



## JAPAN'S PLUTONIUM POLICY AND MOX PROGRAM FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS



Protest in front of MITI against the agreement reached between Japan and the UK to return the MOX fuel with falsified quality control data.  
UK and Japan Agree to Return BNFL's MOX

On 11 July 2000, during her visit to Japan, Ms. Anna Walker, the Energy Director of the UK's Department of Trade and Industry, met officials of Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the Kansai Electric Power Company (KEPCO). Following the meetings, Ms. Walker signed an agreement to have the mixed plutonium-uranium oxide (MOX) fuel with falsified data returned to the UK. (See NIT No. 76, pp. 1-2; No. 75, pp. 1-3; No. 74, pp. 8-11.) Following the agreement, KEPCO lifted the moratorium on signing any MOX fuel and reprocessing contracts with BNFL.

Both governments expect the transportation

to take place within 2~3 years. In total, BNFL agreed to pay 6.4 billion yen to KEPCO as compensation for damages incurred due to the falsification. The sum includes the shipping costs. Both parties noted that it was necessary to secure domestic regulatory approvals and international consents based on relevant existing treaties

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before the fuel could be returned. According to Ms. Walker, Japan will take the initiative in pursuing necessary procedures for consulting the international community. Though the transportation of Japanese plutonium from Europe to Japan must take place after obtaining permission from the US under the Japan-US nuclear cooperation treaty, there are no specifications for transporting plutonium from Japan to Europe. Several years may be needed to formulate regulations in the US to give permission for the transportation.

It is reported that BNFL hopes that the return of the fuel will ensure future business with Japan. However, BNFL is yet to prove the economic viability of its newly constructed Sellafield MOX Plant (SMP). The company must do so in order to gain permission to operate the plant. Now that Japanese interest in BNFL-made MOX has dropped due to the falsification scandal, it will be very difficult for BNFL to prove SMP's economic case since the company largely depends on contracts with Japan. It may have put itself into further financial difficulties by agreeing to ship the fuel back.

On the other hand, all plans for MOX utilization have been postponed for the time being. In addition, on 9 Aug. 2000, over 860 plaintiffs took the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) to court over the MOX fuel planned to be used at Fukushima I-3. The fuel was transported to Japan in Sept. 1999. The plaintiffs have asked the Fukushima District Court to forbid the loading of the MOX fuel manufactured by Belgonucleaire due to doubts over the company's quality control. The plaintiffs are challenging the claim by Belgonucleaire and TEPCO that no pellets were rejected during the diameter check. Citizens have been demanding the release of quality control data, demands that have so far been in vain. The court began deliberation on the 10th. The next hearing is scheduled for 18 Sept. 2000.

#### No Reason for Re-start of Reprocessing Plant

While the Japanese Government has been justifying MOX fuel utilization as a counter measure for the excess of Japanese-owned plutonium, the Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute (JNC) is about to extract even more plutonium in Japan by

resuming the operation of the Tokai Reprocessing Plant. The plant had been shut down since the fire and explosion in 1997. JNC gave the plant a test-run (pre-operation investigation) for about a month from 29 June 2000 under the surveillance of the Science and Technology Agency (STA). During this period, 5.7 tons of spent fuel were reprocessed. The plant will begin operation once JNC receives approvals for the re-start from local governments.

The Government has not been able to specify the use of the plutonium to be extracted. In truth, there is no reason for further reprocessing when Japan is already burdened with excess plutonium. The re-start of the plant will only intensify the contradiction of Japan's vow, declared on the international stage, to hold no excess plutonium. No data has been released for the test-run, but about 40 kg of plutonium must have been extracted. According to JNC's business plan for the fiscal year 2000, 40 tons of spent fuel will be reprocessed at the Tokai Reprocessing Plant. If this plan is carried out, 280 kg of plutonium will be extracted. JNC mainly extracts plutonium from spent fuel belonging to private utilities, but the current plan is for JNC to purchase the plutonium it extracts. JNC will also be responsible for disposing the radioactive waste generated from reprocessing. However, JNC already owns about 4 tons of plutonium which is stored at the Tokai Reprocessing Plant. JNC and the Government claim that none of this plutonium is excess, because there are plans for utilization at the Fast Breeder Reactors Monju and Joyo, and at the Fugen Advanced Thermal Reactor. But there is an all-too-obvious gap between the official plans and the real situation. As Monju has been shut down since the sodium leak and fire in 1995, there is almost no use for JNC's plutonium. Fugen and Joyo are the only plants where plutonium could be used. However, those two reactors only consume about 200 kg per year. In addition, Joyo is now under periodic inspection and will be shut down for 2~3 years. Fugen is planned to be shut down in 2003. The Government should at least admit that there is excess plutonium and try to control the build-up of this material by preventing any further reprocessing from taking place.

