

# **A Nuclear-Free Future is Our Common Dream: Letter from the Japanese Activists Deported from India**

Thursday 1 November 2012, by [NAKAI Shinsuke](#), [UNODA Yoko](#), [WATARIDA Masahiro](#) (Date first published: 29 September 2012).

## **To our friends who struggle for nuclear free future,**

A historic movement is underway in Tamil Nadu State against Koodankulam nuclear power station. People across the world are moved by the resistance and want to express solidarity

We tried to visit India to show our solidarity on September 25 but were denied access at Chennai airport. After an hour-long interrogation, we had our paper written as "Inadmissible person", which denied our entrance to India. It is unforgivable for the government, which invites countless nuclear merchants from Western countries, to deny such small citizens like us. We are writing this letter because we would like you to know what we experienced.

When we got off the plane and approached the immigration counter, one personnel came to us smiling.

We asked them where we can get arrival visa. They immediately checked our passport and brought us to the immigration office. There were more than 5 personnels asking questions to us respectively. I was brought to another room and three personnels asked me whether I am a member of No Nukes Asia Forum Japan. I was surprised because they mentioned the concrete name of the organization.

"You signed the international petition on Koodankulam, didn't you? Your name was on the list. It means you are anti-nuclear" a personnel said. It so happens that all three of us our signatories of the international petition (May 2012). Another one asked me what we would do at Koodankulam. I was surprised again because no one had mentioned about Koodankulam. But the man showed me a printed itinerary of our domestic flight that I have never seen yet.

"We already know that you have booked the domestic flight. So you are going there. Who invited you all? Who is waiting for you at the arrival gate now? Who will pick you up at Tuticorin airport? Tell me their names. Tell me their telephone number. Will you join the agitation?" □ They asked many questions and surprisingly, they knew all our Indian friends' names. We felt scared. We felt something wrong would happen to you. So we didn't answer.

We know that many scientists supportive of nuclear power, and some that are paid by the nuclear industry have visited India and spoken on behalf of nuclear power. These were not merely allowed by the Indian Government, but even encouraged. With India's avowed commitment to democracy, one would imagine that contrary points of view would be encouraged.

Then, they asked me another questions about us, referring to a bunch of papers. "What is Mr. Watarida's occupation? He is involved in the anti-nuclear movement in Kaminoseki, right?" According to Mr. Watarida, there was a lot of information about our activities in Japan written on

those papers. They already researched our activities in detail.

They tried to ask various questions. At first they talked in a friendly manner. They told us that we can enter India if we gave them the information about the movement in Koodankulam. But gradually they got irritated because they wanted to deport us as soon as possible. The Air Asia airplane that brought us to Chennai one hour earlier was about to leave again for Kuala Lumpur. We were at the office more than one hour. Finally, they said " Answer within 5 minutes, otherwise you will be deported." We answered a little but it seemed that they didn't get satisfied with our answer. We were taken to the departure area. Mr. Nakai asked them to allow him to go to washroom, but they refused. Probably they didn't want us to call some of our Indian friends, or they were waiting us to make domestic phone call. They wanted to know the exact names and telephone number of our friends, so I couldn't use my cell phone.

At the last gate, Mr. Watarida asked a immigration staff why we got deported. He answered that the Indian government directed us to be sent out and that we would be in jail if we didn't obey. We were taken to the Air Asia airplane and it took off immediately.

We were given a paper. Yoko Unoda's was written as below;

*WHEREAS Mrs. Yoko Unoda national who arrived at Chennai Airport from Kuala Lumpur on 25/9/2012 by flight No. AK1253 has been refused permission to land in India.*

*You are hereby directed under para 6 of THE FOREIGNERS ORDER 1948 TO REMOVE THE SAID FOREIGNER Mrs. Yoko Unoda out of India by the same flight or the first available flight failing which you shall be liable for action under the said PARA of Foreigners Order, 1948.*

We had come to India in peace, to extend our peace and to extend our learnings about the dangers of nuclear power. As Japanese, we should know what the problems are with both the military use and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We are aware that in India, your government has organised international meetings of the nuclear industry, where the people interested in selling nuclear equipment have been invited as state guests to come and flaunt their wares. We have nothing to sell, just our stories about the dangers and pains that nuclear energy will bring you. It is unfortunate that your Government denied us the hospitality that the people of India were extending to us. In a democracy, and particularly with controversial technologies like nuclear energy, it is important that free and fair debate is conducted in a fear-free atmosphere. It is clear that the nuclear establishment in India is not prepared for such a free and fair debate.

In Japan, a report of a high level committee set up by the Parliament after Fukushima found that the disaster was made in Japan and was a result of secrecy, the failure of people to question their Governments and the closeness between the regulators and the nuclear energy operators.

Your government's refusal of entry to us merely because we bear an opinion contrary to theirs on the matter of nuclear energy speaks poorly of your its claims to democratic ideals and free speech. We are fearful of the consequences of deploying a hazardous technology like nuclear power in such a secretive and oppressive context.

We could not see people in Koodankulam and those sympathized with them. It is truly regrettable that we could not meet them. However, after being denied entrance, our concern has become more serious and our solidarity has been stronger. Those who push for nuclear energy are closely connected. Globally, there are no borders when it comes to nuclear devastation. Then let us overcome the difference of nationalities and languages and make thousands of, ten thousands of comrades to fight for our future without nukes together. We hope to see you in India on next opportunity.

**Masahiro Watarida** Hiroshima Network against Kaminoseki NPP

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