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## 13. Monju-kun: Children's Culture as Protest

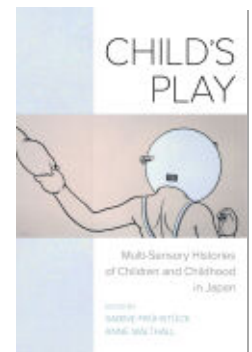
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# Monju-kun

## *Children's Culture as Protest*

Noriko Manabe

*Hello! I'm Monju-kun. I've just started tweeting. Public interest in my existence has been fading because of the accident at Fukushima Daiichi, but I don't want people to forget about me. Up to now, I haven't generated a single watt of electricity, yet I've used up 900 billion yen. Some people are inconsiderate enough to say that I'm a waste of money, but isn't it all for the development of science? As my dad, JAEA [Japan Atomic Energy Agency], says, "As we attend to our research, we'll hold dear in our hearts that we are using the invaluable taxes taken from everyone in this country." (@monjukun, Twitter, May 4, 2011)*

With this self-introduction, Monju-kun—a cartoon character modeled on the Monju fast-breeder reactor (FBR) in Fukui prefecture—made his debut on Twitter. He garnered over one hundred thousand followers and published four books, regular newspaper columns, and interviews with key antinuclear figures while posing as a problematic nuclear reactor, personified as a cherubic but sickly boy. Through this character, Monju-kun's creator (hereafter "M.C.") informed citizens about nuclear power, news sources, and antinuclear events, as well as encouraged them to raise their voices in demonstrations.

Monju-kun resembles characters in *manga* (comics) and *anime* (animation) for children, with a fully developed personality and life story that recall those of Tetsuwan Atomu (Iron-Strength Atom, known in the United States as Astro Boy) and Nobita of *Doraemon*, characters from two of Japan's best-loved anime. But both Atomu (derived from "atom") and Doraemon (the cat-robot from the future) are powered by internal nuclear reactors; they were part of the media-intensive process of naturalizing nuclear power into a part of everyday Japanese life (Kinouchi 2015: 452). Much of this pronuclear media was directed at children and their mothers, often through the deployment of cute characters like Denko-chan, Tokyo

Electric Power (TEPCO)'s mascot, and Pluto-kun, JAEA's stand-in for plutonium. By harnessing character culture, Monju-kun's creator played on the same methods used by pro-industry bodies to present an alternative take on the nuclear industry, nuclear accidents, and radiation, so that mothers and children could learn about the issues in a friendly, approachable, nontechnical way. This chapter explores the ways in which Monju-kun plays on the tropes of Japanese characters and children's culture, and how these tropes are harnessed in propaganda and oppositional movements alike, much in the same way that children once humanized soldiers (see chapter 9).

### WHY MONJU-KUN?

On March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake and tsunami led to an electricity blackout, precipitating the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident. The cores of three nuclear reactors melted down, setting off hydrogen explosions, and the roof of a fourth reactor blew off, exposing spent fuel. As Japanese residents watched the explosions on television, the lack of information caused many to panic over the safety of air, water, food, and land. Government officials—relying on TEPCO, the operator of the troubled plant, for information—played down concerns about radiation, only to report higher numbers months later. As M.C. recounted in anger, “The officials would say it wasn’t dangerous, but later on, they’d say, ‘Well, actually, a meltdown did occur. Actually, all this cesium and iodine got into the tap water.’ It was useless to find out after the fact” (M.C., interview with the author, Tsuruga, October 15, 2013).<sup>1</sup>

But even under such frustrating circumstances, most Japanese could not show their anger, fear, or any emotion other than sympathy for the victims of the disaster, which became known as 3/11; an atmosphere of self-restraint (*jishuku*) had fallen on the country. The nuclear accident became a particularly sensitive topic. Mothers were particularly worried about the impact of radiation on young children's health, but they could not say anything about it. “Radiation became a taboo topic that no one could mention, even among mothers’ groups. Everyone, including the press, was censoring him or herself. Physicians held a range of opinions on radiation and health, but the press would quote only those who said, ‘It’s all fine,’ while ignoring the ones who said it was dangerous, ‘in order not to worry people.’ It made me sad that people couldn’t say what they truly thought, or even that they were scared. The accident was having a highly negative psychological impact as well as a physical one” (M.C. interview).

M.C. also recognized that the media, particularly television, was reinforcing this spiral of silence (see Noelle-Neumann 1993) by repeating pronuclear positions such as, “There’s not enough electricity,” so constantly on television and in newspapers that these positions became de facto “truths.”<sup>2</sup> Information was actually being reported, but the most crucial information was being treated like a minor detail:

“It didn’t stand out and would go by in an instant. There was a lot of information you’d miss if you weren’t reading the newspapers very, very carefully” (M.C. interview). M.C. decided to act as a sort of translator, making the news easy to understand. In doing so, M.C. served a function akin to independent journalism sources like Iwakami Yasumi’s IWJ Internet news network, alternative information blogs like *Fukushima Diary*, and blogs and newspapers by popular musicians like Gotō Masafumi of rock band Asian Kung-Fu Generation; such independent content was instrumental in educating the population about radiation, the collusion among the nuclear industry and government officials, and alternative energy solutions. But M.C. had a different orientation: “I’m taking information that looks very difficult to understand and putting it into *childlike* language, *simple enough for even a child to understand*, so that more people would want to read it” (M.C. interview; emphasis mine).

In other words, M.C. purposefully targeted Monju-kun toward mothers and their small children. Historically, Japanese children’s culture has had propagandistic elements, allowing the country’s leadership to mold its citizens from an early age. For example, school songbooks up to 1945 included many songs that encouraged a pro-military stance—encouraging children to play war games, glorifying self-sacrifice for the emperor, and promoting adulation of the war dead—for the purpose of grooming boys to be prepared for war (Manabe 2012; see also chapters 8 and 9). Furthermore, children’s culture is embraced and absorbed into adult culture, partly because it is part of adults’ activities with children. Parents and grandparents read children’s stories to them, watch children’s movies and television programs with them, and sing children’s songs with them. As such, much of children’s culture is formulated to stimulate adults as well as children—a point which is true for *dōyō*, a type of children’s song, many of which are composed for adults to sing to children. Such songs are popular among adults, featuring in concert halls and recordings.

