Berkeley Japan Prize: Ryuichi Sakamoto — The Man and the Music


Ryuichi Sakamoto

DATE: Friday-Saturday, February 8-9, 2013

PLACE: 125 Morrison Hall, Alumni House (Toll Room), Hertz Hall UC Berkeley

ORGANIZER: Center for Japanese Studies

CO-SPONSOR: The Japan Foundation

CONCERT TICKETS: Purchase online or by calling Cal Performances at 510.642.9988

Description

The Center for Japanese Studies welcomes Ryuichi Sakamoto, internationally-acclaimed musician, composer, producer and activist, to campus as the winner of the 3rd Berkeley Japan Prize. Sakamoto's visit to Berkeley will include a Composer's Colloquium at 3 p.m. on Friday, February 8, an Eco-Activism Panel at 1 p.m. on Saturday, February 9, and a solo piano concert at Hertz Concert Hall at 8:00 p.m. that evening. The Berkeley Japan Prize, established in 2008, is a lifetime achievement award from the Center for Japanese Studies to an individual who has made significant contributions in furthering the understanding of Japan on the global stage.

Ryuichi Sakamoto LIVE - Solo Piano + Talk

Saturday, February 9 | 8 PM

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley

Buy tickets online, or by calling Cal Performances at 510.642.9988, or in person at Zellerbach Hall.

Schedule

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2013

3:00-4:30 pm: Composer Colloquium Series: Ryuichi Sakamoto

Venue: Morrison Hall, Elkus Room 125

Sakamoto speaks at the Department of Music Composer Colloquium, in conjunction with being honored with the Berkeley Japan Prize. This event is only open to members of the Music Department.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2013

1:00-2:30 pm: Eco-Activism in Japan and the U.S. Post-Fukushima

Venue: Alumni House, Toll Room

Sakamoto is well known for his involvement in No Nukes activism. He wrote the score for Alexei and the Spring (2002), a documentary film about the aftermath of Chernobyl, and organized the No Nukes Concert 2012 in Japan. In honor of Sakamoto's contributions to the rise of eco-activism, especially in the Post-

Fukushima accident era, the Center for Japanese Studies hosts a panel of prominent scholars and activists, to be followed by comments from Sakamoto.

This event is free and open to the public.

8:00-9:30 pm: Ryuichi Sakamoto LIVE - Solo Piano + Talk

Venue: Hertz Hall

For this rare Bay Area appearance, Sakamoto performs a solo piano concert followed by a conversation with Ken Ueno (Associate Professor, Department of Music at UCB, Composer/Vocalist). Ticket price: $30 general / $10 students (present IDs at the door). Buy tickets online, or by calling Cal Performances at 510.642.9988, or in person at Zellerbach Hall.

Abstracts

Fritjof Capra, Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley, California

Nuclear Power: A False Solution to a Systemic Crisis

Since all industrial and economic processes are powered by continuous flows of energy, the illusory pursuit of perpetual economic growth generates ever increasing energy demands; and as our access to cheap and abundant fossil fuels reaches its peak and begins to decline, our economic crisis and our energy crisis have become inextricably linked. In this short presentation, Fritjof Capra will emphasize that our energy crisis is a systemic crisis requiring systemic solutions. In previous decades, there was great hope that nuclear power might be the ideal clean fuel to replace coal and oil, but it soon became apparent that nuclear technology carries such enormous risks and costs that it is not a viable solution. Still, in 2001 the nuclear industry launched the idea of a "nuclear renaissance," claiming that it can provide electricity "efficiently, safely, and with no discharge of greenhouse gases or emissions." Capra will show that, from a systemic perspective, it is evident that no part of this statement is true.

He has summarized the basic facts about nuclear energy in terms of seven "inconvenient truths": the production of nuclear electricity creates significant greenhouse gases and pollution; uranium supplies are very limited; construction times of nuclear reactors are prohibitively long; the problem of nuclear waste storage remains unsolved; nuclear power and nuclear weapons are inextricably linked; "new generations" of reactors exhibit the same problems and are decades too late; and, because of all these problems, nuclear power is not viable commercially, being unable to survive without massive government subsidies.

If these arguments are so compelling, why then does the nuclear industry still receive massive subsidies from governments in developed countries, while the nuclear option is eagerly pursued by many countries in the Third World? Capra will conclude by advancing a hypothesis of why nuclear power is so attractive to many governments worldwide.