By Hideyuki Ban

# “No Nukes Asia Forum 2000” Held in Japan

From 9-14 July, Japan played host to the eighth annual “No Nukes Asia Forum” Conference, sponsored by the No Nukes Asia Forum. The first such conference was held in Japan in 1993, and since then the event has been held in a different country every year. This was the first time any country has played host to the conference for a second time. This year’s conference saw participants from Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia and Australia join together with participants from all over Japan to exchange information about various nuclear issues relating to all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle.

On Sunday 9 July, a symposium was held in Tokyo, at which participants from each country gave presentations about specific issues affecting their particular country or region. The morning session consisted of reports from Japan about the Tokai-mura criticality accident, alternative forms of energy production, and Japan’s policy of exporting nuclear power plants.

At the afternoon session, a delegate from Taiwan spoke about the review committee for the construction of the Number 4 nuclear power plant, and about Taiwan’s plans to ship nuclear waste to North Korea and Russia. A delegate from South Korea spoke about the Korean government’s plans to build eight new nuclear power plants, and the movement in Korea to stop these plants from being built. A delegate from Malaysia spoke about radiation pollution affecting residents of the surrounding area of a plant involved in rare-earth metal extraction from monazite which was operated by a company thirty-five percent owned by the former Mitsubishi Chemical Industries. A delegate from Australia talked about uranium

mining on Australian aboriginal land and the fact that Japanese electric companies buy uranium from these mines. He spoke of the strong aboriginal protests against the pollution caused by uranium mining.

The following morning, 10 July, a demonstration was held in front of Hitachi’s main office in Tokyo to protest the export of a nuclear power plant to Taiwan. Participants in the demonstration handed out pamphlets to passers by to highlight the export of nuclear technology to Taiwan. That afternoon, a meeting with officials from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), and the Science and Technology Agency was held at the Councilors’ Assembly Hall of the Japanese Diet. Members from the Taiwan delegation brought up the issue of exporting a nuclear power plant to Taiwan even though Taiwan is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They called for the Japanese government to stop promoting the export of nuclear technology to Taiwan. Delegates from Korea brought up the dangers of shipping mixed plutonium-uranium oxide (MOX) fuel through the waters between South Korea and Japan. They called on the government to cancel the ‘pluthermal’ program, or the program to burn MOX fuel in commercial light water reactors.

The remainder of the week was spent on a bus tour which took the participants to several cities with nuclear facilities in Ibaraki, Fukushima and Niigata Prefectures. On Tuesday 11 July, before leaving Tokyo for Tokai-mura (Ibaraki Prefecture), the bus made a brief stop in front of MITI. The purpose of the stop was to hold a demonstration against an announce-

ment later that day by the British and Japanese governments that they had reached an agreement to return MOX fuel with falsified quality control data back to the United Kingdom. Several reporters were already at MITI when the bus arrived, and they took pictures and video footage of the participants calling for BNFL to "Get out of Asia!"

That afternoon, after arriving in Tokai-mura, the participants were given a tour of the "Atom World" exhibition building of the Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute Tokai Works, followed by a bus tour of the entire site. The guide from the company pointed out the bituminization facility which was the site of a fire and explosion accident in March 1997 which exposed 37 employees to radiation. She explained that the JNC had since "cleaned up" the facility and is leaving it as a reminder to employees of the "importance of safety".

Following the tour of the JNC facility, a symposium was held at a nearby community center with participants from Tokai-mura. Participants on the bus tour were able to hear first hand the experiences of people in Tokai-mura during last year's criticality accident. One of the local residents brought tears to many people's eyes as she explained how the people felt helpless and were unable to protect their children from being exposed to radiation.

The following day was spent in Fukushima prefecture. A symposium was held in the town of Naraha addressing the themes uranium mining, nuclear waste and plutonium use. As in all the other towns, the symposium was followed by an informal get-together where participants exchanged ideas with the local activists.

On Thursday the 13th, the bus crossed over the mountains to Niigata prefecture. The first stop was the Town of Maki. Participants were given a warm welcome by several members of the anti-nuclear movement in Maki, who have been successful at stopping construction of the planned Maki nuclear power plant. Our hosts showed us the site where Tohoku Electric would like to build the plant, and the



Participants on the bus tour receive an explanation about the reactor site planned for Maki and the land which the anti-nuclear activists own but refuse to sell.

sell. Following the visit to Maki, the bus headed south to the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant, where we were given an explanation and tour of the ABWR reactor. Afterwards, local activists gave the participants a brief explanation about the various problems associated with ABWR reactors. The reactor design of the reactor which Japan intends to export to Taiwan for the Number 4 reactor is an ABWR, so participants from Taiwan took special interest in the problems associated with this type of nuclear reactor.

