers-students-administrators was a very intense one but with mutual respect and genuine care. Many of the students of the early years of Bigakkō seem to have kept in touch though they were together only for a year.

3.6 Conclusion

Bigakkō was formed in response to the *Zenkyoto* movement in 1968 and was enthusiastically received by the youth seeking an alternative system. Although the teaching methodologies at Bigakkō were very diverse, there were common elements through these classes – anti-modernism, emphasis on physical experience (*Tewaza*), and strong teacher-student relationship.

In November 2013, I co-curated the 'Anti-Academy' exhibition in which Bigakkō was one of three art institutions started as alternatives to existing Art Academies in the 1960s (See attached CD). The three institutions (Bigakkō, Intermedia Iowa, and Ex-skole in Copenhagen) shared the same concerns such as collective art making, performative, ephemeral exercises, and especially with Bigakkō and Ex-skole, strong anti-authority, almost anarchic political sensitivity. All three were situated in rather peripheral locations compared to such art centres as London, Paris, and New York, small in scale and with little financial support. There was no physical or personal connection among them, and yet there is a sense of contemporaneity.

¹⁵² K(who wishes to remain anonymous) interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 20 January 2013.

CHAPTER 4: The Shifting Landscape and the End of Bigakkō (1970-1975)

4.1 Introduction

In 1970, the *Zenkyoto* movement went into rapid decline and eventually this negatively affected sales of Gendaishicho-sha books as well as student enrollment at Bigakkō. Also, social, economic, and cultural changes in the early 1970s were unfavourable for Bigakkō. Interviews with former staff and students have allowed me to better understand the tensions and difficulties that led to the school reaching what we might call its ‘spiritual end’ in 1975. In this chapter, I discuss the shift from aggressive anti-establishment struggle to quiet self-reflection, from collectivism to individualism, from ‘underground’ culture to consumer culture and the subsequent increase of control over public space and everyday life by business interests and state authority. And yet, against this counter current, Bigakkō (especially Bigakkō Suwa) still searched for an alternative way through art.

4.2 The End of the collective direct action

In the early 1970s, the heated ‘political season’ was coming to an end. By then, ‘normalization’ was essentially complete, with regular deployment of riot police on university campuses. Many universities banned student self-government organizations to prevent further student protest.¹⁵³ The radicals were expelled from campuses and went underground or into exile outside Japan (In 1970, a group of Red Army members hijacked an airplane to North Korea; several other members went to Europe and Palestine).¹⁵⁴ Those who remained in Japan had to face the dwindling membership of radical groups, the persisting police harassment, and the danger of *uchigeba* (internal “Gewalt”; beatings and even murders among rival groups, or factions within a group).¹⁵⁵ In 1973, peace talks were on the horizon to end the war in Vietnam, and anti-war protests were winding down; *Behei-ren* (Citizen’s League for Peace in Vietnam) was disbanded in January 1974. Without unifying causes such

¹⁵³ Steinhoff, Patricia. “Memories of New Left Protest” *Journal of the German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo*. Volume 25, Issue 2, (August 2013) p. 127–165.

¹⁵⁴ See Steinhoff, P. *Shi e no ideorogii Nihon Sekigun-ha* (Japanese Red Army - ideology of death) (Tokyo: Iwanami modern Paperback 2003).

¹⁵⁵ The worst of which was the infamous Rengo Sekigun (United Red Army) incident in 1972. Over a period of 40 days, 12 members were lynched and killed by other members in a hideout in mountain area of Nagano (Steinhoff: 2003).

as Anpo or the Vietnam War, organizing large-scale political action became increasingly difficult.

This by no means meant there were no social problems to tackle in the 1970s. When they looked around, the problems resulting from rapid industrialization were plain; air and water pollution, exemplified by the Minamata disease – caused by mercury-laden waste-water from the *Chisso* chemical factory in Minamata, Kyushu;¹⁵⁶ gender inequality, which was addressed for the first time in Japan by the Japanese women's liberation movement initiated by Tanaka Mitsu;¹⁵⁷ farmers protesting against the construction of Narita International airport in Sanrizuka, Chiba, which gained the support of student activists and by the early 1970s had escalated into repeated armed confrontation with riot police.¹⁵⁸

However, people's awareness of these issues did not lead to mass protest. After the failure of the *Zenkyoto* movement, most people had become apathetic toward direct political action and direct confrontation with the authorities, and the activism that did arise was localized and limited to those directly affected by a given issue.

In Akasegawa's *Sakura Gaho* (Sakura Pictorial Journal, March 1971), the *yajiuma* (literary, 'heckler horses', meaning the spectators or crowd) who suddenly turned from passive onlookers into active participants and rampaged Shinjuku during anti-war demonstration and street riot on 21 Oct 1968, again turned passive. They were expelled from the scene, returned home to go into a long 'hibernation'. (Fig. 55)

One ex-student recalled the time she overheard Imaizumi and Kawani talking while watching television news of the United Red Army lynching and killing its own members. Imaizumi was heard to say "From now on, nothing exciting (*Omoshiroi*

¹⁵⁶ Minamata disease became widely known thanks to books by Ishimure Michiko (Ishimure: *Kugaijodo* 1969) and the documentary photographs of Eugene Smith.

¹⁵⁷ Tanaka distributed pamphlets '*Benjo kara no kaiho* - (Women's) Liberation from the Toilet'. In this pamphlet she claimed that in the *Zenkyoto* movement, the role of female students was to 'provide for male students' physiological needs' – not unlike that of public toilets. (Tanaka Mitsu, '*Benjo kara no Kaiho*' *Inochi no Onatachi e* 1970 p.338).

¹⁵⁸ Steinhoff, Patricia. "Memories of New Left Protest" *Journal of the German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo*. Volume 25, Issue 2, (August 2013) p. 127–165.

koto) will happen".¹⁵⁹ Indeed, no attempt at radical change through direct action has occurred since the mid-1970s.¹⁶⁰

4.3 *Moretsu kara Byutifuru e* (From Furious to Beautiful); the sanitisation of public space

In Japan, the 'Nixon Shock' of 1971 and the 'Oil Shock'¹⁶¹ of 1973 forced the Japanese economy to go through major structural changes, and in 1974 economic growth went into reverse (-0,5%) for the first time since 1945. Although the economy recovered in 1975 and continued to grow at a more stable rate, the era of furious economic expansion had definitely come to an end in the early 1970s.

By 1970, 90% of the Japanese felt they had reached the middle-class status.¹⁶² They were anxious to keep their status quo and wished for no further radical changes. The exhausting pace of mass production and expansion was over and they could now afford to relax a little and enjoy a more individual and a higher quality of life. They also became aware of the adverse effects of industrialization on the environment and looked for a gentler, more humane, less materialistic lifestyle.

A television commercial for Fuji Xerox in 1970 exemplified this shift. Though it was a commercial for a copy machine, it showed no product but rather a man with long hair in hippie-style attire walking up a street alone in Ginza, central Tokyo. He held a flower and a white paper sign in front of him bearing the word 'Beautiful'. At the end, a caption appeared: *Moretsu kara byu-tifuru e* (From furious to beautiful) and then the Xerox logo filled the screen. (Fig. 56) The Fuji Xerox commercial was considered epoch-making in television advertising in that it marked the beginning of the era of 'feeling' ads that relied much more on evocative images

¹⁵⁹ Fukuda, Mizue. Personal interview with Shimada. 17 Aug. 2014.

¹⁶⁰ Perhaps the last public direct action for change was a series of bombing of Japanese corporations in 1974 by East Asia Anti-Japan Armed Front. (see Impaction # 15 special issue: East Asia Anti-Japan Armed Front, 1980).

¹⁶¹ The 'Nixon shock' – called the '*doru (dollar) shock*' in Japan – came when the Nixon administration effectively ended the US dollar's peg to gold, the basis of the Bretton Woods agreement. This step had a large effect on the exchange rate of the Japanese yen, and caused serious problems for Japan's export-driven economy. The 'Oil shock' saw a sudden 70% rise in oil prices due to war in the Middle East. It triggered the '*Kyoran Bukka* (crazy price hike)' in Japan of daily necessities such as toilet paper.

