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Citizens' Nuclear Information Center

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Looking Back Over a Year of TEPCO's Cover-up Defects



Picture above: On September 14, "Stop Resuming Operation of Crack Defected NPP" was held in Kashiwazaki City where there were 200 citizens attended

On August 29 last year, an announcement was made about the long-term cover-up regarding cracks in the reactor shroud. Over the following year, numerous horrifying facts have been revealed one after another.

The fragility of BWR technology

The first incident involved hiding cracks in reactor shroud. This was followed by the discovery that Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) had also found cracks in the cir-

culatation piping system, but had failed to report them. Then there was the cover-up of the results of the leak rate inspection test for

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the containment vessel. During this series of cover-ups, a so-called "defects standard" was approved despite the fact that there had been insufficient debate in the Diet. The "defects standard" allows nuclear reactors in which cracks have been found to continue to operate if they meet certain standards.

The first official announcement of cracks found in a reactor shroud was made for Fukushima II-3 on July 2001. After that, TEPCO ordered a full inspection of its reactors, but, TEPCO continued to report "no problems have been found" until they announced damage found in Kashiwazaki-Kariwa No.3 last September.

A pipe rupture in the recirculation system could possibly lead to a Loss of Coolant Accident (LOCA), so it is the most important component of the system. Previously, 25% of the pipe's welded line was required to be inspected every 10 years by Ultrasonic test (UT). After many defects were found, the inspection term was reduced to every 5 years, and the area of inspection was extended to 100% of the welded line. This represents an eight-fold increase in the number of tests. It was also found that some cracks which had been measured as 2 mm using the UT inspection were actually more than 10 mm depth. This suggested that there was a problem concerning the accuracy of the inspection method. The recirculation pipe was excluded from the subject of the "defect standard" and now if any signs of cracks are detected, relevant parts will be replaced. Under the former inspection standard, the depth of cracks up to a depth of one third of the pipe's material thickness is considered to be "no problems detected."

The inspection and replacement of the recirculation pipe is made in a small space inside the containment vessel, where inspection workers are constantly exposed to a large amount of radiation. There are only enough inspection workers in the plant makers such as Toshiba and Hitachi to comply with the former inspection standard. As a consequence, it is hardly possible to carry out a thorough inspection for

each plant. A large amount of radiation exposure is inevitable during the inspection and replacement of the recirculation pipes. While TEPCO claimed that the irradiated components had been cleaned before the operation, it was reported that a total of 0.3 person-Sv were recorded over 68 inspections and 0.7 person-Sv over the replacement of 6 parts of the recirculation pipe system at Kashiwazaki-Kariwa No.4 (1.2 person-Sv if the planning and preparatory procedures are also included). The highest rate for an individual worker was 8.6 mSv during the inspection process and 7.8 mSv during the parts replacement process, both of which exceeded the standard for workers' compensation for leukemia (i.e. 5 mSv). The cracks in both the reactor shroud and the recirculation pump were found in the SUS316L "improved crack-resistant stainless material", which was jointly developed by the electric power companies and the plant makers. Since the cause of crack is unknown, there is no way to take any preventive measures.

No Sign of Regret from the Government and Electric Power Companies

Concerning the maintenance of the reactor shroud, the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) adopted the "defect standard" approach and allowed the reactors to be restarted. It said, "the material used to constitute the whole system can withstand at least 5 years while it has cracks. Power companies should carefully monitor the cracks and continue operating." For the first time, NISA and the electric power companies stated that the "shroud is not an important component" to ease the anxiety of the public.

From the end of last March, TEPCO and NISA have held several local public meetings in Kashiwazaki-Kariwa. In the midst of all this it was revealed that TEPCO gave beer gift coupons (about 7,000 yen equivalent) to the Mayor and to local assembly members who are in favor of TEPCO to celebrate their election victory. In addition, the company has routinely

distributed seasonal gifts to local influential people. It says it intends to continue this custom. TEPCO says, "We apologize. We will try our best to regain your trust." However, this is only lip service. The company's characteristic manner of trampling on the public's moral sensibilities remains unchanged.