The final day was spent once again discussing various issues about nuclear power generation and the nuclear fuel cycle. Special emphasis was placed on Japan's vigorous plans to export nuclear power plants throughout Asia. Following a lively discussion about the above mentioned issues, a declaration was adopted that lists several specific points but most importantly confirms our common objective of realizing a "Nuclear Free Asia". Finally, it was decided that Korea will hold the NNAF 2001 conference some time in the early fall. Hope to see you in Korea next year!

By Stephen Ready (Green Action, Kyoto)

# Renewable Energy in Japan

## No.2: Wind Energy & Small Hydro Power

This is the second in a series of articles on renewable energy in Japan started in NIT No. 78. This article focuses on latest developments in wind and small scale hydro power.

### 1. Wind power

#### 1.1 Japan and Wind

When people imagine the landscape of Japan, few think of windmills. It is true that since early times Japanese have used water mills more than windmills because of the country's rich water resources. However in Osaka, the nation's second robust metropolis after Tokyo, about 200 windmills were running in the 1960s. They were used to pump water for agricultural purposes (Fig.1).

Of course, there were windmills for making electricity too. The "Yamada Windmill", named after its maker, used spruce wood for propellers.



Fig.1 Old-fashioned windmill in Osaka  
Photo by Dr. Izumi Ushiyama

It performed quite well in various wind conditions. Thus this concept of a windmill spread not only throughout Japan but also to South America and Africa.

Unfortunately, these windmills are almost extinct. However, according to the NEDO (New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization), though it is thought that there is little scope for wind power in Japan, there is real potential that promises successful development.

#### 1.2 Efforts by the Government

Recently, the Government seems to have finally become aware of the benefits of wind power, since it generates no waste, emits no CO<sub>2</sub>, and holds many advantages when operated on a large scale. Moreover, wind energy can be considered the most promising energy source among renewables, because it has already been considerably

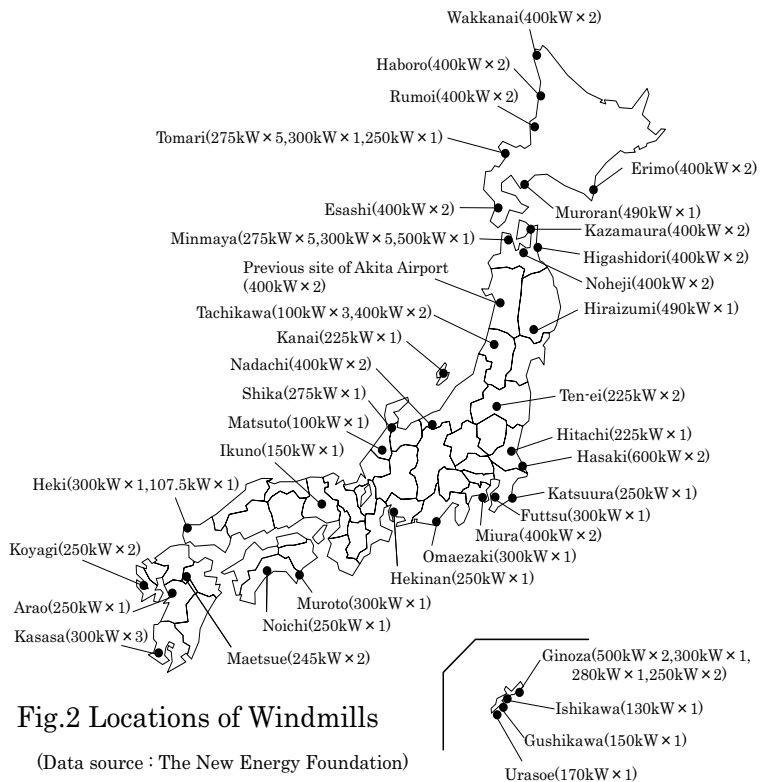


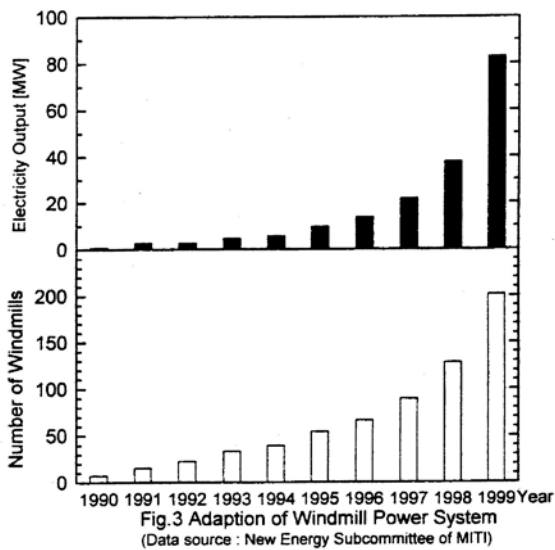
Fig.2 Locations of Windmills

(Data source : The New Energy Foundation)

industrialized and commercialized.

