CHAPTER 5

Resonances of Silence

On April 10, 2011, just one month after the devastating magnitude 9.0 earthquake, tsunami, and subsequent nuclear crisis in northeast Japan, over fifteen thousand people took over the streets of the Kōenji neighborhood of Tokyo in an anti-nuclear-power protest. This was one of the first events of what would become a nationwide antinuclear movement, which has grown into a series of the largest street demonstrations Japan has seen since the 1960s. In the following years, various forms of street protests have taken place, from occasional large street demonstrations (or *demo* in Japanese) to weekly antinuclear rallies in front of the prime minister's residence and more localized smaller events, such as town meetings, kite-flying gatherings, and folk dance festivals.[1]

Leading the April 10 protest was the raucous sound of chindon-ya. Costumed in bright-colored kimonos, six chindon-ya performers walked, twirled, and smiled while playing chindon drum sets that were adorned with colorful paper umbrellas. They were followed by a group of instrumentalists playing melody—a wide array of tunes, from recognizable Japanese popular songs to "Amazing Grace" and "Ppurip'a" ("Root," or "Radical," a Korean adaptation of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home")[2]—in unison on the clarinet, saxophone, tuba, and harmonica. Some of them were dressed in ostentatious costumes with comical wigs and hats, while others were in everyday clothing. A couple of electric guitarists provided a harmonic underpinning to the melody, carrying small portable amplifiers on straps slung across their shoulders. What was notable about their appearance at this particular antinuclear rally on April 10, 2011, however, was that these chindon-ya musicians weren't hired by any client to advertise businesses—they were voluntary participants of the first

demonstration after the disaster, alongside thousands of other citizens. The chindon-ya performers walked along with the fifteen thousand participants to voice their anxiety around the precarious condition of the nuclear power plant in Fukushima and their desire for a nuclear-power-free economy.

The festive sounds and vibrant colors of chindon-ya performers provided a stark contrast to the solemn and dark atmosphere that had pervaded Tokyo city streets for the month since the triple disaster on March 11. Faced with the catastrophic devastation shown daily on TV, reports of an increasing death toll,[3] and uncertainty around the precarious state of the nuclear crises at the Fukushima Daiichi Plant, many Tokyo residents experienced confusion, frustration, fear, and paralysis. In the name of national mourning and energy-conservation efforts, many businesses and individuals observed the social convention of silence and frugality called *jishuku*, leaving the streets dimmer, quieter, and emptier than usual.

Amid this silence of jishuku, how did these chindon-ya practitioners choose to festively sound out against the government's energy policies and its much-criticized reactions to the disasters? How did chindon-ya, an erstwhile commercial practice, become a sonic marker of the mass antinuclear movement in the spring of 2011? Although there had been precedents for the political mobilization of the chindon-ya aesthetic (chapter 4), it was not until post-3.11 that I witnessed chindon-ya practitioners, most of whom had previously refrained from being involved in protests, becoming prominently present and recognizably emblematic of a particular political movement. I suggest that the particular traction that chindon-ya has gained in post-3.11 Japan must be understood in a specific historical, geographical, and sonic conjuncture—particularly by listening to the weighty silence against which the musicians sounded their instruments.[4]

This chapter is a case study that looks closely at the politicization of chindon-ya, offering a framework in which to understand the role of sound in political interventions against socioeconomic precarity in neoliberal and post-disaster Japan. Focusing on the forms of sociality that are produced at these antinuclear street protests, I explore the tension between the resonances of street protests and socially reinforced silence to understand how chindon-ya has gained political traction in the anti-nuclear-power movement in post-3.11 Japan—in a much more audible and visible way than many other instances of the politicization of chindon-ya I described in the previous chapter. Contextualizing the antinuclear protests within a larger arc of social movements in

postwar Japan, I first discuss how the popular imaginary of chindon-ya has informed its political efficacy at street protests. Then I shift my focus to the forms of sociality at these antinuclear street protests to examine how the particular logic of chindon-ya's musical labor was transposed from the commercial to the political.[5] Third, I examine the silence of jishuku. Taking silence as not simply a metaphor for political oppression but as an active auditory condition of quiet, I ask what the consequences of the silence were, and what kinds of understanding of sociality and precarity emerge from listening carefully to the silence. Finally, I zero in on the silence of jishuku and the sounds of chindon-ya at a politicized folk dance festival. Listening to them together, I argue, reveals emergent modes of political expressions, enabling a broader-based movement toward, and beyond, what anthropologist Marc Abélès calls "the politics of survival" in post-3.11 Japan. In so doing, I foreground not only the significance of the nondiscursive sounds in analyzing music in social movements but also the necessity to avoid unreflexively reducing sounding to an oppositional political move. By closely attending to resonances, local ontologies, and sedimented histories, I situate the political affordances of chindon-ya in the very relationality—necessarily contingent and ephemeral—between sound and silence.

CHINDON-YA AT STREET PROTESTS

To explore how chindon-ya has been mobilized in recent antinuclear street protests, it is important to first understand how chindon-ya is situated in the Japanese cultural imagination. As I have shown in the previous chapters, the popular imaginary and representation of chindon-ya today largely has its roots in the 1950s, the period that is considered to be chindon-ya's heyday, when they were familiar sights and sounds on small neighborhood urban streets. Even though their physical presence has become rarer in the recent few decades as they became replaced by other advertisement practices, chindon-ya as a cultural trope have persisted in popular media.