¹⁶² According to *Nakakufu Kokuminseikatu ni kansuru seronchosa* (Census on People's Lives by the Interior Ministry), those who answered to be in the 'middle class' reached 90% in 1970 and remained at the rate since.

and ‘mood’ than on concrete information.¹⁶³ The attire and the flower suggested the ‘hippie culture’ of the late 1960’s, but with soft-focus lens it looked dreamy and unreal – he was certainly not the real, dirty hippies haunting *Fugetsudo* (a legendary hippie hang out cafe in Shinjuku), but was a (sanitized) symbol of a gentler generation. The word ‘beautiful’ in the commercial did not refer to anything concrete, but its immateriality represents the desire for something more humane in an increasingly materialistic social order. The irony was that this desire had already been co-opted into the capitalist system, to be steered and ‘satisfied’ through the medium of advertising. The Xerox TV commercial marked the beginning of an era of exploitation of people’s desires through image manipulation by mass media.

Cultural historian Mita Munesuke named this post-high growth period from the early 1970s the “Era of Fiction”, in which everyday life became increasingly fictionalized, saturated with commercial images and information created by the mass media.¹⁶⁴ In 1973, Parco, a ‘fashion building’ run by *Seibu* Retail Distribution Group was opened in Shibuya. It signaled the shift of the centre of youth culture from Shinjuku (the centre of the 1968 counter-culture) to Shibuya. With *Seibu*’s well-planned image-building PR strategy, which carefully excluded anything that looked or smelled ‘real’, Shibuya was transformed into a heaven of consumer desire for everything cool, cute and clean. (Fig. 57)

The strategic use of information through mass media changed not only the appearance of Tokyo, but also the behavior of its people. Art historian Hayashi Michio wrote that the 1972 publication of *Pia*, a weekly cultural information magazine for Tokyo, “undertook the mapping of Tokyo as a catalogue of commercialized information, turning the audience from active participants to passive consumers.”¹⁶⁵ This also meant the complete control of public spaces by commercial interests, the city authorities and the police. Space that used to be considered ‘free’ – such as temple grounds, riverbeds, and parks - became heavily regulated to keep out

¹⁶³ Suzuki, Kiyomi. TV CM in the 1960s. (<http://www31.ocn.ne.jp/~goodold60net/xerox.htm>) (accessed 12 May 2014)

¹⁶⁴ Mita, Munesuke. *Shakaigaku Nyumon* (Introduction to Sociology), (Tokyo:Iwanamishoten 2006) p.72.

¹⁶⁵ Hayashi, Michio. In search of a new narrative of postwar Japanese art: symposium report (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 2014) p.84.

any gathering that could pose a threat to the existing order and the commercial value of real estate.

By the early 1970s, most of the *Angura* (underground) phenomena of 1968, discussed in Chapter 2, such as street happenings, psychedelic shows, body painting, and hippie fashion were already commercialized and commoditized, without any trace of the original philosophy behind them. Even Shinjuku – the epicenter of the underground and youth counter-culture of 1968 – had been cleaned up through the combined effort of the city government, commercial interests and the police. In 1969, Kara Juro's *Jokyo gekijo* theater was banned from pitching its famous red tent in Shinjuku's Hanazono Shrine. In June 1969, weekend anti-war 'folk (song) guerrilla' performances at Shinjuku Station's Nishiguchi Hiroba (West Gate Square) were crushed by riot police firing tear gas; subsequently any kind of gathering was banned there. Even the name *Hiroba* (square) was changed to *Tsuuro* (Passage) to underline that people were now allowed to pass through it, but not to loiter there.¹⁶⁶ (Fig. 58) *Futen* (vagabonds), the glue-sniffing youths who haunted Shinjuku station's East Gate, had by 1970 also been cleared away by the police. Kara's famous parting shot in 1969 was: "If you want to see Shinjuku, see it now. It will soon be an empty lot!"¹⁶⁷

4.4 Impact of the Expo '70

As discussed in Chapter 3, Japan's art world by the early 1970s was dominated by the apolitical, abstract Mono-ha genre. The 'Anti-Art' artists of the 1960s had been co-opted into the mainstream – especially following the Osaka Expo '70, which had mobilized many avant-garde artists in its projection of a bright, 'high-tech' future. Perhaps the best known of these is Okamoto Taro, whose 'Tower of the Sun' became a dominant symbol of the event. (Fig.59) The work of Takamatsu Jiro of Hi Red Centre was prominently featured in the Expo *Nichiyo Hiroba* (Sunday Square). (Fig.60) The whole Gutai group, some members of Neo-DaDa Organizers, and even

¹⁶⁶ "Nishiguchi folk guerrilla" *Rengo Sekigun to Okami no jidai* (Tokyo: Minichisinbunsha 1999) pp.54-55.

¹⁶⁷ Senda, Akihiko. "Kara Juro, *Jokyo Gekijo no Kiseki*" *Kara Juro no Sekai*", *Bessatsu Shi* (Oct. 19774) pp.183-

the *Angura* icon and *Butoh* guru Hijikawa Tatsumi was featured in the 360 degree 'Astro-rama' screen show at the *Midori* pavilion.¹⁶⁸

However, there were artists who launched an opposition movement against Expo '70. Collectively known as *Banpaku Hakai Kyoto-ha* (Expo '70 Destruction Joint Struggle Group), these included performance groups such as *Zero Jigen* (Zero Dimension), *Koku-in*, and *Kurohata* (Black Flag), the performance artist (and, later, no-hope candidate for the governorship of Tokyo) Akiyama Yutokutaishi, and conceptual artist Mizukami Jun – who later taught at Bigakkō as assistant to Matsuzawa Yutaka. Apart from their opposition to Expo '70, what these all had in common was that their actions were never taken seriously as 'art'. Nor were they taken very seriously by more established activist groups (such as the labour unions and political parties), with their outrageous antics: going around naked; inserting lit candles into their anuses.¹⁶⁹ The 'performance art' roots of these actions is evident but there are also discernible links between the members of *Banpaku Hakai Kyoto-ha* and the *Zenkyoto* student movement of 1968, with its unconventional style of protest. And indeed, one of the most colourful demonstrations by *Banpaku Hakai Kyoto-ha* artists was staged in Kyoto University liberal arts building during *Bari-sai*, a festival in the barricaded campus in June 1969. (Fig. 61)

The *Banpaku Hakai Kyoto-ha* artists suffered the same fate as the *Zenkyoto* students and were arrested and prosecuted for their various public actions. When *Banpaku Hakai Kyoto-ha* members were arrested for public nudity at Kyoto University, art critic Yoshida Yoshie tried to raise support from the art world and called many artist friends; Matsuzawa was the only one who returned the call to express his sympathy.¹⁷⁰

It is interesting to note that none of the artists who taught at Bigakkō between 1969 and 1975 (except for a few who had only given morning lectures) was asked to participate in Expo '70. It is still unclear who was responsible for choosing the participating artists, and on what criteria, but we can plausibly infer that either the

¹⁶⁸ For Hijikata's 'Astro-rama' projection, see Keio Art Center 'Project Rebirth' (accessed 30 September 2014)

¹⁶⁹ KuroDalaiJee. *Nikutai no Anakizumu*. (Tokyo: 2010) p.239.

¹⁷⁰ Yoshida, Yoshie. "sengo zenei shoen no aragoto 18ban aa senrikyuryo" (*Bijutsu Techo* Dec. 1971) p.224.

Expo organizers did not want the kind of artist who would teach at Bigakkō, or Bigakkō did not want as teachers artists who had been co-opted into the clean and shiny modernity of the Expo's vision.

Nakamura wrote critically of the Expo '70:

The frivolous city dwellers' illusion named "environment art" is being built up by the authority, and it will be realized in the Osaka Expo as a showcase of the power of the State' ¹⁷¹

Akasegawa later depicted those who participated in Expo rather critically in his 'Pictorial Chronology of the Great Battles of Japanese Contemporary Art' (Fig. 62). Akasegawa also contributed a plan for re-use the Expo '70 site for Bijutsu-techo, in which he suggested another Expo built there every decade. (Fig. 63)

Although the Bigakkō artists kept their distance from the frenzied festivities of the Expo, they did not take part in the anti-Expo actions either. Akasegawa, who staged the 'Tokyo Cleaning Event' as Hi Red Center prior to the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, did not take a direct action. Adachi Masao said in a talk with Akasegawa in 1973:

Ten years ago, both artists and audience had an illusion that even the 'happenings' could be some kind of experimental production. Now we have realized that they were nothing but a waste of time and had no effectiveness as window display. ¹⁷²

4.5 Bigakkō Suwa (1973-'75) - franchising the commune

4.5.1 'Retreat to the hinterland!'

