

The 1960 Anpo Protests and the Origins of Contemporary Japan

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1. Introduction

From the spring of 1959 through the summer of 1960, Japan experienced the largest popular protests in its modern history. It is estimated that approximately one-third of the population—or about 30 million people—participated in protest activity of some kind during this period. At issue was an attempt by the US-supported conservative government to revise the US-Japan Security Treaty, abbreviated *Anpo* in Japanese. This is the treaty that allows the United States to maintain military bases on Japanese soil to this day.

The original Security treaty had been forced on Japan in 1952, as a pre-condition for ending the US military occupation after World War II. Ever since, Japanese leaders had repeatedly asked the United States to consider revising the Security Treaty.

From a Japanese perspective, the original treaty had numerous flaws, including:

- 1) The treaty explicitly allowed US troops to intervene in Japanese domestic affairs, an infringement of Japanese sovereignty.
- 2) US troops based in Japan could be used for any purpose against any third nation, without prior consultation with Japan.
- 3) The original treaty was indefinite, with no specified end date or provision for terminating it.
- 4) Perhaps most egregious of all (for a treaty called “Treaty of Mutual Security between Japan and the United States”), the treaty was in no way mutual, because it contained no explicit promise that US troops would defend Japan, if Japan were attacked.

The central figure in the renegotiation of the treaty was Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke. A former bureaucrat in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, Kishi had served in the wartime cabinet of General Tōjō Hideki during the disastrous Pacific War. After the war, Kishi had been imprisoned in Sugamo Prison as a suspected Class-A war criminal during the Tokyo War Crimes Trials, but he was saved from

conviction and possible execution at the last moment thanks to the so-called “Reverse Course” in US Occupation policy. Kishi was de-purged, and allowed to return to politics, in order to help fight the Cold War. Kishi had obvious reactionary tendencies. For example, in 1958 he tried to revise the National Police Duties Law to make Japan’s postwar police force more like the prewar “Thought Police,” and openly talked of revising the Constitution to get rid of Article 9 and restore the Japanese military.

Many people on both sides of the political spectrum feared Kishi was trying to take Japan back to the prewar era, and he was widely disliked. Nevertheless, Kishi made an astonishing comeback to become Prime Minister less than 10 years later, even though nobody liked him; this miraculous reversal demonstrated Kishi’s genius as a backroom political operator.

Kishi knew that he was highly unpopular, but hoped to win popularity and secure his legacy by revising the equally unpopular Security Treaty. In order to get the Americans to agree to revise the treaty, Kishi spent years courting American leadership. Kishi ingratiated himself to the Americans so much that they began calling him “our man in Japan” and he even made the cover of Time Magazine on January 25, 1960, posed heroically against an image of a phoenix rising from the ashes of a bombed-out nation.

In particular, Kishi leveraged a rising tide of popular protests in Japan. Taking advantage of US Cold War anxieties, Kishi portrayed grassroots social movements in Japan as the beginnings of a possible communist revolution and argued that if the US refused to revise the treaty, Japan might turn communist.

After several years of intense negotiations, Kishi finally secured revision of the Security Treaty in 1960. The new treaty was much better than the old treaty, fixing all of its most glaring flaws, and Kishi returned to Japan from signing the treaty expecting to be hailed as a hero. However, he was in for a rude surprise.

The problem was that many Japanese did not want treaty merely revised, but rather, wanted no treaty at all, and sought to have military bases and US troops removed from Japan entirely. As strategy, a coalition of opposition political parties, labor unions, student unions, and civic organizations decided to attempt to stop the revision entirely, in spite of the fact that the new treaty was manifestly better than the old one. These groups launched a nationwide anti-Treaty protest movement, carrying out a series of “united actions” from early 1959 through the summer of 1960.

Inside the Diet, the opposition Japan Socialist Party pursued strategy of endless delay, using a variety of parliamentary maneuvers to drag out debate and gum up the works of the treaty approval

process. Meanwhile, Kishi had made a major mistake. Having signed the treaty way back in January, he had already invited Eisenhower to visit Japan in June 1960, believing that six months would be plenty of time to approve the vastly improved Security Treaty, which he expected to receive a speedy assent.

But as debate dragged on, it looked more and more as if the Treaty would not be approved in time for Eisenhower's arrival, and Kishi became increasingly desperate to find some way to cut off the endless debate. Finally, in mid-May, with Eisenhower's arrival just a month away, Kishi met in secret with his closest allies and advisors—a group he grimly dubbed the “Anpo Kamikaze Squad”—and came up with an audacious plan. On May 19, 1960, Kishi shocked the opposition parties and many members of his own party by suddenly calling for a snap vote on the treaty, which was technically legal, but violated longstanding parliamentary norms.

When the Japan Socialist Party staged a sit-in in the halls of the Diet to physically block access to the Diet chambers, Kishi took the unprecedented step of ordering police into the Diet to drag them out and then passed treaty via a voice vote with only members his own party present.

This act was widely viewed as undemocratic, and outraged much of the nation. Thereafter, protests swelled to massive size and continued to surge through the end of May and into June 1960.

