

# NUKE INFO TOKYO

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c/o Citizens' Nuclear Information Center

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## Growing Press Concern Over Japan's Plutonium

The plutonium issue is getting increasing press coverage in Tokyo, partly due to fears over the approaching plutonium economy in Japan and partly because of world-wide concern about plutonium from dismantled nuclear weapons in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States).

The Asahi Shimbun, a leading Japanese quality newspaper, has carried a number of articles criticizing Japan's plutonium policy. On January 31 it carried my article "Japan should scrap its plutonium program" in which I emphasized that the enormous stockpile of plutonium Japan is going to have will greatly increase political instability in Asia while contributing nothing to meeting Japan's energy demands. My article was followed by an Asahi editorial

Jinzaburo Takagi



### IN THIS ISSUE

Opposition to Plutonium Policy Mounts 2	
Plutonium News Watch	3
Plans for More N-Power Plants	4
Series 2: Japan's Nuclear Industry	6
Waste Problem in Korea	7
Anti-Nuke Who's Who	8
News Watch: FEPC to buy Electricity	9
from New Sources/Move to Invite ITER to Hokkaido/Feasibility Study for N-Plant in Indonesia/Rokkasho U- Enrichment Plant Suffers Troubles	

on Feb. 22 demanding that the Government thoroughly review its plutonium policy, expressing deep concern about possible proliferation and diversion of Japan's stockpiled plutonium to military purposes, and pointing out the worldwide trend of abandoning FBR projects. The editorial was followed up in March by two articles in the commentary columns by K. Furukawa, a professor of nuclear engineering at Tokai University, and K. Fukutake, a lawyer working on the Monju lawsuit. Both denounced the government plutonium policy as dangerous and unrealistic. Then on March 7, the Asahi carried a report by a European correspondent entitled "The Unflyable Superphenix," detailing the bleak outlook of the French FBR project.

It is quite exceptional that no immediate counterargument has appeared in the Asahi Shimbun from the pro-plutonium lobby and I infer that the stance the Asahi has taken against the plutonium program reflects the fact that there is now growing criticism of the government's plutonium policy even inside the nuclear industry. This inference is based on recent talks with industry people and researchers at national institutes who all wanted to remain anonymous. They told me almost unanimously that they agreed with me on the plutonium issue. I have also learned from these sources that even "quite a few high-ranking government officials are against plutonium utilization" but these officials have so far remained

officially tacit.

Perhaps the STA (Science and Technology Agency) officials responsible for plutonium policy are well aware of these domestic criticisms as well as the concern from abroad. The "plutonium burner" plan for Japan to burn plutonium from Russian nuclear weapons, proposed rather abruptly by the STA, may thus be considered a countermeasure to avert the criticism that Japan is on its way to becoming a "Plutonium Giant." The STA officials may intend to demonstrate that Japan, with its plutonium program and financial capacity, can "contribute to world stability" by absorbing Russian plutonium in its nuclear program. The Russian President, Yeltsin, has expressed his willingness to sell plutonium to Japan as a commercial proposition, but not to have plutonium burned for the sake of non-proliferation. In relation to this Russian attitude, it is noteworthy that the US DOE secretary Watkins was recently cited by the Denver Post as suggesting the possibility of plutonium from US nuclear weapons also being burned in Japanese fast breeders. And as reported in this issue of NIT, South Korea intends to entrust its reprocessing work to Japan. If all these projects go ahead, Japan really will become a world plutonium center.

Nobody knows what will come out of this controversial and contradictory situation. But not much time is left for the critical decision.

## Opposition to Plutonium Policy Mounts

In February we received from the United States a copy of an important letter written to Secretary of State James Baker and signed by members of the U.S. House of Representatives. The letter requests a briefing on the draft Japanese plutonium transport plan, which was known to have been submitted by the Japanese government and was under review by the State Dept. and other agencies.