This popular perception of chindon-ya proved especially effective for the recent antinuclear demonstrations, which drew a large number of people who had never participated in street protests before. This is significant, as deeply rooted prejudices against demo have kept the general public from participating in street rallies since the student protests of the 1960s, which were often confrontational and violent. During the street demonstrations of that era, called the ANPO struggles (ANPO is the Japanese abbreviation for the Treaty of Mutual

Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan), many activists and students took to the streets and university campuses to oppose the government's plan to renew the security treaty with the United States, extending Japan's neocolonial dependency on U.S. military bases. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the fear of allowing Japan to fall under the U.S. nuclear umbrella was one of the main concerns that had led to the massive protests against the Japanese government's renewal of the interdependency on the U.S. military hegemony at that time.[6] The protesters were met with violent suppression by the police, cementing the popular perception of demos as dangerous, sectarian, and perhaps ultimately futile, as the treaty was signed despite the massive dissent.

The demo constituencies on the Japanese streets started to shift in the early 2000s, when a new form of political protest called "sound demo" turned street rallies into mobile rave parties through the use of trucks loaded with sound systems. Inspired by the international Reclaim the Streets movement that started in the UK in 1991 (chapter 4), sound demos attracted new participants, largely youth with diverse tastes and socioeconomic backgrounds (DeMusik Inter 2005, 122; Hayashi and McKnight 2005, 94).[7] Even then, however, the outreach of this new form of sound demo was largely limited to countercultural youths who shared concerns around the shifts in the flexible and globalized labor market, the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and the neoliberal order of then prime minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi and Tokyo governor Ishihara Shintarō.

It was not until the antinuclear demos in the spring of 2011 that a significantly wider spectrum of society started to participate in street protests, many of them for the first time. Indicative of this demographic shift in demo participants was the issuing of a "demo for first timers" brochure that served as a how-to guide for people with no experience partaking in street protests (figure 5.1). The illustrated booklet, made available for free download online, is written to be accessible for people from three-year-olds to adults, showing what to expect at a street protest, what to bring (e.g., snacks, water, homemade flyers or signs, musical instruments), and putting forth an inclusive picture of who can participate and how. This brochure indexed the changing image of demo and the widening demography of participants in antinuclear rallies.

Chindon-ya's appearance at the antinuclear street protests in 2011 was part of the volunteers' and organizers' effort to appeal to a wider audience by transforming the cultural stigma of demo. To further encourage participation from citizens, and to undo the persistent and widespread assumption that demon-

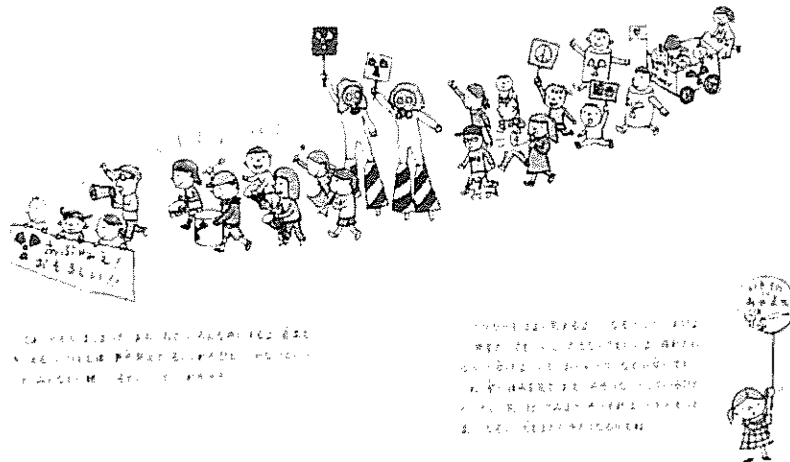


FIGURE 5.1 "Hajimete no demo" (Demo for first timers), brochure excerpt. irutoiratosononakamatachi, https://activism3cream.wordpress.com.

strations are for combative activists with political affiliations, some antinuclear movement organizers strategically embraced chindon-ya. A familiar trope, chindon-ya provides a cultural framework for citizens who have never engaged in street protests. Immediately recognizable to the bystanders aurally and visually, chindon-ya embodies the familiar and the everyday amid the otherwise intimidating spectacle of street demos accompanied by a large number of police forces. In this light, chindon-ya both indexed the diversifying demographic of the post-3.11 antinuclear demo participants and served to update the public perception of demo culture from masculine, violent, and sectarian to inclusive, peaceful, and diverse.[8]

While chindon-ya was effectively mobilized to cater to the shift in the demographics and public understanding of street protests, its relevance within the social movement was not merely symbolic. I suggest that the logic of chindon-ya's musical labor as an advertisement enterprise and the historical specificity of post-3.11 Japan must be closely examined to understand how chindon-ya's sound might be signaling new political possibilities in contemporary Japan.

CHINDON-YA'S MUSICAL LABOR: AFFECTIVE AND ACOUSTIC RESONANCES

Over a cold beer after one of the many street protests in which I played with chindon-ya performers in the summer of 2012, Hattori Natsuki, a guitarist who often joined the chindon-ya performers at demonstrations, said: "There are ways to play so that we'll be heard, without annoying people. We have to make sound so that they'll take notice. We have to play like that." As I have demonstrated in chapter 3, Hattori's comment echoes what the members of Chindon Tsūshinsha have repeatedly emphasized to me as the core principle of their commercial work: the need to sound their instruments in a way that "resonates with listeners' hearts" (*kokoro ni hibiku*). This core principle of chindon-ya's musical labor has been productively transposed to the political realm. One drummer who regularly participates in the street demonstrations tweeted: "I think there are some demo participants who have mistaken sound as a goal in itself as a way to release one's ego. There's a big difference between the objectives of those who want to express themselves through the nuclear problem and those who truly consider everyone affected by the problem."[9] Underneath this rather stoic critique against his own cohort is the professional demand for chindon-ya musicians to be imaginatively empathetic to potential listeners so as to elicit maximum social interaction among the otherwise uninterested.