Not just the left, but many in center and even conservatives joined the demonstrations, as the anti-Treaty movement transitioned from an “anti-Treaty” to more of an “anti-Kishi” movement. At the climax of the protests in mid-June, the Diet Building became the focus of enormous demonstrations. On June 10, a car carrying the US ambassador and White House Press Secretary James Hagerty—who had come to prepare for Eisenhower's visit—was mobbed outside of Tokyo's Haneda Airport by a crowd of protesters, who rocked the car back and forth for more than an hour, danced on the roof, and punctured its tires and cracked its windows, before the occupants were finally rescued by a US Marines helicopter, in what became known as the “Hagerty Incident.”

Then on June 15, rightwing gangsters attacked a group of peaceful marchers with wooden staves spiked with nails, injuring more than 80 people. Shortly thereafter, thousands of enraged student activists smashed their way into the Diet compound itself, overturning and lighting on fire 19 police paddy wagons, and hurling their unarmed bodies again and again into the massed lines of police armed with clubs, fighting long into the night to repossess the Diet in the name of the Japanese people. The grounds of the Diet ran red with blood and the bodies of students beaten unconscious were piled on the ground. In one of the final charges, a young female Tokyo University student named Kanba Michiko was trampled to death.

News of Kanba Michiko's death stunned the entire nation. In the eyes of many people, her death was a triple tragedy. First of all, because she was so young, just 22 years old. Second of all, because she was an elite student at Japan's prestigious Tokyo University, so people felt, "what a shame." Third, and perhaps most of all, because she was female, at a time when, in general, women were still typically not allowed to march in protests at all. They were supposed to remain in the background, providing so-called *ōen* ("support") or *shien* ("assistance"), not battle with police on the front lines.

Taken together, the Hagerty Incident with the mobbing of the car, the bloodshed at the Diet on June 15, and most of all, Kanba Michiko's death, caused everyone on all sides to pause and reconsider. Kishi wanted to call in the Self-Defense Forces to attack the protesters, but his cabinet refused; he was forced to resign as prime minister, and perhaps even more humiliatingly, cancel Eisenhower's much-hyped visit.

The announcement of Kishi's resignation and the cancelation of Eisenhower's visit took the wind out of the sails of the protest movement, especially since many of the people out in the streets in June 1960 were there to bring down Kishi and may not have cared all that much about the treaty itself. At midnight on June 19, the treaty was automatically passed and came into effect. And so, the movement failed to stop the treaty, and thereafter the protests died away.

However, this is exactly the moment when my book, *Japan at the Crossroads*, begins, and as I argue in the book, the impact of these protests was only just beginning. In this book, I examine the impact of these massive protests on US-Japan relations and the Cold War international system, on Japanese society, and also on Japanese culture. I consider Japanese domestic politics as well as social movements such as the student movement, labor movement, environmental movement, and women's movement.

However in the rest of this talk, I will focus on the last two chapters of my book, which examine transformations in literature, art, and film after the Anpo protests, as well as what I call the "landscape of expression" in postwar Japan.

2. Art after Anpo

Scholars of postwar Japanese culture, including art historians, literature specialists, theater historians, musicologists, film studies scholars, and media studies scholars, have often cited the 1960 protests as a turning point or a major watershed moment in the history of Japanese art and culture in the postwar period. The Anpo protests are always mentioned, but prior to my book there had not been

any systematic study of why the Anpo protests were so important for artists and how they impacted artistic production.

Undeniably, the year 1960 coincided with the emergence of a remarkable variety of new trends in Japanese literature, film, and the arts. For example, in the realm of visual art, you have the emergence of so-called “anti-art” and “non-art,” and the rise of performance art focused around absurdist “actions,” “events,” and “happenings.” In dance, you have the emergence of Ankoku Butoh, a kind of new, postmodern dance style. In photography, you have the emergence of the so-called “postwar school” of photography that emphasized spontaneity and physicality over composition, famously encapsulated by catchphrase “*are, bure, boke*,” or rough, blurred, and out-of-focus. You see the emergence of new types of experimental music, the start of the *angura* movement of “underground” theater, the launch of the Japanese version of “new wave” cinema, and even new forms of manga—so-called *gekiga*—which emerged right around the year 1960.

So on the one hand we have all these new artistic movements appearing right around the year 1960, and on the other hand we also have these huge protests. But what was the connection between them?

First of all, we have to recognize how tremendously engaged Japanese artists and writers were with these 1960 Anpo protests. One of the things that astonished me when I was researching this project was that every famous artist, writer, filmmaker, or musician you can think of took part in the 1960 protests. Now, I do not think we could say every single artist took part in these protests, but I had a hard time finding even one artist who did not. You could name many, many more, but just to name a few: writers like Ōe Kenzaburō and Abe Kōbō; critics like Yoshimoto Takaaki and Hariu Ichirō; visual artists like Sekine Nobuo and Shinohara Ushio; composers like Takemitsu Tōru and Hayashi Hikaru; filmmakers such as Ōshima Nagisa and Hani Susumu; photographers like Moriyama Daidō and Hamaya Hiroshi; or theatre figures like Satō Makoto and Kara Jūrō. They all took part in these protests in 1960. Even figures such as novelist Ishihara Shintarō and critic Etō Jun, both of whom later came to be viewed as staunchly conservative, were also protesting against the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960.

2-1. Connecting Art and Protest

So all of these artists and writers were protesting, and we know that when we compare their work before 1960 and after 1960, we see significant changes in their artworks, their writings, and the films that they were making. How did this happen?