The guidelines for applicants to Bigakkō Suwa set out the aims of the first class to be offered there, the 'Final Art Thoughts' workshop to be led by Matsuzawa Yutaka:

We announce the opening of a branch of Bigakkō in Okamura, one of the oldest villages in Suwa, the geographic center of Japan and possibly the birthplace of the ancient Japanese culture. We chose this location as it is best suited to generate bold art thoughts that merge the cultures of East and West of Japan. Facing the dismal situation of the contemporary art today, we have high hopes and expectations for the young people to create, nurture and grow

¹⁷¹ The term '*Kankyo* (environment)' in *Kankyo Geijutsu* (art) had no relation to ecological concern. It simply meant the surroundings. (Nakamura. *Mita Shinbun*, 3 July 1968).

¹⁷² Adachi and Akasegawa "*Shisoteki henshitsuisha no yugekisenso* (Guerrilla warfare of the ideological perverses)" originally appeared in *Eigahiho* (August 1973), reprinted in *Eigageijutsu* (March 2000) p.91

a new culture here with their precise thinking and perseverance of mastering the necessary skills.

Matsuzawa Yutaka, who is feared and respected as one of the most extreme art thinkers, is going to give a workshop from September 1973. His curriculum will touch the radical questions concerning artistic expressions such as ‘what is the ultimate state of art attainable by thought?’ and ‘whether art-making is possible at all?’

We also plan to open a Butoh class and a study group on occultism by Kasai Akira and Sugita Takeo of Tenshi-kan Butoh troop.¹⁷³ (Fig. 64)

Ishii had an ambitious plan to franchise Bigakkō all over Japan. The plan was to found branches of Bigakkō in places where teachers lived, and by organically connecting these autonomous teacher-student ‘cells’ to spread Bigakkō into various locations. The idea of a ‘central’ school in Tokyo could thus be eradicated. Kosaka Mayu, the 2nd year student of Matsuzawa class, moved to Suwa in 1972 and lived in a disused women’s school there. Ishii and Kawani came and saw the place and decided to start a branch there. Though Ishii did not leave written comment on the idea of ‘franchising’ Bigakkō, several people who knew Ishii and Kosaka, who was involved in Bigakkō Suwa from the start, confirmed this was his idea.¹⁷⁴

‘Retreat to the depth of the hinterland!’ was a title of book published in 1971 by Ota Ryu, the Fourth International (Trotskyist) group activist who founded *Revolt-sha*, a political group that published *Sekai Kakumei Joho* (International Revolution Information (Fig. 65) along with some ex-members of Tokyo Action Front. Hiraoka Masaaki, formerly of *Hanzaisha Domei* was then closely associated with Ota. They advocated a “revolution of the destitute” – meaning dispossessed people in remote areas such as the Ainu in Hokkaido and Okinawans – and starting the revolutionary movement from the periphery to overthrow the central Tokyo government.¹⁷⁵ Although Ishii was no longer directly connected with them (although Kawani was said to be connected to *Revolt-sha*) he must have been aware of their ideas.

Ota’s idea of retreat to the ‘hinterlands’ resonates with Tanigawa Gan’s 1956 poem, ‘*Tokyo e ikuna* (Do not go to Tokyo)’¹⁷⁶ and his admonition to “go down deep

¹⁷³ Suwa Bigakkō guideline for application. 1973. Kasai’s Butoh class did not materialize.

¹⁷⁴ Kosaka, Mayu, personal interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 11 February 2013).

¹⁷⁵ Ota, Ryu. *Henkyo saishinbu ni mukatte taikyaku seyo!* (Tokyo: Sanichishobo, 1971) pp. 101-126 postscript by Hiraoka Masaaki.

¹⁷⁶ Tanigawa, Gan ‘*Tokyo e yukuna* (Do not go to Tokyo)’ *Tenzan*, 1956.

to the bottom of the origin.”¹⁷⁷ As discussed earlier in this chapter, the New Left movement had disappeared from the streets of Tokyo. The activists of the 1960s had by this time relocated overseas or to locations within Japan where ‘localized’ struggles had arisen (the anti-Narita airport fight in Chiba; the campaign around Minamata disease in Kyushu; the campaign against the US military occupation of Okinawa) and continued their actions there. Also, after the cancellation of the Yomiuri Indépendants exhibition in 1964, there sprang up a number of regional ‘Indépendants’ exhibitions organized by local artist groups.¹⁷⁸ Seeing these regional movements, and the increasing state control in Tokyo, Ishii might have tried to find a new way of working in ‘peripheral’ locations.

In 1973 Bigakkō Suwa (about 170 km north-west of Tokyo) opened in Nagano with the ‘Final Art Thoughts’ class taught by Matsuzawa, who lived there. Soon afterwards, Nakamura’s painting classes and Kobatake’s sculpture class were opened. Kosugi Takehisa’s music class was opened in 1975 but in reality it was whole of Tokyo that simply relocated to Suwa every other week.

Suwa has one of the oldest Shinto shrines in Japan of which the Matsuzawa family was an important parishioner-supporters. Suwa is also known for the numerous *Jōmon*-era (c. 10,000 BP – 2,300 BP) prehistoric sites around Lake Suwa. In 1952 the avant-garde artist Okamoto Taro wrote an essay ‘*Jōmon doki ron*’ (‘A Theory of *Jōmon* Artefacts’) in praise of the *Jōmon* culture’s ‘primeval energy’ (Fig. 66), and since then this *Jōmon* culture had been an inspiration to many avant-garde artists.¹⁷⁹ Asai Masuo, a young performance artist and also a friend of Matsuzawa, launched the *Jōmon* Festival in the mid 1960s.¹⁸⁰ Suwa was an appropriate place to start a new Bigakkō as an antithesis to the Tokyo-centric social structure.

Suwa Bigakkō attracted students and teachers from Tokyo; even those who didn’t have class there frequented Suwa just for short visits. But Ishii had perhaps underestimated the conservative nature of the local art scene. Matsuzawa – although

¹⁷⁷ Tanigawa, Gan ‘*Genten ga sonzaisuru* (The origin does exist)’ Boin 1954.

¹⁷⁸ There were ‘Indépendants’ exhibitions in Fukuoka, Kyoto, Seki, Iida, Hamamatsu, Shimizu, Gifu, Yokohama, Takasaki, and Koriyama between 1964 and 1970. (Hariu, *Sengobijutsu seisui-shi* (Tokyo shoseki: 1980) p.125.

¹⁷⁹ The Jomon culture can loosely be dated 9000BP–2300BP.

¹⁸⁰ KuroDalaiJee. *Nikutai no Anaakizumu* (Tokyo: 2010) pp.344-350.

an internationally renowned conceptual artist – was positively disliked by the local ‘art establishment’ as he did not belong to any local art group and did not ‘contribute’ to the local art scene.¹⁸¹ While Gilbert and George had visited his house, and many artists and critics from Tokyo came to his communal events, these were beyond most of the local artists’ comprehension.¹⁸² In remote areas in Japan at this time, ‘being a successful artist’ still meant to be accepted into one of the conservative *Kaiha* exhibitions in Tokyo. Although the students in Tokyo loved to make the trip to Suwa, the school did not attract many local students and had to be closed down in 1976.

While the school did not succeed in a ‘business’ sense, it was an extremely innovative and interesting idea for an alternative education system. If it had been successful, there could have been a Kikuhata Bigakkō in Kyushu and a Kobatake Bigakkō in Saitama, and perhaps other ‘franchises’ too. A former Bigakkō student, who had been a student activist in 1968, mused that if the students revolt had actually succeeded in dismantling the existing education system in 1968, this Bigakkō scheme might well have become an alternative to all the art academies in Japan.¹⁸³

4.5.2 *Sekai Hoki* (World Uprising: mail art exhibition)

In 1971, Matsuzawa started an ambitious ‘World Uprising’ mail art project and set up the *Kokuukan jokyō tanchi center* (The Imaginary Space Research Centre) at Matsuzawa’s house in Suwa. The center initially sent out invitation to 18 artists (apart from Matsuzawa) in Japan and overseas. They were: Daniel Buren, Sunahara Toshiyuki, Furusawa Taku, Kobayashi Kiichi, Tanaka Sanzo, Douglas Heubler, Mizukami Jun, Ikeda Tatsuo, Kaneko Shoji, Shukusawa Ikuo, Sekido Rui, Kawazu Hiroshi, Kuriyama Kunimasa, Ashizawa Taii, Suzuki Hideaki, Hasegawa Makio, Laurence Weiner and Tanaka Kodo. Most of the invited Japanese artists were those who were involved in the Nirvana exhibition (see Chapter 3) at Kyoto City Art Museum in 1970.¹⁸⁴

The invitation states:

¹⁸¹ Imaizumi, Yoshihiko. “*Kitazawa Ryochi no tegami* (letters from Kitazawa Ryochi)”. *Stoioken* vol.16 (November 20, 2002) p.28.

