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Japan/Nuclear Power

Fukushima - an ongoing nuclear disaster

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“I have engaged in the activities of our Fukushima Network for Denuclearization for more than 20 years, but we are now confronted with the ongoing nuclear disaster”. On April 3, a public meeting of “Fukushima Nuke disaster: an urgent report from Iwaki City” was held in Tokyo. The meeting was sponsored by Citizens’ Nuclear Information Center [CNIC: <http://www.cnic.jp>], and the 300-seat assembly hall was full in spite of adverse conditions of a short-notice meeting at Sunday evening.

Kazuyoshi Sato, a member of Iwaki city assembly, gave his eye-witness report to the meeting, personally one of his aunts being missing due to the tsunami. He came to Tokyo as a representative of the Fukushima Network for Denuclearization in order to file the denuclearizing demands with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry the next day. The following is excerpts from his April-3 speech:

I have engaged in the activities of our Fukushima Network for Denuclearization for more than 20 years, but we are now confronted with the ongoing nuclear disaster. We are obliged to be conscious of our weakness, and we should apologize in this regard.

The radiation dose of Iwaki City is 1.2-1.3 micro Sv at the moment, 100-times higher than that of Tokyo. Coastal areas of the city are in horrible situation as though they might have been struck at ferociously by air bombers. Iwaki City has a population of 340,000, and one third of the population is presumed to have evacuated voluntarily. In my neighborhood, there are not many houses with electric light on at night. The mass media ran away from the city all together after the explosions and radiation leakage at the Fukushima nuclear plant. The normal workings of city lives were paralyzed. Water was cut off over the whole city, and the water supply started on March 18. Autonomous ability of local communities are to be tested under such a state of emergency, and it has become clear that those local communities which have had their own local activities on a day-to-day basis have the capability to confront the crisis situation.

There are 20,000 people at the evacuation sites, and relief goods do not reach those sites. The official countermeasures operations have not corresponded to the actual local realities. There is no privacy at the evacuation facilities, and there are quarrels among the evacuees necessarily. Residents of my birthplace Naraba-cho, where the Fukushima No. 2 nuclear plant is located, are worried seriously, thinking that they might never be able to return to their hometowns. At the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant, there are various systemic damages and disorders, and its cooling mechanism has not been restored right now: the state of things will be drawn out. Radiation dose is high, and stresses are building up among the population.

A new term of school is to start on April 7, and my city-assembly group has been proposing a two-month suspension of classes. Our group has demanded the municipal board of education to introduce radiation meters into all the schools, too. However, the board of education has refused our proposal of two-month suspension, and its position on the radiation meters is to leave the matter to the discretion of each schoolmaster/mistress or principal. Usually the board of education decides on anything by itself and does not allow any discretion of each school. However, our board of education is utterly irresponsible for this kind of matters.

Since March 11, we have been confronted with a totally new state of affairs: we are forced to be faced with the radiation exposure under de facto decommissioning of nuclear reactors. Never being able to get free from this reality, including the marine contamination, we are obliged to subsist under the despair.

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Futaba-cho, where the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant exists, was the location of an army airfield during the World War II. After the war, the Tsutsumi family of the Seibu capital group bought up the land, and the lot was sold as the nuke site. Accordingly, we are now realizing the real seriousness of popular sacrifices that “national policies” might bring about. The electricity that is generated at the Fukushima nuclear plants is transmitted to the greater metropolitan area, and it is not consumed at all in Fukushima prefecture. The greater metropolitan population should not count on Fukushima prefecture for the electricity any more, and the generating and consuming system of electric power must be decentralized and localized from now on. TEPCO has filed its plan to build the 7th and 8th nuclear reactors in Fukushima prefecture with the government at the present point of time. What a horrible entity TEPCO is!

It is really necessary to have a 100,000-strong demonstration, surrounding the official residence of the prime minister, under the banner of 'Decommission all the 10 reactors of the Fukushima No. 1 and 2 nuclear power plants!' and 'Do away all the nuclear power plants!' Now is the time to move ahead for the definite and total denuclearization; if not, when will it be possible for us to do so?

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