In important ways, the process varied depending on the age bracket or the generation of the artists

in question. First of all, for an older generation of artists who had already become known in the 1950s, the perceived failure of the Anpo protests, and in particular the failure of the Japanese Communist Party to act as a proper vanguard (*zen'ei*) of revolution during the Anpo protests struck a final blow against a formerly prevailing view of the arts as inseparable from politics.

Second, for the younger generation of artists who were just arriving on the scene around 1960, the apparent discrediting of old models, combined with the excitement of a kind of revolutionary moment of protests, helped create new space for experimentation and inspired artistic revolts within established groups and artistic societies. For these younger artists, the struggle against the state and the system during the Anpo protests became conflated with their simultaneous struggles within their own art circles to have their art shown, published, and performed.

In the early postwar period, and continuing through the 1950s, almost every single genre of the arts remained within the grip of some sort of rigid hierarchical system for selecting, training, and promoting the careers of new artists, in which access to displaying, distributing, or performing one's art was extremely restricted, and typically based on seniority, so junior-senior relations (*jōge kankei*) were very important.

In literature, for example, you have the so-called *Bundan*—a system of “literary cliques,” which allowed small in-groups of established authors, critics, and publishers to designate protégés and then selectively advance the careers of favored younger artists.

There were similar systems in other areas of the arts. In theater, for example, extremely hierarchical *shingeki* (“new theater”) companies recruited members at a very young age, and they had to wait many years to have any power within the theater troupe or receive a starring role or be allowed to direct a play.

In Japanese film, a studio system hired future film directors directly out of university based on the result of a written examination, but then forced them to wait many years as “assistant directors” before they had any say in the making of their own films.

2-2. The Role of the Japanese Communist Party

Meanwhile, for the slightly older generation of artists who were already established by 1960, they had less trouble finding audiences for their art, but even these artists faced certain risks, such as public censure by their peers, loss of prestige, and potential disbarment from prominent positions within societies or art groups, if their artwork deviated from certain narrow artistic conventions dictated by the ideologies of Marxism and humanism, and in many cases, by the Japanese Communist

Party itself.

Now, why was the Japanese Communist Party so powerful in the art world in the 1950s? After all, Japanese Communist Party membership was only a few tens of thousands at this time, and the party held no seats in the Diet for much of the 1950s. But as with their participation in protests, hugely disproportionate numbers of artists and writers were members of the Communist Party in the early postwar period, when the Japanese Communist Party was successfully able to sell its leaders as having been the only people who had resisted wartime militarism. Of course, this was because most of the communists were in jail when the war started, so they had the advantage of being able to say that they had been against the war all along. In any case, the communists were enormously popular in the early postwar years, and successfully conflated the idea of being the “vanguard” of political revolution with being the “avant-garde” of artistic advance or artistic revolution.

Of course in English, these are two different words. We use the word “vanguard” to refer to the vanguard of a communist revolution, but when we talk about the vanguard of art or literature, we use the French word *avant-garde*. But in Japanese, these two terms are the exact same word: *zen'ei*. Thus, the Japanese Communist Party strongly pushed the idea that if you wanted to be an avant-garde artist, you had to join the avant-garde political party, the Communist Party.

Of course, not every artist was a member of the Communist Party, but the Communist Party had enough of an influence that certain conventions of art, such as socialist realism and related genres, such as “reportage,” became the dominant mode of artistic expression in early postwar Japan, across a wide variety of artistic genres. And even in genres where the Communist Party held less sway, such as in the film industry, a heavy emphasis was placed on humanism, rationalism, and realism. Art was expected to either be uplifting and celebrate the triumph of the human spirit, or else it was supposed to be a tragedy which underscored social injustice and the need for social reform.

In sum, there was immense pressure for art to be overtly political and have an overtly political message. People who deviated from this expectation were punished. And so, over the course of the 1950s, a lot of artists and writers were struggling to break away from these constraints. Then, in 1960, the massive Anpo protests helped convince artists of a need to make a final break. The ruptures were already forming before the protests, so I do not want to claim that these protests caused everything, but they certainly accelerated this trend and helped it reach a conclusion.

2-3. Visual Art across the 1960 Divide

Before I go any further, I would like to show you some actual images to give you a sense of this

process.

Let's begin with an artist named Katsuragawa Hiroshi. Like many other young artists, Katsuragawa joined the Communist Party right after the war. But in the early 1950s, Soviet premier Joseph Stalin ordered the Japanese Communist Party to immediately launch a Maoist Revolution. Accordingly, the party ordered young students and Zainichi Koreans out into the mountains to form "mountain village guerilla squads," or sent them to attack police boxes with Molotov cocktails. They also sent artists out into the mountains to create revolutionary art in order to hopefully radicalize Japanese farmers and foment a "peasant" revolution.

Katsuragawa was sent into the mountains north of Tokyo, where he was supposed to make art that would anger the farmers enough to start a revolution. To this end, he produced socialist realist artwork such as *The Evicted* (1952), which depicts a pregnant woman and her son who had been kicked out of their home to make way for the construction of a dam.

Along similar lines, in 1954 Katsuragawa produced a series called *The Glass Factory*, visiting an actual glass factory where children as young as 11 years old were working in a dangerous environment and sometimes suffered serious injuries. As we can see, these artworks contained an overt political message regarding exploited children and their dangerous working conditions.