We immediately translated the letter and asked a Dietman to raise the question of this transport plan in the Diet. The Japanese government affirmed that the first plutonium shipment would take place this autumn, and that 1 ton of plutonium was expected to be transported. However, the government said they were only at the negotiating stage and denied that any official transport plan had been submitted

to the U.S. Then the letter was read out, but the government backed out of a reply by saying they could not disclose any details of the plan as it involved the physical protection of nuclear materials.

We also received a copy of a similar letter written to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and signed by 6 U.S. groups, the Nuclear Control Institute, Natural Resources Defense Council, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Union of Concerned Scientists, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace International. It seems as though major groups concerned about the Japanese plutonium policy have formed a united front to put pressure on the U.S. government.

We on the Japanese citizens' side are planning to put an opinion ad in foreign newspapers, as one action to halt the Japanese plan to utilize plutonium. The ad will state that Japanese citizens are concerned about the grave consequences the Japanese plutonium policy will have for the whole world, and that the key to stopping this policy lies in a decision by the U.S.

government to prohibit transport of plutonium and the stopping of Britain's new THORP. We have started a nationwide campaign to collect funds for the ad, which we plan to run sometime in April.

Citizens in other areas of Japan are also starting various activities to stop the operation of the FBR Monju, and educate the public. These include signature drives to stop Monju, a caravan campaign from Tokai fuel fabrication plant to the Monju site in Fukui prefecture, a letter writing campaign to countries involved in plutonium transport like U.S., Britain, and Panama, seminars on plutonium issues, producing easy-to-understand leaflets and videos on plutonium. An opposition front called the "Plutonium Action Nationwide Network" has been formed by concerned citizens' groups around the country, to work specifically on this issue.

We expect concern among the Japanese people to grow, and nationwide opposition to mount, until the Japanese government is forced to change its policy.

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## Plutonium News Watch

### Russian Plutonium To Be Burned in Japan?

On Feb. 18 the Science and Technology Agency of Japan announced that it is ready to propose to the United States and Russia a plan to dispose of plutonium from dismantled Russian nuclear weapons. Under the plan, the plutonium would be burned in a 800MW class fast reactor now being designed by PNC (Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation). The reactor burns about 2 tons of plutonium per year and would be able to consume 80 tons during its projected 40 year life. Meanwhile MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) is reported to have an alternative plan for burning the Russian plutonium in Japanese LWRs as MOX. Neither plan is taken seriously either in Japan or overseas.

### Pacific Crane Remodelled for Pu Transport

On Feb. 23 the Japanese press reported briefly on the ship to be used for the transport of plutonium from Europe to Japan scheduled to begin this fall. The ship, Pacific Crane, owned by the British company PNTL, was earlier used for the transport of spent fuel and is now being remodelled to transport plutonium. The press report says that the ship will sail under the Japanese flag with a new Japanese name. The press report was very brief but was the first mention of the plutonium ship heard in Japan. In a recent session of parliament the Government refused to make any comment on the ship or its route, with the excuse that it is a highly sensitive issue involving the physical protection of nuclear materials.

## Plans for More N-Power Plants

Plans have suddenly been announced to site new nuclear power plants and add to existing ones. One of the new siting plans comes from Kyushu Electric, which on February 17 announced its intention to conduct a preliminary survey at Kushima in southern Miyazaki Prefecture. The company has also announced a plan to add a further reactor to its Sendai nuclear plant in Kagoshima Prefecture. In addition to Kushima, Kyushu Electric is apparently considering 24 other locations for new sites throughout Kyushu. Two of these are the Nobeoka area in northern Miyazaki Prefecture, and Kamae in southern Oita Prefecture.

There has also been more intensive promotion of siting in locations that have been slated for new plants for some time, such as Higashidori in Aomori Prefecture, Ashihama in Mie Prefecture, and Kaminoseki in Yamaguchi Prefecture.