Furthermore, children and their mothers had been among the biggest targets of pronuclear propaganda and needed to hear the counterarguments. During the drive to domesticate nuclear power as safe, modern, and necessary for economic growth, Japanese children’s culture became filled with stories that made nuclear power seem natural or even heroic. Nuclear reactors were internalized into the bodies of Astro Boy and Doraemon; they powered the cyclones of Kamen Rider and the mobile suits of Gundam. Godzilla, which had debuted in 1954 as a feared by-product of nuclear testing, had by the mid-1960s become a kiddie hero, protecting mankind using atomic powers. Nuclear power plants often built public relations facilities in their host towns, to which schoolchildren would be taken. Children’s characters often adorned these facilities: a stuffed replica of Studio Ghibli’s Totoro once welcomed children to the PR facility near the Fukushima Daini plant.<sup>3</sup> Rock star Gotō Masafumi, who visited the nearby Hamaoka PR facility as a child, said that he grew up thinking it was completely normal to live

near this plant, which lies near the intersection of tectonic plates. Poster contests sponsored through schools or government ministries encouraged children to reiterate the mantra that nuclear power was safe, modern, and clean. The now infamous sign on the entry to Futaba, the host town for the Fukushima Daiichi plant—"Bright energy of the future"—was the result of one such contest; the winner was a sixth-grade boy. Pictured often after Futaba was evacuated, it became an index of pronuclear propaganda. Mothers, too, not only absorbed this positioning through children's culture, but were also specifically targeted in pronuclear television advertisements, which emphasized the environmental friendliness and necessity of nuclear power. They often pictured children, linking nuclear power with protecting them. Monju-kun was a counterpunch to these pronuclear arguments directed at children and mothers.

Second, mothers were concerned about radiation, which has the most serious effects on babies and young children. Sources of contamination could be anywhere—school lunches, drinking water, milk, playgrounds, puddles on the way home, et cetera. However, mothers were ill equipped to inform themselves. As M.C. told this author, "Mothers with young children are extremely busy, taking care of children all day. They don't have the time to look for information on a PC. Their only tool might be their mobile phones, and they can only gather fragments of information. Their Internet literacy may be low, and they may have difficulty reading through a long essay. For them, a Twitter message of 140 characters and a link to further information is just right. I thought it would be useful to them if I could hand them the information one [data] packet at a time" (M.C. interview).

M.C. also decided to speak in the guise of a cartoon-like character. First, M.C. wished to retain anonymity, likely to avoid the backlash that is commonly directed at antinuclear activists, who are humiliated publicly, lose professional opportunities, and receive physical threats.<sup>4</sup> In addition, M.C. may have wished to avoid disagreements: M.C.'s own family did not know about Monju-kun. Indeed, Japanese are far more likely to use the Internet anonymously than Americans (Morio and Buchholz 2009), which accounts for the more rapid acceptance in Japan of Twitter, which allows multiple accounts, over Facebook, which prefers users to register under their own names. In 2010, only 22.5 percent of Japanese Twitter users held an account under their real names; 70 percent held a pseudonymous account, and 8.5 percent had multiple accounts (Kin 2010: 75). Another survey in 2011 showed that in Japan only 7 percent of Twitter users and 21 percent of social network users (mixi, Facebook) held accounts in their real names (Orita 2014). Through anonymity, more Japanese are able to hold frank discussions that are rare in day-to-day life; some users speak more openly on Twitter than with friends (Kin 2010: 43). Anonymity on Twitter helped not only M.C. to speak out, but also Monju-kun's followers to speak.

The guise of a *character* was also beneficial. As M.C. explained to me: "People are familiar with characters and have friendly feelings toward them. They would

prefer to listen to a neutral, cute character chatting away [than to a person] . . . If the person behind it becomes known, many people will want to attack him. The more conspicuous a person becomes, the more people he will infuriate. On the other hand, it's hard to get angry at this soft, fluffy thing. After all, people really love cute things" (M.C. interview).

#### THE LOVE OF CHARACTERS

That many Japanese would prefer to learn from a fictional character than a person is hardly strange in a country where children regularly learn about history, politics, Buddhism, and other complex issues through manga. Indeed, cartoons and characters are ubiquitous in contemporary Japanese culture and have a long history. During the Asia-Pacific War, the protagonist of the Momotarō (Peach Boy) fable was made into a character symbolizing the quintessential brave Japanese male. In the 1960s, Tezuka Osamu's *Astro Boy* enjoyed television ratings as high as 40 percent (Aihara 2007: 14). Hello Kitty—perhaps Japan's most famous character—underwent a big boom in the 1990s, when adult women began buying more character goods (Aihara 2007: 43; Yano 2013). According to a survey by toy maker Bandai's Character Research Institute in 2004, character goods (e.g., stuffed toys, pencils, or other items with an imprint of the character) were popular among not only children but also adults, with 90 percent of women and 60 percent of men in their forties owning them (Aihara 2007: 19–21). The Bandai survey found that adults owned character goods to help them relax from the stresses of the day. Characters were substitute mothers that comforted and protected their owners by their sheer presence, allowing some to regress to a childlike state (Aihara 2007, 27–28, 39–41; Yano 2013).

This affection for characters has led corporations to use them to foster intimacy between their goods and consumers (Allison 2006: 14). For example, Peko-chan, a pigtailed girl licking her lips, has been the character mascot of candy retailer Fujiya since the 1950s (Aihara 2007: 14). Local governments and organizations also employ *yuru kyara*—"loose" or "wobbly" characters—as mascots to create a favorable image of towns, local products, or events (Occhi 2012). These characters have personalities and stories that explain how they are related to what they represent. In addition to cartoon logos or animated characters, these characters have a live version (a person in a fluffy costume) that walks around events and greets people, who pose for pictures with them.

The nuclear industry has also had its share of characters. TEPCO, the company in charge of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, had a cartoon spokeswoman in Denko-chan (Electric Girl). Pictured as a ponytailed housewife, she appeared in pamphlets, websites, and a series of television commercials encouraging efficient use of electricity and promoting nuclear power. In one 2004 commercial, Denko is shopping at a supermarket and remarks that everything is

imported. Suddenly a professor appears, telling her that energy is also imported. He says that electric power companies are importing the source that generates the most energy out of the least amount of raw materials—uranium. He argues that nuclear power raises Japan's self-sufficiency in energy.<sup>5</sup> Denko-chan was decommissioned in March 2012, following the Fukushima Daiichi accident.