Likewise, in *Sunagawa* (1955), Katsuragawa depicted farmers conducting a sit-in protest against the expansion of a US military base. This was still within the realm of socialist realism. There is an artistic aspect to these artworks—they are not merely photorealism—but they had to contain an obvious political message.

This is what Katsuragawa was doing before the Anpo protests. But what happened in 1960? Like almost all other artists, Katsuragawa joined the Anpo protests, and he began creating artworks referencing the protests and the Security Treaty issue. In *Even So They Keep On Going* (1960), Katsuragawa depicted a crippled figure walking down a long hall, hobbling on crutches. The figure is heavily bandaged, with the bandages unmistakably recalling the shape of the Japanese National Diet building. We see some transition here because you would not call this socialist realism. It is closer to a kind of surrealism, but it still contains a clear political message that Japanese democracy is under attack. It has been damaged badly or wounded. It is on crutches and has lost one of its legs.

Similarly, in *New York* (1960), Katsuragawa depicts the Statue of Liberty imprisoned in a cage, with the Torch of Freedom having burnt out. Again, although the artistic mode is surrealistic, there is a very obvious political message here about the US-Japan alliance, and the failure of the United States to live up to its own ideals.

However, if we jump ahead just a few years later, to 1963, something has clearly changed. *Landscape from Inside the Eye* was part of a series Katsuragawa started painting pairing images of different kinds of fish with massive, floating eyeballs. This is pure surrealism. Perhaps there is some sort of hidden political message here, but if so, it is very difficult to find.

We see this same pattern with artist after artist. You can pick almost any artist. If you look at their art in the 1950s, it is some form of socialist realism, conforming in some way to the political objectives of the Japanese Communist Party. But their art after 1960 is much different.

Let us consider one more example. In the 1950s, artist Bito Yutaka produced socialist realist works such as *The Kawaguchi Ironworks* (1954) and *The Transforming Station* (1955), glorifying the nobility and diligence of Japan's working class. Then, during the Anpo protests, he moves away from socialist realism, but his art remains overtly political. *Protesting* (1960) depicts one of the marchers during Anpo protests, and the title of *Landscape After the Failure* (1961) alludes to the failure of the Anpo protests to stop the revised treaty.

But by the later 1960s, Bito's works have become even more abstract, as seen in his *City Series* (1968), and it becomes very difficult to detect any overt political message. Perhaps there is some politics in these works, but if so, it is buried deep beneath the surface.

So if we were to summarize the role of the 1960 Anpo protests in this process of artistic transformation, it would be as a kind of final, decisive blow against the idea that all art must be connected to politics and social justice. Again, I do not want to say the Anpo protests were the cause. Rather, they marked final endpoint of certain idea of the relationship between art and politics that had once been so strong in the 1940s and early-to-mid 1950s.

Whereas Katsuragawa and Bito remained in Japan, other artists became so disillusioned by the failure of the Anpo protests that they felt they could not remain. The result was a trend in the 1960s of well-known Japanese artists and writers fleeing abroad. Many went to New York and others went to Paris. They kind of gave up on Japan. The politics had gone in a direction they could not accept, but they also felt oppressed by various hierarchies that still persisted in the art and literary scenes in Japan. They wanted to break away and make a totally new kind of art, which we might call a more "postmodern" style of art, and one totally disconnected from politics. They felt they could do that better in Paris or New York.

One example is Kudō Tetsumi, a young artist who idealistically participated in the Anpo protests, but then became deeply disappointed by their failure and relocated to Paris. In the early 1960s, Kudō produced a series of art installations called *The Philosophy of Impotence*, in which flaccid, phallic

objects hang from walls, ceilings, and other objects, reflecting the inability of the Anpo protests to achieve anything. After a few years of these grim reflections on failure and impotence, Kudō eventually broke free and produced all kinds of abstract art.

Similar transitions occurred in other genres of the arts across the 1960 boundary. In film, for example, Ōshima Nagisa and other younger filmmakers, who were in the midst of launching the so-called “New Wave” of avant-garde Japanese cinema, made several films in 1960 and 1961 either about or featuring the Anpo protests, most famously Ōshima’s *Night and Fog in Japan* (1960), in which they embodied their desire for both the Japanese people and Japanese filmmakers to produce a radical subjectivity free from preexisting ideologies or artistic forms. “What was the Anpo struggle?” Ōshima asked in a 1961 essay. “In our works, we [artists] must all ask this question again and again, and we must answer it.” Ōshima and his colleagues ultimately decided that the answer to this question was an opportunity to break free from the kind of humanism and realism that had dominated Japanese film in the 1950s.

Meanwhile, many younger artists, who had just arrived on the scene in the late 1950s and were struggling to have their art even shown, felt an exhilarating sense of freedom arising from their participation in the Anpo protests, and used the protests as a kind of a stage to explore new art forms. A group of young artists calling themselves the “Neo-Dada Organizers,” for example, would go out and join the protests wearing bizarre costumes, such as group member Masuzawa Kinpei parading through the streets of Tokyo with a mass of various-sized lightbulbs pinned to his shirt, or group leader Yoshimura Masanobu outfitted as a “mummy” (*miira*) wrapped in leaflets printed with the group’s name. In many ways, they treated the protests more as an artistic event than a political one, such replacing the iconic chant of *Anpo hantai* (“Down with Security Treaty”) with *Anfo hantai* (“Down with Art Informel), protesting against the trend toward abstract art at that time.

