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Citizens' Nuclear Information Center

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Maki Townspeople Chose a Nuclear Free Future

by Atsuko Takashima



Handkerchief Campaign. Maki-machi, Niigata Prefecture

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On August 4th 1996, the very first referendum in Japan was held in Maki Town of Niigata Prefecture and completed with great success. Everyone in the town thought carefully about their vote and decided their future for themselves.

Nobody can complain about the referendum results (see over page). They decided "No Nuclear Power Plant in Maki" and they must try to conduct the town administration clearly and strongly to that end from now on.

The results were as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Total Votes: 20,503 | |
| NO: 12,478 | YES: 7,904 |
| Invalid Votes: 121 | |
| Total Entitled Voters: 23,322 | |
| Voting Rate: 88.29% | |
| YES: 38.55% | |
| NO: 60.86% | |

Mayor Sasaguchi

Mr. Sasaguchi was elected the mayor of Maki on January 21st '96 on the basis of his public commitment to "promptly hold a referendum" which followed as a matter of course, because the plant supporters could not put up a candidate in the mayoral election. It was only a matter of time, "WHEN" was the biggest point at issue in the town council of March beside the budget for the coming year.

Voting Day Was Decided

Just before the town council of March, Mayor Sasaguchi publicly announced July 7th as the date for the referendum. He suggested holding a "community symposium" before the referendum to improve understanding of nuclear power plants among townspeople by inviting lecturers from both the pro and anti plant sides.

The pro plant side resisted the July 7th date, firmly. But this was just an expression of their desire not to be seen agreeing with the mayor. They had already given up resisting it, because they could not ignore the will of the townspeople saying "we want to decide our future by the referendum, for ourselves!" Mayor Sasaguchi accepted the town council's decision to not hold the referendum on July 7th and proposed 4th of August as an alternative. The council passed it by a vote of 19 to 1. So now the campaign race between

the anti and pro plant sides began with August 4th, 1996 as their goal.

The Community Symposium

"Community Symposium on Nuclear Power Plant Construction Issues," promoted by Maki Town, was held on May 17th. The pro plant side recommended Mr. Masao Nakamura, a science journalist and former editorial writer of the Yomiuri Newspaper, for their lecturer. As their lecturer the anti plant side invited Dr. Jinzaburo Takagi, the executive director of the Citizens' Nuclear Information Center. Dr. Takagi's lecture was scientifically organized and very easy to understand for all. But Mr Nakamura's lecture was not. Even the pro plant side was disappointed with what he said. Townspeople did not have a chance to hear lectures from both sides until this symposium, so that it was an ideal time to understand the issues of the plant construction especially for the pros.

Campaigns

Tohoku Electric Power Co. which is the host company of the plant construction in Maki announced that they would tackle the referendum with all their power to win it, and the pros organized the "Society of Consideration for the Future of Maki" to intensify their propaganda activities. Also the Agency of Natural Resources and Energy (ANRE) decided to open a series of lectures and began to seriously enter into the pro plant side's activities.

However these pro plant campaigns were, as usual, immoral and shameless. Even though the municipal regulations say that "The freedom of the residents' will must not be bound and interfered with unjustly, such as by bribery etc.", the pros were doing exactly that because of the absence of penal regulations to prevent them. Here are some of the newspaper headlines to show what they were up to...

"It's a PARTY for the PLANT!"

"The SUSHI BAR meeting at NIGHT
-come and sit around with Tohoku Electric-"
"Cheap Plant Study Tours"

1. Tour, with a local bull fight included.
(2,000yen)
 2. Tour including Kashiwazakimisaki
Hot Spring. (4,000yen)
 3. Tour, with nice French cuisine and
beautiful sightseeing. (5,000yen)
- "One Night at Wakura Hot Spring for
12,000yen".....

Even the ANRE supported these as "within the activity limit of public relations for an electric power Co." From the beginning nothing they did showed a genuine regard for the townspeople at all.

