



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-IAS

**Fukushima Global Communication Programme
Working Paper Series**
Number 11 — December 2015



Ethnographic Perspective on Oral Narratives of Risk Communication

David H. Slater Sophia University

Haruka Danzuka University of Tokyo

Fukushima Global Communication Programme

This working paper series shares research produced as part of the Fukushima Global Communication (FGC) Programme, a research initiative of the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS). The FGC Programme applies a human security approach to examine impacts of the Great East Japan Earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident of 11 March, 2011 on people and society, and the challenges of the recovery process in Fukushima. It also focuses on issues of risk and information provision, aiming to improve understanding of how the threat of radiation is perceived, and the specific challenges of risk communication related to nuclear energy.

This working paper is an output of the FGC research workshop “Understanding and Communicating Risks Post Fukushima”, held in Tokyo on 12–13 November 2015. The workshop brought together international experts to explore the specific challenges of understanding and discussing risks related to nuclear accidents, and identify appropriate and effective forms of risk communication.

To find out more, please visit fgc.unu.edu

© 2015 United Nations University. All Rights Reserved.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations University.

ABSTRACT

Based on the in-depth interviews of more than 50 Fukushima residents, including many who are now living as refugees in Tokyo, from a corpus of Fukushima interviews of about 200, this paper documents our informants' shifting understanding and often disillusionment with the state's management of disaster information. We outline two key terms, the *anzen shinwa* (安全神話, the myth of safety) that many residents felt lead to a de-legitimation of the state's role in disaster, and the role of "goyogakusha" (御用学者, scholar beholden to the government) as the foundation of a local critique of the collusive relationship between the state and the scientific community. In both of these dynamics, it was the politics of information flow that was at the heart of the problem. We offer this as 'immanent critique,' a synthesis informants' understanding of their own situation to illustrate key problematics with the expectation that these serve as the starting point of any policy discussion.

抄録

200時間以上に及ぶ福島でのオーラルヒストリー・インタビューの中から、福島から東京に避難された方々を含む50名以上へのインタビューをもとに、福島第一原子力発電所の事故後の政府の対応や情報管理への想いをまとめた。更に、「安全神話」と「御用学者」という2つのキーワードを通して、国や科学界への信頼の崩壊とその影響を考察する。問題の中心にあるのは、情報の流れを巡る策略である。この論文では、インタビューから浮かび上がってきた不信感や将来への不安などの声を、そのままの形で「内在する批判」として取り上げている。これらがいかなる政策議論の開始点となることを期待する。

Introduction

This research note addresses the flow of information, official and unofficial, around the post 3.11 period, especially as it pertains to the issues of radiation danger around the Fukushima reactor. Our convener Sato Akiko notes that "The consequences of faulty risk communication are severe. It can create inconsistent, controversial information; misinterpretation of messages; false rumors; unnecessary exposure to additional risks; and a sense of agitation and hopelessness." Yes, and much more. It is sometimes said that agentless false rumors was the 4th disaster of the 3.11 period (after earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown). Based on our research, it would be more accurate to say that the governmental failure to provide timely, accurate and intelligible information to the affected population was by far the more damaging information-related fiasco, all the more inexcusable because it was supposed to have been managed and executed by the state, in its many levels. This paper is about the ways in which our informants narrated to us how the state failed to appropriately manage information flows, the subsequent loss of credibility it suffered as a result, and the consequences there in.

Research was done through interviews with more than 50

people since 2012 to present, mostly young mothers, who were living in Fukushima at the time of the accident. We conducted interviews at informant's houses or local cafes, mainly in Iwaki and Fukushima city, but also in Tokyo with former residents of Fukushima who evacuated outside. Interviews were semi-structured and were about 1 to 2 hours each on average. All informants introduced in this paper have signed a release form for their stories to be published. We have written about the importance of information in the context of disaster (Slater, Nishimura and Kindstrand, 2012) and its effects on the social community (Slater, Morioka and Danazuka 2014) which two studies that provide a basic outline of the situation.