At the height of Anpo protests in June 1960, the Neo-Dada Organizers held a “happening” called “Anpo Commemoration Event,” in which they engaged in various destructive acts before gathered reporters and a television camera. These younger artists became so disillusioned by the existing art system that they decided they would have to destroy art in order to save it. The group’s manifesto declared: “As we enter the blood-soaked ring in this 20.6th century—a century which has trampled on all sincere works of art—the only way to avoid being butchered is to become butchers ourselves.”

The Neo-Dada Organizers have often been viewed as the founders of a new trend variously called *han-geijutsu* (“anti-art”) or *hi-geijutsu* (“non-art”), which challenged any and all kinds of existing artistic convention and sought to overturn them. Following in the footsteps of the Neo-Dada

Organizers, various artistic groups and collectives emerged in the 1960s that challenged preexisting forms and received orthodoxies, and sought to bring into question basic assumptions about the nature of art itself.

One of the more famous ones was Hi-Red Center, which carried out a series of “events,” “happenings,” and “plans” in the early 1960s, which they used to expose the contradictions and the absurdities within Japanese society. Perhaps their most famous artistic performance was the *Be Clean* event in October 1964, during the height of the campaign to clean up Japan for the Tokyo Olympics in order to impress foreign visitors. In this happening, a group of artists in lab coats and face masks roped off a section of Tokyo sidewalk and proceeded to meticulously clean every square centimeter with toothbrushes as a growing crowd gathered to watch them, mocking the overheated rhetoric of government campaign to clean up the country.

Akasegawa Genpei, one of the members of Hi-Red Center, directly equated what he called the “destructive creative energy” of these groups in the early 1960s with the energy of the 1960 Anpo protests. He said, “We young artists were just playing our appointed role as part of the larger social forces of the time.” He argued that the Anpo protests opened up a “gap” in the early 1960s, during which new forms of art seemed possible.

I will conclude this section on art with a quote from another younger artist of the time, Imaizumi Yoshiko, who recalled:

In the 1950s, almost all young art students were swept up by the ideology of socialist realism. In other words, by the idea that art must serve the cause of socialist revolution, and moreover that this is best achieved not by producing difficult-to-understand modern art, but by employing a realistic style more readily understandable to the masses....The critics all preached this sermon to up-and-coming artists, and cloaked it in so much difficult jargon and theory that their heads got all scrambled before they could even paint a proper painting....The thing that unscrambled our brains was the failure of the 1960 Anpo struggle.

3. Reshaping the Landscape of Expression in Japan

In the remainder of my time, I would like to move on to the last chapter of my book and look at efforts by a variety of what we might call “reactionary” forces in Japan—the courts, the police, mass media conglomerates, and right-wing ultranationalists or gangsters—to reshape what I call the

“landscape of expression” in Japan after the Anpo protests in a variety of ways that made it much more difficult for similar mass movements to arise in the future.

3-1. The Courts

First, the courts. Article 21 of the postwar Japanese constitution explicitly and unequivocally protects freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. There are no caveats or qualifiers. It simply states, “Freedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press, and all other forms of expression are guaranteed.” Very simple and straightforward.

However, almost immediately after the promulgation of the Constitution in 1947, cities and towns all around Japan began passing so-called public safety ordinances (*kōan jōrei*), requiring people wishing to engage in freedom of assembly, protesting in public, or marching, to register in advance and get permission from the local police.

In the early 1950s, when these ordinances were primarily used against communists and Japan’s Zainichi Korean minority, Japanese courts had repeatedly upheld them as constitutional. However, the latter half of the 1950s witnessed the emergence of more broad-based social movements, including the anti-nuclear movement and the anti-military base movement, which saw a much broader cross-section of Japanese society protesting and getting caught up by the public safety laws and told they were not allowed to assemble in public. At this point, the courts switched course and began repeatedly ruling that the public safety ordinances constituted unconstitutional prior restraints on freedom of assembly. By my count, from 1956 through 1959 at least 8 major municipal public safety ordinances were struck down by the courts as unconstitutional.

In November 1959, during the Anpo protests, radical student activists tried to storm into the Diet and were arrested. However, the courts told the police they had to release the students, stating that there was no legal basis to arrest them because freedom of assembly was guaranteed by the Japanese constitution. In fact, the Tokyo District Court chided the police, saying that it had twice ruled that the prior restraint on freedom of assembly in the public safety ordinances was unconstitutional, and thus they had better stop arresting people on this basis.

This created a kind of constitutional crisis because the Anpo protests were getting larger and larger, and the police were being told they were not allowed to arrest anyone, no matter what they might do, and even if it involved crashing into the Diet compound. In response to this, the Japanese Supreme Court decided to aggregate all the pending cases about the constitutionality of public safety ordinances into a single case, fast tracking it and allowing it to jump ahead of other cases on an emergency basis

so that the police could be allowed to arrest and detain protesters.