Fig.2 shows that unlike nuclear power plants, windmills exist all over Japan. The New Energy Subcommittee of the Comprehensive Energy Review Committee, under the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), estimates that the total output from windmills was about 38 MW in 1998 (Fig.3). Moreover, output has been rising dramatically, and it is predicted that the official output goal of 300 MW by the year 2010 will be reached before that time.

Cost savings have helped popularize the use of windmills. Construction costs were reduced because of an increase in the size and scale of equipment and business. In addition, costs were further reduced by Government subsidies and by an "electricity buy-out system" adopted by electric power companies where wind generated electricity is purchased at favorable prices. Table I shows

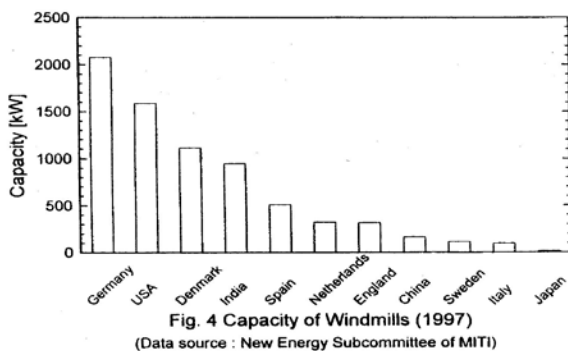


changes in costs. For example, the most recent data on wind energy generation costs for wind power stations with capacities at the 1000 kW level is about 12 yen per kWh, which is even lower than the cost for hydro power (about 13 yen).

	1992	1999
Average output [kW/plant]	145	367
Construction cost [ $10^4$ yen/kW]	45.8	34.2
Cost per electricity output [yen/kWh]	26.0	19.4

Table I Wind Power Output and Cost

But compared to other countries, Japan's capacity and utilization of wind power is limited, despite a large demand for electricity in this country. The main reason for this is that, while considerable basic research has been done (though the money and time spent on the development of wind power cannot in any way be compared with the resources used to develop nuclear energy), little research has been undertaken on policies for actual implementation. However, the New Energy Subcommittee estimates the potential as about



35 GW if wind power facilities are constructed on farmlands, in forests, and along coastal areas.

Is wind energy free of any difficulties? Unfortunately, it isn't. In October 1999 the Hokkaido Electric Power Company announced a moratorium on any further development of wind power. This decision was taken in a prefecture in which wind energy utilization is most vigorous. Following the estimation that about 500 MW could be generated from wind energy, the company restricted the maximum amount of purchase of wind generated electricity at favorable prices to 150 MW. The company explained that it was concerned about uneven power output by wind energy. However, there were views that the company wanted to protect existing energy sources against the decreasing cost of wind energy. (In particular, the company was concerned about the plan to construct the Tomari-III nuclear power reactor.) This decision seriously affected plans to implement wind power in Japan.

### 1.3 Efforts by citizens

Below are two prominent cases of utilizing wind power in Japan.

Tachikawa Town in Yamagata Prefecture is revitalizing its local economy by focusing on wind energy. From olden times, the town has suffered from a strong wind named "kiyokawa dashi", one of the three worst winds in Japan. About 20 years ago, initiatives were undertaken to use this wind as a symbol of the town. Despite old-fashioned regulations and opinions that wind power could not be used in Japan, citizens finally managed to construct three windmills (100 kW each) in 1993. It can be said that wind power took off in Japan because of the efforts of Tachikawa citizens led by the Mayor.

Meanwhile, the "Hokkaido Green Fund" started the movement for a green electricity pay system. The fund charges its members for their electric bills plus an additional 5% of their bill which is put in the "Green Fund." The fund then pays the electric companies for its members' electric bills. Any resident of Hokkaido can join this fund by paying an annual membership fee. The Green Fund is to be used to construct power plants owned by citizens. The system is interesting because it encour-

ages members who find the additional cost a burden to conserve energy in order to be able to pay for the Fund. It won't be long before a "Citizens' Wind Power Plant" will be constructed.