Each of our examples discussed here are, to varying degrees, traceable back to a crisis of legitimacy of the government in the eyes of local residents. The state's handling of information during the 3.11 crisis led many to doubt its competence in dealing with information, and subsequently, its care for residents, and even its commitment to safety of its own population.

What we present here is not meant to be a random sample; we do not have the quantitative survey data to make such claims. Rather, what we attempt to outline is the sorts of local explanations for information failure that we have heard. So, we sketch here, when information production, circulation and reception is perceived as having failed, why and how is this failure understood, explained, and what sort of conclusions are drawn by local residents for this failure.

Anzen Shinwa 安全神話: *The myth of safety*

The failure of the state in terms of information management begins long before the meltdown, with the promotion of the reactors as safe, desirable and maybe even necessary. Given the substantial discrepancy between how people narrated their pre and post-311 awareness, it is difficult not to see a systematic attempt by the state and corporate sectors to misrepresent or at least obscure the risks associated with nuclear energy in general and of the particular plant that has been put into their communities. The way this now-lost feeling of security is most often expressed is as the "myth of safety."

爆発しても、こんな地元に住んでいながら、原発の近くに
住んでいながら、原発の危険性っていうのを普段意識
してないので… まあ大丈夫大丈夫って安全神話があっ
たので。40キロ離れてば大丈夫だろうと思って。爆
発したっていうのをニュースで聞いても近所のお母さん
達と外で立ち話とか、爆発したんだってねって、子どもた
ちも外で遊びながら、学校は休みになったので、土日だ
ったのかな、金曜日が3月11日だったので、土日があっ
て、立ち話して子どもたちが遊んでいるのを見ながら、
原発のうわさ話をしてて。

*Even though I live so close to the nuclear power
plant, I was never aware of the dangers of nuclear
power plants. We live about 40km from the plant,
so we thought we were okay, because we had the*

myth of safety (anzen shinwa), we thought that if we were 40km away, we were okay. Even after we heard on the news that there was an explosion, because school was canceled and the weekend followed the explosion, I was chatting and talking about rumors of the plant with my neighbors outside, while watching our kids play.

This is a mother in her early 30s, who lives in Iwaki city in Fukushima with her two children. After talking to us about her initial (lack of) reaction to the nuclear power plant explosion, she went on to explain that she only realized the possible dangers after seeing others evacuating close to her house, then again, evacuating from there to more inland areas of the prefecture;

そのうちに … 目の前が小学校なんですけど、そこに原発の近くの人が避難してくるようになって、体育館とかに。でそういうのを見て、最初はそういうのを見てここは大丈夫なんだろうと思ったんだけど、その人たちも次の所に移動を始めちゃって。でその人たちも次の日はまた移動を始めちゃったんで、ここもまずいのかなくなってきて。

There is an elementary school right in front of my house and evacuees were staying in the gym, so watching that, I thought I was okay. But after a while, the next day, they started moving again, and that's when I started to sense that even here might be dangerous.

For most of our interviewees, in response to our open-ended question of “tell us about the situation on and since March 11th,” this is how they started their narratives, explaining to us their lack of knowledge about the risk of nuclear power plants and dangers of radiation, of which, they only realized after the accident. While some individuals expressed that they had their personal doubts, almost everyone told us, that they believed that nuclear power plants were safe because that was the only thing they were told by local governments and TEPCO. (See also Watanabe 2014) To say that the desire to see their own circumstances as safe is self-serving is surely true, a fact that makes the state seem not only complicit but also aiding and abetting such beliefs.

After the explosion, this false belief that nuclear power plants are safe have started to be called “myth of safety” (安全神話 *anzen-shinwa*). The word started to be used first among anti-nuclear activists, but has then become widely shared among locals and came up in our interview fairly often.¹ Labeling the safety discourse before the accident as a “myth,” this word express the great shock and disillusionment the accident gave to residents in realizing that they were “lied to” by the government and TEPCO that the nuclear power plant was safe.