On July 20, 1920, just a few weeks after the treaty passed, the Supreme Court issued its final ruling, in which it found every single public safety ordinance in Japan fully constitutional, even the most extreme ones. In the most cited passage of the ruling, the Court went even farther beyond what the public safety ordinances had asserted, to establish freedom of assembly in Japan as a lesser and more attenuated freedom than the other freedoms of expression, freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The court wrote:

Expressing ideas and opinions through group assembly differs from free speech and freedom of the press in that it has the potential for being supported by the exercise of some kind of physical force. This potential for the use of force is...a danger which is well known from theories of mob psychology and recent, real-life experience. Therefore, even though Article 21 of the Constitution prohibits prior restraint of free expression, it is unavoidable that local authorities, in giving due consideration to both local and general circumstances, adopt prior to the fact the minimum measures necessary to maintain public peace...by means of public safety ordinances, but only in the case of expression by means of group assembly.

This ruling opened up a gap between what the Constitution states, merely that freedom of assembly and speech are protected, and the precedent set by the Supreme Court, stating that freedom of assembly is different from freedom of speech, and can be subjected to more restrictions.

The Court's decision was greeted with widespread outrage by legal scholars throughout Japan. They found it especially baffling that the court had so cavalierly overturned precedent, including earlier rulings by the Supreme Court itself that these laws were unconstitutional. Amid the massive Anpo protests, the Court's opinion had changed. But despite the objections of scholars, the 1920 decision has endured to the present day. It remains in force, and it was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in major test cases in 1962, 1967, 1968, and 1972.

3-2. The Police

Police in Japan received heavy criticism from both the left and the right during the Anpo protests. The right criticized them for not being harsher on the protesters, and for letting the protests get out of hand. The left criticized them for being too harsh, killing Kanba Michiko, and beating up the students. So the police felt, "Damned if we do, damned if we don't. We can't win, and we will be criticized no

matter what happens.”

Accordingly, the police in Japan took a variety of measures to avoid a repeat of what happened in 1960. On one hand, they implemented new training and tactics to move even further away from the possibility of police brutality. In particular, the ubiquitous batons and clubs and helmets of 1960 were replaced in many cases with plexiglass shields and fire hoses, which can be equally or even more violent in some ways than clubs, but seemed more defensive and therefore acceptable.

Indeed, the Japanese police were very successful after 1960 at limiting any kind of overt police violence against protesters. They adopted all kinds of tactics which looked like they were the ones being attacked rather than the ones doing the attacking.

They also took advantage of the newly constitutional public safety ordinances and simply stopped giving permission for many types of street protests. They made lists of protest tactics that would be permanently banned after 1960 and remain banned to this day, including sit-ins (*suwarikomi*), the so-called French demonstration (*Furansu demo*), and what we call in English the “snake dance”, but which in Japanese is called *jiguzagu demo*.

In the *Furansu demo*, which was very popular during the Anpo protests, protesters would hold hands and spread out as far apart as they could. The aim was to take up as much public space as possible, in order to block traffic or show their willingness to occupy some prominent public space. This “French demonstration” is effectively illegal in Japan today under the prior restraint afforded by the public safety ordinances.

Likewise banned was the “snake dance” or *jiguzagu demo*, where people would lock arms and march very fast and make a giant snake in the street. This type of spectacular protest march was widespread in Japan from 1946 until the early 1970s, when it was finally suppressed for good. The snake dance is difficult to perform, and requires extensive training, so Japanese people today no longer know how to do it correctly, and now this “intangible cultural property” of Japan seems to be gone forever.

The police also developed new tactics for defeating these newly illegal protest marches. For example, with the snake dance, they developed a tactic called “sandwiching” (*sandoitchi kisei*), whereby they crush the snake between two lines of riot police with shields.

After 1960, the police also declined permission to protest in certain places on a permanent basis. Today, there are permanent no-go zones where protesters are almost never allowed to assemble. These include directly outside the National Diet, outside the American Embassy in Tokyo, outside the Prime Minister’s Official Residence (*kantei*), etc. If activists apply to assemble in one of these spaces, they

will be denied permission to do so.

The police also became much more clever in using selective or creative interpretations of existing laws. Throughout the 1950s, Japanese conservatives and the police had been pushing for new legislation to give them new powers of warrantless search and seizure, more like the powers police had had before the war. But after the Anpo protests, the police pursued what they themselves called the “no need for new legislation” strategy. Instead, they employed existing laws and selectively enforced them to limit protest activities. They used traffic laws, laws against loitering or littering, noise control ordinances, curfew laws, building code violations, or any other kind of law they could find, and then they would arrest people using those pre-existing laws. Protesters were no longer arrested for protesting per se, but rather for “loitering” in public spaces. Or if protesters rested signs or placards on the ground, it was deemed “littering” and they could be arrested, thereby disrupting the protest.

In addition, police worked together with local governments and construction companies and architects and designers to systematically close down, occupy, and collapse public space. Public parks were re-landscaped to subdivide and compartmentalize open spaces, as were large intersections in urban areas. Streets and squares were divided up with bollards, medians, hedgerows, and fences. One example is the Shibuya crossing. If you look at photographs of the Shibuya station area from the 1950s, there is much more open space than there is today. Another example is Hibiya Park in Tokyo, which used to be a major center of large-scale protest activity, but now is subdivided by many fences and changes in elevation. And finally, there is the road in front of the Diet itself, once the site of massive snake dances during the Anpo protests. You could not do the snake dance there today, even if it were not illegal, because there are three concrete medians dividing up the road.

As mentioned, certain areas have become permanent no-go zones. If you go to the National Diet today, there are police officers everywhere. Not only are protesters not granted permission to go there, but if anyone even tried to go there, there is a police officer stationed every 10 meters, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and police paddy wagons loiter with their engines on in front of the Diet 24 hours a day, so if any protesters appear, they can be arrested immediately.