In contrast to them, the anti plant side campaigned seriously and earnestly for their goal "the great success of the referendum." They united many activity groups, large and small, into one big movement under an Executive Committee, because they realized that they could not succeed at this type of campaign without pulling together. Groups like the Social Democratic Party and the Japan Communist Party might have many differences but they had to overcome them and work together because the power and the will of townspeople made them do so. The people of Maki sweated blood on the campaign, including many who had never been involved in such political activities. They did everything that they could do to win inventing many strategies to promote their cause, for example, "the Handkerchief Campaign" (collected handkerchiefs with anti nuclear messages from around the nation), "House-to-House Visits," "PR under the Sun," "Continuous Study Sessions," etc.

The Executive Committee

On the basis of continued efforts such as the success of the self-managed referendum. And despite various pressures such as having

to defeat bribery in the council election and gather over 10,000 signatures for recalling the previous mayor, the referendum was made possible. This issue had to be concluded with a high voter turn out to ensure there were no grounds for complaint about the result.

We went house to house and person to person to emphasize the importance of the referendum and the power of even one vote, to everyone in the town. Most people understood the significance of the referendum very well and, as we visited the people's houses, we became more and more convinced we would win.

The Decision of Maki

Our campaigns were started from issues involved with the mayoral election 2 years ago the result of which we felt did not correctly represent the will of Maki about the power plant construction. Mr. Sato the mayor of Maki at that time refused to hold the referendum. So we managed a referendum by ourselves. For this self-managed referendum, over 10,000 people participated to vote under harsh counter activities by the pro plant side. To think over it now, everything started from those 10,000 people. This number gave courage and self-confidence to others in the town who could not vote for the self-managed referendum. It also became the basic power for us to move forward, recall Mayor Sato and pursue the success of the referendum. If this self-managed referendum got only 4,000-5,000 votes, Maki might be very different today. We don't know how to express our appreciation to those 10,000 voters.

88.29% voting rate, 12,478 anti plant votes, this is the magnificent result. "No Nuclear Power Plant" is the will of Maki. The mayor and the council must respect this. From here, we start the work of erasing the shadows of the construction plan from the town and making a new Maki.

(The writer is a citizen of the town of Maki.)

An Accident Waiting to Happen

-Interim Report on the Monju Accident Released

The CNIC organized Monju Committee, which has been working on an overall assessment of the Monju accident from the technological, the legal/institutional, and from the point of view of plutonium policy., released the draft of its interim report on September 14. It summarizes its findings by saying that the accident was waiting to happen. The committee goes on to make four proposals. The following is a brief description of the report.

Although the director-general of the Science and Technology Agency (STA) declared that freedom of information would be strictly observed in determining the accident's cause, the fact is that not a single datum requested by the Committee was released. So the Committee's investigation of the technological aspects turned out to be a critique of the STA report issued in May.

The STA's report claims that owing to high-cycle fatigue, a crack passed all the way through the thermocouple well at least six months and perhaps as long as two years before the accident, thus causing the well to break off. It also says that a design error that weakened the well caused the vibration to produce the crack.

Because the Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC) actually conducted the investigation, the statement that the STA would lead the investigation was nothing but a pretense. It is obvious that an investigation by those involved in the accident could prejudice a thorough study of the cause.

CNIC's Committee's report makes the following observations on the technological aspects. (1) The STA's story elucidates almost nothing, and it does not question the rules governing the Monju project as a whole, which made checking in advance for design flaws impossible. (2) It is quite possible that the floor liner was deformed by the heat of the sodium reaction, thus leading to fundamental questions about its integrity. (3) The manual for dealing with accidents was flawed since portions of it contradicted the original safety review for licensing.

With regard to legal and institutional

aspects, the PNC had staked its existence on fast breeder reactor development. This resulted in a tendency to underestimate and an attempt to conceal the seriousness of the accident. The report also observes that the accident focussed citizens' suspicions on the kind of secretive decision-making that has so far governed nuclear power development and utilization. It also notes the need for enacting legislation concerning environmental impact assessments and freedom of information on nuclear power, as well as creating institutions under which the citizens can directly participate in monitoring government policy on nuclear power.