Pluto-kun was a mascot character of JAEA, representing plutonium—the radioactive element used in the bomb dropped on Nagasaki and as part of fuel in the Monju fast-breeder nuclear reactor (FBR). He appears in Atom Plaza, JAEA's public-relations building in Tsuruga, Fukui prefecture, where the Monju FBR is located; he also appears on its website. The character looks like a cute little boy from outer space, with a round, smiling face and a helmet with the letters "Pu," the chemical symbol for plutonium. In an eleven-minute video made in 1993, Pluto-kun speaks in a cute, high-pitched, innocent little boy's voice, attempting to dispel all the "negative rumors" about him.<sup>6</sup> In a hurt tone, he says, "Some people exaggerate and talk about me as if I were something really terrible . . . They say I'm highly poisonous and can be the cause of cancer, but they misunderstand." To cheery, soothing music, he enthuses, "No one has ever gotten cancer from plutonium! If you drink plutonium, your body will just get rid of it." This video was shown in the public-relations facilities of several nuclear power plants. After 3/11, it stopped being used.

The industry's use of characters for promoting nuclear power inspired M.C. to come up with another take on corporate characters and wobbly mascots: "If you can use characters to say that a dangerous thing isn't dangerous, then why not have a counterpart say that a dangerous thing is actually dangerous? After all, to say that nuclear power is safe is a lie. If you need a cute character to cover up a lie, you can conversely use one to undo the lie and dissolve it" (M.C. interview).

M.C. also decided to use the Monju FBR as the basis for the character, "because it's dangerous, and it's not that well known, despite its great significance and hazardness. It hadn't attracted that much interest or protests against it . . . It's the devil-child [*oni-go*] of Japan's nuclear policy" (M.C. interview). Monju was a key node in the nuclear fuel cycle, in which the spent fuel of ordinary nuclear reactors was to be reprocessed into mixed oxide (MOX) fuel at the Rokkashō Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing Facility in Aomori prefecture, and MOX was used as fuel for the Monju FBR. However, both Rokkashō and Monju had had several accidents, and as of 2017, neither seemed close to being commercially viable. As M.C. said:

The plan is to have ordinary nuclear power plants, Monju, and Rokkasho, operate the nuclear cycle among them. If they admit two of those nodes don't work, then you really wouldn't be able to use nuclear power anymore, because there won't be any place to take the spent fuel. But they won't admit it, and keep saying that it will succeed one day. They started planning it in the 1960s, and fifty years later in the 2010s, it's still not done. They're now saying it will be completed in 2050. It's a dream that's taking ninety years to fulfill. How much can you trust that? It's like a comedy. And it wasn't

known about at all. It's emblematic of Japanese nuclear policy, and it's very critical. For that reason, I featured Monju. (M.C. interview)

Monju-kun constantly reminded followers that Monju, the plant, cost Japanese taxpayers 20 billion yen (\$180 million) every year. Despite its many problems, including an order from the Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NRA) in 2013 to remain shut due to lax safety inspections, it remained an ongoing entity, supported by taxes, until September 2016. While Monju-kun often referred to his friend Fukuichi-kun—the troubled Fukushima Daiichi plant—M.C. believed it would be in poor taste to feature Fukuichi-kun as the primary character, given that 160,000 people had had to evacuate from their homes as a result of the nuclear accident (M.C. interview).

While M.C. said that much of the character's genesis and development was spontaneous and driven by emotional response, the character of Monju-kun shares many of the features of well-formed Japanese characters. As Itō (2007), Aihara (2007), Condry (2009), Yano (2013), and others have pointed out, creators of anime, manga, and character goods take great care in developing the personalities, premises, and world-settings for their characters, whose formation often precedes and receives more emphasis than plotlines. Let us now examine how Monju-kun, the character, was constructed in terms of appearance, personality, and premise.

Monju-kun appears as a very young boy, with a round face and rotund figure. That he is a boy rather than a girl fits partly into character convention—most nuclear-powered characters, such as Astro Boy, are boys, as they are meant to be strong. Indeed, nuclear power is often depicted in masculine terms, as a representation of Japan's technological and economic might. Perceiving this depiction as a hangover of Nakasone's desire to possess the technology behind the atom bomb, the rapper ECD declares in "Straight Outta 138" (Dengaryū 2012) that nuclear power is the "penis substitute of those old men who wanted to keep fighting the war" but were prohibited from having nuclear weapons.

Hence, Monju-kun's gender is deeply ironic. He is anything but an Astro Boy-like hero. He is a little boy who is physically fragile—"Even though I haven't worked, I'm falling apart, and my body hurts everywhere" (Monju-kun 2012b: 12)—an apt personification of the actual reactor, which had proved prone to accidents. The Monju FBR's vulnerability to sodium leakage is translated into the kid-friendly metaphor of a boy susceptible to diarrhea ("If there's a big earthquake, would I be able to hold it in?" Monju-kun 2012b: 68). This depiction of Monju-kun as a helpless boy, in need of continuous minding, emasculates the Monju FBR, and with it, Japan's nuclear power program, as incapable and powerless. Monju-kun's youth and rotund figure also symbolize that the reactor has hardly worked; in contrast, Fukuichi-kun (Fukushima Daiichi) is an *ojii-chan* (grandpa) because before its collapse the plant was old, having operated for over forty years.



The appearance of characters often has symbolic meaning. To formulate Monju-kun's, M.C. took aspects of Monju the FBR, as well as of Monju, the Mañjuśrī bodhisattva of wisdom after whom the nuclear reactor is named. Like Mañjuśrī, Monju-kun has a bindi on his forehead, elongated ears, and a headband bordering a crown, with a flower in its center (see figure 16).<sup>7</sup> In place of Mañjuśrī's crown, Monju-kun sports a dome resembling a nuclear reactor with a pointed top that looks like the exhaust tower of the Monju FBR. To make him child-friendly, M.C. limited colors to four basic ones that toddlers could name—baby blue, pink, skin color, and yellow. On book covers and in the stuffed costume, much surface area is colored in yellow to make the objects brighter (M.C. interview). This coloring helps the books and characters to stand out in public and attract attention. Monju-kun's costume sports a band-aid on his bottom "to prevent sodium from leaking."

Many characters come with an origin story that explains who the character is and how he or she has become this way. For Monju-kun, the most dramatic version of his origin story is given in his "autobiography," *Goodbye Monju-kun* (Sayōnara, Monju-kun; Monju-kun 2012b). The first chapter is a recounting of the December 8, 1995 accident at the Monju plant and subsequent cover-up, where actual events are told from the anthropomorphic perspective of the reactor himself:

I still remember that accident clearly . . . It was past 7 pm, and the *oji-san* ("uncles," men) were raising the output of the reactor . . . I started to feel a little sick. My stomach started to twitch. Hmm, what is this awful feeling? Then something burst open. I suddenly felt pangs of pain at the bottom of my stomach, as if I were being squeezed . . . Suddenly, I saw a hole in the sodium pipe, and sodium was flowing out. I thought, oh no! If hot sodium touches the air, it will burst into flame . . . The white smoke of burning sodium filled the room, and I couldn't see anymore in the haze . . . Beep! Beep! The fire alarms started to go off. I was *so* scared (Monju-kun 2012b: 13–16).

