Changing the World the Jawaiian Way :
Reggae, Pacific Islands Music,
and Social Agency amongst Japanese Fans

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"Believe it my way" are some words to live by
No matter how you feelin' even if you wanna cry
You gotta do what you do, stayin' true to your crew
Givin' it soul on the role but always keepin' it new
With your own style, own existence, own reality
Bring complexity and love with creativity
Days are something special be your own vessel
Just take what's inside and give it a wrestle. . .
What you are inside so you know who you are
Livin' it up with no doubt ready for any scar
So that's it go make a hit go out, benefit
From the words that we spit and never, never,
ever quit.

Def Tech, My Way, 2005

Def Tech's song "My Way" is one of many of the band's popular odes to living out a life rich in emotional and interpersonal honestly and integrity－improving and appreciating the quality and meaning of human relationships, and pursuing sustainability across all areas of existence amid tough challenges along the way. The song embodies many of Def Tech's key ideological messages－being oneself ; expressing one's feelings ; communicating with loved ones ; reflecting and acting on one's principles, to name but a few.

Since their debut in 2005, Def Tech's music has infiltrated the main stream, and as of early 2007, it is not at all unusual to hear Def Tech songs on the radio, in supermarkets, or in any other public place where mainstream music is piped in to improve the mood of people otherwise occupied with the humdrum activities of daily life. For supermarket managers, radio DJs, and the like, Def Tech's music is a apt choice as "feel good" music－it has a wide appeal to a large multi-generational audience. However, for those fans who attend Def Tech concerts, who purchase the music and who follow news related to the two key Tokyo-based band members, Shen and Micro, the music has a value beyond that of just improving one's mood.

In this paper I will be exploring the youth cultural creation of, and participation in, what has become known as the Jawaiian music scene. I shall be observing how this mix of Reggae and Surfing sound and ideology, ("Jawaiian" is a mix of "Jamaica", "Hawaii" and "Japan"), creates shared social and generational spaces for youth to interact within. I

will then turn to examine how these social spaces are used to facilitate the sharing of like-experiences, values and identities, and how, through this process, Jawaiian fans find a vital sense of validity, self-representation, and, in tandem with the ideology that the music espouses, a sense of their own social agency in Japanese society.

More broadly, towards the end of the paper, I would like to suggest that understanding youth as involved in such ideologically-driven spaces aids in understanding three contemporary movements related to youth, social agency and change. The first of these can be seen as a growing sense of confidence in the validity of generationally contextual values and identities as against those attributed to the world of adults (parents). The second movement relates to the emergence of a highly articulate and intra-culturally formed cosmopolitanism, or cultural relativity, which helps both to form and represent the worldview of many Def Tech fans. The last thread is concerned with highlighting the need for social research to find new techniques to recognize social change－to see that through their intergenerational relationships and their occupation of ideological space, these youth can be seen to be agents of social change in quite different ways from how youth and social change have been connected in previous generations and eras.

Before turning to consider these discursive topics, however, I would like to offer a background and description of Jawaiian music, presenting examples from various stages of two ongoing ethnographic research projects. The first of these is based on participant observation and interviews amongst the Japanese Reggae community gatherings in Tamagawa, and the second consists of interviews and participant observation with Def Tech fans at the band's live concerts.

The Japanese Reggae Scene

In order to begin to understand the Def Tech-led "Jawaiian" scene, it is first necessary to look at the Japanese Reggae scene as providing source material for Def Tech's ideological and musical interpretations and principles. The contemporary Japanese Reggae scene is relatively diverse and I will only be focusing here on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with the "middle" fan base. The middle fan base is perhaps the most representative of the various layers of this community, representing the majority of the regae fan base and age cohort (a large cluster of 30–40 year olds who take the music and ideological messages seriously and transmit them to their children). This "middle fan" base occupies a space between the Reggae artists themselves (who produce the music and largely broker the import of ideology/language from Jamaica), and a "bottom" layer of younger people who come to the scene principally attracted by its aesthetic properties (fashion etc.) rather than the Reggae ideology.

