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CNIC Workshop on Energy Held in S. Korea

Network on energy issue in Asia formally launched



Clockwise from top left: Girish Sant; Kenichi Oshima; Jong-dall Kim; Masafumi Takubo; Anung Kariyadi; Gurmit Singh; Jorgen Norgaard; Komei Hosokawa; Roberto Verzola; Yasushi Santo; Pipob Udomittipong; Hideyuki Ban; Kuang-Jung Hsu; Corazon Vardez-Fabros; Jung Wk Kim; Chirapol Sintunawa; Mika Ohbayashi; John Byrne; Tetsunari Iida; Junji Mine

CNIC held the 1998 Workshop on a Sustainable and Peaceful Energy Future in Asia between September 28 to 30 at Seoul National University in Korea. It was co-sponsored by the Joint Institute for Sustainable and Environmental Energy Future (JISEEF) established by four institutes from the United States and Korea.

Network on energy issue in Asia

Whenever we discuss the issue of global energy and environmental problems these days, one of the most important issues concerns energy policies to be taken by the Asian countries. This workshop was held in order to reexamine the "energy and climate" issue being discussed throughout the world following the 3rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP3) held last December, and to gain some insights into the issue before the opening of

COP4, held from November 2 to 12 in Buenos Aires.

Last year, CNIC officially launched the project on a sustainable and peaceful energy

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in Asia project. Prior to this, a study group was set up to discuss how and what CNIC can contribute to the global energy issue. Our conclusion was to focus on the issue of promoting sustainable energy in Asia where energy demand has continued to rise and to which the Japanese nuclear industry is trying to export its technology. We also acknowledged that in dealing with this issue, we must do it in cooperation with the people of Asia.

It was very natural for us to reach this conclusion, since we had often received requests from people in various Asian countries to act on the issue. And when we looked back to our activities in the past, and at the same time, considered focusing our movement on Asia, it became apparent that there was a need to set up an Asian network on energy with an emphasis on the problems of nuclear power.

During COP3, CNIC organized a workshop titled, A Sustainable and Peaceful Energy Future in Asia held within the UN conference hall. We also co-sponsored the International Citizens' Conference: A Sustainable and Peaceful Energy Future in Kyoto. There were many intense debates during these events, and the idea of creating a network in Asia was also

Outline of the workshop

At the workshop, 22 energy experts and environmental activists from 12 countries - India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Denmark, Sweden, U.S., and China - participated by submitting a study report. The reports will be compiled in the workshop's final report to be released from CNIC soon.

On the first and second day, various reports and keynote speeches were given. The workshop opened with welcome speeches given by Prof. Jung Wk Kim from the graduate school for Environmental Studies (GSES) at Seoul National University, and myself. Kim Sanghyun, a member of the Korean Parliament who has been actively involved in environmental issues, also gave a short celebratory speech. Following this, the first special speech by Prof. John Byrne entitled, reclaiming our Atmospheric Commons, and the second by Prof.

discussed. The purpose of the network, which would be based on the views of the Asian people themselves, would be to share the information provided by experts and grassroots activists and to utilize the knowledge gained through the network in the actual movement.

Furthermore, it was decided that a workshop in Asia would be held next year as the network's first project. To prepare for this, we started calling on various Asian organizations in May to participate in the workshop. Positive responses came from groups in Thailand, Indonesia, India, Taiwan, Korea, and the Philippines. Prof. John Byrne from Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEP) of the University of Delaware, an organization which is actively involved in various projects in Asia, as well as renowned energy experts such as Prof. Lars Nielson from Lund University in Sweden, and Prof. Jorgen Norgard from the Technical University of Denmark, were also willing to participate.

Now that the workshop has been completed with much success, and the network has began full operation, we are hoping some very important joint projects will be initiated.

Jong-dall Kim from Kyongpook National University titled, Korea's Perspective for Sustainable Energy Path: Renewables and Conservations, were given.

Participants from each of the 12 countries then gave reports on the energy situation in their countries. The study paper submitted by Prof. Shiqiu Zhang from Beijing University, who was unable to attend the workshop, drew attention to the fact that although China ranks second in the world in terms of energy production and consumption, the amount of energy consumption per capita is low, and the nation holds an inefficient energy consumption structure creating an uneven distribution of energy supply. Still, the paper suggests that there are possibilities for energy saving and renewable energy.