原発がそれほど危ないというのは、私の中で知識としてはなかったんだよね。よく私の小学校、もう中学校の時にもそうだったけど、原子力のポスターとか一生懸命書いて。原子力の日、10月の29日かな？そのポスターとかよく書いて提出して、賞もらってたなとか。今考えればとんでもないことだなんて思いますよね。あんまり、その危ないという知識はなかったです。「安全だ。安全だ。」って子供の頃から。埋め込まれてたんで。うん、教育的に。子供の頃から原発はいいものだとかそういう教育を受けているので、そんなに怖いもんだと思ってなかったんですよ。地震の避難訓練はしてるけど、原発が爆発した時の避難訓練はしてないから。うん。で「爆発したよ」と言われても、あーそうなんだしか、どうしたらいいのだろうしかなんか思わなかったね私も。

I wasn't aware that the nuclear power plant could be so dangerous. In elementary school, even in middle school, we all drew posters for the nuclear power plant on the day of the nuclear power plant (genpatsu no hi), I think it was October 29?, and the best posters would get prizes. It is horrific to think back of it now. We didn't know that it was dangerous. We were told over and over that nuclear power is safe and because of this education, it never occurred to us that it could be so dangerous. There were trainings for how to evacuate when the earthquake hit, but we never were told what to do when the nuclear power plant exploded. So, when I heard that it did explode, I thought “oh okay” and “so what should I do?” but that was about it.

Effects of state failure

The lack of knowledge of how dangerous nuclear power plants were, somewhat ironically, led them to be extremely dependent on information and instructions from the national and local authorities or experts, the very agents that had betrayed their trust in the first place. We have written elsewhere how this realization of governmental duplicity led to politicization of “regular” people, in Fukushima and Tokyo, a process that often involved the processes of systematic self and group education, the collection of first hand data, and its sharing for analysis among diverse groups (Danzuka, Uno, and Houser 2015). This process was instrumental in the emergence (or re-emergence) of many local activist groups. This is an inspiring story that is today being played out all over the country and, we think, is changing the shape of civil society in various ways.

But when we look at the far larger group (larger than those who become activists) of people who have not become politicized, we see a number of different positions on the role of the state in information crisis management.

1. The failure of the government and TEPCO to acknowledge and educate the public about the dangers of nuclear plant before the meltdown hurt their credibility

so much that it compromised their subsequent efforts of managing the information flow and to aid the affected population.

2. The state's use of changing and obscure technical information, led to the rejection of scientific information all together, and a not infrequent lapse into a largely unprincipled, even conspiracy-theory-like approach in certain communities.
3. The lack and incompressibility of much official data led many to seek for non-governmental or non-official sources of information. As noted above, sometimes the results have been lifesaving in the short term and political liberating in the longer term; other times it has led to confusion and danger.
4. The association of scientific data with the untrustworthy government, apparent for example in the use of "goyogakusha" (御用学者, scholar beholden to the government), damaged the trust local populations has in science as a whole in the context of disaster.

As ethnographers and oral historians, ill at ease offering policy recommendations, we below outline how the informants in our research explain this loss of faith in the government's—a loss that is largely the function of information mismanagement—and some of the consequences.²

Lack of information

The levels of information failures were many. The first, as noted above, was a pre-crisis failure to education the population—a failure from which there is little going back. The second was the lack of relevant information in the immediate crisis. A woman who gave birth on March 10th in Fukushima city explains.

ラジオが、福島が一つしか放送局がないんですよ。私
がいた病院は電気も水道もダメだったので、テレビも見
れずそのラジオだけ唯一、なんか乾電池式のラジオで
先生が付けてくれたんですけど。全部、連絡下さいみた
いな、行方不明者の人をずっと永遠とこう、「何県、何さ
ん、元気ですか？連絡下さい」というのを。ずっとそんな
放送しかなかったの、原発がどうなっているとか、
津波がどうなっているとか、そういうの情報が全然
入ってこなくて。

There is only one radio station in Fukushima. The hospital I was staying in had no electricity, so the radio that the doctor turned on for us was the only source of information. However, they were only playing messages from people who are looking for those who are lost, like "this person from this pre-fecture, please let us know if you are okay". So we couldn't know what was going on with the nuclear

power plants.