¹⁸² Kosaka, Mayu, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 18 April 2013.

¹⁸³ Kosaka, Mayu, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 18 April 2013.

¹⁸⁴ “World Uprising” *Bijutsu techo* (November 1972) p.75-88

Greetings, I congratulate your getting closer to the Disappearance. Today, we would like to invite you to be a part of realization of the 'World Uprising' as the ultimate art form for sharing our thoughts and for living together in this degenerate age. This is the first phase of countless world uprisings to come in the next 250 years, till the Disappearance of human being in 2222.

1. Please prepare your own concept and action for this World Uprising on 31 December 1971

2. Please record the entirety of your concept/action in words, photograph, film, audio-tape and so forth and send to *Kokuukan jokyo tanchi* Centre by 31 January 1972.

3. Planned participants are set in two groups of nine artists each, which corresponds to the nine rooms of the Golden World of *Mandala*. By each member relocating the room, we can create infinite *Mandala*.

Proposed by: *Kokuukan jokyo tanchi* Centre¹⁸⁵

The mail art works by these artists were featured in the November 1972 issue of *Bijutsu techo* (Fig. 67). Matsuzawa then continued the project in 1972 and 1973 inviting more than 100 people each year, including artists, politicians, religious leaders, scientists and so forth. From 1972, the mailing address was changed from Matsuzawa's home to the old school house Kosaka Mayu lived, and which later became Bigakkō Suwa. Kosaka was responsible for much of the paperwork of 'World Uprising' and many other Bigakkō students assisted the operation and participated in it. Takamura Mukata, a student of Matsuzawa's in 1973, recalled

It [Mail art] was something totally new approach to communicate with other artists in the world. [...] When I mailed my works, I got immediate reactions from previously unknown artists – which did not happen much in Japan. I had solo exhibitions in Tokyo, but only people who came were my friends and they didn't discuss seriously about my works. There was no jury and awards for mail art. The only award was being recognized by other artists.¹⁸⁶

Takamura later went to Sweden at the invitation of Nakajima Yoshio, one of the artist friends of Matsuzawa's who also organized mail art exhibitions and symposia.

As the title indicates, 'World Uprising' reflected Matsuzawa's idea of a 'free commune' – an organic gathering of people who shared the same concern over the future of the environment and humanity. Many of the works involve personal rituals,

¹⁸⁵ *ibid* p.88

¹⁸⁶ Takamura, Mukata, on 'Mail Art', *Bigakko Tsushin* (Bigakko newsletter #1) March 1981

small gestures and ephemeral installations in remote areas without audience, but together, they create a strong atmosphere of collective aspiration.

Some of the selected works of 1972 and 1973 were to be published in a magazine, but this never materialized. Later the works were assumed to be lost, but in 2014, in the process of this research, I and some of the former students of Matsuzawa's rediscovered these works in storage at his home in Suwa. We restored and catalogued the art works and exhibited them – along with new mail art works that we had invited - in the exhibition 'World Uprising 2014' in Bunpodo gallery in Tokyo in April 2014 (See the attached CD) We hope to continue this project, as Matsuzawa had predicted, until 2222.

4.6 The End of Gendaishichosha-Bigakkō

From the beginning, Ishii did not intend Bigakkō to last for long – no more than two to three years.¹⁸⁷ From his experience with *Jiritsu Gakkō*, he knew that fundamental conflicts would inevitably arise between the collective organization – which is to say the school – and the autonomous individuals who were its students. Around the time Bigakkō Suwa was doomed to closure, Bigakkō itself was facing various problems. Financially, Bigakkō was never self-supporting and had been heavily subsidized by Gendaishicho-sha. Moreover, although the first and second years were over-subscribed, the number of student enrolling started to fall noticeably after 1973.

By 1973, the students who had experienced the 1968-'69 *Zenkyoto* movement had all graduated (or been dismissed) from the universities, while the government was quick to re-organize the education system to ensure that this kind of rebellion would never happen again. In 1971 *Chukyoshin* (*Chuo Kyoiku Shingikai*; the Central Education Council) submitted a report on the establishment of a central management system for university authorities to control 'the university self-government bodies so as not to cause unnecessary confusion'.¹⁸⁸ The universities were quickly 'normalized' without any struggle. Most of the *Zenkyoto* student activists themselves, after graduation, chose the normal paths of life and became salaried workers. Only a few

¹⁸⁷ Ishii, Kyoji, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Tokyo, 15 December 2010.

¹⁸⁸ Steinhoff, Patricia. "Memories of New Left Protest" *Journal of the German Institute for Japanese Studies Tokyo*. Volume 25, Issue 2, (August 2013) p. 127–165

continued political activism, but most of these got involved in various radical sects which were increasingly separated from everyday reality.¹⁸⁹

The leaders of the *Zenkyoto* movement, Akita Akehiro of Nihon University and Yamamoto Yoshitaka of Tokyo University, were arrested in 1969, and after their release, kept silent. Out of the sense of failure and shame, most other activists also kept quiet about their past. Thus, their experience was not passed down to the younger generations and the questions they had asked were never answered. The Bigakkō students of the first three years were the ones with direct experience of the 1968 movement, who had been disillusioned with the existing education system and sought an alternative. The high school graduates of 1973, however, had little first-hand knowledge but had been informed mainly by the hugely negative images presented by the mass media, which depicted the whole movement as ‘senseless violence.’¹⁹⁰ Despite the large scale of the *Zenkyoto* movement, it quickly evaporated without much impact on the social system, and may even have contributed to the consolidation of state control of the universities.

Gendaishicho-sha itself was also facing financial and labour troubles. Already in the early 1970s, the impact of the economic slow-down, along with the hike in consumer prices and labour costs, had started to impact on smaller publishers. The sales of Gendaishicho-sha books, too, drastically decreased in the early 1970s after the students of the *Zenkyoto* generation – who were the main readers of Gendaishicho-sha publications – had left university. The new students had little interest in reading political theory anymore.

Although the publication of an anthology of the eccentric novelist Inagaki Taruho and a series of ‘World Classics’ by very obscure writers was enthusiastically welcomed by a few fans and intellectuals in 1971, these titles failed to appeal to a wider audience.¹⁹¹ Later, Inagaki received a prestigious literature prize and some of the books of the Classic series became better known (and some were even re-published by Iwanami Bunko), but Gendaishicho-sha’s vision was too far ahead of

¹⁸⁹ Kozu, Akira “*Ika ni kaerimiruka?* (How do we look back?)” *Kaiso no Zenkyoto* (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, 2011) p.24

¹⁹⁰ Steinhoff, P. Ibid. p. 128

¹⁹¹ Some titles of the Classic paperback include: MaxStern *Der Einzine und Sein Eigenthum*, Sebastian Brant *Das Narrenschiff*, and Charles Fourier *The theory of the four movements*

the general public's taste. Gendaishicho-sha searched for a new direction but *Nihon Fushigi Monogatari-shu* (Anthology of Classic Fantasies of Japan: 1973) was a disastrous failure and caused a huge financial loss that year.¹⁹² *Nihon Fushigi Monogatari-shu* was a series of limited edition illustrated Japanese fantasy tales from the 14th to 17th century. They were designed by Kobatake Hiroshi, luxuriously bound in leather with top edges gilt, and with illustrations by ex-Bigakko students. (Fig. 68) Ishii planned to have Gendaishicho-sha employers sell them on commission bases, but as they were quite expensive (15,000 yen), they did not sell well at all.