From India, Girish Sant from PRAYAS Energy Group gave a report on the current reor-

ganization of the electric power industry, and the crisis in the energy industry. It mentions the need to introduce integrated resource planning into the current energy policy, and introduces citizens participation to the policy.

From Indonesia, Anung Kariyadi from WALHI gave a report on the situation prior to the current economic crisis: how investment and the economy had been growing rapidly causing an increase in energy demand, and the government's policy and its plan to develop nuclear power, followed by a report on the current situation. Gurmit Singh from Center for Environment, Technology & Development, Malaysia (CETDEM) gave a report on the country's current energy situation, the situation at the time CETDEM made its survey map of Malaysia's renewable energy in 1996 and its analysis, and the possibilities for effective energy use.

Corazon Vardez Fabros from Nuclear Free Philippines Coalition gave a report on the nation's nuclear energy program, the current situation of the anti-nuclear movement, and the introduction of renewable energy. Prof. Kuang- Jung Hsu from National Taiwan Univ. gave a report on the ever-increasing energy consumption and greenhouse gases emission. She concluded that both economic growth and environmental protection can be obtained, even though one of the most controversial arguments at COP4 will be the introduction of emission controls for countries similar to Taiwan. She also pointed out that the export of nuclear waste to North Korea would not actually take place. From Thailand, Pipob Udomittipong of Alternative Energy Project for Sustainabilities gave a report. He said that although an increase of energy and power consumption was expected due to rapid economic growth, the growth was not as much as was first anticipated, and therefore the government-owned power utility is now in serious debt.

Every report was very well received and many people felt that more time should have been given to each speaker so that debates could have followed after the speeches.

On the second day Prof. Komeii Hosokawa gave the third special speech in place of

Dr. Takagi of CNIC. He stated that nuclear power could never be a sustainable and renewable energy source, but rather harbours many problems in terms of peaceful use of science and technology. The fourth special speech was given by Prof. Jorgen Norgaard. He said that the level of satisfaction of consumers when using energy services does not necessarily correspond to consumption growth. Rather, there is a stronger possibility that consumption will decrease as society matures. His speech made a strong impression on the participants from Asian countries where the standards of living similar to those in present-day Europe are being sought.

Following the keynote speeches came the three study sessions. The first session on sustainable energy systems opened with a presentation by CNIC's Hideyuki Ban. It was based on CNIC's second phase report on the nuclear power life cycle assessment, which examines the case where reprocessing and MOX plans are realized.

The second session was conducted by Prof. Chirapol Sintunawa from Mahidol University in Thailand. He gave a presentation about the joint project on demand side management (DSM) which he conducted with the government. Special attention was received by the audience when he showed a video of a TV program for the promotion of an awareness on energy-saving. The program first calls on the viewers to "turn out the lights for 15 minutes." Then it airs a graph that shows the actual decrease in electricity demand compared to that from the previous day. The program seemed to be working very effectively in educating the people on the need to save energy, and was considered very impressive.

From the supply-side was Roberto Verzola from Philippine Greens who reported on the supply-side situation in the Philippines. According to his report, the government's program is based on high economic growth, and coal is being considered the main resource.

For the session on the economy of renewable energy sources, Dr. Kenichi Oshima, from Takasaki City University of Economics, who is also a member of CNIC's study group on

energy, reported the result of the cost study on nuclear power in Japan. In addition, Prof. Jongdall Kim reported on the economic possibilities of DSM in Korea.

In the session on the possible "scenario" for the future, Tetsunari Iida from Lund Univ. in Sweden, who is also a member of CNIC's study group, reported on the system of operation of Japanese electric power industry, and the possibility of popularizing Green Electricity in Japan. Prof. Byrne then presented his proposal on an energy scenario for Asia.