Attentiveness to the affective dynamics of the streets is another aspect of chindon-ya practice that translated well to street protests. At one march, a sound truck driving right in front of the chindon-ya group used excessively loud speakers to make aggressive comments toward the secret police, who were on the sidewalks taking notes. The woman in the truck yelled through the speakers: "You dirty dogs, we know you are out there, go home!" To this, Kogure Miwazō, the chindon drummer central to Jinta-la-Mvta, voiced her disapproval: "That kind of rough and coarse voice makes everyone feel unpleasant. There were some police who were nice to us along the road. I don't like that sound of anger. That's why I used to hate demonstrations and never joined until this year." Noting the visceral response that the amplified voice of antagonism against police incited in her, Miwazō highlighted how the affective response to the "sound of anger" that typified the previous protests was a deterrent to her own participation in demonstrations.

The affective resonance of chindon-ya's sound has a tangible effect not only on listeners, but also on the performers themselves. A member of the drum

group TCDC, the street-protest collective inspired by neo-chindon-ya aesthetics, told me that the materiality of chindon-ya sound is the mobilizing force for members' sustained participation in protests: "I keep coming back because I want to be in the middle of our sounds. Playing together and feeling the sound in my body makes me feel that I'm part of a much larger movement."[10] It is this sense of co-presence through the shared experience of self-reflexive sounding, hearing, and embodying sound that produces sociality at demonstrations. Through these acoustic and affective resonances, street protests become a site of social encounters—and it is such sociality that motivates the continued participation of the weekly protesters.

The production of acoustic and affective resonances requires a wide variety of performance skills. Some of the skills chindon-ya performers can easily transfer from their advertisement routine to protests are their extensive repertoire and their ability to play widely recognizable tunes catering to specific demographics. For instance, Jinta-la-Mvta (figure 5.2), the chindon-inspired group I performed with at numerous rallies over the past few years, was often asked by the organizers to walk and perform in the "family area" or "family bloc"—a section of the march designated for young parents and small children that is typically placed early in a rally. While walking along the streets with young mothers holding hands with their children or pushing strollers, Jinta-la-Mvta often selected tunes that were familiar to children. One of the repeated songs we would play in the family bloc is "Anpanman March," a theme song for a popular TV cartoon show *Anpanman*.

> Oh, yeah, we can feel the joy of our precious life
> Someday we will live without a heartache
> Have you ever wondered why we were born
> What it is we're meant to be
> We can find an answer on our own
> Let's find it, you and me
> Any time, anywhere, do your best
> Listen to your heart; be honest
> And then you can go far with a smile on your face.[11]

While the cheerful and catchy melody makes the tune widely popular among children, the lyrics' philosophical messages about the simple joy of being alive and the importance of personal integrity in the face of challenging circumstances have inspired and captured the imagination of many adults.[12] Coinci-

FIGURE 5.2 Jinta-la-Mvta members at an antinuclear rally in Tokyo, July 29, 2012. Photo by David Novak.

dentally, many children and adults in the disaster-affected areas requested the song, making it simultaneously an anthem for the survivors of the disasters and for the antinuclear movement.[13]

As a sonic practice that negotiates social relations on the streets, chindon-ya is well poised to maneuver spatial dynamics during street demonstrations as well. While performing during the rally, chindon-ya members refused to simply be a spectacle to people on the streets observing the protest from the sidewalk. They were constantly weaving in and out of the demonstration route regulated by the police officers, moving between the street and the sidewalk, chatting with bystanders and inviting passersby to join the rally—precisely the kind of spatial negotiations chindon-ya practitioners navigate in their usual street advertisement routine. In doing so, chindon-ya unsettled the temporal and spatial demarcations that have historically contained street protests as the disturbance of everyday life and public space, while erasing the social barriers between the demo participants and passersby. By blurring the temporal line between the everyday and the extraordinary, obscuring the difference between participants

and spectators, and revealing the porousness within the spatial dynamism of the public space, chindon-ya's commercial routine transposes productively to the mode of political expression.

But why did chindon-ya gain traction in the spring of 2011 in particular? In order to examine the particular political valence chindon-ya sounds have gained in the recent anti-nuclear-power movement, I suggest that we also need to listen to their sounds at this historically, geographically, and sonically specific conjuncture. I now turn to the silence of jishuku, against which chindon-ya sounded out their instruments as I described at the beginning of this chapter. Instead of understanding jishuku as a lack of soundings, I follow Eugenie Brinkema's reformulation of silence as a "regime of near-inaudibility," which postulates silence as not an absence of sound, but intensity in suspension (Brinkema 2011, 224–25). I am interested in the affective registers of the latent stirrings that mark the notion of nationally mandated silence; put another way, I want to listen to the resonances of the silence of jishuku. While silence has often been analyzed as a sonic metaphor for the suppression of differences or voices,[14] I suggest that we listen carefully to the historical resonances of the silence of jishuku itself to understand the political potency of chindon-ya's presence in the antinuclear protests in post-3.11 Japan.

SILENCE OF JISHUKU

"Let us dedicate a silent prayer to the victims of the disasters," one of the organizers announced through a handheld speaker to the thousands of protesters who gathered in Hibiya Park, Tokyo. It was exactly one year after the disaster, March 11, 2012. Together with the members of Jinta-la-Mvta, I was waiting for our turn to start the one-year-commemoration antinuclear rally. Many of us chose to dress in black that day, instead of the usual dress code of bright yellow—the symbolic color of the anti-nuclear-power movement. After a minute of silence, we plunged deep in conversation, noting the absence of familiar faces in the crowd, and discussing how many seemed to have decided not to participate that day, choosing instead to observe the day in silence at home. A young man, dressed in black, walked up and stood right by us, quietly demanding attention. When we turned to him, we saw that he was holding a sketchbook in his hands. It read in broken English: "I want to pray. Please silent." He stood there in silence, with a stiff expression on his face (figure 5.3). I sensed uneasiness among the chindon musicians, who had already shared with me their di-

lemma between their urge to pay respect to the dead in silence and their urge to voice their antinuclear message even louder on this particular day. After a few minutes, the march started, and we climbed up on the back of a truck to play.