This middle fan base exists nationwide and fans will congregate in the summer months at outdoor festivals and events. Kyushu, Okinawa and Tokyo are the most densely concentrated regions in terms of Reggae events, although trouble at the Tokyo 'sunset' festival in 2005 has suspended the largest gathering in Japan for the foreseeable future. However, although very large, highly organized, gatherings are still regular and wide-spread, the core middle fan base is perhaps best observed (and approached for interviews) at the informal (and free) outdoor 'sessions'－events which attract big name celebrities and amateurs who perform together in an 'open mic' en-

vironment. The most attended of these in the Kanto region is the Tamagawa outdoor event, located next to the river on the border of the city of Kawasaki, and it is here that I have been conducting interviews with artists and fans, as well as participating, alongside the audience, in the various stages of the event.

The Tamagawa event brings together an almost exclusively middle fan base of people ranging in age from 27–45. Having said this, one might be surprised to learn (given the reputation that Reggae communities have, particularly in other parts of the world, for drug use and violence) that there are a great many infant children who attend the event, brought along by their middle-fan base parents. Indeed, as the music gets off to a start in the early afternoon, the event could appear to the passing observer as a mix between a huge outdoor extended family barbeque, and a bohemian and potentially out-of-control festival of the Woodstock variety.

From the early afternoon, the music is a selection of recorded pieces carefully arranged by DJs (selectors), played through a massive PA system. Groups of fans find their own space on the large, open grass area. Some are very well prepared with folding tables and chairs, draft beer making machines, and Reggae-styled rugs and blankets to hang around their temporary territories. Others are merely content which blue plastic sheets to sit on. The children run around happily, visiting other family groups and playing with other children. They are encouraged by their parents and other groups to be aware of the music that is washing over the crowd. They are also encouraged to dance.

The various groups at the event talk about a great many things as the afternoon wears on into evening. Their young children are often a subject—

Two members of the middle fan base, Tamagawa Event (early afternoon)

the degree to which they appreciate, and are able to dance to, Reggae music lends their parents some kudos particularly among childless fans. Their jobs, too, are a common topic ; and here I become aware of how many social-service and care workers make up the fan base, as do other non-company (non-salaryman) occupations (artists, craftsman, electricians, teachers etc). Often related to conversations on occupation, topics connected to a sense of Japan as a mindless consumer group unable to understand the impact of their consumer choices, are also prevalent. Middle fans would often point out that their perspective or choices were different from 'the masses'.

One conversation I had with a carpenter followed such a line by heavily criticizing the average Japanese house buyer as ill-informed, unable and unwilling to do any research into the economic or environmental consequences of hiring huge house-builder companies to build their 'crappy' paper dwellings. Why didn't people understand, for instance, that local timber, having been subject to same climatic conditions as the area in which one was trying to build would be far superior to any cheaply sourced materials that a company would provide? Why were people so lazy, not understanding that hiring a large com-

pany rather than handpicking professionals would *obviously* result in substandard materials and higher costs for lower overall quality? This was typical of the Japanese consumer, a type blinded by the convenience of their lifestyle and lazy-thinking.

In a similar vein, conversations on the general pace of life in mainstream Japanese life, as opposed to within the Reggae community, were prolific. As my main informant, Kei, articulated to me,

"Japan lives in a high speed, rat-race mentality. Consuming all the time, not giving themselves a chance to stop and think. Not paying attention to the really important things in life－relationships, the environment, just being oneself, getting in touch with who you are."

For informants who were parents, such as Kei, such comments were often coupled with an explanation of why they thought it important to bring their children with them.

"I want my son to be aware that there are alternative ways to experience the world－that there are ways of thinking that are not dependent on a kind of cut-throat mentality of money, power and influence. Reggae provides a sort of base of mutual human understanding which goes against this shit. We can share this ideology here. We can share our values here. And we can provide a space for our children to pick up the importance of what we have learned, what we believe."