As can be seen, wind power is special in the sense that local governments actively seek to exploit its use as a source of energy. There are many plans across the nation to construct wind-mills. For example, Kagoshima Prefecture in the south of Japan will begin the operation of a wind power plant (about 26 MW) in 2002. The Eco-Power Company, the most active company in the wind power business, decided to construct a wind power plant (about 30 MW) in Rokkasho-mura in Aomori Prefecture where there are four nuclear related facilities. Data on wind energy is summarized in Table II.

	Wind Power
Total energy output	38 MW (fiscal year 1998) 300 MW (fiscal year 2010)
Potential	35 GW
Construction cost	about 12 yen/kWh (for 1000 kW capacity plants)
Character	low cost

Table II Data on Wind Power in Japan

## 2. Small scale hydro power

From early times, Japan has been one of the most blessed countries in the world with respect to abundant hydro resources. During the Edo-era (1603-1867) water mills constructed on the edge of rivers and streams were important sources of energy, adding to human power and domestic animal power. From the middle of the Edo-era onward, there were between two and three thousand water mills, and in the Meiji-era (1868-1912) the number rose to more than ten thousand.

In recent times, large scale hydro power plants such as dams (over 200~300 GW) have turned out to be the cause of serious environmental damage. In this situation, small scale hydro power (lower than 10 MW) has moved into the spotlight. Unlike dams which store large quantity of water, a small scale hydro system uses "the run of river", and stores only a small quantity of water. As a result, the system causes very little damage to the environment (Fig.5). Chubu Electric Power Company

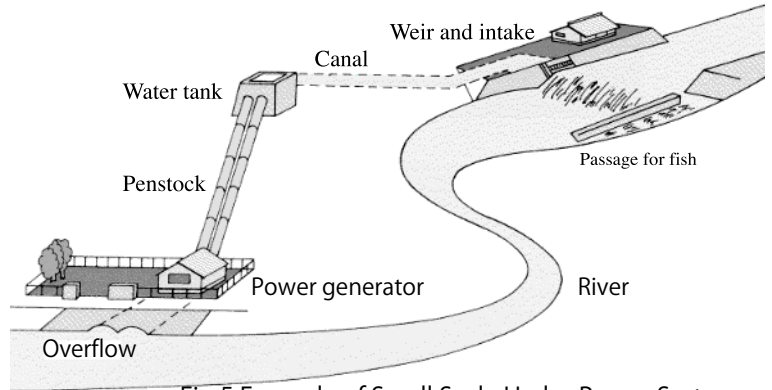


Fig.5 Example of Small Scale Hydro Power System

Illustration taken from <http://www.pref.okayama.jp/kigyo/kigyoyoku/kigyot>

constructed a small hydro power plant (150 kW) by building a water mill and attaching a generator to the water discharge channel located next to the dam for water quantity control. Such small hydro plants have recently become common because of low construction costs.

Unfortunately, these plants rely on large scale dams that have a negative impact on the environment. However, there are other types of small scale hydro power plants that do not damage the environment. For example, in Iwate Prefecture a water power plant exists which utilizes the water flow of a water purification plant. Although the output is 150 kW, the annual electricity output is 1.3 GWh, adequate to supply electricity for 500 households. In Gumma Prefecture, a plant (540 kW) has been constructed in a rice field that uses the water channels of the field. The cost of small scale hydro power is higher than that for other energy sources because of its limited scale. But when the environment of Japan is considered, it has a significant potential for further development.

## 3. Conclusion

There is a great potential for local citizens and governments, extremely knowledgeable as they are of their local environment, to take initiatives and to begin using wind and hydro power. However, before discussing the potential of various kinds of renewable sources of energy, the most important consideration is to contemplate the overly large consumption of energy in Japan. Only then will citizens be able to truly reflect on a sustainable future.