It was a poignant moment of silence that spoke volumes about jishuku—the larger, more sustained, and nationalized form of silence performed in response to the disaster. Jishuku, spelled with the two Chinese characters *ji* (self) and *shuku* (reverence, lack of sound), is a form of self-restraint from activities considered unessential or selfish. It is pervasively practiced by individuals, businesses, and private and official institutions, and for several months on end. The voluntary agency implied in this social convention of jishuku has been subject to contestation. Though small in number, citizens, journalists, and scholars specializing in fields from religion to law were quick to point out the contradictions within the word *jishuku*.[15] Suggesting that jishuku was in fact externally prescribed, journalists coined the term *tashuku*; by replacing "*ji*" with "*ta*" (other, external), they revealed how jishuku was a repressive practice imposed upon citizens, sometimes against their will or to their discomfort (Hōgaku Seminā editorial team 1989, 161).

Behind the notion of jishuku, one can hear an echo of Asia-Pacific wartime austerity efforts demanding individual sacrifice in solidarity with others suffering for a national cause. Matsudaira Tokujin, a legal scholar, has shown that the word was created during World War II in the context of a regulated economy modeled after the Nazi Germany policy of total war, which demanded individual responsibility for the continuation of the collective even when that meant contributing your own life. Jishuku was a militaristic and government discourse that became a social custom through imperial ideology and social conformity (Matsudaira 2013, 88). After the 3.11 disasters, in the name of jishuku, many TV programs and commercials were withdrawn, cherry blossom picnic parties and summer festivals were canceled, pachinko parlors stopped blasting music and announcements, and performances and advertisements in public space were informally banned, leaving the streets dark and quiet.

Such nationwide jishuku was a rare occurrence in postwar Japan, preceded only by a similar ban after Emperor Hirohito's passing on January 7, 1989. The death of the emperor, who had been ill with duodenal cancer for over three months, marked the end of the Shōwa era (1926–1989). That day, Japan fell into silence. The news broke on TV channels, which promptly took special measures to withdraw all commercials and dedicated the following forty-eight to seventy-two hours to special programs reflecting on the life of the emperor.[16] This was

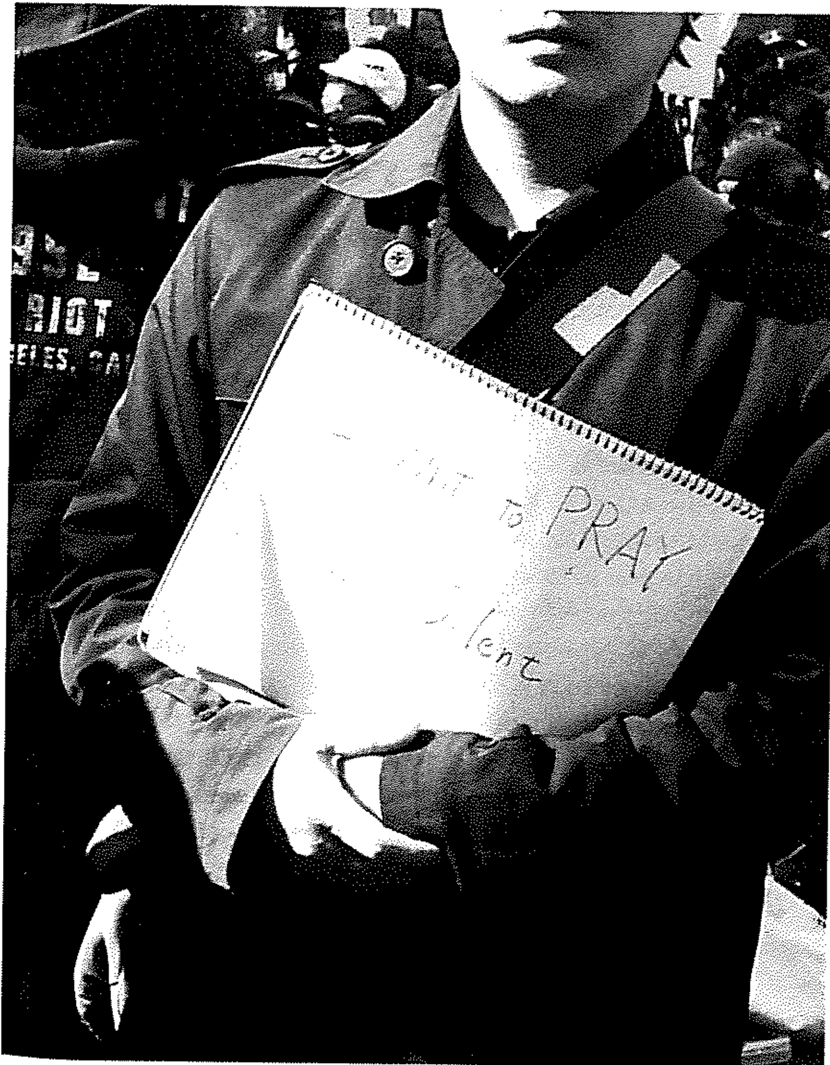


FIGURE 5.3 Man silently demanding silence at the one-year commemoration of the 3.11 disaster at the antinuclear rally in Hibiya Park, Tokyo, 2012. Photo by the author.

followed by a month of programming that excluded entertainment, performing arts, and music.[17] National flags flew at half-mast, with a black cloth covering the round golden tip of flagpoles. Shops and public offices were closed. People remained indoors, glued to the TV. Stores stopped playing recorded music and sales pitches from the speakers. The streets were unusually quiet.