Another finding is that, with respect to plutonium policy, no lessons have been learned from fast breeder development in other countries, and that the accident may well have been caused by the high priority placed on getting Monju operational as quickly as possible. The report calls for a thorough reconsideration of the concept underlying the plutonium policy, i.e., "breeding plutonium will benefit Japan's future energy needs," and says this reconsideration requires a national public debate.

The Committee's report includes the following four proposals: (1) a complete reorganization of the accident investigation system and launching of a full, thorough and open investigation; (2) the establishment of a completely independent safety monitoring system separate from the system for nuclear power development; (3) the establishment of legal institutions which would allow citizens to directly examine nuclear power administration; and (4) a thorough reassessment of Japan's plutonium policy.

Japanese Citizens' Appeal on the CTBT Signing

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on 10th September 1996.

We welcomed its adoption as a great achievement by the people who seeks world peace. Simultaneously, we require swift signing by all 44 countries required for entry into force of the treaty.

There remain various problems to overcome to accomplish the CTBT's ultimate purpose of a "total ban of nuclear weapons", however, we believe the comprehensive ban of nuclear explosion is a trustworthy step towards this end. Like all treaties, for this treaty to be all it could be, needs people's endeavors and supports.

A half century of the nuclear age has passed, and we must never allow our future to be trampled by the tactics and logic of the Big Powers again. We urge the 5 Nuclear States, the nations under the nuclear umbrella like Japan, and every country that relies on the illusion of nuclear deterrence, to promote drastic disarmament of nuclear warheads immediately, to begin efforts to negotiate treaties for "No First Use" and for the "Fissile Materials Production Ban" which would lead the world to a new starting point.

The International Court of Justice gave its advisory opinion that the use and threat of nuclear weapon are illegal in principle under International Law and Humanitarian Law. CTBT adopted the zero yield as the standard of nuclear explosion to be banned, which was the biggest pending problems of the treaty for a year. The solidarity with Hiroshima, Nagasaki, South Pacific Nations and other nuclear victims all over the world together with the power of international anti nuclear movement, brought the judgement of ICJ and advanced the discussions of the CTBT.

Now no country can create its own nuclear wall despite our opposition.

We confirm that as the persons who promote permanent nuclear abolition we persist in seeking a complete ban of nuclear weapons.

This citizens' appeal was jointly released to the public and press on the 24th September 1996 by the Citizens' Nuclear Information Center and the Japan Congress Against A and H Bombs.

As of the 22nd September 1996 ten members of the Diet, the Japanese Parliament, had signed it.

The IAEA Revises Guidelines for Transport of Radioactive Material

IAEA adopted revised guidelines for the transport of radioactive material at the Board meeting held in Vienna on 10th September. The new guidelines will lead the way to plutonium air shipment and contains a lot of problems in the field of safety.

There is much strong opposition to this revision, especially the U.S. Government has given the IAEA notice that the U.S. will not allow plutonium flights in U.S. airspace because the containers (Type C) approved by the IAEA do not meet the much tougher U.S. standards. The United States has also "made it clear that, consistent with United States law, any plutonium air transport to, or over, the United States will be subject to the more rigorous United States packaging standards."

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which is one of the most influential and biggest international aviation organizations, has criticized the new container guidelines. It says the standards of the new Type C container are far lower than those internationally required for flight recorders. The test for the flight recorder package corresponds to an impact speed of 138 meters per seconds, and this is almost the same standard the U.S.A. requires for containers for plutonium air shipments. However, the new IAEA guidelines are based on a test impact speed of only 90 meters per seconds. According to the Washington D.C. based Nuclear Control Institute, the impact speed of the ELAL cargo plane that crashed in to an apartment complex near Amsterdam in October 1992, was 150 meters per second. The new guidelines for the Type C containers will not be able to secure

safety and responsibility at all.