Has Local Government Changed?

The Governor of Fukushima Prefecture got to the crux of the matter when he said, "This is a serious accident which shakes to the foundations the public's trust in the safety of nuclear power. Of course the electric companies should be held responsible for what they did, but a great deal of the blame also lies with the government" and "The problem is in the government's bulldozer approach to implementing nuclear policy, regardless of the wishes of the local people." On the other hand, Niigata Prefecture, which has shown its trust in TEPCO for many years, feeling that it had been betrayed, requested TEPCO to stop operation and make a full investigation, but in the end, it gave in in the face of TEPCO's "power shortage" campaign. Nevertheless, thanks to the public support for our claim, the regional governments demanded that all welding lines of the recirculation pipes be inspected, and on September 9 TEPCO reluctantly announced that it would do so. The net result is that the Prefectural Administrations of both Fukushima and Niigata have grown more distrustful of TEPCO.

It will be worth watching how the attitudes of both Prefectures change when considering the future of the relationship between the central government and local municipalities. However, in the case of the councils of the local villages where the facilities are located, they have behaved as if they were company representatives announcing their approval to restart the reactors. In Fukushima the first speech at the reopening ceremony was made by the head of the local government, in Kashiwazaki Kariwa it was the Mayor. It would seem that they are

more interested in money than safety.

All Japan Council of Local Governments with Atomic Power Stations--an organization to help support local governments solve issues arising from the presence of nuclear power plants--is promoting a "Spent Nuclear Fuel Tax" scheme. Revenue from the fixed property value tax on nuclear power plants has been decreasing sharply. The Council maintains that the income from subsidies will not be enough to provide for the facilities they need, so they need a "Spent Nuclear Fuel Tax." The Federation of Electric Power Companies (FEPCO) and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) resisted, claiming that "electric power companies already contribute their fair share to the local areas, that they carry a heavier tax burden than other industries and that it will amount to double counting because the Prefectures already levy a 'Nuclear Fuel Tax' on nuclear fuel." But on August 1, influenced by the recent scandals, TEPCO agreed to pay the "Spent Nuclear Fuel Tax." Kashiwazaki City will tax the spent fuels stored at the reactor site from October and Sendai City in Kagoshima Prefecture will levy the tax from next April.

(Kazuyuki Takemoto*)

A Whistle-blower Made A Press Conference: Mr. Kei Sugaoka, a former GE engineer, who disclosed lax management of nuclear inspection by TEPCO and GE, revealed his name and appeared to the public in Fukushima Prefecture for the first time. In replying to the question, why he decided to whistle-blow long concealed secrets in nuclear industry, he explained "it's all about GE's insincere management attitude." He added, however, that he never expected that his appealing could result in the resignation of the former president of TEPCO as well as the shut down of all the nuclear plants in TEPCO's power supply region.

Mr. Kei Sugaoka is a third generation Japanese-American who had been working as an engineer at GE until 1998 when he was fired without being given sufficient reason. He was involved in the construction of Fukushima I-1 where he witnessed flaws that were kept secret by the company.

*Member of The Coalition Against the Kashiwazaki Nuclear Power Plant and a Board member of Citizens' Nuclear Information Center.

Japan's Nuclear Fuel Cycle Policy

The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) announced a decision entitled "Concerning the Basic Position on Japan's Use of Plutonium" on August 5, 2003. The Commission took the view that, "In order to avoid giving rise to concerns, either within Japan or overseas, in regard to our use of plutonium, it is important to establish understanding, both within and outside of Japan, by achieving greater transparency in our use of plutonium." Specifically:

1. A plan regarding the use of plutonium will be made public each year before the plutonium is separated. The plan should include the owner of the plutonium, the quantity owned and the intended use. The intended use should include the amount to be used, the place, the commencement time and an estimate of the duration of the use;
2. In cases where there are concerns that the use plan might be affected by the state of progress of the pluthermal program, or by Japan Nuclear Fuel Limited's (JNFL) Reprocessing Facility's operational status, etc, the electric power utilities and JNFL will investigate the steps that need to be taken and, where necessary, reconsider the use plan;
3. Similar steps will be taken in regard to the plutonium separated overseas and the plutonium held by Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute (JNC).