Meanwhile the Japan Atomic Power Co. states for the first time in its "Business Operation Priorities" (FY1992) that it plans to add reactors to its Tokai plant in Ibaraki Prefecture and its Tsuruga plant in Fukui

### Plutonium News Watch

#### Korean Fuel To Be Reprocessed at Rokkasho?

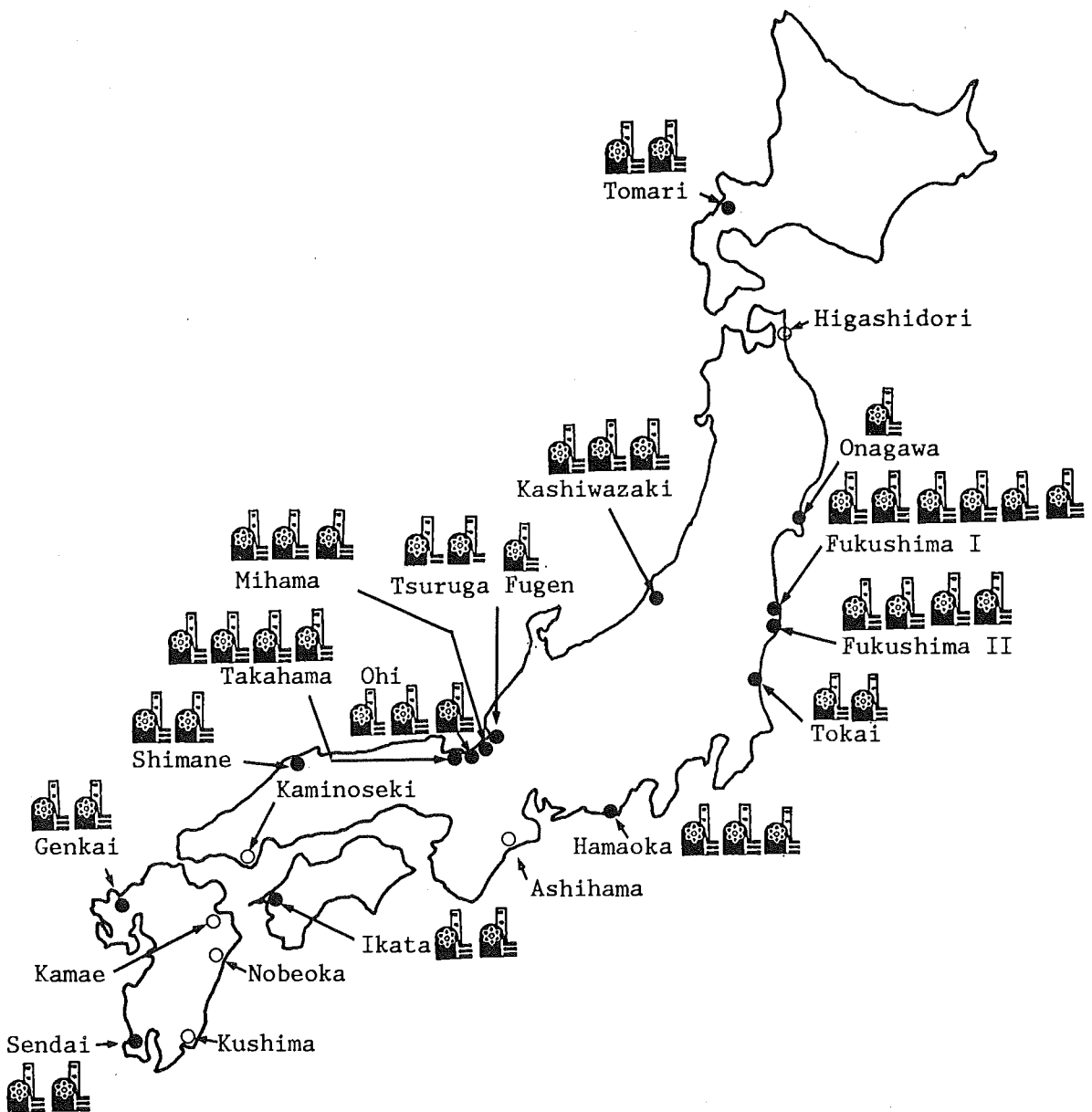
Is the South Korean spent fuel to be reprocessed in Rokkasho-mura? This once rejected plan recently resurfaced when the South Korean Minister of Science and Technology visited Japan in March and told the press here that South Korea might entrust its reprocessing to the Rokkasho plant in future. He made a statement to the same effect last November in the Korean diet but corrected it the next day after it was strongly criticized (see NIT 26). His renewed statement is taken to show Korea's continued willingness to reprocess spent fuel at Rokkasho despite repeated official denials on the Japanese side.