With the decline of business, a labour-management dispute erupted at Gendaishicho-sha. As the result of the success in the 1960s Gendaishicho-sha had recruited more élite university graduates and re-organized the company structure so that it was no longer an unruly melting pot of revolutionaries, intellectuals and artists as in the 1960s. Both Kawani and Imaizumi were promoted to management positions, and when a union dispute started over salaries, they were made to negotiate. Ishii told the union that he envisioned Gendaishicho-sha as a 'commune' and its profits should be distributed in discussion with each worker in accordance to his need. The union thought this was no more than Ishii's tactic to divide and rule the workforce, since Ishii didn't question his own position as a director and his salary was never discussed.¹⁹³ In response, Ishii wrote to the union representative not to mistake his idea of a commune as an intimate, family-like group of friends in support of each other. In a letter to Imaizumi dated 22 April 1970, Ishii stated that his idea of Gendaishicho-sha as a commune was not based on any particular political ideology, nor it was a group of those who sympathized and identified with the ideals of Gendaishicho-sha. He was well aware that many workers were there just to make a living. His idea of a commune was based not on a single principle, but on the everyday life of the individual worker. Therefore, it was of the utmost importance for those individuals to express their needs, rather than that to be represented by the union. In the letter, Ishii repeatedly urged the union representative to express his personal opinion and his needs, rather than try to speak for the others.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Kosaka, Mayu, interview with Shimada. Tokyo, 6 February 2013.

¹⁹³ Suyama, Ikuro. *Gendaishicho-sha toiu senko*. (Tokyo: Gendaishicho-shinsha, 2014) p.164.

¹⁹⁴ Ishii's letters to Suyama Ikuro, the union leader (undated) and to Imaizumi, 22 April 1970. Imaizumi archive, Tokyo.

Ishii's attitude to the union was similar to his reaction when he encountered the rebellious students at Bigakkō (see Chapter 3): he only recognized the student who dared to do something by himself. At the end of the dispute, the union was disbanded and the representative left the company. It left a certain bitter feeling among the workers as well as the management, and it might have contributed to a lowering of overall morale.

A further factor that led to the demise of Bigakkō was the gradual internal changes at Bigakkō as the balanced tension among the teachers, students, and administrators started to waver. For the first couple of years, the students were discouraged from taking the same class repeatedly, but some students such as Minami Shinbo came back as a 'flunked' student of Akasegawa's class year after year.¹⁹⁵ They became very close and the students must have benefitted from this, but at the same time, it fostered dependency and slackness in discipline. Nakanishi, who taught drawing again in 1972, said it was very different from the class of 1969: that the students were too relaxed and even started drinking alcohol in the class.¹⁹⁶ The initial tension and working ethics the administrators had envisioned started to wane.

Teachers such as Nakamura, Nakanishi and Kikuhara firmly believed that in order to reach a certain plateau of artistic expression, it was necessary to go through rigorous physical trainings and intellectual confrontation with the teachers, as that was the way they had come to their own practice through turbulent years of the post-war Japan. However, the students of the 1970s increasingly shied away from such a confrontational approach. It was not that they disdained acquiring skills and intellectual exercises, but as seen earlier in this chapter, they were of the generation who preferred gentler, easier approach. Classes such as Matsuzawa's and Akasegawa's where students exchanged ideas in more communal and relaxed atmosphere continued to attract students into the 80s, but some classes that requested more vigorous master-pupil training such as Nakamura's started to lose number of new students after 1973.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Minami Shinbo, interview with Shimada and Roxby. 8 July 2010.

¹⁹⁶ Nakanishi Natsuyuki, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Ito, 11 July 2010.

¹⁹⁷ Sano Shiro, who was a student of Nakamura's in 1973 recalled "Nakamura was so scary and demanding. When he came into the classroom, nobody talked. Only sound during two hours class period was the slight noise of pencils hitting the surface of paper" (Sano, Shiro talk show at Atsuko Barou. Tokyo, 26 April 2014.

Another further contributing factor was weakened relationship between the teachers and the administration. Initially, Ishii and Kawani had been very much involved in the everyday operation of Bigakkō, even attending some classes themselves. As Gendaishicho-sha started to have financial and labour problems, however, Ishii's involvement in Bigakkō had to be limited, and Kawani's departure in late 1972 was a heavy blow. While each teacher's autonomy in planning the class curriculum was invaluable, the individuality of each class gradually surpassed the coherence of the institutional program as a whole, especially after 1973, when the number of lectures declined – partly due to the decrease of financial support from Gendaishicho-sha.¹⁹⁸ Without the strong presence of the administration to reinforce the basic principles of Bigakkō, the school gradually became a collection of interesting but highly diverse artist-teachers, each focused on his own students.

After Kawani's departure, Imaizumi's relationship with Ishii, which had never been as close and amicable as that between Kawani and Ishii, deteriorated. After internal conflicts, and financial difficulty, Gendaishicho-sha withdrew from the operation of Bigakkō in 1975. Afterward, Imaizumi took over the directorship, and Bigakkō went through some turbulent years of financial and structural problems. Nakanishi didn't come back to Bigakkō after 1972, while Nakamura, Matsuzawa and Akasegawa all left Bigakkō in the early 1980s. Kikuhata persevered for over thirty years but most of the other original teachers had left by 1985.

Although a school named Bigakkō still exists in Tokyo, it has none of the principles of Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō. After Imaizumi retired in 2000, the new administration restructured classes and replaced the teaching staff entirely. The current school still uses the Bigakkō name and logo mark, and inhabits the same building but it should be considered a totally different entity. It has become no different from many other small art vocational schools. The current administrators also seem uneasy about, or even 'ashamed' of, the school's history, and in 2000 they discarded all remaining physical relics of the old Bigakkō.

¹⁹⁸ Nakanishi Natsuyuki, interview with Shimada and Roxby. Ito, 11 July 2010.

CONCLUSION

Summery

This thesis set out to uncover the history and teaching practices of Gendaishicho-sha Bigakkō (1969-1975), and to examine the inter-connection between radical art and politics in Japan from 1957 to 1975, and to evaluate their relevance for contemporary Japanese society. This is the first in-depth study of the wider artistic, political and economic context of the formation of Bigakkō and of its early history up to 1974, and is based on extensive archival research, oral history, curation of exhibitions and re-enactments of Nakanishi's drawing practices.

The aim of this thesis was not to create an exhaustive history of Bigakkō but rather to focus on its inception as a way of understanding the ideas behind its foundation and of locating it in the wider historical context in post war Japan. To achieve this aim, it was necessary to extend my research into the ambiguous realm that cannot easily be categorized as artistic or political (or even criminal – in the case of de Sade and Akasegawa's 1,000 yen banknote case). Much of the material concerning Gendaishicho-sha and Bigakkō has hitherto been overlooked by art historians and writers of socio-political history. The contribution of this thesis to the field of art history lies in its examination of the intersections of art and radical politics in Japan during this turbulent period, and how these manifested themselves in the Bigakkō experiment.

The methodology I adopted in this study was to start with details (just as Nakamura did in his drawing class), looking into small groups, single events, individual articles, and each class exercise carefully and trying to find common elements – participants, beliefs, methodologies and so on - and thread them together. These seemingly disparate details started to form a kind of constellation of Bigakkō as a whole.

Focusing on the three founder members and the actions and teachings of the five experimental visual artist-teachers Nakamura, Nakanishi, Akasegwa, Kikuhata, and Matsuzawa, my research has demonstrated that the formation of Bigakkō represented a continuation of their artistic and political activities from the late 1950s

as well as an attempt to respond to the unanswered questions of the suppressed New Left and 1968 student movement in the post-1968 situation.

Building upon this research and the interviews, exhibitions and archives that it has generated, I can identify key areas in need of further research that were beyond the scope of this thesis. These include Bigakkō's technical workshop classes, Kosugi Takehisa's music class (1975 - 1976), Kasai Akira's butoh class (1972 -1973), and Suzuki Seijun's filmmaking class (1975 - 1980). The developments of Bigakkō after 1975 also merits further study.

Examining the pre-history of Gendaishichosha- Bigakkō from 1957 in Chapter 1, this thesis has demonstrated that the publishing company Gendaishichosha became a hotbed of New Left ideologues, anarchists, artists and scholars of an 'underground' culture, and as I have shown both in the thesis itself and the accompanying visual chronology, the three founders and artists under discussion were involved in various forms of direct political action such as *Rokugatsu Kodo Jinkai* (June Action Committee), and *Koho no Kai* (Group of the Rear Supply Line), and *Hanzaisha Domei* (League of Criminals) as well as in the artistic direct actions which germinated from 'Anti-Art' in Yomiuri Indépendants and culminated in various street events by Hi Red Center. Their artistic and political actions briefly merged at *Jiritsu Gakko*, a school that aimed to nurture the 'unnamable' in order to transform the everyday world. But their subversive actions began to be noticed by the authorities and friction with the police in the latter of part of the 1960s resulted in 1,000 yen banknote trial.