The final day was spent on discussing the proposal for COP4, and future plans for the network. Regarding the network, the participants confirmed the importance of sharing information from experts and activists throughout the world, to come up with effective measures by learning about the different situations in various countries. In addition, it was confirmed that a workshop would be held once every year, that CNIC will act as the secretariat of the network and that a steering committee will be established. It was also agreed that the proposal to be made to COP4 would be finalized after making adjustments in the opinions of the participants after the workshop has closed. The proposal was then officially released on November 2. (See below)

We were overwhelmed by the sincere atti-

tude and profound knowledge of the participants from Asia. We hope to continue strengthening our ties and deepening our debate. We would also like to thank the many people who helped us make the workshop a success. Prof. Jung Wk Kim of GSES (one of the original members of JISEEF) worked as the coordinator for the workshop in Korea, and was helped by several postgraduate students who worked as volunteers. Prof. Wk is one of Korea's most respected and renowned environmentalists, and has been involved in various environmental issues, including opposition to the construction plan to build an international airport on the sea, which was prevented by the opposition movement.

Because CNIC's former Director, Jinzaburo Takagi, who had planned to work as the main coordinator of this workshop, became ill in the middle of preparations, Prof. John Byrne of CEEP (also one of the original members of JISEEF) also devoted a great deal of his time and energy in helping us organize the workshop. In addition to the people whose names have been mentioned above, there were also many others to whom we would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation for their help in making this workshop a success.

by Mika Ohbayashi

- The below proposal decided at the workshop and aimed at COP4 was released on November 2. The proposal was also distributed at COP4.

ASIAN SCIENTISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS CALL FOR ACTION TO PROTECT OUR CLIMATE

We, the Undersigned, call upon the Fourth Conference of the Parties to adopt the following principles:

Climate Sustainability: Set an explicit goal of 60 percent reduction in anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to occur as soon as possible in order to restore the balance between human activity and the atmosphere of our planet.

Climate Democracy: Preserve the atmosphere as a global commons needed for all forms of life to prosper. Policies that would sell and buy "rights" to pollute this commons should be avoided. The

right to a climate-stable future should be respected as a fundamental democratic right for all peoples - present and future generations - and for all living things.

Climate Equity: Adopt reduction targets and timetables that establish equitable treatment among the Parties. Because developed countries are responsible for the build-up of greenhouse gases that has led to a warmer climate, the Parties should expect these countries to take the first steps to solve the problem. Annex 1 countries should demonstrate their commitment to an equitable solution to the climate change problem by signing the Kyoto Protocol immediately. However, all countries should participate in the realization of Climate Sustainability according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

A Peaceful Energy Future: Reject nuclear technology and embrace Peaceful Energy -- energy conservation and decentralized renewable energy applications as the only acceptable energy strategy to restore climate stability. Recent nuclear testing in Asia and the region's continued development of nuclear technology underscore the need for scientists and environmentalists to speak out clearly for a Nuclear-Free Peaceful Energy Future.

Climate Sensitive Development: Establish support for international development strategies that replace the existing two-tier world economy of rich and poor with one that promotes sustainable livelihoods and ecologies for all peoples across our planet. The current international finance system for developing countries, including energy development support from such sources as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Official Development Assistance (ODA), etc., should be revised. Climate-sensitive mechanisms that transfer technology and capital and build human capacity (including research and development infrastructures) to pursue Peaceful and Sustainable Energy Options are essential to solving our global problems. In this regard, a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) that supports capability-building for Climate Sustainability (rather than transferring "emission credits" from poor to wealthy countries) must be the focus of the Parties.

SIGNATORIES

The Network on the Sustainable and Peaceful Energy Future in Asia

Dr. Jinzaburo Takagi, Citizens' Nuclear Information Center (Japan); Ms. Mika Ohbayashi, Citizens' Nuclear Information Center (Japan); Mr. Anung Kariyadi, WALHI (Indonesia); Mr. Pipob Udomittipong, Alternative Energy Project (Thailand); Prof. Chirapol Sintunawa, Mahidol University (Thailand); Mr. Roberto Verzola, Philippine Greens (the Philippines); Ms. Corazon Vardez-Fabros, Nuclear Free Philippines Coalition (the Philippines); Mr. Girish Sant, PRAYAS Energy Group (India); Prof. Shiqiu Zhang, Beijing University (China); Prof. Kuang-Jung Hsu, TEPU, Taiwan University (Taiwan); Prof. Jong-dall Kim, Kyongpook National University (S.Korea); Prof. Jung Wk Kim, Seoul National University (S. Korea); Prof. John Byrne, University of Delaware (U.S.A.); Dr. Komei Hosokawa, Saga University (Japan); Mr. Tetsunari Iida, Lund University (Sweden); Mr. Ken'ichi Ohshima, Takasaki City University of Economics (Japan); Mr. Ken Tsuzuku, REXTA (Japan); Mr. Junji Mine, Fernande (Japan); Mr. Dai Nakajima, Decentralized Energy Research Groupe (Japan)

(Others to follow)

Spent-Fuel Cask Data Doctored

— Data on MOX cask also altered forcing gov't to reexamine safety inspection on fuel transport.