This idea that the world of Reggae is one defined against a mainstream society heading towards unsustainable reality was common. Reggae was seen to provide social space to reflect and act upon the issues, to instill change through shared ideology and its transmission to the next generation.

If the afternoon stages of the gathering were

Kei, with his son, one of many children at the Tamagawa Event, (early afternoon)

about 'improvising' around some of the landmarks of this community, and bonding and confirming relationships with others through such improvisation, (Machin and Carrithers, 1996), as the day turned to evening and night, the event entered a different phase. It was around 7 pm that the open-mic phase of the proceedings began.

Next to a make-shift tent which held the PA equipment, a small wooden stage allowed a succession of well-known and amateur performers to improvise sets surrounded by supportive, dancing, Reggae fans. A succession of artists performed sets that were characterized by rapping-preacher style monologues which were peppered with Jamaican phrases and intonations. Commonly, each artist would make reference to the degree to which Reggae had changed their perception of the world. And it was not unusual to shout out to the audience, in tones and exchanges more reminiscent of a gospel service than a Reggae gathering, questions and phrases such as, "How many of you out there have had your lives changed by Reggae?!", or "Shout out loud if Reggae has changed your life!". Responses to such calls to ideology were consistently intensely enthusiastic, adding to the impression that one was in attendance at a re-

Free Improvisation and audience participation, Tamagawa Event, (evening)

ligious congregation, rather than an outdoor music event.

Alongside this celebration of the transformative values and identities seen as particular to the Reggae community and ideology, this 'free improvisation' contained a good many themes that were common to all the artists. These themes, although overlapping and random in their presentation within and across each artist's set, can, I suggest, be organized into three main ideological categories, which I shall now briefly outline.

1. Importance of honest and full self-expression

Perhaps one of the most prevalent themes of all in the free-improvisation sets is the notion that individuals must strive for clear, honest and direct self expression. Such expression should reflect one's true feelings and must be engaged in as often as possible. Phrases such as "be yourself", "be true to yourself", "open up your heart", "express yourself", "express your feelings", "express yourself directly", "make your feelings known", "be true to your feelings", and other like-phrases, are peppered throughout the artists' monologues, and encourage the participants to reflect on this theme. Underlying this notion of the importance of honest and full self-expression, is the idea that mainstream Japanese society does not engage in such free, direct and straightforward expression, and therefore this quality becomes assigned to the Reggae community－one of its portfolio of values dealing with the sustainability and maintenance of human relationships.

2. Individual agency in changing society

I have already mentioned how some informants attempt to imbue the next generation with Reggae ideology, and this in itself can be seen to represent an established form of social agency (Bertaux & Thompson 1993). There is, however, a more focused and individually configured theme of agency evident in the free-improvisation performances. This theme relates to encouraging the belief in the individual's ability to have an influence on change in Japanese society. This is to say that the Reggae world values of emotional and environmental sustainability, peace, self-expression, etc., are ones that are believed to hold change-inducing properties. And through the performances, the fans are encouraged to act on the beliefs that tie them to the community. Here again, some of the phraseology within monologues reflects the thematic ; examples range from the direct, "go out and change the world", to, "act on your principles", "make society a better place", "pass on peace", and "protect this world from damage".

3. The acknowledgement of social and cultural diversity as a world outlook

This last theme is harder to characterize and describe as it appears more in what this community *lacks* rather than what it directly states or deliberately acts to symbolize. However, simply put, the

Reggae community is involved with what might be called a celebration of local and global social and cultural diversity. Such an impression is formed through a variety of observations, 'visible' of which is the status ascribed to people on the margins, or periphery, of mainstream regional, racial, or historical narratives. As such, Okinawans and people from Hokkaido are given elevated status on the local level[1]. Likewise, and perhaps obviously, Jamaicans and 'unconventional' looking foreigners, (Asian, black or white with dreadlocks, for example), are given disproportional respect and attention. In its trumpeting of a ideology derived from a country in relative cultural and geographic isolation from the centers of "Western" or "Eastern" culture, the Reggae community thus places itself outside the realm of dominant world narratives and understandings and worldviews (see White, 2006 : 2). This is largely because it perceives mainstream interpretations of diversity to be inadequate and even unjust, and thus deliberately sets out to reconfigure the local and global world-map (see also Gerow, 2002). 'Invisible' evidence for this worldview comes in the form of a obvious lack of dialogue on the specifics of "the Japanese", or of "foreigners" as a general category ; the lack of any cultural or racial essentialisms in conversations which might otherwise include them ; and an absence of referential positioning in a world ranked according to nation, culture, economy, or race (see Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993 for traditional ranked models).