This silence had been anticipated since the first news of the emperor's declining health broke in September the previous year. Though the cancer diagnosis was not publicly revealed until after his death, a sense of somberness and solemnity lurked in the everyday lives of Japanese citizens for several months leading up to the emperor's passing. A daily announcement of the emperor's condition became a staple on the radio and TV news, rendered eerily intimate by quantitative data on his pulse, temperature, blood content of his stool, and amount of blood transfusion, given as routinely as if it were a weather report. After the initial announcement of the emperor's ailing health in September 1988 until the time of the funeral in February 1989, many public events were canceled in reverence of the emperor, from small local festivals and sports festivals to the victory parade for the sumo champion, annual music awards, international fashion shows, and the New Year's performance of kabuki theater. Without any formal mandates or legal regulations, sound, gestures of festivity, and performance in public spaces were discouraged. Many sounds disappeared from public space, from the bass drums of the cheerleading team in the university league baseball games to right-wing sound trucks,[18] Christmas jingle bells, and, of course, chindon-ya, the epitome of commercialism, festivity, and sound and performance in public space.[19]

In these two affectively charged historical moments of 1989 and 2011, the disappearance of chindon-ya's sounds, together with other sounds of commercialism and merriment in public space, was a silence pregnant with questions. Just how did Japanese citizens come to participate in this voluntary practice of sonic abstinence? How voluntary is this silent practice of self-restraint? On what kind of social logic was this silence based, and what might it tell us about the particular sociality produced at these moments of national crisis?

Some cultural critics and journalists interpreted jishuku as complex processes and mechanisms of social management, reminiscent of the Foucauldian notion of governmentality. They argued that an ensemble of institutions from mass media, local and national government, the police, right-wing organizations, and private organizations created conditions in which the majority of citizens, arguably willingly, participated in the act of self-silencing, without formal

technologies that forced them to do so.[20] Others pointed to the binding power of social custom and the moral aesthetic of consensus and conformity as the driving force behind jishuku. Many of these writers seemed unable to resist the allure of the explanatory power of nihonjinron, a persistent and popular postwar discourse that essentializes Japanese cultural exceptionalism.[21] Although they were critical of the nationalist tendencies behind jishuku, these writers nonetheless fell prey to reductively diagnosing the silence of jishuku as a symptom of a uniquely Japanese notion of social collectivity or community (*kyōdōtai*), attributing it to notions like "excessive conformism" (Funakoshi 1990), "friendly authoritarianism" (Davidson 2013, 3), *seken* (world-space) (Abe Kin'ya 1995, Kōkami 2009), and *kūki* (air) (Kōkami 2009, Yamamoto 1977). These terms are purported to refer to an inherent pattern of Japanese sociality that explains how citizens embrace the jishuku mandate without external coercion. The latter two Japanese terms in particular were frequently invoked in interviews and writings on jishuku. For example, an owner of movie theaters in Tokyo, who was asked why he decided to follow the jishuku order, answered: "I didn't do it out of consideration for the emperor. It's not because I'm scared of the right wing and mass media. . . . I guess it's *seken* [literally, "world-space"] in general [that made me follow the jishuku order]." *Asahi Journal* shuzai han (1988) argues that seken is a "native" concept of Japanese sociality or worldview, as opposed to the notion of *shakai* (society), which was coined in the late nineteenth century to translate the English word "society" (Abe 1995). *Seken*, unlike *shakai*, which defines society as a collection of individuals, refers to social relations that have an immediate impact on oneself, thereby highlighting one's embeddedness within a social circle and a sense of obligations required to maintain these relations. *Kūki* is used almost interchangeably, referring to the fluidity and flexibility of the inescapable social relations that govern one's social conduct. The presence and demands of the social collectivity can be tautologically defined through these notions, which signify a ubiquitous social space that is invisible, nebulous, and yet omnipresent—like the air.

Neither the notion of governmentality nor the essentialist characterization of the Japanese social order alone is enough to account for the prevalence and consequences of jishuku, however. Here, I suggest a third perspective to bring them together by paying particular attention to the role that affect plays in the logic of jishuku. Referring to the feedback loop between state forces, private forces, and social expectations held by individuals that produced and maintained jishuku, literary and cultural critic Akatsuka Yukio argues that jishuku

works as if it were a "phenomenon of resonance" (1989, 149). Understanding the silence of jishuku as a kind of resonance is helpful in examining how various technologies of social management, the cultural imaginary of Japanese sociality, and affective rhetoric have been articulated together in the practice of jishuku, and what kinds of sociality and histories are audible within the silence.

The aforementioned spatial metaphors of *seken* (world-space) and *kūki* (air), which refer to senses of social collectivity, offer a key to examining the particular intensities of affective and social resonances within the silence of jishuku. Instilled in this air at the two specific historical moments of jishuku in 1989 and 2011 was the affective power of mourning and yearning for sociality. Examining the jishuku practices in post-3.11 Japan, Matsudaira asks why so many citizens sought in jishuku a proof of *kizuna* (affective bond, human connections). Chosen as the word of the year by popular vote, the notion of *kizuna* became the unofficial slogan for the disaster relief efforts, various charity events, national media coverage, and political campaigns, evoking a sense of human connection, from familial relations to the national (Matsudaira 2013, 86).[22] The rhetoric of human connection was a powerful mobilizing force behind jishuku, especially for a nation violently shaken by the disasters that revealed the ephemerality, fragility, and consolatory power of human connections. In this context, the silence of jishuku was represented, heard, and felt as a way of implicating oneself in the lives of those who were affected by the disaster, vicariously sharing the pain and losses suffered by them.

Both after the death of the emperor and after the disaster, jishuku was a sonic performance of national mourning and social embeddedness. Both were moments of national crisis, in which Japanese sociality was deeply fragmented—through the death of the national symbol in 1989, and through the devastation of people, region, and a power plant that supplied much of the capital's electricity demand in 2011. Jishuku, then, was an attempt to suture fragmented national sociality through silence, previously in the name of imperial nationalism, and today, disaster nationalism. In the resonance of jishuku, we hear the various forms of nationalist projects, which hailed citizens as state subjects through the affective rhetoric of mourning, empathy, and solidarity.