Incidents of fabrication and alteration of inspection data on spent-fuel transport casks was revealed to the public on October 7, following an e-mail report sent to the press and other related organizations by an anonymous worker employed in one of the manufacturing firms. The maker of the cask's synthetic resin which shield neutrons emitted from the fuel, and is made of hydrogen, boron and other raw materials, admitted the accusation. The news quickly swept across Japan, stirring up once again anxiety about the safety of Japan's nuclear programs and creating more doubts about the government and the nuclear industry's management ability.

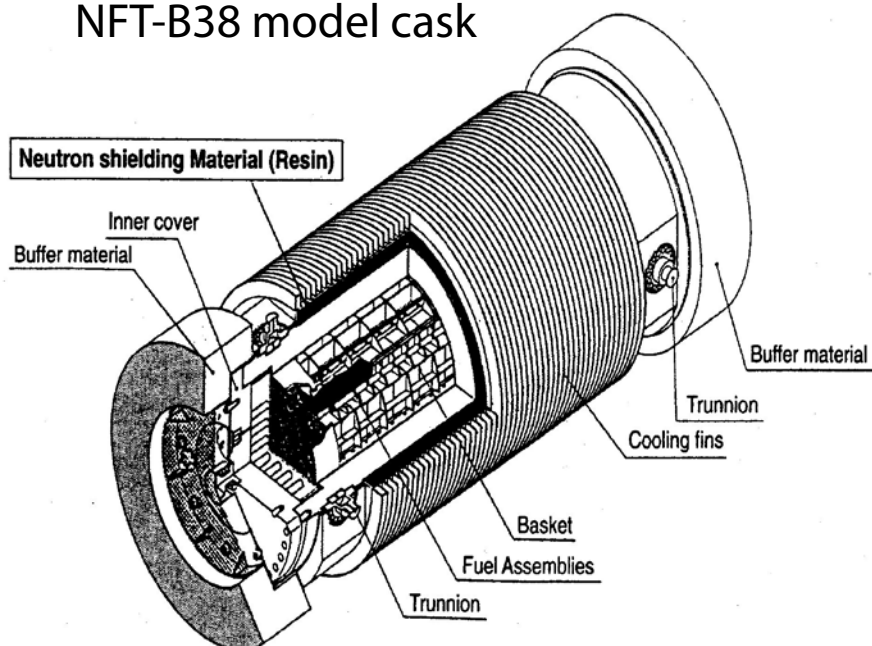
Because of this revelation, 8 tons of spent-fuel that had been shipped from Fukushima II to Aomori's Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant on October 2 is being kept inside a storage pool. No further shipments of spent-fuel from other nuclear plants have been made since news of the fabrication and alteration of data was made public.

The casks used to transport spent-fuel to the Rokkasho plant are the NFT model. Depending on the type of spent-fuel and the number of fuel-assemblies that go into the cask, license for each of the four different types of casks to be used for boiling water reactor (BWR) fuel and two more types for pressurized water reactor (PWR) fuel were obtained.

The resin is packed inside the outer layer of a cask. After the cask is completed, water is poured inside it as the fuel assemblies are inserted. In addition to the resin, water also shields the neutrons because it consists of hydrogen. For the newly made casks, boron - a substance that is especially effective in absorbing neutrons - was added to the resin. This is done so that the casks can be used to ship a high-burnup fuel expected to be treated at Rokkasho in the future.

Nuclear Fuel Transport Co. Ltd. is responsible for transporting the fuel. The company placed orders for a total of 52 casks. Among the orders, 43 were placed with Japanese companies including Kobe Steel Co., Mitsui Engineering & Shipbuilding Co., Hitachi Zosen Corp., and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. The remaining nine orders were placed with Precise Component Corp. (PCC) of U.S. Gen-

NFT-B38 model cask



den Engineering Services and Construction Co., a subsidiary of Japan Atomic Power Co., supplied the raw materials that make up the resin and was in charge of the packing. The firm manufactured the resin by buying the patent for a NS-4-FR type resin developed by the American firm BISCO Co.