Much to Monju-kun's disappointment, the uncles of Dōnen (Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation, forerunner to JAEA) were slow to react in his hour of need: "They didn't stop the sodium pump, so I couldn't stop wetting my pants. It was so embarrassing and painful. I was very sad" (19). In the actual accident, ninety minutes passed by before Dōnen halted the reactor, allowing 650 kilograms of sodium to leak.

At a press conference the following day, Dōnen claimed that the accident wasn't serious, even though the total amount of sodium leaked was substantial, and that it had no knowledge of conditions at the site of the accident, although it had already taken a video of it. In the autobiographical narrative, an appalled Monju-kun yelled, "The uncles are lying! . . . The pipe room is completely covered in white," but none of the reporters heard him (26–28). Subsequently, Dōnen edited the video to make the accident look minor and held another press conference. Monju-kun was again horrified by the lies: "I was so surprised, I almost wet my pants with sodium



FIGURE 16. Images of Monju-kun, from @monjukun, Twitter. Courtesy @monjukun, Instagram, April 29, 2012.

again” (31). Fed up with Dōnen's vague responses, the people of Fukui prefecture demanded to see the site themselves. The visit revealed the lie, and the resulting scandal was well covered in the media. Nishimura Shigeo, the assistant manager in charge of investigating the accident, was found dead, and his death was ruled a suicide; his wife, who had previously worked for Dōnen, claimed he was murdered.<sup>8</sup> Pressure from intense media coverage was blamed for his death, and the media backed off from Monju.

This event, which happened in real life, is set up as a defining moment for Monju-kun, the character, who begins to question his identity and worth.

As a fast-breeder reactor, exactly what am I? Until then, I had always been told, “You are the reactor of dreams.” “If you succeed, Japan no longer has to worry about energy” . . . I thought I was supporting the ambitions of Japanese science . . .

But the sodium accident made me realize three important points. First, I break easily and I'm dangerous . . . It hurt, it was hot, it was scary. I don't ever want to experience that again.

Second, I make everyone worry . . . After I had the accident, residents in the area were asking fearfully, “Should we evacuate?” . . .

Third, I started to wonder if Dad, Dōnen, were really all right. I had always trusted Dad, because he was Dad . . . But during the accident, I kept saying, “It's hot, it's hot!” but no one came to extinguish the fire. The uncles didn't stop the nuclear reactor right away. They hesitated to drain the sodium so I continued to wet my pants. I wondered if they really intended to take care of me. . . .

They lied, they hid the video, they piled lies upon lies, and they use everyone's tax money for research but can't explain it properly to outsiders. That's dishonest. They drive someone in their organization into a corner and don't protect him . . . Since then, I have continued to wonder if my existence is really necessary. (Monju-kun 2012b: 36–40)

### MONJU-KUN'S PERSONALITY

This origin story highlights the key elements in Monju-kun's character. First, he is a child, and as a child, he is helpless: he is dependent on the uncles to prevent accidents. As a child, Monju-kun (and by analogy, the Monju FBR) is blameless: the accident is clearly the fault of the technological uncles of Dōnen, who have designed him badly and cover it up.

Second, he possesses the basic human goodness attributed to children (Mallick 2010; see chapter 5): he is an honest boy with a sense of morality and social responsibility. He feels outrage at the cover-up of the Monju accident and is deeply saddened by the reported suicides of the manager in charge of communicating Monju's accident in 1996 and the manager who was organizing repairs in 2011.<sup>9</sup> He laments that the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency had just been rubber-stamping Dōnen's materials: “I felt sad that people weren't paying adequate

attention. It scared me” (Monju-kun 2012b: 100). Fukuichi-kun’s accident also makes him wonder if he’s really safe. When the uncles at the plants or the government claim, “It’s safe,” he feels more unsettled.

Thirdly, he has the child’s ability to see the truth: he doubts the moral integrity of his father and creator, Dōnen, and its successor, JAEA. Dependent on Dōnen, Monju-kun feels betrayed by his uncles’ inability to “take care of him” by dealing quickly with the accident. And as a seer of truth (Malkki 2010), Monju-kun recognizes that he is not the future of nuclear energy as he is purported to be. Like some children unable to deal with unrealistic expectations, he retreats into a somewhat nihilistic dream of retiring and being reborn as a solar cell in the Sahara.

This depiction of a technology-based character in a moral conflict with his father/creator locates Monju-kun in a tradition of character-types created by Tezuka Osamu, the author of *Astro Boy* and considered the father of Japanese postwar manga and animation. At the beginning of *Astro Boy*, Tobio, the son of Dr. Tenma, the director-general of the Institute of Science, is killed in a turbo-car accident. The bereaved father summons all the resources of the Institute to build Astro Boy, a boy robot with an atomic generator as a source of energy, as a substitute for his son. Tenma becomes disappointed when he doesn’t grow like a human boy. Dismissing him as “just a robot,” he sells him to a cruel circus owner who makes Astro Boy fight gladiator-style with other robots. Astro Boy recharges cast-off robots and mobilizes them to rescue people from a circus fire. The passage of a robot bill of rights frees him from the circus. Meanwhile, Dr. Tenma has been forced to resign from his position, and the kindly Dr. Ochanomizu has replaced Dr. Tenma as the director of the Institute. Ochanomizu adopts Astro Boy, who goes on to fight villains.<sup>10</sup>

Astro Boy shares with Monju-kun the attributes associated with children: like Monju-kun, Astro Boy is an honest boy who seeks righteousness and truth. Moreover, both embody an anxiety about technology and those who wield its power. They are both powered by atomic energy and billed as technological marvels (although Monju-kun’s wonders remain unmaterialized). Both father-creators are powerful figures in science, the director-general of the Institute of Science mirroring Dōnen’s position at the heart of Japanese research on nuclear power. Both fathers are also deeply flawed: the director-general eventually loses his position, and Dōnen, reorganized as Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA), has been censured by the new NRA for underreporting problems. Astro Boy is betrayed and abandoned by his father, while Monju-kun is betrayed and misled by Dōnen/JAEA; both harbor conflicting feelings about “dad.” Anne Allison surmises that Astro Boy’s abandonment resonated with many in postwar Japan, who felt that military leaders had betrayed and sacrificed them (Allison 2006: 57). Similarly, Monju-kun’s betrayal and doubt over the leadership of nuclear power—and with it, the underlying assumptions behind Japan’s technological and economic policies—echo the feelings of many Japanese in the wake of the Fukushima Daiichi accident. For Astro Boy, the emotional dissonance is resolved when the kindly Dr. Ochanomizu

adopts him. For Monju-kun, no such adoptive parent materialized—just as in real life, in which no organization stepped up to replace JAEA as the manager for the Monju FBR.