By Tadahiro Katsuta

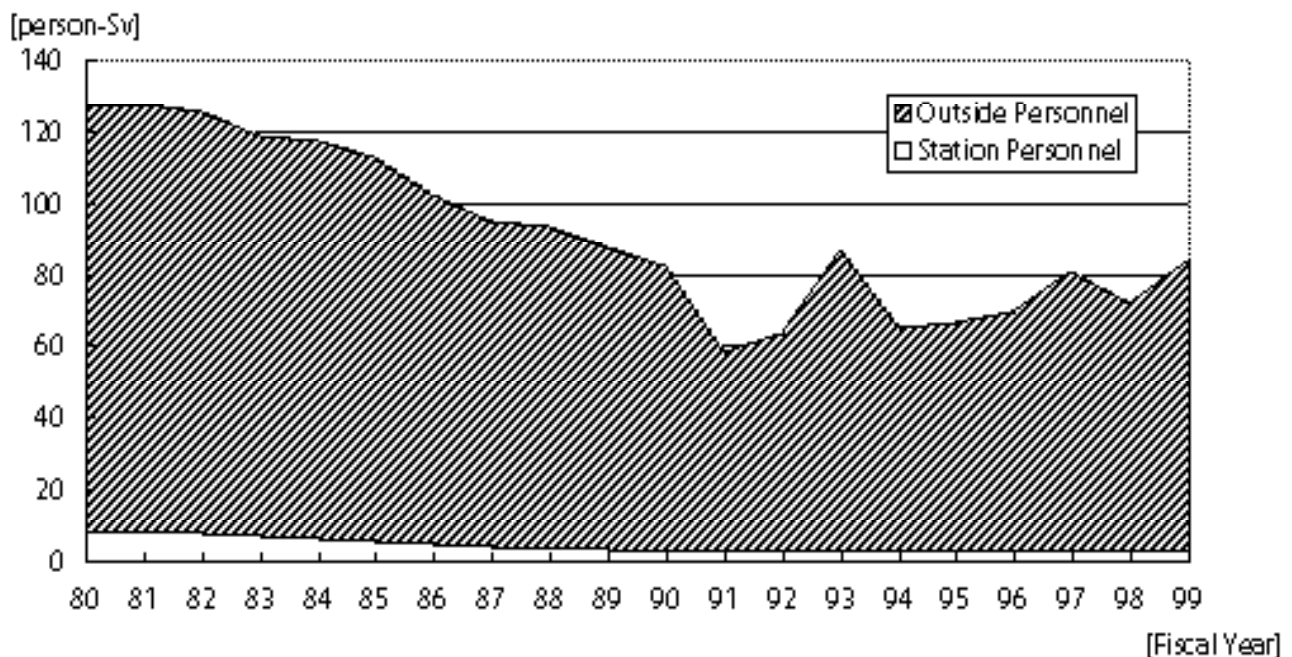
## Data: Workers' Exposure at Nuclear Plants (1980-1999)

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

Fiscal Year	Station Personnel	Outside Personnel	Total
1980	7.96	119.52	127.47
1981	7.84	119.33	127.18
1982	7.33	117.67	125.00
1983	6.60	112.06	118.67
1984	5.97	111.25	117.23
1985	5.36	107.25	112.59
1986	4.31	97.68	101.98
1987	3.88	90.93	94.82
1988	3.76	89.00	92.76
1989	3.12	84.28	87.39
1990	2.96	79.01	81.94
1991	2.69	55.16	57.86
1992	2.66	60.89	63.54
1993	2.78	83.86	86.65
1994	2.45	62.48	64.89
1995	2.85	63.50	66.32
1996	2.92	66.10	68.99
1997	2.98	77.77	80.77
1998	3.07	68.78	71.85
1999	3.06	80.69	83.78

\*Fugen excluded

Source: Agency of Natural Resources and Energy (ANRE)





## Announcement : SPENA Workshop 2000 Beyond Nuclear Energy Toward Sustainable Energy Path

Sustainable and Peaceful Energy Network - Asia (SPENA) will hold its annual workshop in Tokyo from 12-14 October. The Network consists of energy experts and environmentalists from around Asia. The Network's goal is to promote a sustainable energy vision for Asia, which stresses safe, peaceful and sustainable energy through all possible energy options that minimize environmental damage. The main themes of this workshop are 'energy saving' and 'nuclear energy.' The workshop will be open to the public on 14 October from 13:30-17:50.

### Workshop Schedule

12 OCT.

9:00~10:30 Introduction of Participants.

Special Speech by Dr. Jinzaburo Takagi.

10:30~12:30 Session 1 Country Reports on Nuclear Energy & Energy Saving/Efficiency.

13:30~15:00 Session 2 'Nuclear Energy and National Policy.' Keynote speech by Prof. Gloria Hsu, Taiwan National Univ., on Taiwan's New Government and its Nuclear Policy. Discussion.

15:10~16:40 Session 3 'Problems of Nuclear Waste.' Keynote speech by Dr. Srendra Gadekar, Anumukti (India), on Nuclear Waste Problems at Jadugoda. Discussion.

13 OCT.

9:00~10:30 Session 4 'NGOs' Role in Nuclear Phase-Out.' Keynote speech by Mr. Akifumi Fujita & Dr. Tadahiro Katsuta, Citizens' Nuclear Information Center (Japan), on a Nuclear Phase-Out Scenario. Discussion.