The content of the resin mixture packed inside the casks is certified by an attached material certificate that shows the analytical data taken previously from a sample mixture. The data shows the volume of hydrogen and boron, as well as the density of the resin measured after the sample mixture has hardened. This certificate which the company is required to issue is the only document that assures the quality of the resin.

Genden Engineering, however, had been issuing certificates with fabricated data because they did not have enough time to analyze the sample and also meet the packing deadline. Even when there was enough time, the firm altered the data because the numbers did not meet the standard stipulated by Nuclear Fuel Transport Co.

During an investigation by the Science and Technology Agency (STA), data for 39 of the 43 casks made in Japan was discovered to have been falsified, meaning almost all of the casks were "disqualified."

A few days later, on October 13, Transport Ministry officials announced that test data on a cask to be used to transport Kansai Electric Power Company's (KEPCO) mixed oxide (MOX) fuel from Europe to Japan had also been the object of tampering. KEPCO is planning to load MOX fuel at Takahama 4 in Fukui Prefecture during next spring's regular inspection. Because permission for the loading is expected to be issued in December, the fuel is already being manufactured at the MOX Demonstration Plant in Sellafield, U.K.

The cask in question is an Excellox model that was manufactured by British Steel Engineering. Although packing was done by the

firm, raw materials for the resin were supplied by Genden Engineering. The Ministry of Transport, which regulates the sea transport of nuclear fuel, is currently inspecting the cask and discussing how best to deal with the issue.

According to STA's estimations, the cask's surface dose of neutrons will increase by 30% when it carries spent uranium fuel. This is because the resin's shielding ability will drop due to the decrease of hydrogen and boron content. The result shows that if the cask is actually used to carry MOX fuel - a trip that will take about 2 months by sea - safety will be endangered even more so. CNIC, therefore, cannot allow such a cask that contains resin of such poor quality to be used to carry MOX fuel.

The fabrication and altering of such crucial data by these firms is not in any way morally acceptable. However, it has become clear that within Japan's nuclear industry, a completely different standard of moral judgement exists, one that asserts that even if they cannot meet the official standards for resin in order to assure safety, it is okay as long as the product's delivery date is met.

If the industry has developed such an irresponsible attitude, what was STA doing and what is it prepared to do to improve the situation? To our extreme concern, though, during the series of meetings held by STA's special investigative committee, the subject of whether or not to cancel the approval already given to these NFT casks was not raised even once. Rather, the biggest issue was how to convince the public that all casks are "safe." And on November 12, the committee formally decided that the casks were "safe" after conducting a series of tests to check for safety. As for the MOX cask in question, we await the Ministry of Transport's decision.

No matter what the outcome may be, this incident has proved that Japan's nuclear safety inspection system is nothing but an "illusion."

by Masako Sawai

New Series of Roundtable Talks Begins

-- The second series of nuclear energy Roundtable Talks was launched in September after a two-year interval following the first series that ended in September 1996.

In setting up this second series of Roundtable Talks, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) first selected five people who will share responsibility to act as discussion moderators, taking charge of the overall operation of the various meetings. The selection did not include a single anti-nuclear representative; on the other hand, two pro-nuclear members were selected. The AEC is authorized to make the choices. However, neither the method of selection nor reasons for the particular choices were made public.

Six guest speakers were invited to each of the two meetings held under the common theme, "Why nuclear power now?" The meetings were opened to 200 observers from the public, chosen by lottery before the meeting began.

At the first meeting held on September 9, Mie Asaoka head of the Kiko Network, an NGO working to prevent global warming, presented her view that the government must stop constructing new nuclear plants. Her views, however, were counter-attacked by various pro-nuclear members. A chief-researcher of Central Research Institute of Electric Power Industry declared that it is absolutely necessary to build more nuclear power plants in Japan because demand for energy is increasing every year. Another speaker, Hitoshi Yoshioka, a Kyushu University professor presented an analysis and general evaluation of the nuclear power generating system and why it is necessary. During this meeting, the six participants agreed that there is a need to promote freedom of information and to open the door to ordinary citizens so that they might join the nuclear policy decision-making process.