In Chapter 2 the focus is on 1968 as an important turning point of the Japanese political and cultural history with the *Zenkyoto* students uprising and near breakdown of the university education system. Unlike the single issue of anti-Anpo in 1960, the students of 1968 posed existential questions, a fundamental challenge to the school authorities (*Daigaku kaitai* – deconstruction of universities) and to themselves (*Jiko hitei* – denial of themselves). When their questions were met with stern silence, some sought for an alternative education system. Here I discussed another alternative art school, B-zemi, in comparison to Bigakkō, in order to clarify

the difference between an alternative as a complement to the existing system and an alternative as a mean of subverting that system.

In Chapter 3, I argued that Bigakkō was an attempt to respond to those questions suppressed in the post-1968 situation, and that it was also imagined by the founders as a ‘movement’ at a time of change. An analysis of the teaching methods further demonstrated that underpinning the contradictions and diversity of the workshops, there was in fact a common ideal. The notion of *Tewaza* (hand technique) was broadly interpreted by the artists/teachers, but its common purpose was the acquisition of new perceptions through physical experience. Bigakkō was envisioned as a collective of individuals (as students, teachers, administrators) who would come together and seriously engage with one another.

What Bigakkō had attempted to achieve was not just to provide an alternative art education, but to continue challenging the socio-economic system, which was increasingly constraining individual autonomy via conventional education, commercialization, and sanitization of the everyday world. In Chapter 4, I discussed Osaka Expo ’70 as an exemplifier of this shift to more stable, affluent, and controlled society. Ishii’s attempt to, as it were, franchise Bigakkō in the peripheral locations in order to continue their struggle was, along with Bigakkō Suwa, also a focus of Chapter 4. Despite these efforts, Gendaishicho-sha faced increasing financial and internal difficulties and had to close Bigakkō Suwa and withdraw from Bigakkō entirely by the end of 1974.

***Tewaza* and Collective**

Since the economic ‘bubble’ burst in 1991 the Japanese economy has been in a slow decline – the first decade of which came to be called ‘the lost ten years’. This was extended to the ‘lost twenty years’, and even more. A sense of general stagnation started to be felt, yet there seemed to be little resembling a collective movement for change.

However, in the last few years, especially in the aftermath of the 11 March 2011 earthquake and the associated nuclear power plant disaster, it has become apparent that Japanese society cannot continue on the same path, and there is an

urgent need for change. Yet after forty years of complacency it is difficult to come up with a mechanism for change. In this context two key aspects underpinning Bigakkō may be of particular relevance.

The first is a re-evaluation of *Tewaza* and shared physical experience, through which a new kind of creative interaction may emerge. As discussed in chapter three, how to interpret the notion of *Tewaza* was left to individual Bigakkō teachers, and their interpretations ranged from Nakamura's literal technical training through Nakanishi's physical exercise to Matsuzawa's denial of the very idea. However, the essence of *Tewaza* perhaps lies in Imaizumi's question regarding Nakanishi's action at *Jiritsu Gakkō* (see Chapter 1): "Can it be a tool of communication?"

The limitation of *Jiritsu Gakkō* was its ultimate dependence on existing political language. On the other hand, Ishii's idea in starting an art school was to use artistic language instead to bring about change. In 1969, the prevalent artistic trends were Mono-ha, which consciously avoided any trace of handwork, and *Hachu-geijutsu* (made-to-order art), which was manufactured in a studio by assistants (often using industrial materials and methods) and which became more widely recognized thanks to the Osaka Expo'70. Painting and drawing were definitely considered outdated, but Bigakkō was set against the stream of modernism, and dared to employ seemingly old-fashioned methodologies like *Tewaza*.

Tewaza was not only to bring 'physicality' back to artistic production, but also to open up a way to re-discover and re-connect to reality. As Okada Takahiko observed in Bigakkō classes in 1970 (Chapter 3) tackling raw materials with vigorous handwork training made the students face the reality of their situation squarely, without any delusions. Nakamura's insistence on concentration on the surface along with a very rigid set of physical restrictions was intended to force the students to confront that immediate reality without interference from previously-acquired artistic methodologies. Akasegawa class's seemingly meaningless enlarged copying of newspaper headlines and the 1,000 yen banknote aimed to make the students look at what they might not otherwise see, and to make them realize how much their vision and senses were controlled in everyday life. The same can be said of Nakanishi's exercise, which induced students to recognize space and human faces

anew – not through pre-existing information, but through bodily sensation. This new way of seeing was to find a new tool for communication. If the language of politics failed to connect to others, Bigakkō offered a site of the search for a new creative language – not merely for artistic production but for the construction a new kind of communication and ‘collective-ness.’

The second key aspect of Bigakkō is the idea of a school as a commune where teachers, students and administration (and each individual) exist autonomously on an equal basis, and yet work and share collectively. As demonstrated in Chapter 3 the workshops of Matsuzawa, Kikuhata and Nakanishi put emphasis on collaborative, collective and anonymous art production. The balance between the individual and the collective is always a delicate issue. What was envisioned was not a uniform, interdependent group, but a collection of autonomous individuals connected by mutual respect and comradeship.

These ideals were not without weaknesses, some of which were inherent in the principles themselves. One was Ishii’s (and perhaps some other teachers’) belief in the necessity of confrontation in forming a collective relationship, whether it be a commune or the relationship between teacher and student. It posited the idea that a commune (or a class) is not a friendly gathering but a battleground of autonomous individuals striving to improve themselves and one another. This was a noble idea, perhaps, but when applied too dogmatically, it led to exclusion of those whose temperament was not suited to such an approach, most notably also women.

Bigakkō – The Essence of Contradiction

From the beginning, what made this research most difficult and yet extremely interesting were the recurring contradictions. For example, while Bigakkō guidelines state the necessity of vigorous training through hand work, Matsuzawa refused to have anything to do with the physical production of art, and while individual autonomy was encouraged, most of the teaching methodologies were extremely restrictive and feudalistic. When asked about the contradictions in his class approaches, Nakamura said ‘of course there were contradictions – contradictions make the whole thing more interesting!’ It was this contradiction and complexity that drew me to Bigakkō. One could be easily get confused and lost in the layered

contradictions, but as I have argued, it was here that one finds what Tanigawa Gan of *Jiritsu Gakkō* called the ‘essence of contradictions, flower of paradox.’

As a practicing artist, Bigakkō’s notion of embracing contradictions was truly liberating. As stated before, Japan is now facing the overwhelming social problems and many artists have started to engage in this reality. However, these responses tend to fall into either the old-fashioned (i.e. 1950’s) model of protest art or government-sponsored sentimental ‘art of healing’. They may differ in their ideologies, but both forms of response are what Akasegawa called *Seiron-ha* (righteousness faction) that adheres to the existing moral or ideological principles. This is partly because contemporary artists who are engaged in these socio-political ‘issues’ are expected to bring forth immediate effects – contributing to the protest movements, bringing the community together, making people ‘feel better’ and so on. In effect, artists are expected to show social responsibility and their works are expected to serve good purposes. So-called socially engaged art in the post 3.11 has become subordinate to public welfare, and has become streamlined to serve this purpose most effectively. There is no room for contradictions. Yet, as an artist I have always dealt with contradictions and the challenges this has presented of having to justify and rationalize my work to both the right wingers and the activist groups in Japan. Such rationalizations are unavoidable, but there is danger of limiting one’s artistic expression by being enslaved by them

Nakamura famously stated in 1956 ‘tableau never self-criticise’ – that art works should be independent from any kind of political restraints. Ishii Kyoji also defended the freedom of thought against the censorship in the name of the ‘public welfare’ in de Sade case. This did not mean that they advocated art should be separated from the social reality and remain in the ‘pure’ realm of the art world. On the contrary, they tried to find a way that art could intervene, agitate and challenge the society without moral and ideological constraints. Founding Bigakkō was continuation of this search. The artists I have discussed did not search for a rational and effective methodology, instead, they embraced the complexity and contradictions of the reality and refused reductive theorization. Their emphasis on *Tewaza* and communal experimentation was to obtain a new form of expression - as Akasegawa put it: ‘not the dead words, but something you can hold in your hand.’

(Chapter 3) It was necessary therefore for this research to not only examine the various experimental exercises conducted at Bigakkō in details, but also re-enact and experience them physically. There are things only attainable through physical sensation. Hence, as discussed in this thesis, I strongly recommend doing some of the exercises in order to fully understand their affects.