Def Tech

If the world of Japanese Reggae can be seen to embody the three key ideological principles I have outlined above, (expression, agency, diversity), in a community perceived by its fans to operate outside the realm of mass society, then Def Tech can perhaps most powerfully be seen to be the popularizers and marketers of these principles to a mainstream Japanese society. Micro, a Tokyoite and one half of the Micro-Shen duo that is the Def Tech 'phenomena', "fell in love with Bob Marley at three years old and had mastered Michael Jackson's moonwalk by the age of five"[2]. The blend of influences speaks to his role now－a facilitator and broker of Reggae ideology to a mainstream, predominantly youth, popular music market.

Since their debut in 2005, Shen and Micro have captured the imagination of hundreds of thousands of young people around the country, predominately, I suggest, by organizing and packaging the Reggae sound and ideology in a more user-friendly, "feel good" popular "Hawaiian"－"Jawaiian"－sound (Shen is a Hawaiian himself and provides what he terms as a Pacific Island Music sound to the Reggae phraseology). In the transition, the music and message are largely stripped of any sign of any 'unseemly' Rastafarian roots such as drug or sexual references (although much else is retained including Reggae/Jamaican syntax and principles of sustainability and renewal). Thus, the Reggae ideology is given a veneer of Surf rather than Spliff,[3] which aids in the ability for a much larger proportion of people to join forces with its message.

Def Tech also catches another wave, to paraphrase the name of their most recent album[4]. If the middle fans of Japanese Reggae community broadly occupy a generation in their 30s, Def Tech fans represent these values writ young, the majority of followers occupying a 16–26 year old fan base. Amidst a thirties generation anxious to educate their children in the discourse of environmental and social sustain-

Micro and Shen are Def Tech

ability, Def Tech reaches forward in time to represent and encourage a cohort of people in their teens and twenties who are already well aware of the problems, and who are taking it upon themselves to form friendship networks which validate their generationally formed social ideals, values, worldviews and identities, in turn helping them to consolidate and find a sense of social agency, as I will come to detail.

In contrast to the variety of different events on offer for Reggae fans around the country, Def Tech fans are only able to attend rather irregular concerts that the band performs on recently embarked upon nationwide tours. These live shows attract the younger, and more dedicated, section of an already youthful fan base. They are organized by professional event companies in large concert halls, or similar venues, and attract numbers in the thousands, typical, perhaps of most popular music concerts. The set I observed, (at Kyoto Kaikan in May of 2006), was impressive in the enthusiasm of the band and the

audience, the latter falling very much under the spell of Micro's preacher-like improvisations between songs. In fact, the only advantage for a fan to pay to attend a concert over purchasing an album, (beyond of course seeing the stars in the flesh and experiencing the live atmosphere), is that Micro's dynamism is even more contagious on stage, as he adds to the messages in the music with small one-way conversations with the fans. As an example, in a preempt to the popular track, *Consolidation Song, 2005*－a tune largely about a search for meaning in life and relationships and an acknowledgement of a shared humanity, Micro 'preaches' the following (no music in the background, and using a spoken voice with rises throughout towards an impassioned crescendo which the music then meets) :

> "We all feel sad sometimes. We all feel happy sometimes. We all feel close to those we love. We need to be able to take our feelings and communicate them. To tell those who we love that we love them. To tell those that we are angry with that we want to make amends. If we can't do this, then what is the point of it all? Be yourself. And be with others. Express yourself, and find in others their expression. Let's do this together! Let's do this together!"