Szasz and Takechi have noted that “in Tezuka’s world, the robots, such as Astro Boy, are often more human than humans themselves, as they deal with sadness, fear, sorrow, and even remorse. Humans cause most of the problems in his stories” (Szasz and Takechi 2007: 737). In other words, the technology-based character (also a child) is socially responsible: it is the human (adult) who begets evil out of technology. Similarly, Monju-kun and his nuclear-reactor friends—Fukuichi-kun, Hamaoka-kun, Ōi-kun, etc.—are worried that they are not truly safe; they are disappointed in the humans who lie and engage in cover-ups. Fukuichi-kun deeply regrets the consequences of his accident, for which Monju-kun blames the Nuclear Village: “Fukuichi-kun . . . , I can see your tears. You can’t see them on television because they’re mixing and disappearing with the continuing flow of contaminated water, but I can see that you are crying tears of apology. You’re not the one who’s bad! It’s the over-lenient plans and fraudulent inspections that are bad!” (@monjukun, Twitter, May 13, 2011). Hence, Monju-kun, the innocent boy, asserts that the technology of nuclear power is not inherently evil, but that humans handle it in a problematic manner.

Like Astro Boy, whose liminal position between the robot and human worlds brings on an identity crisis, Monju-kun is highly anxious about his identity as a nuclear reactor and the meaning of his existence. He laments when the *Yomiuri* newspaper writes that nuclear power allows Japan to have plutonium, which is the raw material for nuclear weapons (September 8, 2011). Unlike Astro Boy, who responds heroically by fighting injustice, Monju-kun is remorseful about his very existence. As mentioned previously, he wants his existence as Monju to end. This pessimistic, unheroic withdrawal differentiates him from Astro Boy and other nuclear-powered commercial characters. However, the social and economic difficulties in the current society have led to an increase of NEETs—a person who is not pursuing employment, education, or training—and *hikikomori*, or extreme social withdrawal (Borovoy 2008; Furlong 2008). Monju-kun’s desire to withdraw may have resonated with many young Japanese people.

Indeed, Monju-kun’s depiction as a weakling may have made his character more appealing. Childlike weakness and helplessness are key components of the cuteness (*kawaii*) aesthetic, as they invite others to take care of that person or character (Kinsella 1995). Monju-kun tends to highlight his physical weakness, which draws the motherly attention of his followers. When Monju-kun tweeted extensively about his “operation” in June 2011 (mirroring a real-life effort to remove fallen equipment from the FBR), so many followers tweeted “get well soon” messages that M.C.’s Twitter app crashed.

As M.C. observed, “The Japanese prefer something flawed or weak over something perfect, like Nobita from *Doraemon*” (M.C. interview). In this long-running

manga and anime series, Nobita is a boy who is always failing: he receives poor grades at school, performs poorly at athletic activities, and can't do anything right. His descendant sends the robot cat Doraemon to protect Nobita from a hapless future. Whenever Nobita gets into a bind, Doraemon tries to rescue him by pulling out a gadget, which Nobita misuses. Schilling (1993) notes that many children, who are under extreme pressure to succeed in school and elsewhere, identify with Nobita. And like Nobita, Monju-kun is under pressure to work, although he simply can't. According to Monju-kun's author, "People can empathize more with an incompetent kid like Nobita [than with a perfect kid]. Monju-kun, too, is very weak physically, and he's always failing, like the actual Monju FBR . . . Those types of characters feel friendly and familiar to many people" (M.C. interview). And as Monju-kun fit into this recognizable type, he appealed to more people, making them more willing to listen to his explanations of nuclear power.

Nobita has a marked lazy streak—another characteristic Monju-kun shares with him. Building on the fact that the Monju FBR only operated for about six months since its completion in 1991, Monju-kun calls himself "Japan's number one NEET" (@monjukun, Twitter, May 22, 2011). On his resume, he lists his special skills as "loafing" and "using up a lot of money" (Monju-kun 2012b: 2). His T-shirts and illustrations show Monju-kun hula-dancing and hunting for insects (a favorite summer pastime for children) with the caption, "Every day is summer vacation"—a biting remark for the many Japanese who hardly get any vacation from their jobs.

Another endearing element to Monju-kun's character is his distinctive language. He greeted followers in the morning with an "*oha-oha*" tagline to the common greeting, "*ohayō gozaimasu*" (good morning). He also uses the distinctive "*desudayo*" sentence ending, combining two auxiliary verbs when either one alone would suffice—the kind of mistake a child would make. M.C. explained that this pattern was a form of *keigo* (polite language) when addressing evacuees and people of higher status on Twitter.<sup>11</sup> That is to say, Monju-kun is a polite, well-behaved child.

Like Astro Boy, Monju-kun sought kinship outside of his original "family." He made his most frequent references to his nuclear reactor friends, comprised of all the other reactors in Japan and pictured as a mutually supportive network of coworkers in difficult environments. When the Hamaoka Nuclear Plant, which sits directly over the subduction zone of two tectonic plates that are overdue for a major earthquake, was taken off-line, Monju-kun tweeted, "I tried to call Hamaoka-kun to congratulate him on being taken off-line, but I couldn't get through! There's a flood of congratulatory calls from Tsuruga-kun, Kashiwazaki-kun, Shimane-kun—all the nuclear reactors in Japan. We all put on a brave face, but we're actually scared of earthquakes" (@monjukun, Twitter, May 9, 2011).

Hence, Monju-kun's cute personality, classic conflicts of father versus son and technology versus humans, and multiplicity of associated subcharacters made him both familiar and distinctive to Japanese, enhancing his acceptance. Let us now explore how his popularity grew and how he was received in various forms.

## MONJU'S SPREAD ACROSS MEDIA PLATFORMS

Monju-kun began his life as a Twitter account on May 4, 2011, tweeting little-known stories about the Monju FBR in humorous, often sarcastic tones that resonated with the angry mood at the time:

Hello from atop an active fault! It's me, Monju-kun (May 6, 2011).

I don't drink mother's milk. I grew this big from everyone's hard-earned taxpayer money! (May 10, 2011)

Monju-kun's amusing manner quickly attracted the attention of the Twittersphere, where many Japanese had congregated for news in those first few months after 3/11. He was quickly retweeted by influential tweeters such as musicians Soul Flower Union, Gotch (Asian Kung-Fu Generation), Ōtomo Yoshihide, and Sakamoto Ryūichi, resulting in a rapid increase in followers (M.C. interview). These endorsements encouraged musicians' fans to follow Monju-kun and increased his perceived trustworthiness. In ten weeks, he had over fifty thousand followers, and in a year, he had nearly one hundred thousand.