A new point in the "Basic Position" is that each year electric power companies will make public specific details of the quantity of plutonium held and the intended use thereof. Since this occurs every year, if plutonium use doesn't proceed, it will be necessary to reconsider and modify the plan. However this reconsideration won't apply to the nuclear fuel cycle policy itself. Operation of the Rokkasho Reprocessing Facility is assumed.

But in fact, because of the need to fix up the problems associated with the shoddy welding scandal, it has been announced that the Rokkasho Reprocessing Facility would not

begin operating until 2006, a delay of one year. Consequently, the question of electric power companies announcing their plans to use plutonium from the Rokkasho Reprocessing Facility is a bit premature.

And which power company would be in a position to make such an announcement anyway? Due to scandals involving Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO), that company's pluthermal plan is in disarray. Quality control data for fuel for Kansai Electric Power Company (KEPCO) was fabricated and last year that fuel was returned to Britain. According to recent reports KEPCO has entered into a contract with France's COGEMA to make MOX fuel. If they were to ever load this fuel it would presumably be around 2005. Other power companies have not made specific announcements about plans for pluthermal. This is the situation regarding plutonium reprocessed overseas. In the 1997 announcement (that by 2010 pluthermal would be operating in about 16 reactors it was assumed that plutonium that had been reprocessed overseas would be used. Since that announcement the pluthermal program hasn't progressed one iota, but there has been no reconsideration of the program whatsoever. At the end of this year an announcement will presumably be made from this position, because at least reprocessing is continuing at THORP.

Until now the suggestion has been that the destination of the plutonium extracted from the Rokkasho Reprocessing Facility would be the Oma Nuclear Reactor when it is established. This reactor was to have a full MOX core and it was intended that Rokkasho reprocessing plant's plutonium would be consumed there. When the Oma reactor plan was changed from an Advanced Thermal Reactor to an ABWR, one of the reasons given was that the ABWR's full MOX reactor core would consume more plutonium. But the Oma nuclear reactor is in trouble because of lack of progress with purchase of the land. Now they say they will slightly adjust the

planned site and forge ahead with construction. But there is no indication of when, if ever, it will start operating.

So even if the AEC says, for the sake of transparency, that plans for the use of plutonium must be made public before reprocessing begins, the current situation is that none of the electric power companies have any specific details that they can announce. One could say that, by requiring the electric power companies to provide details of their plutonium use plans, the AEC is in fact attempting to apply pressure on the companies to move ahead with the plutothermal program. But if the AEC does have this in mind the fact is that it is highly questionable whether this attempt is capable of moving the program forward either.

In conjunction with this a document entitled "Concerning the Nuclear Fuel Cycle" was released. It states: our country lacks resources, so nuclear energy is indispensable; if plutonium is used in fast breeder reactors, uranium can be used 100 times more effectively--plutonium is a purely nationally produced energy resource; the light water reactor fuel cycle is a proven technology used safely in several countries including France, England, Germany and Switzerland; by using the light water reactor fuel cycle, efficiency increases by around 50%.

Under certain conditions, plutothermal is cheaper than oil and coal. "Concerning the Nuclear Fuel Cycle" sums up the Atomic Energy Commission's position in regard to the nuclear fuel cycle policy.

As a result of the 1995 Monju accident, the 1999 JCO criticality accident, the scandals of 2002 in regard to inspections of TEPCO reactors, etc, confidence in nuclear energy has fallen dramatically. A major issue now is to recover that confidence. To that end, they intend to use "Concerning the Nuclear Fuel Cycle" as the basis for discussion for a direct dialogue with the public. However, "In order to turn [the nuclear fuel cycle policy] into a reality, during the course of the policy formation process we would like to adopt a flexible posture reflecting the ideas of a large number of citizens about what type of policy should be adopted".