At the second meeting held on October 26,

CNIC's Baku Nishio was invited as one of the six speakers. As a result of this meeting a shared understanding emerged that there is no need to build more nuclear plants. Basically, the discussion focused on three points: 1) Implement a nuclear phase-out program as soon as possible; 2) Stop building new plants; 3) Maintain the present share of nuclear power at 30% of the nation's total electricity supply.

Since the Japanese government has a plan to build 20 more plants by the year 2010, the outcome of this second meeting will mean a great deal in our attempt to reverse these government plans.

With regard to the AEC's method of setting up this new Roundtable Talks, CNIC joined with other NGOs in submitting a letter of protest calling for more open and democratic methods. Although the new Roundtable has begun without any actual improvements towards building the grounds for a fair discussion, we will continue to watch the direction of the discussions and nominate people who will speak out against Japan's nuclear policy.

From here on, three or four more meetings are scheduled to take place by March next year. One will be in Tsuruga-city where a nuclear plant is located, and the other two will be in Osaka and Tokyo where most of the nation's electricity is supplied. The discussions will be summarized by the moderators and then presented soon after March. Although the AEC plans to make the summary a final report, there are strong requests both from the public and the moderators themselves that the talks be continued beyond next spring. No decision, however, has been made.

by Hideyuki Ban

Anti-Nuke Who's Who

Masayuki Sato

A labor union-man determined to stop MOX plan

by Tadao Yabe, member of the Kashiwazaki City council



Masayuki Sato

The bridge between citizens and workers.

Masayuki Sato is a prominent member of the Kashiwazaki City civil servants' labor union and a leading anti-nuclear activist working with his own union as well as with local anti-nuclear citizens' groups. The 54-year-old salaryman turned activist first came to Kashiwazaki to work at a private firm but over time became increasingly involved in anti-nuclear and labor movements. During the past thirty years he has changed jobs, married and settled down to life as a leading and committed citizen of Kashiwazaki.

Sato is driven by a strong sense of justice and he is not afraid to stand up against authority in order to fight for what is right. Of all the activists in the three local anti-nuclear groups, he is known as the clearest and most logical thinker, whose sharp tongue has defeated many an opponent in debate. Sato's presence has been instrumental in keeping the struggles against the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear plants moving forward on track and steered well clear of all traps of opportunism and division.

Sato worked as the union's secretary-general for three years from 1988 during one of the most difficult periods. Kashiwazaki-Kariwa 1 had started operation in 1985 and the

anti-nuclear movement was forced to adopt a more indirect approach which differed from the direct, physical obstruction tactics used in the past. Today the most pressing issue for the movement is to stop the controversial plan to burn mixed oxide (MOX) fuel at one of the Kashiwazaki reactors. At this important time, Sato is about to be appointed as speaker of the labor union at the end of November.

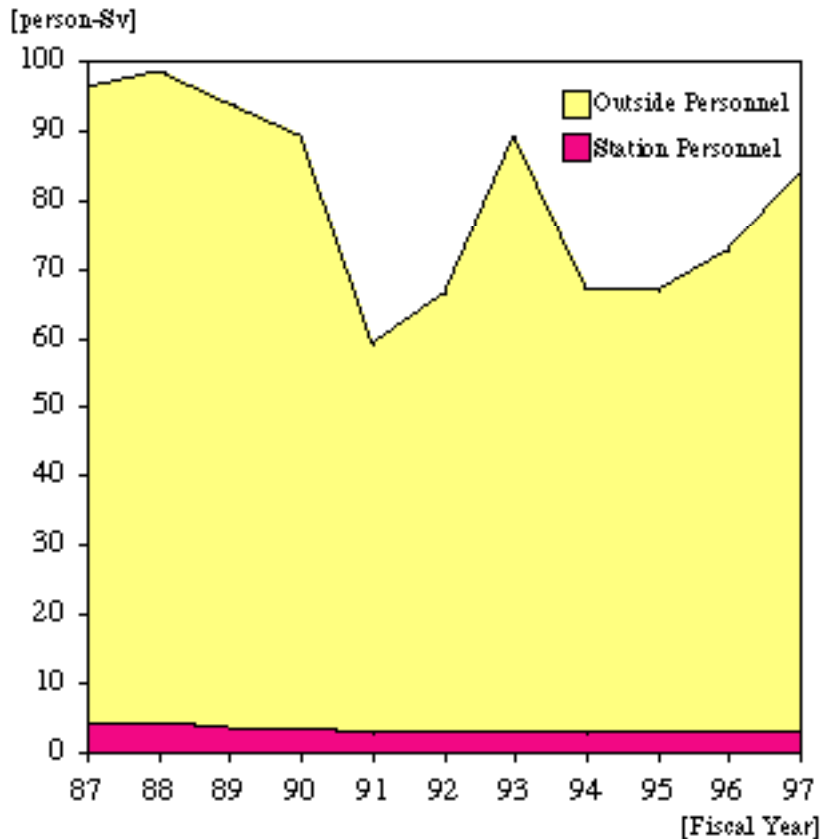
As the world's largest nuclear site with a plant that holds a total capacity of 8212 MW, Kashiwazaki-Kariwa has become more controversial than ever, with more and more people now determined to say "No!" to the MOX plan. In July of this year, a new grassroots citizens' group was formed to stop the MOX plan. It was originally formed by residents who had gathered to watch a documentary film on Belarus and Chernobyl entitled "Narja's Village" that began screening in Kashiwazaki in April.