Jishuku was not simply a top-down state project, however. The silent production of nationalist sociality was filled with tensions—much like the moment of nervous restlessness between the young man who mutely insisted on silence and the chindon-ya musicians at the one-year anniversary antinuclear rally. As the political, social, affective, and economic consequences of jishuku

spun out in interconnected and unexpected ways, new currents emerged from the resonances of silence. Among many sources of agitation were those whose livelihoods were constrained by the economic side effects of jishuku measures, including chindon-ya. As I describe below, the tensions within the resonances of silence created unanticipated receptions, reactions, and resistances in return.

SOUNDING OUT THE POLITICS OF SURVIVAL

The moments of silence in public space in both 1989 and 2011 severely affected the livelihood of chindon-ya practitioners, along with various street vendors (*rotenshō*), whose income depended on commercial activities and performances on the streets.[23] When reflecting on their careers, veteran chindon-ya—those who had witnessed the economic upturn of the postwar recovery as well as the decades-long downturn beginning in the early 1990s due to the burst of the economic bubble—often refer to the first few months of 1989 as the most damaging time for the chindon-ya industry.[24] After the emperor's declining health was made public, all business opportunities for chindon-ya were canceled. Veteran chindon-ya Takinoya Hihumi, who recently passed in his nineties, was so pessimistic about the future of the chindon-ya business at the time that he considered switching careers, taking up a part-time job working for a lunchbox shop. In her book *Chindon* (2009), Hiromi Ōba describes the impact the death of Emperor Hirohito had on the chindon-ya industry: "What gave the kiss of death to the surviving chindon-ya was the death of Emperor Shōwa [Hirohito]. From 1988 and 1989, entertainment and publicity were self-censored, and all of Japan became quiet as if a flame had gone out. Chindon-ya in Tokyo lost all their jobs for that year, and since this time, the number of chindon-ya troupes declined to fewer than twenty. Particularly, the self-censoring of the pachinko [slot machine] industry, which was the largest client for chindon-ya, was lethal to chindon-ya" (Ōba and Yada 2009, 357–58).

Though the impact of the jishuku movement varied slightly between Tokyo and other regions,[25] nationwide, the chindon-ya industry faced an unprecedented sense of crisis at this time. The long-term economic downturn that began in 1990 further aggravated this crisis, as fewer small business employers were able to afford chindon-ya.[26]

The chindon-ya industry faced a similar struggle again after the catastrophic earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crisis of 2011. Chindon-ya was one of the sectors directly affected by the social convention of jishuku, as it discouraged

performance of festiveness and commercialism in public spaces.[27] Following the triple disaster, clients canceled chindon-ya gigs scheduled for the following few months. According to a report, one chindon-ya troupe appealed to the government to claim the financial damage caused by the disaster, estimating a loss of $370,000—approximately 30 percent of their overall income. As a result, jishuku observed by chindon-ya's employers forced chindon performers to take up part-time jobs, joining the growing population of the irregularly employed or the underemployed who survive by stringing together various part-time jobs. Kawaguchi Masaaki related to me in an e-mail in April 2011 the impact the disaster had on the chindon industry: "I've never seen it this bad since we started our business in the 1980s. We all have had to find part-time jobs. We may not be in business by the time you come back to Japan this summer." Jishuku brought another blow to the chindon-ya industry in April 2011, when it was announced that the annual chindon contest in Toyama was canceled. This contest provides a sizable income and an opportunity for chindon-ya throughout the country to gather. Having lost the symbolic and financial pillar of business, chindon-ya practitioners had been at a loss.

Consequently, chindon-ya's affective labor—which has always been precarious throughout its history—became aligned with the contemporary struggles of those who are called *purekariāto* (precariat) in Japan.[28] The term "precariat" was popularized in Japan by activist-author Amemiya Karin in 2007, who drew it from the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri on affective labor (2001, 293). A combination of the words "proletariat" and "precarious," precariat refers to the chronically underemployed or working poor (particularly youth), who are deemed socially and biologically unproductive and psychically and physically unable to survive in the postindustrial economy.[29] With the erosion of lifetime or regular employment, postindustrial Japan's demand for flexible labor has produced an unusually large number of people who are underemployed and living precariously.[30] Identifying the proliferation of the precariat as a contemporary Japanese social malaise, anthropologist Anne Allison mobilizes the term "precarity" to characterize the pervasive sense of fragmented sociality in Japan: a condition of being and feeling insecure in life that extends one's disconnectedness from a sense of social community (Allison 2009a, 92; 2013, 9).[31]

As chindon-ya felt at a loss in 2011, facing this deep sense of precarity, so did many Tokyo residents. Immediately after the 3.11 disaster, in the vacuum of reliable information and in fear of radiation exposure, many stayed home, with-

out knowing what information to trust, how to feel, and with whom to share their confusion. Amid widespread, paralyzing confusion, a group of precariat called Shirōto no Ran (Revolt of Amateurs) announced its plan to protest on the streets under a blunt slogan with a comical overtone: "*Koee! Abunē! Genpatsu Yamero!*" (Dangerous! Terrifying! Stop nuclear power!) (figure 5.4). This emotionally charged call for action mobilized fifteen thousand people, a turnout far exceeding the organizers' initial expectation of a couple of thousand.

Part-time chindon-ya performer Midori Ishida told me that she felt relieved when she read the slogan, which reassured her that she wasn't alone in her confusion, fear, and frustration. Ishida continued: "I stayed at home as much as possible, because we really didn't know how it would impact our health. Everyone was staying home and feeling kind of scared and depressed. In the jishuku mood, we didn't even know what would be appropriate to say."[32] She then explained why she decided to put a call out to all her chindon-ya colleagues in the Tokyo area to join the march: "We lost our livelihood to jishuku. We didn't know what was going on with radiation. We were frustrated. We just wanted to make sounds against the jishuku order."[33]

Thus, the presence of chindon-ya at the first antinuclear protest after the disaster was not merely a cultural trope to mobilize a diverse crowd or spectacle adding to the politics of festivity. They were protesting not only the antinuclear policy but also the resonances of jishuku, unsettling the convention that precluded affective responses of fear, frustration, and confusion. As a form of affective labor grounded in the production of sociality, chindon-ya's soundings revealed the repressive and alienating effects of the nationalizing silence of jishuku.