Through such interchanges with the audience, the messages and ideology in the music are given a special immediacy. It is an immediacy and relevance that feeds off the solidarity of the group, the Def Tech presence, and the carefully constructed and adapted message. It is clear through the performance that Micro is charged with the direction of The Message, and that his enthusiasm for transmitting such ideology lies in an assumption that he can help to

empower youth with a sense of social agency－with some of the tools necessary to improve the quality of their emotional and interpersonal experiences and relationships. In the remainder of this paper I will follow three areas that Def Tech targets－areas strongly related to the principles derived from Reggae ideology－asking how and to what extent Def Tech's efforts can be seen to have an impact on inducing change in Japanese social systems and/or identities－in empowering youth with a sense of their own agency.

(1) Agency within Familial and Intergenerational relationships

The first area I shall examine is the realm of youth relationships with their parents－the family dynamics that characterize many of the young Def Tech fans' home existence. For a large proportion of Def Tech fans, particularly those still residing at home, there is a frustration that what they see as important is often not recognized nor valued by their elders. For instance, many fans I spoke to said they felt that their desire to have warmer more intimate relationships where feelings are shared and all topics openly discussed is not shared. Here is Mayumi,

I feel that we (young people) occupy a different world from our parents. I think we have lots more opportunities to be open and honest about our feelings than our parents' had. We are better at communicating with each other than to them (parents). I suppose we need more confidence to break away from the way we were brought up, to try and bring our parents into our world more. Whatever, the music helps!

Def Tech fan, female, 22

Often, the way that informants feel is seen not to be given any special space for discussion or evaluation in home, and this results in feelings of isolation and loneliness－incidentally a state which is cited by countless newspaper and sociology articles as the cause of a variety of youth problems, from *hikkikomori* to general delinquency. For those in this position, Def Tech's music helps in encouraging these young people to find self-representation through the music－to recognize that they are not alone in their isolation.

We are brought into the world equal,
Subject to one time and one face,
Subject to one life and one death,
But some things begin to separate us,
Our environment, family, and the way we are brought up,
(*in English*) DNA pain complain insane in the vain brain. . .

Consolidation Song, 2005 (my translation)

Such direct references to the importance of family and upbringing, as well as a subtext that dysfunctional or uncommunicative family environments cause pain, are common in the music. Again, the picture of there being a whole different range of potential environments and family configurations－all of which have the potential to cause emotional pain and suffering－has an important therapeutic value for those who feel deeply isolated in their own family contexts.

Here, it is perhaps important to note that this youth search for self-representation as relief for the isolation caused by family relationships is not confined to music. As Kingston (2004) points out, art as

a whole is involved in the process of providing for the isolation of contemporary youth,

> "Nara Michi, the leading turn-of-the-century pop artist in Japan, explains that his often forlorn, cartoon-like figures resonate so powerfully among today's alienated youth because they see a reflection of their own pain and so feel less isolated." (pp. 272).

If Nara's cartoons help young people find a self-reflexive sense of community, Def Tech perhaps goes one step further in actively encouraging fans to find real interaction and peer-solidarity. Indeed, Def Tech seems explicitly to understand that bonding together in friendship groups clusters can help give strength to youth in this position－

> "Hold my hand, and you won't be scared, but I suppose I won't always be here, you'll have to do it without me sometimes."
> *My Way, 2005 (my translation)*

Def Tech song lyrics are littered with references to creating partnerships to overcome and tackle problems－to find common strengths and purpose. Therefore, as well as providing the artistic material within which young individuals can find themselves represented on an intergenerational stage, Def Tech also provides for the creation of intra-generational solidarity. As in the above short extract, however, the band is not overly romantic or optimistic. Peer-group solidarity is essential for initial empowerment, but ultimately one must use it as a vehicle for self-empowerment and individual action.