Monju-kun was chatty and interactive with his followers, who asked him "personal" questions, in language similar to the way in which adults engage with children. Noting that Monju-kun had referred to his dad, a follower asked, "What about your mom?" He responded, "The energy industry is a male-dominated world, so there aren't many moms. It doesn't have any mom-oriented ideas either" (June 14, 2011). When another asked, "What are your hobbies?" he responded, "I wanted to try the tea ceremony, but [the water] would react with the sodium and make it explode, so I gave it up" (September 10, 2011).

But amid all the fun, Monju-kun's easily understood messages quickly made him a trusted authority to whom adults, particularly parents, could ask questions. He corrected misunderstandings, gently telling one follower that he couldn't use his Geiger counter to measure radiation in food ("A Geiger counter measures sieverts; when you eat vegetables, you want to know about bequerels," May 13, 2011). When a follower asked, "Is it all right to drink plutonium? . . . Ohashi Hiroshi, a distinguished professor from Tokyo University, said it's fine to drink it" (@benntenn5283, June 6, 2011), he emphatically replied, "Even if a professor says it's all right, good children must never drink it! If you choke, and it goes down your windpipe into your lungs, you'd receive continuous doses of internal radiation" (June 6, 2011).

Eventually M.C. was unable to keep up with the barrage of questions, and Monju-kun moved into the authorship of books and blogs. First Monju-kun solicited questions from his followers under the hashtag #oshiete\_monju. This Q&A on topics relating to nuclear policy and radiation formed the basis for his first book, *Teach Me, Monju-kun* (Oshiete! Monju-kun; Monju-kun 2012a).

Monju-kun found that while Twitter was good for transmitting sound bites, its 140 characters were not sufficient for discussing complicated issues. Furthermore,

many Japanese still put greater trust in print media than in Internet sources: a digital divide existed between regular Internet users and flip-phone users, and the Internet, while less prone to censorship, suffered from an image of unreliability. M.C. thus felt that Monju-kun would seem more trustworthy if the information were packaged into a physical book from a reputable publisher (M.C. interview). With the longer book format, M.C. was able to explain complex concepts in nuclear science, give advice on avoiding radiation, debunk pronuclear arguments, and present renewable energy as a viable alternative to nuclear power.

In the guise of Monju-kun, M.C. published four books: *Teach Me, Monju-kun* (Oshiete! Monju-kun, March 2012), an FAQ on nuclear power and radiation; *Goodbye, Monju-kun* (Sayonara, Monju-kun, March 2012), an “autobiography” explaining the accidents and problems of the Monju FBR; *Energy of the Future for Everyone* (Monju-kun to miru! Yomu! Wakaru! Minna no mirai no enerugii, July 2012), describing renewable energy sources; and *Have We Changed Since 3/11?* (Monju-kun taidan-shū: 3.11 de bokura wa kawatta ka, 2014), a book about cultural responses to 3/11 featuring interviews with Sakamoto Ryūichi, artist Nara Yoshitomo, photographer Suzuki Shin, philosopher Kokubun Kōichirō, and martial arts researcher Kōno Yoshinori. Each of the first three books was supervised by an expert in the field: environmental economics professor Ōshima Ken’ichi and science education professor Samaki Takeo for *Teach Me, Monju-kun*; nuclear physicist Kobayashi Keiji for *Goodbye, Monju-kun*; and Iida Tetsunari, director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies, for *Energy of the Future for Everyone*.

M.C. wrote the books with mothers in mind, using simple, clear language so that they could read them quickly and read them aloud to their children. So that upper-elementary-school children would be able to read them on their own, the books are printed in large letters with *kana* (phonetic spellings) for nearly all Chinese characters. They also include a plethora of kid-friendly illustrations that explain complicated concepts (e.g., the nuclear fuel cycle) or anthropomorphize actual situations (e.g., Monju-kun bent over with a stomachache while leaked sodium catches fire).

The books have been received well, the first two books having sold more than twenty thousand copies within the first month.<sup>12</sup> Many readers tweeted that their children were reading them: “Not satisfied with just having the book read to him, our first grader is reading it himself, dictionary in hand” (@lovelovebonchan, March 7, 2012).

#### LIVE APPEARANCES

Given Monju-kun’s popularity, it seemed only a matter of time before he appeared live in stuffed costume, like a true wobbly mascot. In particular, he had already been helping to spread information about demonstrations; in Twitter conversations with individual followers, he sometimes gave them the extra push of courage





FIGURE 17. Monju-kun at the TwitNoNukes demonstration, Shibuya, Tokyo, 29 April 2012. Courtesy @monjukun, Instagram, April 29, 2012.

they needed to participate in a public protest. As early as June 2011, demonstrators were already carrying hand-drawn images of his likeness. Monju-kun then uploaded placards and round fans, which protesters downloaded and took to demonstrations. When he finally appeared at a TwitNoNukes antinuclear demonstration in Shibuya, Tokyo, on April 29, 2012, protesters, particularly those with children, were delighted to be greeted by him and posed for pictures with him (see figure 17).

Monju-kun was also a big hit at the Sayonara Genpatsu (Goodbye, Nuclear Power Plants) rally and demonstration on July 16, 2012, which attracted 170,000 protesters. Fans of all ages—both adults and children—came up to hug him and take pictures with him.<sup>13</sup> He entertained protesters in a skit with journalist Tsuda Daisuke on a big stage, declaring himself the King of NEEtTs for receiving an “allowance” of 55 million yen a day (“I took a taxi from Tsuruga! . . . Not even a dent in my allowance!”).<sup>14</sup>

Monju-kun also participated in a number of music festivals, such as No Nukes, Project Fukushima Festival, and Fuji Rock Festival's Atomic Café stage. At the Atomic Café in 2013, Monju-kun performed in a skit with Suishinger—the comedy unit Okome Takeru no Ichiza's "superhero" trio representing pronuclear forces—TEPCO (in red leotards), METI (blue), and mass media (white); "suishin" means "to promote" (in this case, nuclear power).<sup>15</sup> Monju-kun told them that he didn't want to work, reminding the audience that the sodium in him will explode if combined with water—"If I start sweating from working, it'll be dangerous!" Suishinger bullied him, saying, "Just pretend you're going to work at some point." As Monju-kun cried, his tears of sodium generated smoke, causing Suishinger to flee. Tsuda Daisuke joined Monju-kun onstage, mentioning the moves by the Liberal Democratic Party, which had just returned to power, to restart twelve "nuclear reactor friends," all of which Monju-kun named. Monju-kun reported that the NRA had forbidden restarting him because the JAEA had failed to conduct safety checks on ten thousand pieces of equipment. The skit entertained children while updating adults on the current status of nuclear power.<sup>16</sup> A child was overheard asking his mother, "Do we not need nuclear power?"