Further, and more important, in sounding out within and against the silence of jishuku, chindon-ya produced a new sociality among constituents. Forced out of work by the silent logic of jishuku, chindon-ya, through their soundings at the antinuclear rally, enabled an affective alliance between the economically disenfranchised—including chindon-ya themselves—and those threatened by nuclear radiation.[34] In bringing together those who shared deep insecurity in life in the face of economic recession and nuclear crisis, chindon-ya's sound performed ambivalent negotiations about the nation (demanded in silence) and empire (exposed through silence), which brought to the fore the lives of those living on the edge in postindustrial Tokyo.

At the April 10 rally, then, chindon-ya's resonances impelled an unexpected

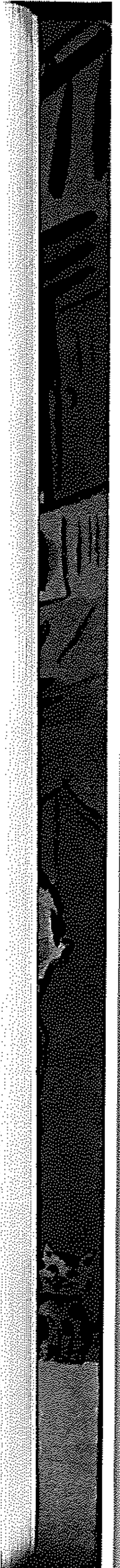
FIGURE 5.4 "*Abunē! Genpatsu Osoroshī!*" (Dangerous! Nuclear power is terrifying!). Poster for the first demonstration after the disaster, held on April 10, 2011, in Kōenji, Tokyo.

reconfiguration of what "social precarity" meant in post-disaster Japan. "Precarity" no longer simply evokes the condition of the underemployed, but rather the larger segment of the society whose lives and futures are uncertain under the risk of radiation exposure. The frequent use of the rhythmic chant "protect our children!" at the protest attests to how antinuclear protest has become a kind of politics over life, or survival against the precarity of life caused by economic recession and nuclear disaster. Given this new emphasis on life and survival as the nodal point of political engagement in the post-Fukushima street protests, it seems appropriate that the song "Anpanman March"—celebrating the simple joy of being alive and what Antonio Gramsci calls optimism of the will—has become a popular anthem for the survivors of the disasters as well as for the anti-nuclear-power movement.

Forged through chindon-ya's sounds, what these new affective alliances have produced is a kind of politics of survival against different kinds of insecurity. At this conjuncture in postindustrial, post-3.11 Tokyo, chindon-ya's sound performed what anthropologist Marc Abélès calls the "politics of survival": a political preoccupation symptomatic of the neoliberal moment plagued by global insecurity (2010). While this notion aptly captures the political orientation toward preservation of life in the face of environmental, economic, and biological threats, I distinguish my use of the term from Abélès's by insisting on the social and the conjunctural. I augment this precautionary, insecurity-driven orientation of the politics of survival by highlighting both the potency and the ephemeral nature of such an unexpected alliance built around the politics of survival.[35]

I do not intend to celebrate desperate precarity as the necessary condition for subversive politics of survival, or to reduce and romanticize affective labor as inherently subversive in the neoliberal condition. Rather, the politicization of chindon-ya's sound was made possible precisely through its fleeting, temporary configuration of particular contingencies. While chindon-ya were forced out of work, the resourceful redirection of their labor yielded political traction—but the political affordances were necessarily transient. Over the several months following the first demo in 2011, as chindon-ya started to regain employment, their participation in antinuclear demos gradually declined. As a sense of normalcy has returned to their lives, the momentum and urgency at antinuclear rallies have subsided. The kind of political traction I just described has also dissipated—only to be further challenged by the election win of the pro-nuclear-power Abe cabinet in September 2012.

But it was not simply the building of affective alliances among various con-



stituents invested in the politics of survival that chindon-ya's sound illuminated. Even after the initial formation of politicized chindon-ya dissipated as they regained employment, the imprints and associative connections remained latent in their sounds, in the cultural imaginary of chindon-ya, and in the streets, waiting to be activated to produce multiple resonances in other configurations.

LIVELINESS AND THE ETHICS OF SURVIVAL

On a muggy summer evening in August 2012, Jinta-la-Mvta was invited to collaborate with other local musicians at a local bon-odori festival in Suginami Ward, one of the more vocal Tokyo neighborhoods against nuclear power (figure 5.5).[36] Bon-odori is a popular summertime folk dance festival, held annually during the *obon* season when the living honor ancestral spirits, who are believed to revisit household altars.[37] Usually hosted by local neighborhood associations (*chōnaikai*), bon-odori memorializes ancestral spirits through dancing, socializing, and feasting.[38] Although chindon-ya has not historically been part of bon-odori musical accompaniment, the malleability of the cultural imaginary of chindon-ya as synonymous with the festive and the popular, as well as the familiar sound of kane that is used both in chindon-ya and bon-odori musical accompaniment, made it a seamless fit for the occasion.