The efforts that some Def Tech fans go to in or-der to activate and empower their inter-generational relationships are having interesting results in a many cases. For approximately half of those fans whom I interviewed who mentioned that Def Tech's music has influenced their relationship with their parents, the parents themselves have been brought to the messages of the music.

> "My mum really likes Def Tech. She likes Shen the best. We often listen to the songs together in the car. Recently she has said she wants to go with me to a live concert－but I don't know about that－it might be embarrassing to have my mum there. I don't trust her dancing!"
> *Def Tech fan, female, 19*

In the world of familial, intergenerational relationships, Def Tech are aiding youth in finding spaces where they can see their isolation in the context of a society/generation-wide experiences. It seems clear that Def Tech are providing such space so that these young people can in turn find a sense of their own validity－a safe zone, if you will, which serves to consolidate and empower them through generational partnerships and actions. Ultimately, this, for a small but perhaps growing number of people, is having an influence on how actual family relationships are played out－how youth are making decisions and taking initiatives in the directing interactions and exchanges with their parents.

(2) Inter-Cultural and Intra-Cultural Cosmopolitanism

The second way I suggest Def Tech can be seen to be representing and imparting a sense of youth agency relates to the complex area of ordering intra-

and inter-cultural diversity. Firstly, the obvious deep friendship between Micro and Shen which is seen on stage and in their music videos is one example of the way that Def Tech expounds a model of healthy *inter*-cultural cosmopolitanism. The tall thin Hawaiian and short stocky Tokyoite are an odd pair, but by the way that they speak and interact with one another (in music videos and live concerts), work together in the production and performance of the music, and so obviously share a concern with the ideology and message of their work (put across in both English and Japanese in almost every song), we, the audience and listeners, are brought into the folds of this cross-cultural, inter-language and inter-racial partnership. In so doing, our vision of the kind of partnerships that succeed in Japanese society is expanded to include such inter-cultural pairings, and, as a result, Japanese society itself seems momentarily more dynamic and diverse. One does not need to identify with the Def Tech message itself in order to form this impression; it is one brought about merely by Def Tech's existence and mainstream successes[5].

Interestingly, amongst the fans themselves, this 'visible' and 'audible', (Shen accompanies Micro in perfectly fluent Japanese in many of the choruses), *inter*-cultural component is merely symbolic of a much more meaningful grass roots *intra*-cultural cosmopolitanism. This *intra-cultural* variety can be seen in the way Def Tech's message speaks directly to, for example, the transitions that young people are seeing in their inter-generational concepts of who and what Japanese society can and should contain. Likewise, the common worldviews (cultural and national narratives) that Japanese society gives access to are being overhauled, challenged, and, in most cases, completely replaced by youth subjectivities configured around cultural pluralism.

One of the common misconceptions that nationalistic and ethnocentric identities fuel themselves with is the notion that all members of the group are subject to the same kind of family systems, community structures and cultural and national experiences. Again Def Tech's message is very much at odds with this idea. The troubled and diverse family situations that characterize many fans' realities, (see previous section), may not be positive in themselves but they have an interesting and perhaps important side-effect when it comes to conceiving local diversity. Understanding that people are subject to whole range of different local systems and familial relationships, lends itself to an adaptable worldview which places social diversity at its centre. The acknowledgement of local diversity is clearly vital in promoting the "foreigners to ourselves" phenomena (Kristeva, from Morley 2000; see also White, 2006 : 1). A state of mind, or "degree of consciousness that goes beyond any one situation, an awareness that each moment is embedded with a range of cultural possibilities" (Amit-Talai et al., 1995; 231).

As one of many examples of how Def Tech encourages the linkage between local and global diversity, in the live concert I observed, Micro and Shen cleverly stage an argument towards the end of a song themed around the idea of the pointlessness of cultural/racial essentialisms. Feigning annoyance at Shen, Micro begins making comments about how foreigners can't understand things properly, how they are all individualistic and selfish and think they are superior. In response, Shen counterattacks saying that Micro is a short and bad tempered Japanese, typical in that he doesn't say what he feels until he loses his temper. The argument proceeds to the pain making

derogatory remarks about racial features (size of Shen's nose etc.) and at this point, I, as the only other white-skinned foreigner in the concert hall apart from Shen (that I could detect) began to feel a little uncomfortable. Just at this moment, the argument suddenly stops and the two singers face each other and begin to sing about how pointless such stereotypes and limited worldviews are when they are seen in the context of real human relationships.