Simultaneously, the IAEA adopted a revision which allows the transportation of mixed oxide fuel (MOX) in the existing Type B cask. The Type B cask is required to withstand an impact of only 13 meters per second. Although this is only because Germany is strongly insisting on air-lifting plutonium inside Europe, this would also provide a way for the Japanese government to ship MOX fabricated in Europe from reprocessed plutonium by air as Japan has a plan to transport 50 tons of MOX fuel. Tokyo Electric Power Co. did not rule out the air shipment possibility when CNIC had a meeting with TEPCO officials in April 1996, but the Science and Technology Agency denied this idea saying "Japan's policy to transport plutonium is to be by ship."

With regard to this situation, CNIC sent a letter to the STA on 9th September asking Hidenao Nakagawa, the Chief Director of the STA, to confirm its policy. STA responded to us on 17th and added "The Japanese government will not transport plutonium by air. It was confirmed in the Long Term Program for Research, Development and Utilization of Nuclear Power, released in 1994. We do not know of any plan except the sea shipment."

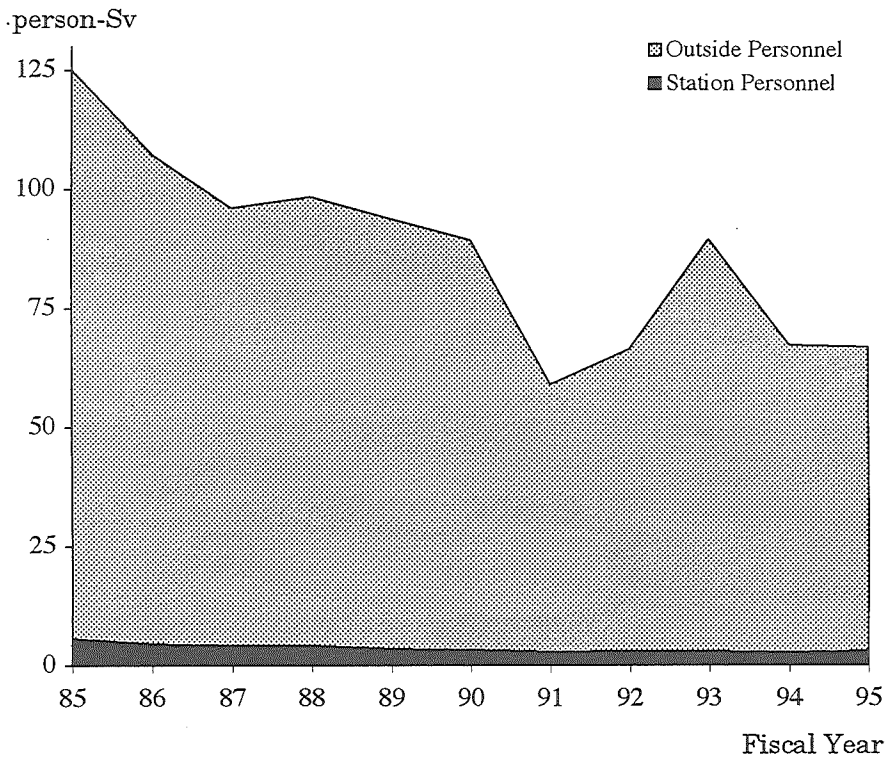
The Japanese government pursues its plan to fabricate MOX fuel from a huge stockpile of plutonium in Britain and France. We have to watch carefully the movements of radioactive material shipments all over the world, not only by the Japanese government.

(With thanks to the Nuclear Control Institute, Washington D.C. for details for this article.)