She was relieved that none of her relatives were killed in the earthquake and tsunami—and like others, did not even have a chance to know that the real danger was the subsequent radiation leakage. She only found out about the nuclear power plant explosion through talking with her husband and relatives on the phone, and through sharing that information with others who were staying at the hospital. She told us that the lack of information led to greater fear, and she tried to get as much information as she could from her mobile phone once the connection became regular.

Unintelligibility of information

Even if you had information, if you did not have the tools to understand them, it is also a frightening experience. Many went to lectures on radiation by experts held in city halls and community centers, to get information on what is happening and what they should do to protect themselves.

何マイクロシーベルト、何ミリシーベルトとかベクレルとか、全部外国語みたいでどういう意味か全然分からなかった。

Mico-cerverts, mili-cerverts and becqurels all sounded like a foreign language to me, and I could not understand what they meant

For many, like this grandmother living by herself in Iwaki who later decided to evacuate to Tokyo with her daughter and grandchild, it was difficult to understand the scientific explanations and the technological words used to explain the situation. She said, that even though she clung to the broadcast news and went to local lectures to get all the information she could, it did not make her understanding of the situation better. Actually, she was more confused and more scared. The result of such obscuring technical language was not only confusion; the use of such terms are intimidating, frightening to local people because they carry the patina of official and sometimes emergency directive. Some of the people we talked to internalized the fault, at least initially thinking that they themselves were too stupid to understand this information. Increasingly more, blamed the government. As one older man from Koriyama explained, "We are not fancy people. The [government] should know that." He then added ironically, "Are they too smart to explain things in ways that we can understand?"

Critique generated by our informants

In increasingly levels of venality, local explanations of the failure to provide timely, useful and accurate information could be summarized as such.

1. The government is incompetent. It cannot gather, ana-

lyze and disseminate radiation information

2. The government is uncaring. Thinking that the government must be able to manage this information—imagining that they must have been prepared for this obvious occurrence—many reasoned that it must not really be taking seriously the situation of the local residents.
3. The government intentionally puts residents at risk. This explanation suggests intentional and willful harm being done. Often, this explanation is linked to the protection of corporate capital, and in particular, to TEPCO, over and above the safety of the communities affected.

Uninformed Support

It should be noted that by and large, while virtually no one we spoke to had a completely positive view of the government's efforts, very few became politically active. In more recent sets of interviews (generated through a very different set of contacts), we have found what is probably a numerical majority: those who are NOT open and vocal in their criticism of the state's ability to manage information. Again, while refraining from any claims to representative sample, it is worthy to note that those who were least critical, were also, usually by their own admission, least informed. Perhaps not surpassingly, those who are less critical about the state's handling of the situation are less likely to talk about it. They are also less likely to engage in critical inspection of it, develop other sources of information (reading websites or blogs, going to events, etc). They are, again by their own admission, simply and relatively passively accepting what their government has to say and the information it has to provide.

Consequently, we are not presenting 'one side of the story,' leaving out the other. Among any of our interviews, there is very little critical or systematic review of the government's handling who have concluded that they did a good job. The community members are not, by and large, defenders of the state's handling of the situation; they are agnostic if they have a position at all. Most explain, they are tired, and 'simply do not want to think anymore.' More in depth interviews with the same person over time reveals often more anxiety is just below the surface. Peer pressure, fear, experience or exhaustion is not hard to see in many of our interviews. Explained one woman in Koriyama, "I don't worry about getting more information; I am here and I cannot leave so I have to be ok. My kids have to healthy.' We bring this up here because if as Sato mentioned, we seek to promote some sort of "participatory" approach to risk communication, the retreat into willful refusal to become engaged in the data-driven situation by those who ostensibly support the government's effort is perhaps even more damaging than those others who have become forced to adopt critical and/or even adversarial stances to their own

governments. (See Svendsen 2013 for related discussion.)