While the group acknowledges the existence of a nuclear plant in their city, the members are determined to stop the MOX plan, a plan which does not indicate where the spent-fuel will be kept in the future. The group is also concerned about the issue of spent-fuel in general which continues to accumulate within the plant site. With plans for holding a referendum on the MOX plan, the movement continues to expand and to receive support from more and more people.

Sato and his colleagues, including myself, will work together in close cooperation with the citizens' group to stop this dangerous plan. All the members of our anti-nuclear movements are depending on Sato to serve as the liaison between citizens and workers, and Sato himself is determined to live up every inch to all expectations.

Data: Workers' Radiation Exposure at Nuclear Power Plants

Annual Collective Dose of N-plants (person-Sv)



Fiscal Year	Station Personnel	Outside Personnel	Total
'87	4.17	91.94	96.11
'88	4.14	94.25	98.39
'89	3.46	90.34	93.80
'90	3.29	86.03	89.32
'91	2.86	56.06	58.92
'92	2.92	63.53	66.45
'93	2.98	86.40	89.38
'94	2.66	64.63	67.29
'95	2.97	63.87	66.84
'96	3.15	69.33	72.48
'97	3.21	80.39	83.60

Workers' radiation exposure (annual collective dose) at nuclear power plants in FY1997 increased by more than 10 person-Sv over the previous year. Major cause of the increase is the core shroud replacement at Fukushima I-3 reactor when about 11.5 person-Sv were exposed only within FY1997. The maximum individual exposure dose was 25 mSv. More than 100 workers associated with the core shroud replacement alone were exposed to over 20mSv, in spite of the large-scale chemical decontamination performed at Fukushima I-3. This implies that ageing of nuclear power plants is in progress beyond the limit of the current decontamination technology.

NEWS WATCH

Utilities Compete to Shorten Regular Inspection Period

Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima II-3 (BWR, 1100 MW), which has been undergoing regular inspection, resumed operation on October 18. Altogether operations were suspended for 36 days, the inspection having started on September 12. This marks the shortest inspection period on record, compared to the 38 days it took to inspect Chubu Electric Power Co.'s Hamaoka 3 (BWR, 1100 MW) and Kansai Electric Power Co.'s Ohi 3 (PWR, 1180 MW).

Japanese power utilities have been anxious to shorten the inspection period in order to help improve the economic efficiency of nuclear power plants. Their attempts include such shortcuts as conducting overhauls of equipment only once every other inspection instead of every time, and starting the inspection right after the operation has been switched off while radioactivity is still very hot. These measures clearly demonstrate that priority is placed on economic efficiency at the expense of the safety and protection of workers.

The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) supports these measures. According to media reports, it is preparing to cut down the list of inspection items by more than 10%. Furthermore, while the Electricity Enterprises Act currently stipulates that the interval between regular inspections shall be within 13 months, MITI is considering extending it to anywhere between 16 to 19 months.