10:30~12:00 Session 5 'Role of National/Local Policies in Energy Saving.' Keynote speech by Mr. K.R. Datye, Society for Advance of Renewable Materials and Energy Technologies (India). Discussion.

13:30~15:00 Session 6 'Energy Efficiency Technology.' Keynote speech by Dr. Chirapol Sintunawa, Mahidol Univ. (Thailand), on the Latest Efficiency Technology and Prospects. Discussion.

15:10~16:40 Session 7 'NGOs' Role in Energy Saving.' Keynote speech by Mr. Gurmit Singh, CETDEM (Malaysia), on CETDEM's Campaign for Energy Saving.' Discussion.

14 OCT.

9:00~11:00 Session 8 'SPENA's Role in Nuclear Phase-Out and Energy Saving/Efficiency.' Discussion.

13:30~17:50 Open Seminar (Session 9) 'Energy Saving Experiences in Asia.'

13:30~14:30 Presentation by Mr. Susumu Miyata, on the Implementation and Experience of Energy Saving Education at the Sincho Elementary School of Kawasaki City. Q&A and Discussion.

14:40~16:10 Presentation by Mr. Sanghoon Lee, Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (South Korea), on Experiences of Energy Saving in South Korea. Q&A and Discussion.

16:20~17:50 Presentation by Dr. Wanxing Wang, Beijing Energy Efficiency Center (China), on China's Energy Saving Policy. Q&A and Discussion.

The Open Seminar is open to anyone who is interested. No registration is necessary. Contact Kumiko Tanaka at CNIC for details. Participation fee: 600 yen.

## Anti-Nuke Who's Who

# Hideyo Kanematsu

## A Diligent Activist Fighting Geological Disposal

By Nakako Asada

There is a plan to build an "Underground Research Laboratory" at Tono in Gifu Prefecture to study the disposal of high-level nuclear waste generated from nuclear power plants. The developer, Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute (JNC), has already been collecting various data by boring a number of deep holes in the vicinity of the proposed site for the research institute. Local people are worried that Tono may be chosen as the disposal site of high-level waste. Ever since the announcement of the plan five years ago, Ms. Hideyo Kanematsu has been leading the local movement against it.

Ms. Kanematsu is a very enthusiastic learner. She not only reads the reports and materials published by JNC, (not an easy task in itself), but also scours nuclear-related Japanese magazines such as 'Nuclear Power Eye' and 'Energy Forum' and newspapers like 'Electricity News.' What's more, she disseminates such information to others. I learned a great deal from the information provided by her. She also informs journalists and Diet members of the situation at Tono.

Another side of her activities is that she puts great effort into building relationships with anti-nuclear activists in other areas, an endeavor which requires enthusiasm, much effort, and lots of time. She has developed her relationships with people in Hokkaido, Okayama, Osaka and Tokyo by exchanging information, and cherishing the network. I think the most important thing in any movement is human relationships.

I once asked her why she became involved in nuclear power issues. She said that she used to be a director of a Consumer Co-op Union, and had interests in peace issues. Then one day, she became aware of problems related to nuclear power, and gradually became involved in this area. She formed a group called the "No Radioactive Waste! Citizens' Network Gifu", and started to work on letting as many people as possible know about high-level



radioactive waste. The group published a pamphlet, 'Not "Clearly Distinguished" - The Underground Research Laboratory and High-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Site', and publishes a periodic newsletter to distribute newspaper articles on high-level waste. These publications are to alert local people who aren't concerned about these issues. Activists in other areas also find the newsletter useful, as information on situations in other places can hardly be found in respective local newspapers, unless it is major news.

Last summer, the Gifu Bar Association and Japan Federation of Bar Association (JFBA) started a co-investigation which was proposed and promoted by Ms. Kanematsu. The JFBA announced this June that Tono is being considered as the disposal site. Not long before the announcement, the Law Concerning the Disposal of Specified Radioactive Waste passed the Diet. Ms. Kanematsu has made outstanding efforts in lobbying Diet members and attending committees for the deliberation of the bill. Not the least discouraged by the passing of the law, she is now preparing an open inquiry letter to the Mayor of Gifu.

Perhaps her best quality is that she never gives up.