Here a 3 stage development theory is unfolding, with the final aim being development of the

fast breeder reactor. The first stage was the light water reactor. This has been implemented. The second stage is the light water reactor cycle. The third stage is the fast breeder reactor cycle. They recognize that the prospects for the second and third stages are still unclear. Between the lines we can see their sense of despair that if they stop now, they won't get another chance to develop the fast breeder reactor. However, this line of thinking is in contradiction with the "Long Term Plan for the Development and Use of Nuclear Power (2000)" which refers to the fast breeder reactor as just "one strong option for the use of nuclear energy." They are returning to the former long term plan which had the fast breeder reactor as the goal in the development of nuclear energy. The difference is that where previously the light water reactor cycle was the "link" to the fast breeder reactor cycle, now "the light water reactor cycle" term is invented, but it is not a "link," it's one step. However, the substance is only a proposal based on data that they have compiled to suit their own purposes and is not very persuasive. Both plans are nothing more than the same old posture promoting the nuclear fuel cycle which has been repeated again and again until now.

Were they aware that the day that it was announced was the day that the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, 6 August? One can't tell from the document itself. Functional tests at the Rokkasho Reprocessing Facility using uranium are planned to begin around January, 2004. One of the major criticisms of this is that starting up the plant with no plan for the use of the plutonium will increase the plutonium surplus. The question is, is this really a good thing? Neither the electric power companies, who are the owners of the plutonium, nor the government have provided any reply to this question. It's fair to say that this decision was made because they have no other bright ideas and because they are unable to bite the bullet and change the policy.

(Hideyuki Ban, co-director)

Energy Policy Basic Law and the Basic Plan

Japan's first Energy Policy Basic Plan ("Basic Plan") was decided upon on October 7 by the Cabinet. This plan is devised in accordance with the Energy Policy Basic Law ("Basic Law"), which was promulgated and came into force in June last year.

The Energy Policy Basic law:

The purpose of the Basic Law is to show the future direction of national energy policy. In 2001, the Energy Policy Subcommittee of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) introduced legislation to the Diet. In June 2002, the bill was passed and put into force. In the past, the Atomic Energy Basic Law and the Environmental Basic Law were enacted in Japan, but no law, covering energy policy has existed so far.

Embedded in this law are the following three principles regarding energy supply and demand measures: "security of stable supply," "environmental compatibility," and "application of free market principles." The obligations of the state, public bodies and private businesses are laid down to promote the principles in an organized and planned way. Table 1 shows a summary of the Basic Law.

However, as we have already pointed out in the previous issue (see Sep/Oct 2001, No. 85) a variety of problems arose from the process of enacting this law. Even though the LDP did not make its intentions clear, it is apparent that the party intends to make nuclear energy the pillar of national energy policy in spite of strong anti-nuclear movements. Mr. Tokio Kano (LDP), who proposed this legislation explained at a Diet session, "In my view, I believe that only nuclear energy conforms to all three basic principles."

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that "application of free market principles" is

placed only at the third place. This goes against the world-wide trend of the liberalization of the energy sector. However, in spite of lobbying activity from citizens' groups and a signature campaign, the proposed bill was approved.

About the Energy Policy Basic Plan

The Basic Plan envisions the basis and direction of future energy policies in a qualitative manner with regard to the energy supply/demand for the next 10 years, based on the introduction of the Basic Law. The contents of the Basic Plan have been examined by the Planning Section held in the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) since this April. However, just like the other former examination panel, it is nothing more than a body to help the energy producers protect their own profits. The basic policies are almost entirely laid out by the government. The contents of the policies are only slightly adjusted in accordance with the comments from the committee members. As of the end of September, the proposed Basic plan has been submitted, but still many problems remain.

Regarding nuclear power the plan clearly states, "under the prerequisite of assuring safety, nuclear power should be placed as the primary source of electric power and should be promoted further." The proposed plan even extended to the public school's educational policy. For example, there is one provision which "encourages activities to help public understand the value of nuclear energy" where a strengthening of an advertisement campaign and the acquisition of knowledge in favor of nuclear energy at school would also be encouraged. Should nuclear energy be boldly advocated in public schools? According to the proposed plan, the "pluthermal" plan will be

promoted as a preposition of the nuclear fuel cycle.