DATA Workers Exposure at Nuclear Plants (1985-95)

**Annual Collective Dose of N-plant Workers
(person-Sv)**

| Fiscal Year | Station Personnel | Outside Personnel | Total |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
| 85 | 5.72 | 119.33 | 125.05 |
| 86 | 4.66 | 102.78 | 107.44 |
| 87 | 4.17 | 91.94 | 96.12 |
| 88 | 4.14 | 94.25 | 98.39 |
| 89 | 3.46 | 90.34 | 93.80 |
| 90 | 3.29 | 86.03 | 89.29 |
| 91 | 2.86 | 56.06 | 59.93 |
| 92 | 2.92 | 63.53 | 66.44 |
| 93 | 2.98 | 86.40 | 89.39 |
| 94 | 2.66 | 64.63 | 67.29 |
| 95 | 2.97 | 63.87 | 66.80 |



Anti Nuke Who's Who : The Citizens of the Nine Electric Utilities



(photograph by Kei Shimada)

On April 26th 1995, high-level nuclear waste was returned to Rokkasho Village, Aomori Prefecture from France for the first time. From now on a vast amount of reprocessed radioactive waste will be returned continuously to this small village from the UK and France under the heading of "temporary storage."

Because of this incident, many citizens who are concerned about the nuclear waste resulting from the operations of the nine electric power companies in Japan, united together to form an organization called "Citizens of the Nine Electric Utilities" (CNEU). The main purposes of this organization are to campaign for a cessation of waste production from all nuclear power plants and to demand the cancellation of the reprocessing contracts between foreign countries, and the Japanese government and electric power utilities. CNEU also maintains contact with other citizens around the world who are also concerned about nuclear waste.

In February 1996, three members of the CNEU visited France, the country from which the reprocessed waste was exported, in order to see the actual conditions of reprocessing. We saw serious pollution around the La Hague Reprocessing plant. We met the leader of the anti-nuclear group there and received their promise to cooperate in future visits.

In the second visit, from June 1st to 7th, twelve CNEU members from all over Japan developed relations with various movements

in France. We had arranged to have a meeting with a COGEMA representative and a tour of the COGEMA reprocessing plant, but just before leaving Japan we received notice of cancellation of these plans from them through the Science and Technology Agency of Japan. With extreme dissatisfaction, we negotiated with them several times after our arrival in France for a meeting with a person in a position of responsibility, but were not treated sincerely at all. However we were warmly welcomed by many anti-nuclear activists and exchanged valuable information with them.

Especially at La Hague, Mr. Didier Anger, a member of the Green Party acted as tour guide for us and lectured us on pollution cases around the plant with historical background, with information on radioactive contamination among the plant workers, three trials which have been started by the citizens of La Hague and issues concerning strategy coordination by nuclear-related industries. The tour cancellation by COGEMA meant we could not tour inside the plant, however we were taken on a thorough tour around the outside of the plant by our guide. We also made contact with several anti-reprocessing plant organizations such as "CRILAN" and "ACRO", and we told them that we are campaigning with a thousand people against the transportation of nuclear waste from Japan to France for reprocessing, that we firmly oppose the plutonium policy of Japan and that we are aware that 39.6% of the total 37,000 tons of nuclear waste reprocessed in France is actually from Japan, and feel a heavy weight of responsibility for this.

During the visit, we distributed French language handbills prepared by the Japanese anti-reprocessing movement in front of the COGEMA Co., in Cherbourg and in front of the Pompidou Center in Paris. We were surprised and gratified that many French citizens are deeply concerned about this issue and read our handbills enthusiastically.

(by Yuriko Tani)

NEWS WATCH

Troubles Continue in the World's First ABWR

Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s (TEPCO) Kashiwazaki-Kariwa 6, the world's first advanced boiling water reactor (ABWR, 1,356 MW) had to stop operation again during its trial run. The internal pump trip which occurred in February was reported in NIT 52.

This time the cause of the trouble was a pin hole in the fuel rod. A rise in iodine concentration was detected in the primary coolant on August 19th, and on the 20th radioactivity level in the exhaust gas began to rise. Since the iodine concentration increased by a factor of 500 over the normal value on the 24th, showing a rising trend, the reactor's operation was manually suspended. It was the first time that this kind of trouble had occurred during a trial run.