Eight Inconvenient Truths About Nuclear Power

(1) Nuclear energy creates significant greenhouse gases and pollution. When the entire fuel cycle is considered, a nuclear plant emits 27% of the CO2 emitted from a coal plant. Within only one or two decades, it will produce as many emissions as conventional sources of energy, as the concentration of available uranium ore declines and uranium becomes more and more difficult to extract and refine.
(2) Global uranium supplies are finite. If the world's total electricity demand were met by nuclear energy today, the accessible uranium would last less than 9 years.
(3) If nuclear power were to actually replace fossil fuels, this would require the construction of one nuclear reactor per week for the next 50 years. Considering the 8-10 years it takes to build a new reactor, such an enterprise is simply not viable.
(4) The nuclear industry has never taken responsibility for the massive amounts of lethal radioactive waste that it produces continually. In spite of the global consensus on the appropriateness of storage in geological sites, no nation in the world has yet opened such a site.
(5) Historically, as well as technically, nuclear power and nuclear weapons are inextricably linked. Nuclear plants are essentially bomb factories. Al Gore: "During the 8 years I worked in the White House, every nuclear weapons proliferation problem we faced was connected to a reactor program."
(6) Nuclear power requires massive infusions of government (i.e. taxpayer) subsidies, relying on universities and the weapons industry for its research and development, and being considered far too risky for private investors. According to The Economist (1998), "Not one [nuclear power plant] anywhere in the world makes commercial sense."
(7) "New generations" of reactors are not only decades too late but exhibit all of nuclear energy's inherent economic, environmental, safety, and proliferation problems.
(8) In 2008, the world invested more in renewables than in fossil fuels. Worldwide, distributed renewables added 40 billion watts and got $100 billion of private investment. Nuclear power added zero watts and got zero investment, despite its far larger subsidies and generally stronger government support.

Sources

Al Gore, Our Choice (2009); Helen Caldicott, Nuclear Power Is Not the Answer (2006);
Amory Lovins, "Nuclear Nonsense," RMI Paper #10 (2009); Amory Lovins, "New Nuclear Reactors, Same Old Story," RMI Solutions Journal, Spring 2009.

Barbara Rose Johnston, Center for Political Ecology

Nuclear Disaster: The Marshall Islands Experience & Lessons for a Post-Fukushima World

What are the humanitarian consequences of nuclear disaster? Between 1946 and 1958 the United States tested 67 nuclear weapons on or near Bikini and Enewetak atolls, atomizing entire islands and blanketing the entire Marshallese nation with dangerous levels of radioactive fallout. US military testing in the Marshall Islands also involved a wide array of scientific tests, including ecological baseline studies; biological effects of radiation; the nature and behavior of radioactive fallout in the atmosphere, marine, and terrestrial environment; and the bioaccumulation of radioisotopes in

the environment, food chain, and human body. A wide array of degenerative health effects were found, including cancers and reproductive abnormalities. Despite decades of remedial attention from the United States — scientific study, medical assistance, compensation, and technical and economic support in developing the nation's capacity and infrastructure — the fundamental conditions of life in the Marshall Islands remain tenuous. The continuing struggles of the Marshallese nation to restore the fundamental rights and health of the nation prompted a UN Special Rapporteur investigation in 2012, with findings and recommendations that underscore the critical importance of the right to information, health, reparation and remedy, and the recognition of continuing obligations for the United States and the community of world nations. The continuing struggles of the Marshallese nation offer immense lessons to a post-Fukushima world: The humanitarian consequences of nuclear disaster are not limited in time and space; health consequences and related societal burdens expand over time; and, political efforts to attend to the damages resulting from nuclear disaster too often serve to limit economic liability by ignoring or denying the humanitarian reality of ulcerating conditions. What is now apparent in this seventh decade of struggle is that no single nation can attend to the complex environmental, human health, and societal needs in singular fashion. Understanding and attending to the full array of issues associated with nuclear disaster requires national, bilateral, regional, *and* global commitment and action.

Brett L. Walker, Montana State University, Bozeman

The Birth of Eco-Activism: Defending Livelihood and the Global Body

In his comments, Brett Walker will place "Eco-Activism" in historical context. In recent decades, a powerful shift has occurred in the nature of Japanese environmental activism, one that has witnessed a broadening of views to include Japan's place in the world. Unlike early forms of Japanese environmental protest that focused exclusively on livelihood, today's "Eco-Activism" is focused on global environmental health. Put differently, Japanese have broadened their "Eco-Activism" to include not just livelihood or even the national body, but the health of the entire planet as well.