Furthermore, in another clause of "the harmonization of retail electricity liberalization and nuclear power as well as the promotion of the nuclear fuel cycle" proposes the necessity to create an appropriate environment for the development of nuclear energy in a liberalized electricity structure. For example, when power demand is low, priority should be given to nuclear power. This is based on the "Rule of Power Supply Priority Order." Other measures include enforcing the Law on the Regional Preparedness Around Power Generation Facilities" to provide more support to nuclear power generation. Those measures would not lead to the "right" electric liberalization.

If nuclear power is protected in such a way, energy policy will become inflexible and energy consumption will be stimulated while degrading the environment.

In early October, the report was submitted to the Cabinet and after the cabinet decision, it will, then, be referred to the Diet. Furthermore, there will be a release of an "Energy White Paper" based on this plan. The Basic Law will be tied up with the "long-term energy demand and supply outlook," which serves as the actual energy supply and demand target.

Originally, the Basic Law should outline Japan's principal energy policy, including the

perspectives of Japan as a member of the international community. However, the proposed Basic Plan is nothing but a plan that is the resultant of different energy providers adjusting their interests and protecting their profits.

Among the three principles, only "energy security" has been the focus of attention. Japan, with its low energy self-sufficiency rate, imports resources from foreign countries by using the power of money and consumes a large amount of energy (the way in which it is used has many wasteful elements). The stance behind the Basic Plan--which emphasizes the current status quo--might be embarrassing for other countries. Japan should shift to a low energy consuming society.

(Tadahiro Katsuta)

List 1. Energy Policy Basic Law

Chapter	Main Points
1. Aim	To define principal policy regarding energy supply and demand by making clear the responsibility of central government as well as local municipalities. To promote long-term, comprehensive and well-planned energy supply and demand policy. To contribute to regional and global environmental conservation.
2. To Secure Stable Energy Supply	In the light of the unstable international state of affairs, the government plans to secure energy safety security by promoting diversification of energy supply sources, improving energy self-sufficiency. To implement necessary policy measures to maintain reliability and stability if it is difficult to replace with alternative source of energy or those that are difficult to store.
3. Adaptation to the Environment	To improve energy efficiency; to promote the transition to non-fossil fuel based energy use such as photovoltaics and wind power; to promote efficient use of fossil fuels; to realize energy supply and demand that is harmonized with climate change preventive measures and regional environmental protection and to help create a society that is harmonized with nature's cycle.
4. To Make Use of Market Principle	Economic structure reform regarding energy supply and demand should consider the policy aim of Chapter 2 while business entities can display autonomy and creativity so that energy demand-side profits can be secured.

Perspective from 4th Anniversary of the JCO Criticality Accident

Since the criticality accident of September 30th 1999, the inside of the conversion test building, the site of the accident, has been closed to the public. In September, four years after the accident, JCO opened the conversion test building to the mass media as well as to the investigative committee of the Atomic Energy Society of Japan (AESJ). However, other than this they haven't shown any signs of opening.

Just before that, in August, JCO submitted an application to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology for permission to dismantle and remove the inside of the conversion test building. They say that, as soon as permission is granted, all the machinery inside the conversion test building will be dismantled and stored on site as radioactive waste.

It is a fundamental principle that, for the purpose of elucidating the causes of the accident, the evidence must be preserved and made available to the public. The attitude of JCO, dismantling and removing the site so soon, when it has only been open to the public for such a limited time, will irreversibly eliminate the chance to verify the causes and preserve the lessons of the accident.

Since JCO announced in April that it would close down its business and remove the equipment inside the conversion test building, the JCO Criticality Accident Comprehensive Assessment Committee, a research project staffed by Citizen's Nuclear Information Center and Japan Congress Against A- and H- Bombs, has continued to criticize the decision to remove the equipment. They have also requested that the conversion test building be preserved and opened to the public, but they haven't received any reply from JCO. On September 5th Tokai Village also submitted a request that for the time being the removal of the equipment be halted. It further indicated that, without an "explanatory meeting for the

local residents," "opening of the facility to the local residents," and "consultation with the village," etc, removal of the equipment is unacceptable. Actually, however, the fact that this request came from Tokai Village and not the central government reveals that the safety culture that the Nuclear Safety Commission and others of their ilk keep reciting is just lip service and that what they really want is for this accident to fade into oblivion.