It is a powerful performance, and the message hits home, not least because many of the acted-out essentialisms will be familiar to the young audience as views they have heard from their parents generation (see Nakano, 1995； Kato, 1992). Taking direct aim at a cultural nationalism associated with the fans parents' generation, as well as references to overcoming a Japanese inferiority complex (see last song extract of this paper)－a reference to a baby-boomer generation still existing in a worldview which ranks nations according to relative economic or historical power－Def Tech is concerned with the emancipation of youth from any narratives which seek to limit the range of access to imaginative communities.

Fans clearly take this onboard, and through their responses illustrate that the music is not necessarily providing them with newly configured worldviews, (for many fans the notion of cultural pluralism is a notion already deeply embedded in their generational experiences of the diverse locales－again see White, 2006：(1), Miller, 2006). Rather it is *voicing and representing* these youth worldviews on a large mainstream popular canvas.

I think the message in the music is about being honest and upfront and open-minded. There are all kinds of different personalities-of people-in the world but we all share in each other－in our relationships with each other. Being true to ourselves and to each other is what the music's message says to me.

Def Tech fan 23, male

The ability to integrate local experiences of social diversity (various family systems, relationships, personalities etc.) with the idea that the same patterns of diversity exist outside the realms of one's immediate face-to-face relationships (i.e. inter-culturally, or inter-nationally), is one that I see being at the forefront of youth agency in Japan and elsewhere. This is a worldview which puts culture below other factors such as personality, motive, attitude and identity in the organisation and categorisation of others. The view holds that social diversity permeates all realms of human existence and that to even attempt to essentialize it is to choose not to understand its potential in reducing conflict, in enriching interpersonal relationships, and reconfiguring local and global worldviews in order to promote a narrative of common country.

In this way we can see that just as the Reggae world emphasizes the periphery in attempting to do away with the notion that there exists a stable and monocultural centre, Def Tech challenges a set of internal and external ideas about what it is to be human, stripping the definitions of culture down to a notion of common community. As the track *Consolidation Song* states most clearly,

"It doesn't matter where you come from, let's go as one consolidation song. . ."

(3) Japanese Youth and Social Change.

So far, we have seen that Def Tech, and the values that it has imported from the Reggae community are being successful in representing the familial and intra-cultural worlds of their fans. In this last section, I am concerned with briefly pointing out more tangible areas where Def Tech is encouraging youth to be proactive agents of civil change－how they are imbuing youth with the energy to attempt to make concrete changes in the policies and participation of society. Convincing youth that they can make a difference to the civil workings of society is a challenge, and a popular view is that modern Japanese youth are particular in their passivity in this area (see Kotani, 2006).

I happen to think that the importance of introducing youth agency into familial relationships (section 1, above) and contributing to the construction of plural imaginative communities (previous section) are efforts just as vital as what is traditionally defined as "civil participation" (indeed, these areas could well be included in a re-worked definition of civil participation). However, I want to stress here that in their music and concerts Def Tech encourage their fans to think about and act upon changing specific Japanese policies.

> "Up until now women have been discriminated against. But things have been changing recently. And the time to change things forever has come!" *Power in Da, 2005*

Gender discrimination and gender-free policy is one area that Micro strongly encourages his fans to think about and act upon. It is an area that relates to one of the band's driving principles－a concern with encouraging youth to act against discrimination and bigotry whatever forms it may take. When I observed the live concert in May 2006, gender policy was the political issue taken up by Micro, but one has the sense that as the months and years pass, Def Tech will turn its agency-generating energy to the most problematic issue of the time. This ability to crossover between the familial, the imaginative, and the political realms earns Micro in particular great respect from fans.