State and Science: goyogakusha

Our final example is somewhat different, and one that addresses the status of expert or scientific knowledge, and its perceived use and misuse by the government. At issue is the definition of the term "safe." We saw a number of different patterns. First, many of our informants reported that local and national media officials repeatedly and bluntly said that the situation is "safe." (What some came to understand the government asserting was that situation will cause "no immediate physical harm." But as was often pointed out to us, to identify any meltdown of a nuclear reactor as "safe" because no one was hit by debris in the exposure is misleading at best. Second, Even after the government published more specific information, locals were confused and discouraged by the changing orders of evacuation and the changing of annual amounts of radiation that is acceptable to enter one's body. How could this declaration of safety change even before there was any systematic radiation surface testing (let alone the effects on bodies through ingestion or contact)?

はじめ信用していたものがあとからなって覆されますよね。数字も、そうじゃなかったって何日か経ってからして話していたんで。そこから信用できなくちゃったんですね。はじめはいいように出しといて、最後は全部ひっくり返して期待を裏切られ。全部数字をかえてきて、はじめからその数値を知っていたくせに変えてたんじゃないの？こっちから言わせればと、疑ちやいますよね。そこで大丈夫じゃないっていう発信をしたらパニックになるからとかそういう考えのもとと言わないでいるとか、私たちは裏をかくじゃないけど、

Even things that we believed at first is flipped a while later. Numbers too. They said that the initial numbers were wrong a few days after they first announced it. I lost trust in them ever since. They first presented numbers that were much lower, and fooled us and lost our trust. I'm starting to think that they knew the real numbers from the beginning and changed them on purpose to fit their needs. I started to think that they are not saying certain things so that we don't panic, I have started to doubt like that.

Refusal to establish and/or be responsible for stable criteria of "safety."

The third pattern is somewhat more complex. We repeatedly heard examples of representatives of government, of corporate interests (TEPCO) or the scientific community addressing audiences to provide information that would help community members make sense of the tragedy and the immediate risks involved. After sitting through a presentation in a local community center, various charts and tables

of numbers and graphs, one woman stood up to ask what was on everyone's mind: are we safe? The scientist's reply was this. "Well, that is hard to say. What exactly is 'safe'? I think that maybe each of us has our own understanding of safe, and I do not want to force my ideas on you."

Amidst the furrowed brows and pained expressions of confused and frightened mothers, the one woman continued, "We have no idea if it is safe—that is why we are here. You are the scientist. You have to tell us." An old woman nearby sighed and said to her friend, "Let's go home. This is another 'scientist beholden to the government' [*goyōgakusha*]." When asked how she could tell, she replied: "What sort of scientist has ever said he does 'not know what safe means'? He is too stupid to help us or is really probably lying." (Slater, Morioka and Danzuka, p. 491). The state's and scientific experts being unable and/or unwilling to address issues of safety was seen as perverse, irresponsible and self-serving by most of our informants.

Many studies of disaster information point to the importance of the dynamic between scientific and lay sources, uses and circulation of information that might bridge this gap. Instances such as those offered in the first half of this paper illustrate how this sort of bridging activity is rendered problematic from the start due to the failure of scientific discourse to be made accessible—a common failure in Japan and elsewhere. (See also Penney 2011.) But this is a more extreme case with the willful and intentional withholding of an answer to the only real question on people's minds—is this safe? The use of terms such as "*goyōgakusha*" illustrate the failure of the scientific community to retain its own credibility, the credibility that comes from being intendant from the government's attempt to manage and convince the lay community of safety.

Scientific discourse as objective and useless

This is not to say that we are unaware of the reasons often offered for such withholding. Explained one scientist from Tokyo University after an event in Sendai, "'safe' and 'safety' are not scientific terms. They are judgment calls and cannot be objective evaluations. As such, he explained, "I cannot pronounce something as safe or not, at least not as a responsible scientist. All I can do is give the readings." One younger man at the event asked, "But is it responsible for you to NOT tell these people if it is safe or not?" The scientist shrugged, "Well it is all a matter of responsibility (責任)." It is uncommon for a scientist or governmental official to admit this, but it is just what many suspect: that that no one from the state or the "*goyōgakusha*" wanted to be responsible for the findings that they themselves were presenting, and the consequences that they or their state sponsored might be associated with. "It is just numbers, numbers. You cannot understand with numbers. Even [the scientist] cannot understand with numbers."