Prefecture. There have also been reports that Kansai Electric is considering adding to its Mihama and Ohi plants in Fukui Prefecture, and NIT No.26 reported in the "News Watch" column that the council of the town in Fukushima Prefecture where the Fukushima 1 plant is located solicited an additional reactor to that plant last September. Tokyo Electric has indicated it welcomes the decision.

Large, 1,300 MW-class reactors are under consideration for all these plans. The reason for the sudden emergence of these new siting and additional construction plans is pressure on the electric utilities by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). If they are to meet the nuclear power development target in the long-term energy strategy worked out in June 1990 by the Advisory Committee for Energy -- a commission to advise the Minister of International Trade and Industry, the electric utilities must start actualizing the plan immediately. In other words, the plan is being expedited to save face for MITI, which has frequently been forced in the past to reschedule plans and postpone their implementation.

Strong opposition by local residents, however, has kept new sitings at bay in many locations. Since the 1970s, people have not allowed construction in a single location where new plants have been planned. Although 42 reactors are now operating and 12 more are under construction, this is only because the first reactors at these sites were built before the local residents knew what nuclear power was, and once sites had been established it was easier to construct additional reactors. But recently there has been a great deal of opposition to additions as well, and it is getting much more difficult to add to plants. Hence there is little doubt that local opposition will stop these plans for new plants and additional reactors.

## Existing Nuclear Power Plants and New Proposed Sites



## Series 2: Japan's Nuclear Industry

### Nuclear Industry Groups

Japan's nuclear power industry comprises five groups, each of which corresponds to one of the old financial cliques (zaibatsu) dismantled following the Second World War. The groups were formed between 1955 and 1958, when the United States offered Japan assistance with nuclear power. One could say that nuclear power provided the thrust that breathed new life into the

old zaibatsu.

Of the five groups, those involved heavily in commercial nuclear power are the Toshiba/Mitsui Group of the former Mitsui Zaibatsu, the Tokyo Atomic Power Group (Hitachi Group) and the Mitsubishi Group of the former Mitsubishi Zaibatsu. The first two groups are working on BWRs  
Continued on page 7

Name of Group	Number of Companies	Managing Company within the group	Major Company	Fuel Processing Company	Trading Firm	Major Technical Affiliation
Mitsubishi	25	Mitsubishi Heavy Industries	Mitsubishi Atomic Power Industries; Mitsubishi Electric	Mitsubishi Nuclear Fuel	Mitsubishi Shoji	WH
Tokyo Atomic Industrial Group	22	Hitachi	Babcock Hitachi	Japan Nuclear Fuel	Marubeni	GE
Toshiba-Mitsui	33	Toshiba	Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries	Japan Nuclear Fuel	Mitsui-Bussan	GE
First Atomic Power Industry Group	22	Fuji Electric	Kobe Seiko; Kawasaki Heavy Industries	Nuclear Fuel Industries	C. Itoh; Nissho-Iwai	IA RI
Sumitomo	38	Sumitomo Atomic Energy Industries	Sumitomo Metal; Sumitomo Heavy Machineries	Nuclear Fuel Industries	Sumitomo Shoji	CE