Until the previous day, TEPCO seemed to have been considering whether to continue operations, as it announced on the 23rd that the trial run going smoothly and it would start commercial operations on September 11, earlier than scheduled.

"Local Development"- Highlight for Next Year's Budget Demand

Various ministries and government agencies in August submitted their demands for budgetary appropriations for the government's budget bill for fiscal 1997 (April 1997 to March 1998) to the Ministry of Finance. Based on these demands the MOF will draft an provisional bill. Some of the items that have been cut from the demand will

be restored through negotiations between the MOF and each of ministries and agencies before the final government budget bill is compiled by the end of the year.

In the demands for budgetary appropriations relating to nuclear power both the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and the Science and Technology Agency (STA) stepped up the emphasis on local development. It is in an attempt to appease "unfavorable winds" blowing against new and/or additional nuclear plant construction as typified by the reaction of municipal governments affected by the accident of Monju and the referendum held at Maki Town, Niigata Prefecture. In the proposed budget MITI and STA jointly plan to set up "a subsidy for long-term development measures," meaning to continue providing subsidies until a reactor completes its operation. This attempt seems to repel local people as the governor of Fukui Prefecture and the mayor of Mihama Town in the prefecture stated that they could not accept subsidies in exchange for Monju resuming operations.

Tohoku Electric Apply for Higashidori 1 Building Permit

On August 30, Tohoku Electric applied to the Minister of International Trade and Industry for permission to build Higashidori 1 reactor which the company plans to construct in Higashidori Village (to the north of Rokkasho-mura where the nuclear fuel cycle facilities are located). It is said that the site has the space to accommodate 20 reactors.

For the time being Tohoku and Tokyo Electric plan to construct two reactors there each. The one that Tohoku Electric recently applied for is a BWR of 1,100 MW, but it is thought that those to follow will be ABWRs of 1,350 MW output.

Spent Fuel Begins to Overflow

The fact that spent fuel has been accumulating at each nuclear plant site is beginning to become a big problem.

A large amount of spent fuel has been shipped to Britain and France under the terms of the nuclear fuel reprocessing contracts, but most of the agreed amount of fuel has been shipped and the delayed construction of Rokkasho reprocessing plant are the reasons for the problem. The amount of spent fuel stored at nuclear plant sites in Japan increased in ten years from 1,500 tU (at the end of FY1985) to over 5,000 tU (at the end of FY1995). The rate of increase is expected to accelerate.

In the document the Agency of National Resources and Energy submitted to the Nuclear Energy Subcommittee's meeting of the Advisory Committee for Energy which was held on August 9, the Agency stated that some of the nuclear plants which were built in the early stage of nuclear development in Japan, and whose capacity for storage of spent fuel are reaching their limit, may have trouble

continuing operations in a few years time. They thus suggested the following measures to cope with the situation: (1) to construct more storage facilities within the plant sites; (2) to construct a centralized storage facility elsewhere; and (3) to add more to the overseas reprocessing agreements.

Residents Opposed to Adding Hamaoka 5

The opposition of local residents to Chubu Electric Power Co.'s plan to construct Hamaoka 5 (ABWR, 1,358 MW) at Hamaoka Town in Shizuoka Prefecture is getting stronger. In the Sakura district, residents agreed with little dissent to the construction of the four previous reactors, but they decided to oppose the 5th in March 1995, saying that they had done enough already to further national policy.

In spite of this the mayor and the council of Hamaoka Town in June this year decided in a closed-door meeting to enter into negotiations with Chubu Electric. Opposition to this unrepresentational and autocratic behavior from local residents has spread from the Sakura district to other districts, and on August 5th petitions with the signatures of 3,417 people demanding a complete withdrawal of the plan for Hamaoka 5 and of 3,020 people asking for a referendum on the issue, were handed to the town mayor.

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