> "I really admire Micro because I think he is really trying to change society-to motivate others to have a voice, to communicate with people and to get them to share the way that they feel with each other so that they can act on those feelings, and then help to change society themselves."
>
> *Def Tech fan 22, male*

In this, Def Tech represents the result of a long evolution of the relationship between social agency and popular music. This evolution can be seen to have started in the 60s and the 70s, in that the import of Jamaican Reggae (alongside other 'celebrations' of alternative societies and belief systems during this time) in that era in Japan and other countries often served as ideological (and psychologically experimental) fuel for youth uprisings. However, the vast majority of Def Tech fans do not see themselves as part of a "social movement" or "youth uprising", and commentators who see contemporary youth as passive will not necessarily be dissuaded from their outlook by Def Tech's successes and fan base. However, as I hope to gave illustrated, the social reality which Def Tech represents, and the social spaces that

its music provides for the consolidation of youth values and identities, play a vital role in engendering a broad sense of social agency－from the familial to imaginative to political realms of social life.

Conclusion

In identifying the degree to which new generations are setting out to alter the social systems and identities which surround them, we need to pay closer attention to the micro-level changes that these generations involve themselves (White & Mathews, 2006). In this paper I have broadly gestured to categories of change－(1) familial/intergenerational change in the nature and quality of relationships and emotional responses and articulations (2) changes with respect to conception of what kind of cultural/national identities and worldviews are appropriate in a climate of inter and intra-cultural diversity, and (3) changes related to civil participation and the modes of agency that we, as social scientists, have the potential to observe and recognize.

New and emerging generations can appear to be unfocused and unconcerned with social agency and action. Anthropological perspectives can help us to see how, under the surface, a variety of previously embedded systems and identities are under intense negotiation. In the evolution of the Reggae ideology to Def Tech's music, younger people have created for themselves spaces within which they can find support and consolidation, build networks and find a sense of place. Indeed, for many of these fans, the social spaces spawned by Jawaiian music scene have allowed them to reflect upon their position in the ebb and flow of Japanese societal change and flux. Such reflection has in turn empowered many to begin to act, albeit in small incremental steps, to bring about a society which better reflects their generation's experiences, subjectivities, identities and worldviews.

夢と現実の狭間で　冷静と情熱の間で
リミットある one time
人生を満たされない日々もなんなくと
こなせる自分にまずなりたいと
思った時からすぐに tight
Fight high と right proud
持ち続けてもでも震える今日
どんなにふけ年老いても
これだけは忘れないでいてよ
まずマジ"恥""劣等感"
"嫌悪感"人に対する嫉妬心
ハズすバシバシ　話し吐き出し
泣き出しそれで確かに
今日はめでたし
でも明日からまた新しい日が始まる

Between dreams and reality, reflection and
passion, there is a limit, one time
On days when your life seems unfulfilled,
When you feel you want to reach out,
Act tight, fight high and right and proud,
And though you may fight, it will be frightening
No matter how old you become
Just make sure you remember this－
That Shame, Feelings of Inferiority,
Hatred, Envy of others
Need to be let out, bashed out, talked out
Cry it all out and then tell someone,
Today was good
And a new day starts tomorrow

Def Tech, My Way, 2005

〔**Notes**〕

1 ）See Steele (1995) for a discussion on a similar movement celebrating the periphery in the early 20th century.

2 ）Information from short biography on the Def Tech website.

3 ）Having said this, I found very little actual marijuana usage amongst the middle fan base of the Reggae community. At the current stage of my ongoing ethnography, I would estimate the number of marijuana users amongst the Reggae community to be less than 10%, and this number would be made-up predominately of younger, lower-level fans.

4 ）"Catch the Wave" a song and album of the same name emphasizes the Pacific Island surfing culture influence.

5 ）Def Tech have won a prestigious NHK music award (2005), which places them firmly in the Japanese mainstream-indeed elevates them to 'Japanese cultural property' standing ; a position which gives them access to the attention of much older generations than their core fan base.

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