

The Hope of Fukushima (4 years later)

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Government promises

Can kill.

Each plan is delayed several times, then finally canceled.

Another broken promise.

The reality is

There will be no pre-accident Fukushima.

Our best techniques cannot even halt

Fukushima's current radioactive output.

Daily stopgap work continues

Just to prevent more accidents.

Our survival still depends daily on a 7000-person workforce.

Time does not

Heal all wounds.

The then prime minister

Ordered the evacuation with these words of hope:

“Before a year passes, we will right this calamity.”

“We shall conduct decontamination until ambient radiation levels are again at 1 millisievert per year.”

(The next prime minister also uttered this empty “return to normal” sentence)

Four years later, we are not even close.

Even worse, with the declaration that,

“There are no adverse health effects up to 20 millisieverts per year” (note 1),

The government began urging repatriation.

It discontinued temporary housing and stopped monthly reparations payments,

Forcing everyone to go home.

But home had utterly changed. The color was completely gone.

The earth that before 3/11

Had lain in school grounds, farm fields,

And even returnee homes' gardens,

Was now filling mountains of huge black decontamination bags,

Having become highly radioactive (more than 8000 bq/kg).

Although only homes and roads were treated,

Vast quantities of polluted soil were excavated.

When three full years had passed,

86 cases of thyroid cancer developed from those then 18 and under.

(However, a special doctor's group, now the government's medical mouthpiece, asserted that these 86 cases developed too early to be related to the nuclear accident, only citing that no such cases at the same point in time developed after the Chernobyl accident.)

Despite all this, the victims decided to return. They must have deemed it safe
To resume their lives there again.

The government knew that anything approaching

A complete decontamination was impossible,

So their cleanup attempt was halfhearted.

The victims knew this pretense already, but they had to join

With their government and proclaim, "Rebuild!"

The road that had connected the area with the newly chosen Olympic city of Tokyo

Will be reopened, even though it cuts into

The heart of the radioactive zone, just two km from the accident site.

The train line, parallel to that road, will also be running again soon.

No one can but cheerfully say that they are symbols of "revival".



Radiation leaks unseen

Across national borders every day.

Even after four years, radioactive emissions have continued unabated into the land,
Sky and sea.

Expert opinions have begun coming in

From ethical scientists and nuclear plant engineers abroad. (Note 2)

"The aggregate radiation level has already surpassed that of Chernobyl, making it
the worst in history."

"With current technology, one cannot expect that the Japanese government can
fulfill its plan to decommission the Fukushima power plants in 30 to 40 years. The
current levels of radiation are just too high."

"The 15-meter-high tsunami generated by the magnitude 9 earthquake that
occurred off the coast of Fukushima delivered its impact with a velocity greater than
that of the speed of sound. There is no nuclear plant of this grade worldwide that can
withstand such force."

With the government's recent arbitrary decision that,

“Up to 20 millisieverts is safe,” (Note 3),
The people are now trapped in the contamination zone.
From now on, they will absorb radiation
From their food, the soil, even the air they breathe.
The radiation from each will be concentrated in their bodies, accumulating each day.
The damage will worsen with each passing year, with each generation,
And finally become manifest.

Everyone else is saying,
“We will not forget Fukushima.”
But the Fukushima victims say,
“Don’t leave us for dead.”

Note 1: After the Chernobyl accident, the USSR closed off all areas over 5 msv/year in perpetuity and ordered a complete and permanent evacuation of the area. The government pledged to compensate all victims with new homes, new jobs, pensions and medical benefits. Despite these measures, there was much health-related damage. In contrast, the Japanese government decided in one stroke to raise the safety standard to 20 msv/year. Then to add insult to injury, the government broke its promise to require repatriation only after all affected areas were decontaminated.

Note 2: quoted from the report “Crisis Without End”: The Medical and Ecological Consequences of the Fukushima Nuclear Catastrophe: From the Symposium at the New York Academy of Medicine, March 11-12, 2013

Note 3: The Japanese government continues arbitrarily to raise the permissible level of radioactive contamination. Along these lines, according to The USA’s Nuclear Information and Resource service (NIRS) and the Physicians for Social Research (PSR), which won the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize, the Japanese government’s “20 msv/year” equates approximately to having 1000 chest X-rays per year.

If the levels of permissible radiation had remained at 1 msv/year, as before the accident, Tokyo would now be in the hazard zone. Even with 10 msv/year, the area around the Fukushima prefectural capital would also be included. With the potential for vastly increased numbers of evacuees and the resulting chaos, the Japanese government updated its official rules to say, “up to 20 msv/year is safe.”

Note 4: At the same time, the Japanese government raised the allowable level of radiation for burnable radioactive debris to 8000 Becquerel per kilogram for ordinary garbage processing. Furthermore, for temporary incineration facilities inside Fukushima prefecture, that level

was raised from 8000 to 100,000 Becquerel per kilogram. By contrast, in the USA any debris above 5000 Becquerel requires removal to a special facility buried deep underground. If it were instead to be burned, the radiation would be diffused over a wide

area in the atmosphere.

Reference 1: At the end of February, 2015, England's Prince William paid a sympathy visit to Fukushima. Prime Minister Abe entertained him with Fukushima crop products, attempting to persuade him that Fukushima was safe.

Reference 2: The same year, in the first part of March, just before the 4th anniversary of 3/11, German chancellor Merkel also visited Japan. She stated, "Germany has learned from the Fukushima accident and has decided to eliminate nuclear power generation." At that time, Prime Minister Abe declared, "Germany and Japan are different. All nuclear reactors that are presently stopped will be restarted as soon as they are verified according to Japanese safety rules." There are also some within the ruling party who say that, for countries like Japan that have officially renounced nuclear weapons, nuclear power generation can be a useful way to provide a potential nuclear deterrent anyway. There is also a plan to replace old nuclear power plants with ones built on new designs.