Early examples of environmental degradation in Japan, such as mining waste that created "bad water" in the early modern period, was protested by farmers, but because it inhibited their ability to make a living. When silt, erosion, and mining waste flowed into rivers it killed rice plants, which caused hardships. When Andô Shôeki, an eighteenth-century ecological thinker, critiqued the commercialization of the Japanese economy, he did so because it removed some people from working the land. For Andô, proper agrarian sustainability through "right cultivation" (*chokkô)* was the message of his early "Eco-Activism."

Later, with the Ashio copper mine disaster of the Meiji period (1868-1912), environmental protest assumed a different incarnation. To be sure, Tanaka Shôzô, another environmental thinker, trained his sites on the hardships that erosion caused farmers in the Watarase River Basin, downstream from Ashio, but he also spoke eloquently on the detrimental impact that environmental pollution had on the health of the imperial body. "Ashio pollution is a stain on the Japanese Empire," he wrote on one occasion. "If we do not remove it, there is no glory or honor in all our Empire."

In the postwar period (1945-89), "Eco-Activism," particularly in the aftermath of methyl-mercury poisoning in Minamata or cadmium poisoning in Toyama, focused on the livelihood of fishers and farmers, but also on the health of the individual body. Deformed children made clear the porous nature of the human body. Methyl-mercury caused

horrific congenital deformities and cadmium unfathomable pain and protests frequently involved marches that included congenitally deformed children, emphasizing the individual, bodily nature of postwar "Eco-Activism."
Today, Japanese "Eco-Activism" has taken on a global appeal, one that focuses on the ecological health of the planet. Many Japanese have taken the lead in discussions of climate change and, following the Fukushima nuclear disaster, in the safety of nuclear energy. These shifts in the focus of Japanese "Eco-Activism" signal a heightening of concern for planetary health. Indeed, with climate change, for the first time humans have started to impact the basic geology of Earth, something that requires "Eco-Activism" on a different scale.

Participants

Ryuichi Sakamoto began his career in 1978 as a founding member of the Yellow Magic Orchestra, and emerged as a pioneer in electronic music. He began acting and composing for film with Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence (1983). His score for The Last Emperor (1987) won him an Academy Award for Best Original Score, Golden Globe Award for Best Original Score, and Grammy Award for Best Score Soundtrack Album for a Motion Picture, Television or Other Visual Media. His score for The Sheltering Sky (1990) won him his second Golden Globe Award, and his score for Little Buddha (1993) received another Grammy Award nomination.
Sakamoto's visionary and genre-defying work as a musician, with his dozens of film scores, pop music, classical music as well as experimental glitch, has demonstrated universal appeal beyond Japan. His collaborations have included some of the biggest musical stars in the world, such as Michael Jackson, and prominent cultural figures, such as the Dalai Lama. He helped to shape musical thinking in the incorporation of electronic instruments. Sakamoto has also been an outspoken advocate of eco-activism. Among his film scores are those for Original Child Bomb: Meditations on the Nuclear Age (2004), a short film about the aftermath of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Alexei and the Spring, a documentary about a Belarus village 180 kilometers downwind of Chernobyl. After the Fukushima Nuclear Accident, he organized the No Nukes 2012 Concert in Chiba, Japan.

Fritjof Capra, Ph.D., physicist and systems theorist, is a founding director of the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley and is on the faculty of the Beahrs Environmental Leadership Program at UC Berkeley. Capra is the author of several international bestsellers, including *The Tao of Physics* (1975), *The Web of Life* (1996), and *The Hidden Connections* (2002). He is currently working on a multidisciplinary textbook, "The Systems View of Life," coauthored by Pier Luigi Luisi and to be published by Cambridge University Press.

Barbara Rose Johnston is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Political Ecology. Barbara is an environmental anthropologist who studies the relationships between environmental crisis and human rights. Her current work explores the community dynamics of water resource management; and, the human environmental impacts of the United States Nuclear Weapons Testing Program as conducted in the Marshall Islands. In 2011, she was the recipient of the Fifth New Millennium Book Award (Society for Medical Anthropology) for *Consequential Damages of Nuclear War: The Rongelap Report* (co-authored with Holly M. Barker).

Brett Walker is Regents Professor of History at Montana State University, Bozeman. He studies environmental history, the history of human health, and the history of science. His research seeks to understand how humans have altered the environment, or have been altered by the environment, across both historical time and geographic space. He investigates how climate, geography, and microbes have imposed their way onto the human past, as well as how humans have sliced, burned, extracted and engineered their needs and desires onto Earth and its living organisms. His research area is early modern and modern Japanese history, as well as comparative world history.