Monju-kun finished the skit by dancing to his theme song, "Monju-kun ondo," based on a common Japanese song style (explained below). Music is usually part of a character's packaging: many characters are identified with the theme songs of their anime (e.g., Astro Boy) or videogame (e.g., Nintendo's Super Mario). Typically these songs summarize the premise and highlight the personality of characters; e.g., "I'm Doraemon" (Boku Doraemon) introduces the robot cat as one that can solve any problem.

M.C. felt that the Monju FBR was so "patently absurd" that "only a song could make people learn about it." M.C. chose the *ondo* style because it "is the most common type of Japanese song. Everyone knows it. It doesn't have to be trendy or cool" (M.C. interview). Originally a type of traditional call-and-response song and dance associated with particular localities and summertime *bon* festivals, the *ondo* was commercialized into a popular song form played with Western instruments in the 1920s. Today, many places, situations, personalities, and characters (e.g., Doraemon) have their own *ondo*. M.C. was familiar with the music of traditional *ondo*, having participated in many *bon* festivals, and found the lyrical pattern of *ondo*, which alternates lines of seven and five *morae* (short syllables) like haiku, straightforward to write. The cheery music of Monju-kun's theme song sports the pentatonic melody and dotted rhythm characteristic of a commercial *ondo*. The song was made available for download on the Project Fukushima site and for streaming on Soundcloud and YouTube.<sup>17</sup>

Audiences have responded positively, with bemusement, to the song at live performances. M.C. attributed this reception to the sheer familiarity of the form:

When you play it at an event, that *ondo* has a devastating impact. . . . with an *ondo*, everyone is on the same page, because everyone knows the *ondo*. Everyone can sing

it and has danced to it before. It's something everyone has in common, something the body remembers . . .

[The *ondo*] also embarrasses the Japanese. In their daily lives, Japanese people tend to hide anything in the culture that seems Japanese. *Ondo* is definitely one of those things . . . You wouldn't sing one at a karaoke bar. Because you've hidden it away in a closet, you giggle when you hear an *ondo*. Just when you're smirking, the lyrics grab you. (M.C. interview)

Another reason for this reception may be the absurdity of having a giant stuffed character dance, jump at the word “explosion,” and cover his mouth at “plutonium,” all to lyrics that describe a dead-serious situation; the incongruity itself is enough to make one laugh, just as incongruous mash-ups do. The song's three verses succinctly explain the issues with the Monju FBR: that both the sodium it uses for cooling and the plutonium it uses for fuel are extremely dangerous; that it remains unfinished despite fifty years of planning and testing; that a serious accident was covered up; that the FBR is more difficult to control than other nuclear reactors; and that every other developed country has already given up on this technology. Its chorus begins by reminding us that “the annual budget is 20 billion yen,” that “it's called the reactor of dreams, but it's a nightmare from which we haven't awakened,” and that it would “ruin Lake Biwa if there were an accident.” In simple words that a child could mostly understand, coupled with a familiar *ondo* melody, the song is catchy and easy to learn. It replicates the long-held Japanese practice of using music to teach children, as in the case of Meiji-era school songs that teach Confucian values or the recent wobbly mascot Kumamon's song, which teaches children to overcome difficulties. But the recording also replicates the mother-child dynamic seen throughout the Monju-kun character: a woman-mother is singing, while a sprightly boy yelps the response pattern: “*Mon, Mon, Mon-ju, hai, hai, hai-ro*” (Monju, shut it down).

## CONCLUSION

Through the tropes of Japanese character culture—a cute, fuzzy being, with the father-son conflicts and technology-human ambiguities that shape *Astro Boy* or *Doraemon*—Monju-kun provided a nonthreatening and fun conduit to inform citizens, particularly mothers, about nuclear power and radiation. He exemplified the political usefulness of children's culture, whose friendly, familiar, and comforting associations made it a perfect foil for transmitting technically difficult information like nuclear fission or contentious situations like the problematic Monju reactor. In addition, Japanese children's culture also permeates adult culture, due not only to the participation of parents in their children's culture but also to the Japanese attraction to cuteness. Children's culture has historically been used in public relations (e.g., Denko, Pluto-kun) or outright propaganda, as with children's songs during World War II. Other antinuclear activists and musicians also

used children's culture, such as Saitō Kazuyoshi's antinuclear songs based on Aesop tales, Acid Black Cherry and Coma-chi's concept albums written as children's stories, and Scha Dara Parr and Hikashū's references to Godzilla, while visual artists such as Sayonara Atom applied the cuteness aesthetic to banners for demonstrations. As M.C. inferred, most Japanese may find it hard to discuss the nuclear crisis, but they also find it hard to get mad at cute, childlike things or reminders of childhood. And like a child without social filters (see chapter 5), Monju-kun was able to speak the truth about nuclear power and get away with it.

Monju-kun's beginnings and primary existence on the Internet also illustrate how important the anonymity of cyberspace has been in disseminating information and sustaining discussion outside of mainstream-media narratives. Anonymity allowed not only both M.C. and Monju-kun's followers to speak out. Having amassed a large following on Twitter, M.C., under the Monju-kun *nom de plume*, wrote informative and accessible books that a child could read, while the character, in stuffed costume, attracted parents, children, and fans to antinuclear demonstrations and festivals. The combination of the cute, approachable character and timely dissemination made Monju-kun a crucial source of information under a spiral of silence.

In November 2015, the NRA announced that JAEA could no longer manage the Monju plant. It instructed the education and science ministry (MEXT) to find a new manager or consider closing the plant. After a ministry report failed to lay out a reform plan or identify a new operator, Cabinet members agreed in September 2016 to decommission Monju, at an estimated cost of 375 billion yen (\$3.3 billion) over thirty years, and the government formally confirmed this decision in December 2016. However, the Cabinet did not shift policy away from nuclear fuel recycling: the government plans to build a demonstration fast-breeder reactor in Fukui, the same prefecture that hosted Monju. Japan has a forty-eight-ton plutonium stockpile, which it has justified through the nuclear fuel recycling program.