In future JCO will produce nothing. It will continue to exist only in order to sort out compensation for damages and the management of the radioactive waste. JCO's maintenance costs are around 800 million yen per year and are no small burden for its parent company Sumitomo Metal Mining. The company traces its origins back to the Edo era, having grown from a copper mining and refining business, but it is now regretting its diversification into nuclear energy etc and is indicating that it will concentrate on its core business.

The reason why the Sumitomo Group, a metal industry corporation, went into nuclear energy was because it believed in the fast breeder reactor paradigm, with its presumption of fast breeder reactor development. At one stage Sumitomo Atomic Energy Industries Limited, a sibling company of JCO, participated with Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC, currently JNC; Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute) in research into the reprocessing of fast breeder reactor spent fuel.

However, their predictions proved to be off target. Processing of uranium for the fast breeder reactor didn't become JCO's main line of work. Rather, the conversion test building became a small backwater burdened with all the stresses of the nuclear industry.

(Satoshi Fujino,CNIC)

Data: Japan's Separated Plutonium Inventory

FACILITY	Amount of Plutonium as of end of year(kg, total plutonium)									
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Reprocessing plant	326	836	753	602	538	537	528	582	842	806
stored as nitrate	238	710	597	384	385	384	375	365	539	545
stored as oxide	38	126	156	217	153	154	154	217	303	260
MOX fuel fabrication plant of which	3,269	3,018	3,146	3,543	3,649	3,596	3,491	3,413	3,294	3,344
stored as oxide	2,339	2,032	1,980	2,346	2,553	2,737	2,652	2,515	2,323	2,530
under processing	790	948	985	786	726	473	481	439	551	506
completed fuel	140	38	181	411	370	386	358	360	420	308
Reactor sites of which	1,089	498	823	887	819	832	1,298	1,290	1,546	1,256
Joyo	15	6	31	48	23	2	38	18	64	29
Monju	637	15	367	367	367	367	367	367	367	367
Fugen	12	53	0	43	0	34	0	0	0	0
LWR							465	465	670	415
Critical assemblies	425	425	425	429	429	429	428	440	444	445
Overseas reprocessors of which	6,197	8,720	11,378	15,090	19,083	24,398	27,596	32,070	32,379	33,251
BNFL	1,286	1,412	1,418	2,437	3,549	6,109	6,957	10,118	10,713	11,640
COGEMA	4,911	7,308	9,960	12,653	15,534	18,290	20,639	21,953	21,666	21,611
TOTAL	10,881	13,072	16,100	20,122	24,089	29,363	32,913	37,355	38,061	38,657

Data compiled by CNIC
Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

Plutonium stock data of 2002 was officially released on September 2. According to the data, 5.4 tons of plutonium is currently stored within the country and 33.3 tons outside of the country; in total, Japan owns 38.7 tons of plutonium. Although no value is shown regarding the amount of plutonium contained in spent fuels in the table, it has reached 97 tons.

Since MOX fuel--which had been due to return to the U.K. because of the falsification of its quality data--was shipped back to the U.K. from Takahama port, the total of 255kg was taken from the domestic stock (See the difference between 2001 and 2002 in "LWR Commercial" within "reactor sites of which").

In addition, about 340kg of plutonium was recovered from the reprocessing at the U.K. Given the fact that a reprocessing contract with France has expired, reduction in France's plutonium stock can be explained as "nuclear loss" (loss caused by a decay of plutonium isotope, Pu-241, into americium). This phenomenon can occur both in Japan's domestic plutonium stock, as well as in over sea's stock such as the one in the U.K. The amount of nuclear material missing from plutonium was not disclosed.