The bon-odori festival started in the early afternoon. Incessant cicada sounds and children's excited screams filled the woodsy park, where a *yagura* (wooden tower and raised stage) had been built at its center. Food and drink vendors lined up along the periphery. The tower and a raised stage were colorfully decorated with traditional red-and-white drapes and a huge banner with antinuclear messages and images drawn in vibrant colors—without which the festival would not look any different from an ordinary local bon-odori. The prerecorded bon-odori tracks were playing from the speakers on repeat, accompanied by live taiko drumming at the top of the tower. Occasionally emcees and singers took to the stage to sing along. Festivalgoers, both young and old, were dressed for the occasion in *yukata* (a cotton kimono worn for summertime events), while some wore outlandish costumes including Mexican *lucha libre* masks, feather boas, and sparkly tights. People would join the circle of dancers around the yagura tower/stage whenever they felt like dancing to a tune or two. As the sun began to set, hours of dancing, socializing, and drinking started to loosen the dancers' movements. By the time the chindon-ya performers took to the stage after dark, the crowd was ready for revelry.

FIGURE 5.5 Antinuclear *bon-odori* festival in Suginami Ward, August 2012. Photo by the author.

Particularly ostentatiously dressed among the crowd, the musicians played several bon-odori tunes on the chindon drums, the big taiko drum, electric guitar, amplified *sanshin*, trumpets, trombones, saxes—almost twenty musicians in total, myself included on the accordion. With the boisterous and exuberant sound of the performance, the crowd went wild; stepping outside of the circular formation, the dancers broke into improvised movement, as if they were in a mosh pit. On one particular original composition we prepared for the occasion, called "Meltdown Blues," the singer sang an original tune satirizing then-prime minister Yoshihiko Noda, while the dancers swirled, jumped, and tumbled. In the atmosphere and sounds of nigiyakasa, the politics of festivity—the real matsurigoto—was palpable.

While the lyrical content of the tune explicitly addressed a dissident stance against the government's nuclear policy, it wasn't simply in the lyrics where the political potency of chindon-ya was felt. Although neither discursively indexed nor melodically referenced in the performance, the parallel between the bon-odori custom of honoring the suffering and the sacrifice of ancestors and memorializing the victims of the disaster was contextually evoked. Moving to the familiar and typical bon-odori beat (*don-don-ga-don*) while hearing the

out-of-the-ordinary sounds of chindon-ya, dancers and their footsteps not only bridged the dead and the living—as bon-odori customarily is meant to do—but also articulated the social imaginaries of the ancestral spirits, the disaster victims' souls, and anticipated nuclear death. Miwazō told me over drinks at a bar later that night: "That was fun, wasn't it? I was able to play with prayers for the ancestors, disaster victims, and everyone."[39] Prominent folklorist Origuchi Shibuo argues that the Japanese belief system, inflected by Buddhism, does not distinguish between the spirits of the living and the dead. He maintains that "the bon festival is an amalgamation of two festivals: that of the spirit of the living and that of the spirit of the dead" (Origuchi [1947] 1995, 1). Folded into the localized and historically specific context of the bon-odori festival, chindon-ya's professional commitment to imaginatively empathize with, and perform for, listeners who may or may not be physically present was extended to the deceased—ancestors, the victims of the disaster—as well as those whose lives may be lost to radiation exposure in the future.

I suggest that chindon-ya practitioners creatively mobilized the traditional communal dance practice to reconfigure antinuclear politics as more than the preoccupation of the living for their own survival. While a shared concern over insecurity brought together different constituents, from the precariat to mothers and farmers threatened by radiation exposure, chindon-ya's sound resonated with particular, localized sensibilities to move beyond the rhetoric of insecurity. Performed at a politicized folk dance festival, outside chindon-ya's usual commercial context, this particular form of affective labor inculcated what the politics driven by insecurity lacked: a sense of interdependence, a relational understanding of sociality, and an ethical orientation that prioritized not only atomized, precautionary politics that sought to prevent future catastrophe, but also the desire for a better future based on the past/death being integral to the present/life.

The festive and sonorous remembrance of the dead stood in stark contrast with the silence of jishuku that had been mandated to honor the victims of the disaster. Resonances of chindon-ya, heard within the resonances of the silence of jishuku, instilled an embodied and empathetic sociality among the demo participants, shifting the weight away from insecurity and the neoliberal politics of survival toward an ethics of survival—underscored by the local cosmological understanding of life as constitutively defined through its relation to the dead. Chindon-ya's sounds reminded participants, through their dance moves, how their lives were inextricably linked with the lives and deaths of millions of

unknown others. And perhaps with that relational awareness comes, for some, a sense of responsibility to partake in political life.

Responding to the demonstration in front of his official residence on June 29, 2011, then Prime Minister Noda was quoted as saying: "Oh, there's some big sound out there." This comment unleashed a surge of criticism, accusing him of being indifferent to the citizens' "voices." One older activist decried: "Our voices aren't heard; our voices are just simple 'sound' to him." Yet this loud "sound" does as much work as the voicing of citizens' opinions, if not more. This "big sound" that operates beyond the realm of the discursive, that is felt and that moves bodies, that reactivates latent sociality and political possibilities sedimented in the streets and in the silence of jishuku, is what is behind the growing anti-nuclear-power movement.

A kind of affective labor that has been present throughout the past century, chindon-ya has rather unexpectedly gained traction as a vehicle for a broad-based anti-nuclear-power movement. By insisting on performing in the street despite the silence of jishuku that put them out of work, chindon-ya made a subtly subversive move. When chindon-ya's "sound business" of producing sociality transposes from their usual commercial routine onto the political protest against the social precarity of contemporary Japan, they redirect their musical labor away from the market and toward critique of the silence that hindered their livelihood and foreclosed affective responses to the disaster. Chindon-ya's sociality not only produced the politics of survival, but also moved beyond it; their lively performances activated the latent socialities that do not simply react to insecurity and threat, but are also grounded in the local ontology of the social inherently defined through the relations of the living and the dead. What we hear in chindon-ya's sonic presence in the antinuclear movement, then, is a reclamation of labor from capitalist logic to the production of sociality in its own right, among not only the living but also the cultural imaginary of the dead—however provisional, fleeting, or incidental it may be. And it is here—in this temporary reclamation of their own affective labor into the realm of poetics—where we hear emergent political possibilities in post-3.11 Japan.