Meanwhile, Monju-kun's creator appears to have gone on with life. Monju-kun stopped tweeting shortly after the fifth anniversary of 3/11, without a goodbye. In his last tweets, he sounded optimistic over Monju's potential decommissioning but resigned over Japan's inability to give up nuclear power; asked by an inquisitive child as to why the nuclear accident had to happen, he said he still did not have simple words to explain.

But Monju-kun hadn't disappeared from the minds of his fans. As the news on Monju flowed, they revisited his books, articles, and songs, reposting them on Twitter as quick refreshers on the problematic reactor. Monju-kun had entered the discourse on this reactor: in discussing its potential decommissioning, many Twitter users referred to it as Monju-kun, discussing the reactor as if it actually were the little boy of the character. They credited him for making them aware of the Monju controversy. As Monju-kun remained inactive in the face of decommissioning news, fans became increasingly mystified by his silence; they tweeted

that they missed his wry, friendly commentary. They were also concerned for the creator's well-being; as one might with an ill or lost friend, they tweeted to other antinuclear avatars—Pluto-kun and the Zeronomics bear—to ask after him. They showed their affection for him by posting their personal memories of him, such as their own photos of Monju-kun badges or Monju-kun in stuffed costume, or imitating his characteristic *desu-dayo* speech pattern. When Monju's decommission was confirmed, fans again poured out their affection, posting pictures of him with the caption, "Good-bye Monju-kun," sometimes with a wistful comment about the character's disappearance: "He must be happy that he can retire" (@mem\_no\_koe, December 21, 2016). Like a lost lover in an *enka* lyric, Monju-kun was gone, but the feelings of his fans lingered.

Through the trope of children's culture, Monju-kun's funny, biting, and often-times absurd manner attracted people to his Twitter feed and books, bringing attention to the issue of Monju, which had become obscure and forgotten at the time of 3/11. He engaged them not only intellectually but also affectively, inviting them to learn, think, discuss, and become passionate about the future of nuclear energy.

## NOTES

1. My research on Monju-kun is part of a larger project involving five years of ethnographic work. While M.C. and I had additional correspondence, all M.C. quotes in this article are taken from our interview of October 15, 2013.

2. Monju-kun, 2012, "Monju-kun intabyū: Genpatsu zero uttae, Tōkyō no demo ni shutsubotsu," interview by *Shimbun Akahata*, May 14, [www.jcp.or.jp/akahata/aik12/2012-05-14/2012051414\\_01\\_1.html](http://www.jcp.or.jp/akahata/aik12/2012-05-14/2012051414_01_1.html).

3. Ghibli asked for its products to be removed from the facility after receiving customer complaints that its characters should not be tied to nuclear power.

4. See Manabe 2015, chapter 3, for stories of musicians and activists who have suffered after expressing antinuclear opinions.

5. "Otsuha CM, Denko no denki nikki: 'Enerugii jikyū ritsu' hen," YouTube video, 0:31, from television commercials in the Kantō area, posted by "fitone10001" on December 24, 2009, <http://youtu.be/wOTuafkP-RY>.

6. "Japanese Nuclear Propaganda Cartoon," YouTube video, 10:54, from 1993 *Dōnen* (JAEA) public relations film, uploaded by "WHENDASHTF1," August 28, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOFg8oWMHRM>.

7. A photo of the Manjusri bodhisattva can be seen here: <http://bit.ly/2gxNI3U>. A photo of the Monju FBR can be seen here: <http://bit.ly/2vRLTkh>.

8. Nishimura's reasoning was as follows: while her husband was said to have leaped from a hotel room, the X-rays showed no sign of skull or neck fracture, the deep body temperature did not match the reported time of death, the hotel room held no signature of registration, the police only took one photo of the scene, and parts of the suicide note, which was on official company stationery, were not in her husband's handwriting. She published an exposé in the magazine *Shinchō* 45, to which the company never responded (Nishimura 2005; Nishimura Toshiko, 2013, "Homicide by JPN Nuclear Village!?" interview by Mari Takenouchi, April 14, [http://takenouchimari.blogspot.com/2013/04/blog-post\\_1741.html](http://takenouchimari.blogspot.com/2013/04/blog-post_1741.html)).

9. The section manager in charge of overseeing this repair was found dead in the woods around Tsuruga in February 2011, as the repair was being attempted. The death was ruled a suicide.

10. This story is the version given in the first episode of the 1963 television anime. In that version, Tobio is riding on “the safest highway in the world,” where “all you have to do is press a button, and the road does everything for you,” when a car appears from around a corner; the incident warns against putting too much faith in technology.

11. Monju-kun, 2012, “Monju-kun intabyū: Genpatsu zero uttae, Tōkyō no demo ni shut-subotsu,” interview by Shimbun Akahata, May 14, [http://www.jcp.or.jp/akahata/aik12/2012-05-14/2012051414\\_01\\_1.html](http://www.jcp.or.jp/akahata/aik12/2012-05-14/2012051414_01_1.html).

12. Nakamura Mariko, 2012, “Monju-kun, yuruuku wakariyasuku: Genpatsu hon ga wadai ni,” *Asahi Shimbun*, April 2, afternoon edition.

13. “2012.07.16 Sayonara genpatsu 10 man nin shūkai NNMH demo (10/11) Monju-kun,” YouTube video, 2:31, from Sayonara genpatsu demonstration, uploaded by “ken23qu,” July 16, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4weuQaXSxIk>.

14. “Monju-kun wairudoda ze ~e! Tsuda Daisuke Sayonara Genpatsu 10 man-nin shūkai,” YouTube video, 6:14, Monju-kun’s skit from Sayonara genpatsu demonstration, uploaded by “fitop1go,” July 16, 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK9OM4RZFSU>.

15. Suishinger’s self-introductory video, designed as a parody of an opening sequence to a superhero television series, can be seen on Okome Takeru no Ichiza’s website, [www.okometakeru.com](http://www.okometakeru.com) and at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8P2iQyyArwo>

16. The skit can be seen at “Tsuda Daisuke, Monju-kun, Okome Takeru no Ichiza @ Fuji Rock Festival ‘13, New Power Gear Stage/Gypsy Avalon,” uploaded by Sakai Satoru, July 30, 2013, 28:48, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RE8MVuVF7rA>.

17. “Monju-kun ondo,” available at Project Fukushima, April 29, 2012, [www.pj-fukushima.jp/download/diy\\_list\\_details026.php](http://www.pj-fukushima.jp/download/diy_list_details026.php); SoundCloud, April 29, 2012, <https://soundcloud.com/monjukun/monjukun-ondo-diy>; YouTube, with English subtitles, from a July 2012 performance at Fuji Rock, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP0iMtE6Q4c>.

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