Court Says Nuclear Plants Are Negative Legacy

The Kanazawa branch of the Nagoya High Court announced a ruling on September 9 in the suit demanding the suspension of Shika reactor (BWR, 540 MW) in Ishikawa Prefecture. In its ruling, the Court acknowledged that nuclear power plants bear a form of "negative

legacy," using an expression to describe the problems of nuclear power which had never before been used in past trial rulings involving nuclear power.

The Court, however, stopped short of passing a clearcut judgement on the issue, stating that "it is up to the Japanese people or humanity to choose whether to promote nuclear power or abolish it." In response to this decision, the plaintiffs, consisting of local residents, vowed to strengthen their struggle to stop the plant's operation. They said, "If the Court is going to withdraw from its responsibility, we must be the ones to fulfill our responsibility to our children and grandchildren."

PNC Becomes JNC

Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corp. (PNC), which has been a target of public criticism due to a series of accidents and cover-ups, was officially dissolved on September 30. The following day on October 1, the Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute (JNC) was established as the succeeding organization. However, the prevailing view is that the only difference is the organization's name.

It is not known when JNC's two major facilities, the fast breeder reactor Monju and Tokai reprocessing plant, will resume operation. JNC submitted requests to Hokkaido Prefecture and Horonobe-cho on October 12 for permission to build an underground research facility for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste. Although JNC has long planned to construct the facility in Horonobe-cho, the Governor of Hokkaido announced on October 22 his decision to reject the plan. JNC plans to make the same request again, but it can do so only under the condition that it provides Horonobe-cho with a pledge that high-level waste will not be shipped there.

NSC Chairman Testimony

Kazuo Sato, Chairman of the Nuclear Safety Commission, testified on October 21 at a trial seeking to determine whether the construction license used for building the fast breeder reactor (FBR) Monju was invalid. It was the first time that an NSC member was called as a witness in a lawsuit involving nuclear power.

In December 1995, a fire broke out at Monju caused by sodium leakage from the secondary coolant system which led to the denting and thinning of the floor's steel plate lining. During a simulated recreation of the accident conducted in June 1996, the chemical reaction created actual holes on a steel board. Sato asserted that they could not have predicted such a result because at the time when the first safety review was conducted, there was no scientific data to show that it would happen. However, he admitted that construction would not have been approved if the inspection was made based on current knowledge.

Agricultural Co-op Says "No" to Additional Reactor at Tomari

At a board meeting held on September 8, the agricultural cooperative in Iwanai-cho, Hokkaido, which is located across the Iwanai Bay from the Tomari nuclear plant, decided to oppose plans by Hokkaido Electric Power to construct an additional reactor Tomari 3 (PWR, 921 MW). On October 10, letters expressing opposition to the plans were sent to the president of the utility firm, the governor of Hokkaido and the mayor of the town of Iwanai.

In May 1991, after an accident at Tomari 1 (PWR, 579) caused cracks on the turbine wing, a consumer cooperative in Sapporo, the

biggest city in Hokkaido, refused to buy milk produced in Iwanai. This is an excellent illustration of how goods produced in or around nuclear sites are rejected by consumers out of fear, even if there has been no radioactive leakage. Back then, the incident dealt a heavy blow to farmers in the Iwanai area, and this experience strengthened the agricultural cooperative's resolve to oppose the new plan.

After the decision was reported by the media, the agricultural cooperative's office received as many as 1,500 letters and postcards of support written by consumers.

TEPCO Applies for Safety Review on MOX Fueling

Fukushima Prefecture, together with the two local towns, Ohkuma-cho and Futaba-cho, notified Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) on November 2 that they will approve the utility's plan to burn mixed oxide (MOX) fuel at its Fukushima I-3 reactor (BWR, 784 MW) beginning in 1999. In turn, on November 4 TEPCO submitted an application to the Minister of International Trade and Industry for a safety review of the plan.

Kansai Electric Power Co. (KEPCO) had already submitted an application for the safety review of its MOX utilization plan at Takahama 4 (PWR, 870MW) scheduled to begin in 1999, as well as at Takahama 3 (PWR, 870 MW) from 2000. It received the ministry's approval on August 26. The plans are currently being "double checked" by the Nuclear Safety Commission. Although Fukui Prefecture and Takahama-cho have given the green light to apply for the safety review of the two plans, they have not yet approved the actual MOX fueling.

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