

# Japan: Disaster - earthquake and nuclear explosion

Tuesday 15 March 2011, by [AKIMOTO Yoko](#) (Date first published: 15 March 2011).

Sadly, as time passes on, the reality is waking us. We see new figures whenever we switch on TV, which may be, I feel, the same as our friends in Pakistan or Haiti who are still being suffered by natural disaster. Yesterday the governor of Miyagi announced that the count of bodies would amount to over 10,000. And today the No.3 reactor at Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant has exploded, and now (2 am on the 15<sup>th</sup>, in local time) core melting is happening at the No.2 reactor. It is quite clear that the nuclear power plants in Fukushima are beyond control.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12724953>

Forty years ago, our senior members struggled against the construction of nuclear power plants, identifying danger of nuclear power plants in this earthquake-prone country. Unfortunately, it has just become a reality!! At that time, the government expropriated fishing rights from the fishery cooperative or local community to build the nuclear power plants. The government forcibly destroyed people's life on fishing or fishing grounds to build those plants, saying with confidence that nuclear power plant was safe.

Now the government and the TEPCO, Tokyo Electric Power responsible for the accident parrot one phrase that an earthquake much bigger than expected struck the northern part of the mainland in Japan. However, Hiroaki Koide, associate professor of Research Reactor Institute, Kyoto University said, "As Japan is a country where earthquakes happen the most frequently in the world, unexpected earthquakes must never happen if the government push nuclear power generation." Many ordinary Japanese may be convinced of who is to be blamed for the accident.

The TEPCO started planned outage in Tokyo and some other prefectures yesterday, which will continue till the end of April, explaining that the nuclear accident caused shortage of electricity. In connection with it, many trains are expected to go out of service. Only the half or less of regular trains ran yesterday.

Stores or supermarkets in the metropolitan area don't have enough food to sell to consumers. Milk, water, fish, bread, or rice as well is getting scarce. Some of display shelves get empty. Distribution problems are one major reason for it. Some highways are blocked. Cargo trucks for Tokyo are stalled in highways or ordinary roads.

Residents in the Tokyo metropolitan area have enjoyed convenience for long.

We could easily get, buy or eat any food in Tokyo even if we didn't know such food was displayed after a long journey of several hundreds' or more kilometers. We didn't have to know who produced it; however, it was OK to us here in Tokyo. Sadly enough, the biggest earthquake and core melting have reminded us of distribution actually supported by the weak process and made us think how we should live a life.

Like over-production, over-consumption and over-damping, over-convenience inevitably produces cracks in the planet, accompanied by excessive or unnecessary carbon emission or destruction of the Mother Earth. The way of life or how we live a life without destroying the environment might be our big task to be considered.

Well, four days have passed since the tragedy happened. Catastrophe information is coming out one after another. We have not yet known whether some of our members in affected areas are safe. Radiation contamination is spreading. Reportedly, it has already got to Tokyo. Now we are cloaked in invisible anxiety.

In Solidarity, with Hope & Love

Yoko Akimoto  
Secretariat, ATTAC Japan

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## **News, March 14, 2011**

*(an answer to a mail)*

Dear Pierre [Rousset],

Actually, the things are getting worse day by day.

Today around noon, the No.3 reactor at Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant has exploded, too. Now two reactors are melting down. This is a catastrophe or disaster!

We ATTAC Japan has not yet contacted some members in affected areas. We don't know if they are safe. It's hard to contact them even by mobile phone or e-mail, because most base stations or some servers at the provider are down.

As you know, there are many of our old comrades in affected areas (Northern part of the mainland: Sendai, Fukushima, Iwate, etc.). I don't know what is happening with them. I'm afraid some are devastated or others are injured or killed, or their family, relatives or friends as well. *[I seems most of them are safe.]*

Our senior comrades fought against construction of power plants in Fukushima forty years ago. They already knew and identified danger of nuclear

power plants in this earthquake country. Unfortunately, it has become a reality!!

Some of my old friends in affected areas have been still continuing struggle or concerned with campaign against nuclear power plants in Fukushima where explosion is happening now, even after the plants were completed.

They plan an open meeting in Iwaki (the biggest city of the Pacific area in Fukushima) toward the end of this month, titled as "40 years' Fukushima Nuclear Power Plants and Our Future". When they formed a plan of the meeting initially, none of them could expect that in fact, such a disaster would happen.

The Tokyo Electric Power Company responsible for nuclear power plants in affected areas started planned outage in Tokyo (excluding urban central area), and some other prefectures this morning, reportedly because failure of power plants caused shortage of electricity. In connection with it, about half of commuter trains are out of service today.

Milk, fish, or other food as well are getting scarce at stores or supermarkets, because of difficulty of distribution (some highways are blocked).

Anyway, we can say definitely that this is really a catastrophe.

In solidarity

Yoko

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