Notes: WH:Westinghouse (USA), GE:General Electric (USA), IA:Interatom (Germany)  
RI:Rockwell International(USA),CE:Combustion Engineering (USA)

## Waste Problem in Korea

The disposal of radioactive waste is becoming a highly controversial issue in Korea. Nine reactors are now in operation and the waste is being stored at each site, but storage space will reach capacity within 1 to 2 years. Total storage capacity for intermediate and low level waste is about 60,000 drums (200 liters each) and as many as 32,000 drums have already been stored. At the Kori nuclear power plant, the oldest plant in Korea which started operation in 1978, 24,000 drums have been stored and the plant is close to its capacity of 32,000 drums.

Korea has so far chosen not to reprocess its spent fuel, also stored at the reactor sites which are now close to full capacity of about 3,300 drums. 1,500 drums have now been stored and the situation is quite serious at the older reactors such as Kori and Wolsong.

Hence the promoters of the plants hope to build a LLW disposal site by 1995 and a HLW permanent storage site by 1997. Last December 27 they announced six final planned sites for disposal. These are Kosong and Yangyang on the Japan Sea coast near the border, Uljin and Yong-il which have been chosen as reactor sites, Changjung near Cheju Island, and Anmyon Island where strong opposition previously stopped a plan announced in 1990. The reason why this island was chosen again is that the ground is geologically stable and 70% of the land is owned by the country. But again the local islanders are furious over the government's announcement.

After abandoning the plan in 1990, the Government tried to buy off some of the local people and chose the island as a site again in November, 1991. But the islanders refused again, and now feel they have been deceived twice by the Government. From the moment the latest plan was announced, strong protests have been taking place at every site. At Yong-il, protesters began a sit in at the county office on the day the

plan was announced, and demonstrations and street occupations have continued ever since. At Anmyon Island a rally was held on the day of the announcement and the following day about 1,500 people showed up and staged a strong protest despite police use of tear gas. On January 7, 10,000 people gathered and showed their strength while protests and rallies are taking place at the other planned sites as well. The Government will probably make a final announcement of the sites after the federal election in March.

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Continued from page 6  
through a technology alliance with America's General Electric, while Mitsubishi is working on PWRs through a tie-up with America's Westinghouse. These partnerships originally covered thermal power plants and were later extended to nuclear plants.

This arrangement means the Japanese market is split roughly in half between BWRs and PWRs, with BWRs being more common, thus making for a distribution of core types that is internationally unusual (Taiwan also has more BWRs than PWRs).

Of interest is the fact that when some of the groups were first formed they included companies that one would certainly not associate with the nuclear power industry, such as beer companies. This goes back to the days when people entertained fantasies of nuclear power having many other uses besides generating electricity. Hence local governments and companies in a broad variety of industries, including newspapers, television stations, publishing companies, record companies, and cosmetic companies, all participated in the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum which was formed in 1956. Many of those companies subsequently withdrew from the organization.

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## Anti-Nuke Who's Who

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(Photo by Kenji Higuchi)

Mr. Kazuyuki Iwasa, a 69 year-old plumber, was exposed to radiation in May 1971 while working at Tsuruga nuclear power plant, operated by the Japan Atomic Power Co. He subsequently developed radiation sickness and took the company to court, demanding compensation. Since then he has been fighting the only court case in Japan to involve radiation exposure at a nuclear facility.

After the exposure, Iwasa found his knee swollen and felt constantly tired. He was diagnosed at Osaka University hospital as having a radiation-induced dermatitis. Yet despite an official medical certificate proving this, he lost his case at the Osaka Local Court. Appealing against the decision, he was defeated again at the Osaka High Court, on the grounds that the certificate did not prove his dermatitis had actually been induced by radioactive contamination at the reactor.

