

From *Kogai* to *Kankyo Mondai*: Nature, Development, and Social Conflict in Japan

Acronyms, Foreign Words, Timeline

Acronyms

BOD	biological oxygen demand
COD	chemical oxygen demand
DAMPWR	Diet Members' Association for a Mechanism of Public Works Review
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LBCDP	Lake Biwa Comprehensive Development Plan
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MOC	Ministry of Construction
NCDP	National Comprehensive Development Plan
NCLD	National Comprehensive Land Development Act
JCP	Japan Communist Party
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
PCBs	polychlorinated biphenyls
SANREDC	Society Against the Nagara River Estuary Dam Construction
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
WRDC	Water Resources Development Corporation

Foreign Words

<i>ayu</i>	sweetfish
<i>Chisso-sama</i>	Chisso employees
<i>gumi</i>	gang
<i>ichigen-san</i>	one-time visitor
<i>jigoro</i>	longest residents of Minamata who farmed or engaged in commerce
<i>jimotogaku</i>	movement spread by Yoshimoto throughout Japan to call on people to look within their own locales for value and meaning
<i>kaisha</i>	“The Company” – how residents referred to the Chisso plant
<i>kankyo mondai</i>	environmental issues
<i>ki-byo</i>	“the strange disease” or Minamata disease
<i>Kinki no Mizugame</i>	Water Jug of the Kinki Area
<i>kogai</i>	public nuisance
<i>mimaikin</i>	gift money

<i>moyainaoshi</i>	maritime metaphor ‘re-tying the moorings,’ alluding to the re-forging of community bonds
<i>moyau</i>	two boats link up with one another at sea, applied to the Minamata victims’ movement
<i>muda na kokyo jigyou</i>	useless public works
<i>nagare</i>	fishermen
<i>okazu-tori</i>	side-dish catching
<i>sama</i>	honorific title for a social superior
<i>shakkan</i>	Japanese system of weights and measures, based upon human body-related perception
<i>taemae</i>	“for show”
<i>unagi</i>	fish or eel
<i>Yodogawa Suikei</i>	
<i>Ryuuiki Innkai</i>	Yodo River System River Basin Committee
<i>yoi kurashi</i>	rich, modern life
<i>zaibatsu</i>	conglomerate

Timeline of Related Policies, Laws and Regulations

Minamata Disease (Kumamoto and Niigata)

- 1953 First cases of Minamata disease observed in Minamata.
- 1963 Kumamoto University releases a scientific report linking Minamata disease, mercury in fish, and Chisso’s pollutants.
- 1968 The national government publicly acknowledges Chisso’s industrial waste as cause of the Minamata disease.
- 1969 First suit against Chisso filed in the Kumamoto District Court by Minamata victims.
- 1973 Court Decision in the 1969 civil suit finds Chisso guilty of professional negligence
- 1973 Compensation Agreement reached after negotiations between Chisso and victims groups mediated by the Environment Agency. The agreement gives victims more compensation than the earlier court decision, and establishes standards on patients’ certification.
- 1973-1974 The Environment Agency sets temporary standards for removing mercury from the bay floor. Remediation project begins.
- 1974 Pollution Health Damage Compensation Law adopted. The law entitles victims of pollution to compensation from the industrial polluter, although payment is to be partially made through tax money.
- 1982 Kansai trial against Chisso, the central government and the Kumamoto prefecture filed.
- 1989 Remediation project ends. 1.5 million cubic meters of the bay floor reclaimed, 58 hectares of reclaimed land developed through landfills.

- 1990 The government of Kumamoto prefecture starts the *Moyainaoshi* campaign to promote community healing and revitalize Minamata City.
- 1992 First Minamata Victims Memorial Service organized by Minamata City.
- 1994 The mayor of Minamata publicly apologizes to Minamata victims for the first time.
- 1994 In the Kansai trial, Osaka District Court orders Chisso to pay 280 million yen in damages, and clears the central and local government of responsibility for the disease.
- 1995 All Minamata-related lawsuits, except the Kansai trial, withdrawn after a government settlement.
- 1997 Fish in Minamata Bay declared safe for eating; bay reopens for fishing after 24 years.
- 2001 In the Kansai trial, Osaka High Court finds Chisso, the central and local government responsible for the Minamata disease and orders them to pay a total of \$2.18 million in damages to the victims. Kumamoto prefecture and the national government appeal the decision.
- 2004 Supreme Court ruling upholds the 2001 Osaka Court decision and orders the central government and the Kumamoto prefecture to pay \$703,000 in damages to Minamata victims.

Lake Biwa

- 1896 River Law (revised 1964 and amended 1997) assigns responsibility for river systems to prefectural and national government. Until the 1964 revision local authorities remain largely responsible for water resource management.
- 1950 National Comprehensive Land Development Act (NCLD) gives central government sole authority over water allocation rights for Grade One rivers. Prefectural and municipal governments retain jurisdiction over lower grade rivers.
- 1958 Industrial Effluent Control Law enacted. The law regulates factory effluents.
- 1962 Water Resources Development Law adopted. Central government receives further authority to develop water resources for electricity, industrial use and flood control.
- 1964 Revision to River Law places water supply under state control. National government approval required for all local water plans and development.
- 1970 Water Pollution Law adopted, establishing national water quality standards.
- 1972 Lake Biwa Comprehensive Development Plan (LBCDP) adopted to increase the water supply from Lake Biwa for urban and industrial development.
- 1976 Lake Biwa's and downstream residents file a suit against the Shiga prefectural government, citing LBCDP as a threat to their water supply.
- 1979 Shiga Prefecture Eutrophication Prevention Ordinance enacted. The ordinance is the first in Japan to prohibit the use of phosphorous-containing detergent, although it does not ban industrial use of phosphorous altogether.
- 1988 Lake Biwa residents lose the case against the prefectural government. The Court denies the right to clean water on the grounds that it lacks legal precedent.
- 1997 River Law amended. New clauses on citizen participation and environmental protection included.

2001 Mother Lake 21 Plan finalized. This nationally approved and supported project aims to transform lake Biwa into a model of lake conservation.

Nagara and Yodo River Dam

- 1968 Central Government decision to construct a dam at Nagara River.
- 1973 Local fishermen sue the national government to halt the project.
- 1981 Fishing cooperatives drop the suit because of difficulties in the legal procedures due to the large number of plaintiffs, compensation settlements, and political pressure. Replaced by a second suit filed only by the Akasuka Fishing Cooperatives.
- Early
- 1980s Hirose Shunichi, head of the river section of the Ministry of Construction leads study of the ecosystem impact of the dam.
- 1988 Akasuka Fishing Cooperatives suit is dropped after protesting fishermen accept government compensation.
- 1988 Amano Reiko begins anti-dam movement. The Society Against the Nagara River Estuary Dam Construction (SANREDC) formed by sixty-three opposition groups.
- 1989 Dam construction begins.
- 1994 The Diet members' Association for a Mechanism of Public Works Review (DAPMWR) is established. DAPMWR is an independent watchdog organization set up to review public works projects.
- 1995 Construction of the dam is complete.
- 1996 River Law amended. New clauses on citizen participation and environmental protection included.
- 2001 Yodo River Basin Committee formed.
- 2004 Yodo River Basin Committee publicizes a recommendation that dams should only be constructed when all other measures of flood control have been examined and only after assessing the full social impact.
- 2005 Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (the new MOC) decide to stop the construction of the dams on the Yodo river. This is the first time in Japan that a dam has been halted midway through construction.