(Hideyuki Ban)

Anti-Nuke Who's Who**Kaori Kanda:**

A Storyteller

who continues to tell the story of Chernobyl accident

By Mamoru Fukae (Kyushu Denuclearization Network)

17 years have passed since the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, which sent shock waves around the world. While the tragedy of the accident is being eroded from people's memory bit by bit, one person keeps the memory alive by telling the story of Chernobyl: that is a storyteller, Kaori Kanda. Her sad tale about a fireman and his wife appeared in Suetlana Alexievitch's *Chernobyl's Prayer*, which was translated and published last year by Iwanami Shoten. The wife, Lusha (Ludmila), has to observe how her beloved husband becomes a "living reactor" and turns into a shadow of his former self. Hiding her pregnancy she nurses her husband devotedly. Listening to this sublime love story, the reality of Chernobyl draws in.

Born in Iwaki-city, Fukushima Prefecture, where many nuclear power stations are crowded together, she aimed at an acting career after graduating from High school and enrolled at an acting school in Tokyo. After leaving the school she started studying storytelling as one of the theatrical arts from Sanyo Kanda. She became associated with the Storyteller association and began her opening performance. It was 22 years ago. After finishing her training opening performance, she was promoted to the next rank *futatsume* in 1984. To celebrate her promotion, she went to Saipan, where she encountered the "war." American military tanks were left as they were in the coral reef; a pillbox was left in the jungle with a bullet hole. The Banzai Cliff, from which thousands of people, who couldn't bear to live anymore, jumped to their death. Standing there, she decided to take up "war" as her personal theme. She visited Okinawa, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki and read the cartoon Comic - *Barefoot Gen**, which she bought at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial



Museum. In August 1986 she announced a story of *Barefoot Gen* for which she received the Japan Variety Knowledge Award. After that she continued to develop her own, unique style by adding Jazz and monodrama elements. Her newest piece *Chernobyl's Prayer* also uses musical and light effects producing a three dimensional story, which reminds one of a monodrama.

In July she performed her *Chernobyl's Prayer--A Future Story* at ten places in Kyushu from her caravan. In the world of storytellers the term *Koza Hyappen* exists. It denotes the phenomenon of putting the same material on stage repeatedly until it becomes part of oneself. The performer and her audience, who have the same aim, make up the piece together. Ms. Kanda incorporated the responses from the Kyushu caravan tour and says that she managed to finish her newest work *Chernobyl's Prayer*.

This country, which is rattled by earthquakes, has 52 nuclear power stations. *Chernobyl's Prayer* is our prayer. If we remain silent, it will become irretrievable. "The only thing I can do is to tell the truth, to make people imagine. I want to become a device which awakes imaginative power in people," hopes Mrs. Kanda, who continues to tell her *Chernobyl's Prayer* today.

**Barefoot Gen* (Hadashi no Gen in the original Japanese) is an autobiographical story. It has drawn wide acclaim for its portrayal of an event as devastating as Hiroshima in the comic book form.

NEWS WATCH

Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant Operation Postponed for One Year

Japan Nuclear Fuel Limited (JNFL) announced on September 19 that it has postponed the scheduled plan to start the operation of Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant in Rokkasho village, Aomori Prefecture for another year from July 2005 to 2006. When the project was approved in 1989, it was scheduled to begin operation in December 1997, but the plan has been postponed three times already, and this is the fourth postponement.

The experimental operation involving the reprocessing of uranium was also postponed until January 2004. This had been scheduled to be conducted prior to the operation. Accordingly, the trial operation using spent fuel was delayed until February 2005. As reported in NIT No. 95, as many as 291 poorly welded points were found in the spent-fuel storage pool, which required large-scale inspection and repair work. This is the reason for these postponements.

Government Agrees to Tax on the Storage of Spent Fuel

On September 18, MPHPT (Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications) agreed to place a municipal tax on spent fuel, which Kashiwazaki City of Niigata Prefecture and Sendai City of Kagoshima Prefecture had requested. Following this on September 20, Kashiwazaki City council, which planned to introduce the taxation in October, adopted a supplementary budget for the current year, including 225 million yen tax revenue. The tax rate is 480 yen per kg of spent fuel, and the City is expected to gain 2.7 billion yen from this taxation in the coming

five years.