Finally, at a broader level, sheer numbers were thrown at the problem. The National Police Agency’s budget more than doubled in five years from 1960 to 1965, and then doubled again in the next five years to 1970. Meanwhile, the number of riot police more than tripled, from 5000 in 1960 to over 15,000 in 1970. After 1960, the National Police Agency organized a massive spying ring and inserted younger police officers or female police officers into left wing groups to keep tabs on what

they were doing, to the point that left wing groups often complained that the police knew more about what they were planning than they themselves did.

Examining this chart I made of the total number of police officers in Japan from 1960 until 2015, we can see that the number of police officers in Japan has always gone up, never down, has far outpaced the growth of the Japanese population, and has continued to rise even as Japan's population has begun to decline. On a per capita basis, there are far more police officers in the relatively peaceful and calm Japan today than there were during the tumultuous protests of 1960.

Nowadays, even when police do grant permission for a street protest in Japan, the protest march is accompanied by a huge contingent of police officers, far beyond what would seem necessary. In some cases, you cannot even see the protesters because there are so many police officers walking alongside.

3-3. The Mass Media

Let us take things in another direction and examine what happened to the mass media in Japan during and after 1960.

After the May 19th incident, virtually the entire mass media, including even the conservative newspapers, was calling for Kishi's resignation. But then, after the violence at the Diet on June 15th and the Hagerty Incident, Kishi and the American Ambassador called in the heads of all the major television companies and newspapers and pressured them to help calm down the protests and prepare the way for Eisenhower's arrival. Almost all of the major newspapers in Japan then issued a joint statement, titled "Wipe Out Violence, Preserve Parliamentary Democracy." In a classic case of media both-sides-ism, the declaration condemned "violence" on both sides and called for an end to the protests.

The 1960 protests also provided a wake-up call to conservative politicians and business leaders to pay more attention to what they called "mass media countermeasures" (*masukomi taisaku*). In June 1960, a group of prominent Japanese businessmen established a "Mass Media Countermeasures Committee," which used advertising dollars to pressure media companies into providing more conservative media coverage of events.

In addition, within the media itself, there was much soul-searching and self-reflection (*hansei*), especially in the upper ranks, as editors and media company presidents blamed themselves for the Anpo protests. They promised to exercise more self-censorship and "editorial control" going forward.

For example, in 1961, on the one-year anniversary of Kanba Michiko's death, Ryū Shintarō, managing editor of the left-leaning *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper, put out the following statement:

With regard to the present-day Japanese government, we do not harbor even a single anti-government thought in our heads....Our basic stance toward the Treaty issue was correct, but it cannot be said that we were not at least slightly imprudent....When we consider this fact, we must all, myself included, undertake some serious self-reflection....If it comes to our attention that there is a flame somewhere, which if not attended to, might spread,...certainly in terms of what we say, but also in terms of how much we say about it, we must never under any circumstances...fan such a flame. It is not simply about “reporting the facts.”

Although blaming themselves, in a way these members of the media were also giving themselves a lot of credit for the Anpo protests.

The heads of TV stations were also saying things like this. For example, TBS chairman Imamichi Junzō asserted, “The 1960 Anpo riots were a problem that was taking place in a small corner of Tokyo. Our broadcasts reported this truthfully and continued reporting on them as they developed. But in doing this, we soon infected the whole nation.” Similarly, NHK chairman Maeda Yoshinori recalled in 1969: “This is an issue that all of us have been painfully aware of, ever since Anpo....It is the area in which we now cooperate most closely in our broadcasts....Even if we think we are just simply reporting what we see, the effect of that reporting, the shock of it, can affect the beliefs of the entire nation....”

As a result of this soul-searching, media companies were prepared to carry out a much greater degree of self-censorship moving forward, and also to more readily cave into outside pressure from advertisers or corporations or the government. In my research, I discovered that from 1960 to 1970, there were 63 television programs that we know of that were already produced and scheduled, but were canceled prior to being aired for reasons of political sensitivity. Prior to 1960, I could not find even a single program that had been canceled like this. This was a major shift. We see a significant difference before and after 1960 in terms of how much the mass media was willing to accommodate the wishes of large corporations and the government.

3-4. The Right Wing

Finally, I want to turn to the right wing in Japan. In the early postwar period, ultranationalism, as you might imagine, was heavily stigmatized. The war had been lost. People blamed ultranationalism and conservatives. Some right-wing groups existed, but these were relatively small and generally shied away from confrontational public activities. But in 1960, as the Anpo protests grew in size, right

wingers became very energized and excited and activated. They feared Japan was on the verge of a communist revolution, and if they did not take drastic action, Japan might turn communist.

As a result, numerous new right-wing groups were founded during the 1960 protests to engage in counterprotests, and money flooded into new and existing groups from anonymous donors. A key role was played by so-called fixers (*fikusā*), who would amalgamate this money and channel it to certain groups and would also supply yakuza thugs or gangsters to show up and beat up protesters or engage in counterprotests. One of the most famous examples of this occurred during the June 15 protests, when a group calling itself the “Restoration Action Squad” (*Ishin Kōdōtai*) rammed their trucks into a line of peacefully marching theatre troupes, and then severely beat the protesters with wooden staves spiked with nails.