The lay and local critique of state and science, as embod-

ied in the term "*goyōgakusha*" should not be interpreted as suggesting scientific information is or should be unrelated to the state. While it is true that most of our informants believed that the scientific community should not produce information that is simply supporting state policy, this does not mean that the state and scientific community should be unconnected. Actually, the opposite is true: the state must support and be responsible for the information produced by an independent scientific community. And more to the point, they must be responsible for the real-world consequences of these findings. That is, while recognizing that scientific community could not make determinations of safety—in recognition of their professional limitations—the state must do exactly this. They must decide what is safe as a way to be responsible for this community, and the citizens, it serves. This is what the state would not do. Instead, they flooded the lay community with data they could not understand and were then unwilling to make clear determination as to the safety of the situation.

Doing so, they left the local residents in a position of extreme precariousness that contravenes the limits of responsibly governing. As one grandmother explained, "Should we be surprised? Governmental officials want to shield themselves. So they just talk numbers to us." She paused, "But at a time like this? Can they do something like that, even now?" In some ways, the popular skepticism of scientific, expert discourse is but the collateral damage of the crisis of legitimacy suffered by the state: guilt by association with the state's efforts to cover up, as much as from failure of experts to deploy scientific discourse in meaningful and intelligible ways to a local community.

Theoretical implications are intertwined with the political implications at this point. It becomes clear that our models of scientific information, as produced by experts and provided to the lay community, is a simplistic and even inaccurate communication model, especially in those situations where the information is potentially life threatening. When the lay population assign a particular set of associations to the producers of scientific discourse through its use by a local or national government, disaster communication becomes even more complicated.

If there is a policy implication, implicit in the narratives that we have collected, it is the expectation that the role of the state is to support the generation of information, to authorize and stand behind these findings necessarily permeates production, transmission and reception of this information. Moreover, it must go one step beyond, and to even be responsible for its consequences. These consequences include, at a very minimum, to set and communicate clear criteria for "safe" levels of exposure. The state then must be willing to morally and financially take responsibility for negative consequences for those who might suffer even though they are following these directives. On the other hand, the state must be willing to organize and financially support the evacuation of those areas that are not consid-

ered safe. To simply provide technical and often confusing information to an untutored lay population, and then suggest that they come to their own decisions, clearly as a way to avoid moral, legal and fiscal obligations is irresponsible and venal.

Policy Recommendations

The following are some of the policy recommendations that have emerged from our study. They reflect the problem that have come from problematic disaster information production, circulation and reception. These recommendations are directed at the government—sometimes local, sometimes national, on the assumption that citizens and communities, NPOs and other civic groups are not the ones who would or should receive policy recommendations.

The overall recommendation is simple: Governments should not lie to its citizens.
(When this occurs, all subsequent disaster communication becomes problematic)

More specifically:

Pre-Disaster (the problem of 安全神話)

1. The government must provide the citizens with a clear understanding of the risks involved in nuclear energy before any accident occurs.
2. Governments should honestly reveal the risks of placing a nuclear reactor in relatively close proximity to a community before it is put there.
3. Governments should honestly provide information on any leakage or reactor failures during the course of operation.
4. If it is going to resist the nomenclature of "safety" (what is safe and what is not) after a meltdown, it

should not pronounce a pre-failure reactor "safe."

5. The government should provide and advertise independent study and dissemination of reactor safety or danger to the community in ways that clearly disentangle any actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Post disaster:

1. A government should provide timely and accurate disaster and radiation information to the citizens.
2. The government should acknowledge the limits of this knowledge immediately.
3. The governmental should present information in ways that allows citizens to make sense of it.
4. The movement must make recommendations as to safety procedures to its citizens. That is, it must declare "safe" or "not safe."
5. The government should take responsibility for its recommendations, so that if a "safe" area or period turns out not to be safe, they government will compensate and take care of the citizens.

Re: scientific and/or expert production of information (the problem of 御用学者)

1. The government should identify and support a full range of "experts" to evaluate the situation.
2. The government should establish and/or support independent scientific (市民測定室) bodies before, during and after an accident to evaluate risk.
3. The relationships between the government and the scientific community and esp. of those scientists who are actively engaged in risk assessment should be transparent and open.