Sendai City has decided to impose a tax of 230,000 yen on the spent fuel per canister (about 500 yen per kg) from April next year. The city expects about 1.26 billion yen in tax revenues in the next five years.

Mutsu City Council Does Not Approve of a Plebiscite

On September 1, citizens of Mutsu city in Aomori Prefecture requested the Mayor to establish a city ordinance by a plebiscite with regard to the siting of Japan's first off-site storage facility for spent fuel. The legally binding request requires the petitions of 801 citizens, which accounts for one-fiftieth of the constituency. However, a total of 5,514 citizens, nearly 7 times the required number, ended up signing the petition.

Yet, the Mayor of Mutsu pressed Tokyo Electric Power Co. to invite the facility to the city when the petitions were collected on July 23, and the Mayor submitted a proposal to the city council on September 4, expressing his opposition to the request for the ordinance on a plebiscite. In the debate at the city council, the Mayor said, "if a plebiscite is held, the majority might oppose the plan, and, therefore, the city will not be able to invite the facility." Despite this comment, the city council rejected the bill on September 11 for establishing a city ordinance with the majority votes against the ordinance.

Electric Companies to Give Away Huge Donations to Local Communities.

Last September, Kyushu Electric Power Co. announced a donation of 1.5 billion yen to Sendai City in Kagoshima Prefecture where Sendai No. 3 nuclear power plant is planned to be built

(currently two reactors are in operation). This huge donation is the response to a request for co-operation from Sendai City. In order to gain the city's cooperation, Kyushu Electric Power Co. also had to pay the even larger sum of 1.1 billion yen, referred to as a "measure for the promotion of local business."

There were anonymous donations totaling 300 million yen to Shimane town, which recently approved the construction of Chugoku Electric Power Co.'s Shimane No. 3 nuclear power plant nearby. Anonymous donations have been observed twice in 2001 and once in 2002, for 300 million yen on each occasion, making a total of 1.2 billion yen. Although these are reported as anonymous donations, the media suggested that they were from Chugoku Electric Power Co. The actual construction site is in a neighboring town of Kashima where 700 million yen in anonymous donations were given in 2001 and 2002.

Nuclear Safety White Paper

On August 29, the Nuclear Safety Commission issued the 2002 edition of the "Nuclear Safety White Paper." Normally, the white paper is published in March. However, the publication was delayed by six months due to the Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s (TEPCO) trouble concerning deceptive practices (see page 1 for reference) and a ruling to nullify the construction permit for the Monju fast-breeder reactor (see NIT No.93).

Concerning the TEPCO incidents, the report says, "the statute of limitations never runs out for the act of losing credibility" and makes clear that gaining the public's trust in nuclear energy is an enormous difficulty. However, the white paper doesn't take up the subject of separating the Agency for Nuclear Industry and Safety from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), a measure which has been strongly requested from local governments. On the contrary, the paper simply confirms the METI's policy of continuing reactor operation even though cracks are found. It introduced the accident risk acceptance standard, what is called a "safety target."

Regarding the Monju high court ruling, the report insists that the safety review of Monju

itself was the right process. As one electric power industry paper said, "there is nothing new in the white paper."

MOE Proposes A New Climate Change Tax Scheme

On August 27, the expert committee on the climate change tax scheme, the advisory body of the Minister of Environment organized under the Central Environment Council, summarized a consultation report on climate change tax policy. The Minister of the Environment agreed the proposed tax scheme.

The subject of taxation is the amount of carbon content contained in fossil fuel, which is taxed when the fuels are imported or shipped to a domestic market; import traders or refinery companies will be subject to the taxation. The preliminary calculation estimated that the amount of tax will be 3,400 yen per ton. This will yield 950 billion yen annually. The revenue will be spent on the construction of energy-saving housing and a dissemination of fuel-cell-powered automobiles. The Ministry of the Environment plans to introduce the tax policy in 2005, and has started to persuade industries who have strongly opposed the policy.