As this research has demonstrated, Bigakkō embraced contradictions and irrationality in search for the new way of communicating with the reality. Iwata Shin-ichi of the performance group *Zero Jigen* (Zero dimension) recently wrote ‘What we wanted was “chaos” – 1960s experience of Zero Jigen’¹⁹⁹. Looking back, he recognized that the initial energy to confront the everyday reality gradually got lost when they became more concerned with presentation and theorization of their performances. He concluded that aestheticisation and intellectualization would bring death to artistic expression, and that the hardest task for any artists was to resist the temptation of aestheticisation and remain firmly in the initial chaos. As an artist, I cannot agree more. It is much easier to refine your work and rationalise it than face the contradictions and remain in the realm of unknowable. If Bigakkō streamlined its principles and methodologies, it might have been more successful and continued longer, but the sparkling energy and richness of their experiments would have been lost.

If Bigakkō is relevant to the current situation in Japan, it is not because it can provide usable models or methodologies to solve the stagnation. On the contrary, it is Bigakkō’s refusal of being effective, rational, linear, and comprehensible, and the determination to remain in the realm of chaos, contradictions and the unknowable that brings about the necessary energy to liberate us from existing constrictions. When Ishii started Bigakkō, he believed in art as the next possibility. Although the Bigakkō experiment was prematurely terminated, this belief in the possibilities of art continues to have relevance today.

¹⁹⁹ Iwata, Shin-ichi “What we wanted was ‘chaos’ – 1960s experience of Zero Jigen” (Aida #215 2014) pp. 12-16

Images

Fig.1 Poster for inauguration of Bigakkō, designed by Nakamura Hiroshi and Nakanishi Natusyuki (The logo design by Akasegawa Genpei), 1969, Ishii Mayumi collection, Tokyo

Fig.2 Photograph of students carrying an injured friend, 15 June 1960, *Mainichi* news paper, Tokyo

Fig. 3 Photograph of *Rokugatsu Kodo Inkai* (Yoshimoto on the far right, Nakamura is next to Yoshimoto), at Tabata station, June 1960, reproduced from *Kikan* #15, 1990, Kaicho-sha, Fukuoka

Fig. 4 Photograph of the striking coalminers in front of 'hopper' in Miike coalmine, 20 May 1960, *Mainichi* newspaper

Fig. 5 *Koho no Kai* (Group of Rare Supply Chain), an appeal for building *te o tsunagu ie* (a house for holding hands), Imaizumi archive, Tokyo

**Fig. 6 Photo of the 9th Nippon Indépendants, Nakamura Hiroshi's paintings
'Sunagawa goban (Sunagawa district five)' and 'Kokutetsu Shinagawa (Japan
Railway Shinagawa station)' on the wall, 1956, reproduced from *Kikan*#15, 1990,
Kaicho-sha, Fukuoka**

**Fig. 7 Nakamura Hiroshi, 'Kokutetsu Shinagawa' 1955, oil on canvas (37.5x101.5
cm) Private Collection**

Fig. 8 Photograph of the 13th Yomiuri Indépendants 1961: From upper right, clockwise; Akasegawa Genpei '*Vagina no shiito* (Sheet of Vagina)', Shinohara Ushio '*Dodonpa de ikouze!* (Let's go Dodonpa!)', Toshima Soroku '*Sooru no Bansan* (Dinner of Sole)', Yoshimura Masunobu '*SaDaDa si no ousetsuma* (Mr. SaDaDa's guest room)' and Miki Tomio '*Work*', *Bijutsu techo*, April 1964

Fig. 9 (Right) Shinrai Tetsu, '*Ryokui*', oil on canvas, *Nitten* exhibition, 1963 (Left) Togo Seiji, '*Leda*', oil on canvas, 1968. Togo Seiji Art Museum.

Fig. 10 Akasegawa Genpei, *Nihon Geijutsukai Daigekisen* (Great battles of Japanese Art World), *Bijutsu techo*, May, 1972

‘Unruly Pan-kui (bread=‘pan’ of *Indépendants*) competition! Going straight to Hell!’

The portrait on the right is that of Princess Michiko, and a pop singer Mihashi Michiya on the left. Several important artists and art works of Yomiuri Indépendants were depicted here, such as *Zero Jigen* (three men sleeping on the ground), Takamatsu Jiro’s rope, Kosugi Takehisa’s music instrument (a bag with a leg protruding), Nakanishi Natsuyuki’s clothes pins, Neo DaDa’s Yoshimura’s ‘Mr. Sadada’s living room’ installation, Matsuzawa Yutaka’s psy (ψ) sign, Kudo Tetsumi’s black penis like objects (hanging from the ceiling), Akasegawa’s wrapped canvas (on the far left), and a huge pile of junk from Kyushu-ha, and knives in a bird cage and in a hand of a mannequin (in the circles on the top left), which caused the introduction of regulations and eventual closure of the exhibition.

Fig. 11 Kudo Tetsumi, '*Zoshokuseirensahanno* No.1 (Multiple chain reaction No.1)' 1960, The National Museum of Art, Osaka

工藤哲巳 増殖性連鎖反応 No.1 1960 (第12回展)

Fig. 12 Kyushu-ha: (top) Obana Shigeharu, ‘*Jigazō* (Self-Portrait)’ 1958-59, asphalt on board, Fukuoka Art Museum. Reproduced from the catalogue cover of Kyushu-ha exhibition, 1988.

(bottom) Kikuhata Mokuma, ‘*Dorei Keizu* (Slave Genealogy)’ 1961 (reproduced in 1983), 120x198x630 cm, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo

Fig.13 Photograph of *Zengakuren* student group climbing over the wall and occupying the Diet compound. 27 November 1959, Tokyo, *Mainichi* newspaper

Fig. 14 Photograph of Group Q, later Kyushu-ha, demonstrating in Fukuoka, 1957

Fig. 15 Photo of Waseda University's Okuma Hall men's urinals painted red by Nakanishi Natsuyuki during the *Hanzaisha Domei* performance, 1962, photo by Takeda Atsushi

Fig. 16 Photograph of the *Yamanote sen Jiken* (Yamanote Line Incident), 18 October 1962. Nakanishi Natsuyuki is licking his 'compact object'. Photo by Murai Taiji,

Fig. 17 *Keisho* #7 and #8 (cover design of #8 by Akasegawa Genpei), 1963, Imaizumi archive, Tokyo

Fig. 18 Compiled photographs of Hi Red Center events, in 1964
a-‘Shelter plan (Nam Jun Paik)’

Fig. 18 b-*'Dai Panorama Ten'*, Nakanishi and Takamatsu closing the Naika gallery door for the duration of the exhibition, photo by Hanaga Mitsutoshi

Fig. 18 c-*'Dropping Show'* (Takamatsu, Izumi Tatsu, Akasegawa, Kazekura Sho), photo by Hirata Minoru.

Fig. 19 Hi Red Center (Kawani, Takamatsu, Tanigawa Koichi, Izumi Tatsu, Akasegawa and Nakanishi, 'Tokyo Cleaning Event', 15 October 1964, photo by Hirata Minoru

Fig. 20 Akasegawa Genpei, pages from *Akai Fusen aruiwa mesuookami no yoru* (Red balloon or Night of She-wolf), a magazine published by *Hanzaisha Domei*, 1963, Imaizumi archive, Tokyo

Fig. 21 Article on *Hanzaisha domei*, *Weekly Bunshun*, 6 January 1964, Imaizumi archive, Tokyo

Fig. 22 Tokyo Kodo Sensen (Tokyo Action Front), 15 June 1965, Imaizumi archive, Tokyo

**Fig. 23-a Photograph of Nihon University Art Department barricade, *For Freedom!*
July 1968**

Fig. 23-b Photograph of Nihon University Literature department barricade.

Fig. 24 Photograph of the occupied Yasuda hall surrounded by riot police, January 1968, *Mainichi* newspaper

Fig. 25 Sekine Nobuo, '*Iso-Daichi* (Phase-mother earth)' 1968, photo by Murai Osamu.

Fig. 26 Photographs of the Anti-war riot in Shinjuku, 21 October 1968
a- burning police car at the central entrance of Shinjuku station.