Prime Minister Kishi himself turned to these fixers in his hour of need. When his cabinet refused to let him mobilize the Self-Defense Forces, he turned to his old friend from his days Sugamo Prison, the right-wing fixer Kodama Yoshio. Kodama claimed he could have 150,000 right-wing thugs on the streets of Tokyo at a moment’s notice to beat up the protesters and make it safe for Eisenhower’s visit. Later, the National Police Agency investigated, and insisted this was not true. According to the Agency, Kodama could only have mobilized 121,000 thugs, not 150,000. But that is still a lot of thugs.

Ultimately, Kishi promised to resign and Eisenhower’s visit was canceled, so the thugs were not needed to clear the streets of Tokyo. Instead, they sent some of them down to Kyushu to beat up the striking miners at the Miike coal mine strike.

If we examine this chart I made of right-wing groups in Japan and total membership as identified by the National Police Agency, we can see that prior to the Anpo protests there were very few of these groups, and not very many members. From 1956 to 1962, however, we see that the number of right-wing groups more than quadrupled and their total membership nearly doubled. Membership in right-wing groups has continued to rise ever since, but if we were to make a similar chart for left wing groups, we would find the opposite trend—fewer and fewer groups with ever declining membership.

One prominent example of this process is the writer Mishima Yukio. Before 1960, he did not write anything especially political. But in a process that is a mirror image of the depoliticization experienced by left-wing artists, Mishima was very excited and agitated by the Anpo protests, supported the protests on nationalist grounds, and started writing political writings about the protests. Thereafter, as is well-known, he became something akin to a right-wing ultranationalist, and his writings took a rightward turn. Apparently inspired by the Anpo protests, in the fall of 1960 Mishima wrote

“Patriotism” (*Yūkoku*), his famous short story about a Japanese Imperial Army officer who commits suicide after a failed uprising against the government (based on the 2/26 Incident in 1936). The rest of the decade of the 1960s saw Mishima write play about Hitler, among other works, demand the restoration of direct imperial rule and a more robust Japanese military, and increasingly lament what he viewed as the decline of traditional Japanese culture, culminating in his spectacular suicide by *seppuku* in 1970.

But the darkest side of anti-communist panic and renewed right-wing confidence in the aftermath of the Anpo protests was a wave of right-wing terrorism in the early 1960s, most famously the assassination of the chairman of the Japan Socialist Party, Asanuma Inejirō, on national television, watched by millions of people. There were numerous other assassinations and attempted assassinations of politicians, business leaders, and diplomats. There was even a coup attempt in 1961 by former military officers that sought to assassinate the entire Ikeda Hayato cabinet.

But in terms of freedom of expression, the most important incident was the “Shimanaka incident” of 1961. That year, writer Fukazawa Shichirō published a short story in the magazine *Chūō Kōron* in which he graphically described the execution of the Japanese Imperial family with a guillotine. This provoked massive outrage. A right-wing youth invaded the home of *Chūō Kōron* publisher Shimanaka Hōji. Shimanaka was away at the time, but the youth murdered his maid with a knife and critically injured his wife before being apprehended.

Amazingly, instead of condemnation of the youth for murdering an innocent maid and stabbing Shimanaka’s wife, large numbers of prominent people openly sympathized with attacker and said they could understand his feelings. Members of the Diet called for a new *lèse-majesté* law, which would criminalize criticizing the Emperor or portraying him in a negative light. Right-wing groups also started threatening writers, and Fukazawa himself had to go into hiding for five years. Fukazawa was kept at an undisclosed location with 24-hour police protection, and 300 other writers were granted temporary police protection.

Finally, *Chūō Kōron* took the unprecedented step of “retracting” a work of fiction. Shimanaka apologized on behalf of his magazine for offending the feelings of the nation, and promised the magazine would exercise more “self-restraint” going forward. The Diet was on the verge of passing a *lèse-majesté* law, making it illegal to criticize or talk about the Imperial family, but the major literary magazines and newspapers all got together and cut a deal with the politicians promising to exercise self-censorship about the Imperial family going forward. This unwritten policy against public discussion of the Imperial family other than in dry news reports has since become informally known

as the “chrysanthemum taboo,” after the chrysanthemum crest of the Imperial family.

4. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the 1960 Anpo protests and their aftermath fundamentally altered the landscape of legitimate or permissible expression in Japan.

The creative landscape of expression expanded, as artists and writers were able to create many new types of art that were not possible before, using approaches that might be best called postmodern rather than modern.

The physical landscape of expression was altered by the compartmentalization and policification of public spaces, and by court rulings that allowed the police to dramatically limit or preclude street protests.

Finally, the psychological landscape of expression was transformed in both measurable and immeasurable ways by new regimes of censorship and self-censorship in the mass media, and by the effects of right-wing terrorism on constricting the bounds of acceptable expression.

At the same time, new narratives on the right and ultranationalist ideas gained a new foothold in the landscape of expression in Japan, which has expanded over time. This remodeled landscape of expression, I would argue, continues to shape public discourse in Japan down to the present day.

Reference

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特記

本稿は2024年6月21日に開催された講演会の記録である。また本稿の取りまとめに際し、崔紗華同志社大学社会学部教育文化学科准教授、藤田吾郎早稲田大学政治経済学術院政治経済学部講師に多大な助力を頂いた。