# NEWS WATCH

## Moves toward New Reactor Construction Plans

On 24 July, Governor Nobuyoshi Sumita of Shimane Prefecture submitted to the secretariat of the Power Development Council a written agreement to include Shimane 3 (ABWR, 1,373 MW), which the Chugoku Electric Power Co. plans to construct, in the national government's basic plan for power source development. The council will meet in August, during which it is expected to officially decide to include Shimane 3 in the basic plan. The governor's agreement reflects the approval of "the Regional Development Plan," which was jointly prepared by the Prefecture and the three municipalities concerned, given on 27 June by the Council's Advisory Group on Power Plant Location. The Council is composed of related ministries and agencies, and the approval of the plan means that these ministries and agencies have pledged to cooperate in the 117 billion yen regional development project, which is one of the largest of its kind. However, it is not clear how far their pledges will be fulfilled.

Meanwhile, at the Prefectural Assembly on 14 July, Hokkaido Governor Tatsuya Hori expressed his intention to approve construction of Tomari 3 (PWR, 912 MW), signaling a move toward an agreement on this project. The majority of the participants at the "Meeting to Listen to the Citizens' Opinions" sponsored by the Prefectural government voiced opposition to this plan, or were cautious about it. A group of academics who advise the governor have also made a statement asking to freeze the plan. With these mounting protests against the governor's intention, it is hard to predict what will happen in this

case.

## Successive Reactor Shutdowns Lead to Restart of Thermal Power Generator

Four out of 17 reactors in the three nuclear power plants owned by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) were shut down between 14 and 25 July due to various troubles. In addition, three other reactors have been suspended for regular inspections. Following these suspensions, the company hastily decided to re-start a thermal power generator to remedy the power supply shortage. In April, TEPCO suspended two of the generators at the thermal power station at Kashima, Ibaraki Prefecture, for five years due to excess supply.

Reactors owned by other power companies have recently been suspended as well due to various problems - further evidence of the unreliability of nuclear power.

## Court Rules that a Public Hearing is Not a Place to Hear Public Opinion

On 13 July, the Hakodate District Court dismissed a demand filed against the state by plaintiffs claiming compensation for the fact that they had not been given an opportunity to express their opinions at a public hearing. The hearing in question was held by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry in December 1998, regarding plans for the construction of the Ohma nuclear power plant (ABWR, 1,383 MW). Only those living in Ohma-machi, the planned site in Aomori Prefecture, and bordering municipalities were allowed to speak at the hearing. The plaintiffs - citizens of Hakodate City in Hokkaido, which is located just across the sea from Aomori Prefecture - were not permitted to speak.

In the trial at Hakodate District Court, the state argued that a public hearing "aims to promote local residents' understanding and seek their cooperation, and is not an arena for hearing their views." The ruling has prompted angry protests from those who were able to attend and speak at the 1998 hearing.

#### Municipalities Issue Ordinances Refusing Radioactive Wastes

Local ordinances rejecting radioactive waste were established one after another at various municipalities. One concerns a plan to construct intermediate storage facilities for spent fuel. On 27 March, in reaction to rumors that Tanegashima Island in Kagoshima Prefecture might be selected as a potential site, the Yaku Town Council of Yakushima Island, located next to Tanegashima, passed a draft ordinance rejecting the plan. A similar ordinance was then passed on 30 June by Nishi-no-omote City Council in Tanegashima.

Another case involves a plan for an underground research facility for high-level radioactive waste disposal. On 11 May, Horonobe Town Council in Hokkaido passed an ordinance bill. The ordinance declares that although they would promote the construction of the facility, they would not permit radioactive waste to be brought in. On 28 June, the adjacent Hamatonbetsu Town Council adopted a resolution against the plan, stating that they will refuse to accept radioactive waste or the construction of waste disposal-related facilities anywhere in the northern part of Hokkaido.

The plan to build an underground research facility is being pursued by the Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute (JNC). On 6 and 7 July, Yasumasa Togo, chairman of JNC, visited six municipalities concerned, asking for cooperation with the proposal. All these municipalities except Horonobe Town expressed opposition and doubts about the plan. The local explanatory meetings held by JNC on the 17th in Horonobe and on the 18th in Wakkanai City were overwhelmed by residents' objections to the scheme.

#### Jet Planes Crash in the vicinity of Onagawa Nuclear Plant

On 4 July, two jet training planes of the Self Defense Force crashed on a mountain 4.5 km south of the Tohoku Electric Power Company's Onagawa Nuclear Plant (2 BWRs). Also, on 22 March, a jet training plane crashed on a mountain 9.5 km north of the plant. All of the planes belonged to the Air Self Defense Force's Matsushima Base which, like the plant, is located in Miyagi Prefecture. Planes from the Matsushima base have been conducting acrobatic flight training. A total of 700 planes are making these flights each month, and they are said to avoid an area of 3.6 km diameter around the nuclear plant. Local residents are worried that these jet planes may crash directly into the plant. There is no protective ceiling above the reactors that would withstand the impact of a jet plane.

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