David H. Slater is Director of the Institute of Comparative Culture and a Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Japanese Studies at Sophia University. Since March 2011, he has run a project called Voices from Tohoku (<http://tohokukaranokoe.org/>) that combines volunteer work with oral narrative interviews in post-disaster Japan; with 500 hours of footage, it is the largest video archive of the 311 disasters of its kind in Japan. He is the co-editor of *Japan Copes With Calamity: Ethnographies of the Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disasters of March 2011* (translated into Japanese as *東日本大震災の人類学: 津波、原発事故と被災者たちの「その後」*, with Tom Gill and Brigitte Steger; and has co-authored with Rika Morioka and Haruka Danzuka of "Micro-politics of Radiation: Young Mothers Looking for a Voice in Post-3.11 Fukushima" in *Critical Asian Studies*.

Haruka Danzuka is a graduate student at the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, studying in the field of Anthropology. She has been involved in Professor Slater's Voices from Tohoku project since 2012, conducting more than 50 oral narrative interviews in Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, and also with evacuees from Fukushima. She was a co-author with David H. Slater and Rika Morioka of "Micro-politics of Radiation: Young Mothers Looking for a Voice in Post-3.11 Fukushima" in *Critical Asian Studies*, and co-authored "Activist Moms and Radical Women" in the *American Anthropology Newsletter*. She has presented her work at Japanese and international conferences.

Notes

¹ Of course, the word itself is much older and used in a number of different contexts, including the most often cited in Kawai 2011 and more recently Nishiyama, Noboru and Takatoshi Imada (2012).

² Note: a larger point here that goes beyond the parameters of this paper but should be relevant to our general discussion, is that with the diffusion of digital media, from websites to blogs, from list serve to Line groups, etc, we see people gathering so much data themselves that it might not be reasonable anymore to even speak of state control of information anymore, in particular in the context of disaster. It might be, that even in this age of "State Security Acts," neither the Japanese State, nor any other state can longer "control" information in any systematic way. For us as scholars to make recommendations for improved information practices to a state or any other unitary body may be anachronistic to the point of misrepresentation of the true complexity of the media environment today.

References

- Danzuka, H., Uno, S., & Houser, M. (2015). Activist Mothers and Radical Women. *The Asia-Pacific Journal; Japan Focus*. Retrieved October 10, 2015, from <http://www.anthropology-news.org>
- Kawai, M. (2004). *Anzen shinwa hokai no paradokkusu* [The paradox of the collapse of Japan's safety myth]. Tokyo, Japan: Iwanami Shoten.
- Nishiyama, N., and Imada T. (2012). Zero Risuku Gensou to Anzen Shinwa no Yuragi: HigashinohonDaishinsai to Fukushima Genpatsujiko wo tsujita Nihonjin no Risukuis-hiki no Henka (The instability of Zero Risk fantasy and Safety Myth: Changing risk perceptions after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant accident).
- Penney, M. (2011). Nuclear Workers and Fukushima Residents at Risk: Cancer Expert on the Fukushima Situation. *The Asia-Pacific Journal; Japan Focus*. Retrieved October 20, 2015.
- Slater, D., Morioka, R., & Danzuka, H. (2014). Micro-Politics Of Radiation. *Critical Asian Studies*, 485-508.
- Slater, D. Nishimura K., and Love K. (2012). Social Media, Information, and Political Activism in Japan's 3.11 Crisis. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol 10, Issue 24, No 1, June 11.
- Svendsen, E. (2013). A new perspective on radiation risk communication in Fukushima, Japan. *Journal of the National Institute of Public Health*, 62(2), 196-203.
- Watanabe, Y. (2014). *Higashi Nihon Daishinsai to Genshiryoku Anzen Shinwa, JIshin-yochi Shinwa, Panikku Shinwa* (The Great East Japan Earthquake and the Myth of safety, Myth of Earthquake prediction, and Panic Myth). *Journal of Aoyama Gakuin Women's Junior College*, 68, 1-16.