Fig. 26 b- *Yajiuma* bystanders, turning to active participants of destruction of Shinjuku station, *Asahi Graph*, 8 November 1968

Fig. 27 Photograph of *Zero Jigen*, ‘*Zenra dokumen hokou gishiki* (Nude gas-masked walk ritual)’ Shinjuku, 9 December 1967, photo by Kanesaka Kenji

Fig. 28 Photograph of *Jokyo Gekijo*, *Koshimaki Osen furisodekaji*, Shinjuku Central Park, January 1969. The red tent theater was surrounded by riot police, and four members, including Kara Juro was arrested after the performance.

Fig. 29 Hijikata Tatsumi, '*Nikutai no hanran* (Revolt of the Body)', 1968. Stage design by Nakanishi Natsuyuki, photo by Hanaga Mitsutoshi

Fig. 30 Yokoo Tadanori, poster for *Koshimaki Osen* of Jokyo Gekijo, 1968

Fig. 31 B-zemi class note by Sekine Nobuo, 5 April 1970, reproduced from *Bijutsu techo*, July 1971

Fig. 32 Nakamura Hiroshi, the cover of *Boenkyo kara no Kokuji* (Announcement from Telescope), 1968, Gendaishicho-sha

Fig. 33 Kara Juro, *Koshimaki Osen* (O-sen in underskirt), 1968, Gendaishicho-sha

Fig. 34 Hosoe Eiko, *Kamaitachi*, 1969, Gendaishicho-sha, Tokyo. A poster announcing the publication, Imaizumi archive

Fig. 35 Bigakkō pamphlet, 1969, Ando Yu collection, Saitama

Fig. 36 Kobatake Hiroshi's wood carving class, *Weekly Playboy* magazine, 6 June 1971

Fig. 37 *Kaiha* map, *Geijutsu Shincho* magazine, January 1956

A caricature of this *Kaiha* scene in *Geijutsu Shincho* magazine supplement 'Map of Art Scene' (January 1957) shows *Nitten* (a national juried art exhibition) at the top of the world, surrounded by the clouds of various *Kaiha* such as *Nika* (a modernist group), *Issui-kai* (naturalism), and followed by post-war groups such as *Nihon-Bijutsu Kai* (affiliated to the Japan Communist Party), the Modern Art Association, and young individual 'abstract' and 'new realism' artists on the ground.

**Fig. 38 (top) Hayashi Takeshi giving instruction to a student at the National Academy of Art, Tokyo where he was a professor of painting from 1952
(bottom) Hayashi Takeshi, 'Yagai fujin', oil on canvas, 1956, *Geijutsu Shincho*, November 1956**

Fig. 39 *Teita*, copied by Toriyama Yutaka, Kobatake class student, 1973

Fig. 39

**Fig. 40 Nakamura Hiroshi, '*Sunagawa goban*' 1955, oil on canvas (92.5x183 cm)
Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo**

**Fig. 41 Unknown student of Nakamura class, 'Mona Lisa', pencil on paper, circa
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Fig. 42 Nakanishi Natsuyuki, 'rotating portrait project' diagram, 1969, reproduced from *Bijutsu techo*, September 1975

Fig. 43 Photograph of Nakanishi class exercise, Bigakko, 1969, photo by Morinaga Jun.

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53-a Sakakibara Shigeko, pages from her memory book 1973

“A memory of my honey moon: We went for a walk in the mountain and found a beautiful pond. It was early April and still quite cold, very quiet...On our return, a inn owner smiled and said ‘Last night, a man’s skeleton was found in the pond’”

53-b Sakakibara Shigeko, pages from memory book, 1971

“The figure was my father, who was ill at the time and unable to speak. He became a part of the mountain range surrounding my hometown”

53-c. Sakakibara Shigeko, pages from memory book, 1971

"I had a dream of a pig in a tent. She had lips painted red and skin very white. I somehow knew she was a prostitute and just had a baby. The piglet was in the back of the tent. The pig looked at me with a tired smile."

Fig. 54 K, Barricade Diagram, pen on paper, 2013

Fig. 55 Aksegawa Genpei, *Gendai suimin ko* (Study of Contemporary Sleep), *Gendai no me*, March 1971

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Fig. 61 *Zero Jigen* (on the roof) and Mizukami Jun (on the rope) at Kyoto University Banpaku funsai Black Festival, 1969, photo by Hirata Minoru, reproduced from

Nikutai no anaakizumu Han-paku, photos by Hirata Minoru.

(Lower compilation) Black Festival at Kyoto University. Photos by Hirata Minoru and Kanesaka Kenji reproduced from *Bijutsu techō*, May 1972

Fig. 62 Akasegawa Genpei, *Nihon Geijutsukai Daigekisen* (The Great Battle of Japanese Art World), *Bijutsu techo*, May 1972

‘Congratulation Environment Art! Anti-Authority Slapped With Money!’

In the foreground, debris from the barricading university campuses pile up with *Bikyoto* members burning signs of Japan commercial artist association and *Sogetsu* film festival (both of which they objected to and forced to close down). In the mid ground, there is a silhouette of students and confronting riot police shield. Tokyo U. Yasuda Hall rises on the right. In the middle, the Tower of the Sun of Expo '70 soars. Dada Kan runs naked in front of it, while *Zero Jigen* stand on Kyoto University Clock tower naked in protest against the Expo. Ghostly white smiling figures hovering behind are supposed to be artists who participated in the Expo and were paid well. Each holds a lantern with his excuse for participating in the Expo (“I had to pay my debt back” “I will self-criticize later” “Finally my time has come!” etc.) A man with a red helmet holed himself up in the eye of the tower and the Red Army Faction hijacked Japan Air Line (*Yodo*) and flew to North Korea (far left).

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**Fig. 66 Jōmon Venus (national treasure), a clay figure from Kayano, Nagano city
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Fig. 67 Mail art works of 'World Uprising' 1971, pages of *Bijutsu techo* (November 1972)

a-Matsuzawa Yutaka

b-Daniel Buren

c- Douglas Heubler

d- Ikeda Tatsuo

67-a Now I imagined the word 'death' nine times at nine places among fallen leaves in *Meiso-dai* (meditation stand) in Sensui-iri. This corresponds to banishing of the human beings. 31 December 1971

67-b

67-c

67-d

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Includes student list of 1969-70, lecture notes, letters and other private papers.
The archive is currently being catalogued by Shimada Yoshiko

Matsuzawa Yutaka teaching notes collection. Collection of Itami Hiroshi, Tokyo. Itami was Matsuzawa's last student

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Nakamura Hiroshi Bunko (Nakamura Hiroshi personal papers), Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Contemporary Art Library

Nakanishi Natsuyuki teaching notes collection. Collection of Ando Yu, 1969 Nakanishi class student, Tokyo

Yamamoto Sakubei Collection (including *Bigakko mural of Kikuhata class*), Tagawa City Library, Fukuoka

Yamamoto Sakubei on line archive:

Interviews

Video interview recordings of Hayashi Michio, Nakamura Hiroshi and Kikuhata Mokuma are available on request (in Japanese, no subtitle). Nakamura and Kikuhata's previous interviews are available in transcripts edited by them (both in Japanese and English).

Ishii, Imaizumi taped recordings are partially available on audiotape (as they passed away after the interviews, The author needs to consult with their families for full permission).

Nakanishi recording is partially available on audiotape pending full permission due to his poor health.

All other interviews recording are available except ones noted as NR (the interviewee did not wish to be recorded).

All interviews were conducted in Japanese.

Artists

Kikuhata, Mokuma: 7 July 2010 and 5 December 2012 with Alice Maude-Roxby

Matsuzawa, Kumiko (the eldest daughter of late Matsuzawa Yutaka): 12 December, 2012

Nakamura, Hiroshi: 24 June 2010, 10 December 2012, both with Alice Maude-Roxby
26 April 2014

Nakanishi, Natsuyuki: 11 July 2010 with Alice Maude-Roxby

Founders

Imaizumi, Yoshihiko: 20 April and 28 June 2010 with Alice Maude-Roxby

Ishii, Kyoji: 15 December 2010 with Alice Maude-Roxby

Kawani, Toshie (the widow of late Kawani Hiroshi): 10 September 2010

Students of 1969-71

Ando, Yu (Nakanishi class): 9 June 2013

Fujikawa, Kozo (Kobatake class, and current director of Bigakko): 14 May, 23 June and
3 July 2010

Fukuda, Mizue (Tateishi miniature drawing class): 17 August 2014

Katano, Kazunori (Nakanishi class): 8 December 2010

Kono, Katsuo (Tateishi Miniature drawing class, Nakamura class, and Mitsuo Kano
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Critics and scholars

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