Iwasa appealed again, but the Supreme Court rejected his appeal last December 17. He was quite shocked that the Supreme Court did not even give him a chance to present his case. The rejection amply demonstrated that no case of radiation exposure at a nuclear facility would get fair

treatment in the courts. Iwasa's dermatitis has now been cured, but he still suffers from severe headaches, cataract and various internal problems, and has to take so many pills he says he can even smell them from his skin.

His doctor tells him to get hospitalized and treated, but he knows his condition is serious and is afraid he will end up dying in the hospital without being allowed home again. When he feels a little better he sometimes goes for a walk, and people think he has recovered, but this is far from the case. He may look all right, but he is only hiding his suffering.

It is 20 years since Iwasa was exposed to radiation and almost 18 years since he filed his court case. He appreciates the support and encouragement that he has received all this time from members of the group to support Iwasa Court Case, anti-nuclear activists, lawyers, doctors, scientists, and other people whom he has never met.

At first Iwasa considered the court case to be his own private problem but then started to realize that there had been and will continue to be other workers exposed to radiation at nuclear facilities and that the result of his case would affect these people as well. Once in a while he receives phone calls from nuclear workers who have also been exposed to radiation. None of them has even managed to get a medical certificate saying their illness is radiation-induced, and it disappoints them to hear that Iwasa does have such a certificate but still cannot get either proper legal aid or compensation. Iwasa feels really sorry for these workers since he knows that once they have been exposed, their health gradually worsens over the years until they feel constantly exhausted and lethargic. Then they usually have to stop working because their health deteriorates so much and their families suffer while they get no compensation. Iwasa is determined to continue fighting to give other exposed workers a chance to get compensation and legal aid.



# NEWS WATCH

## FEPC to Buy Electricity from New Sources

The Federation of Electric Power Companies on January 22 decided on a plan to purchase excess electricity in order to promote development of new energy sources including solar power. The decision represents a 180-degree change in the stance of the Japanese power industry.

Under the plan, solar and wind-power generation will be seen as developing technologies and the federation will purchase power from these sources at prices as high as the electric companies' selling prices until it becomes commercially viable. It is said that electricity generated from fuel cells will be purchased for the same price as power generated from garbage, which has already begun.

## Rokkasho Uranium Enrichment Plant Suffers Troubles

The uranium enrichment plant at Rokkasho, Aomori Prefecture, was scheduled to begin full-scale operation in January but is now well behind schedule due to a series of problems. The first incident occurred on January 26 during a test to check whether a centrifuge could continue operating after a temporary power cut, but the power failed to come on. The

uranium had to be recovered and another test tried about a month later. On February 24, when the power was cut, an alarm went off and the uranium was automatically recovered.

In spite of these persistent problems, which have worried people in the prefecture, the uranium enrichment plant began full-scale operation on 27th March.

## Move Seen to Invite ITER to Hokkaido

Hokkaido Economic organizations announced on February 27 that they would set up a promotional congress in April to invite the International Thermonuclear Fusion Experimental Reactor currently being developed by the U.S., Japan, former Soviet Union and EC, to a site east of Tomakomai, Hokkaido.

## Work Starts on Feasibility Study for N-Plant in Indonesia

NEWJEC (New Japan Engineering Consultant Inc.) was commissioned by the Atomic Energy Agency of Indonesia in August 1991 to conduct a feasibility study for a nuclear power plant, and began the study in November. The company has built a meteorological observatory and a seismometer on the Muria Peninsula in

Java and begun surveys. It is reported that the company will select two more survey sites and eventually choose one of them for a full-scale study to be carried out by 1995. In order to protest at these developments, members of the environmental protection groups of Indonesia came to Japan in the end of March.

They gave a briefing lecture to Japanese citizens and visited the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs the next day, together with concerned Japanese citizens' groups, to ask them to dissuade the Japan Export Import Bank from funding this feasibility study. The Ministry, however, answered diplomatically that the Japanese government is not in a position to interfere with the commercial activities of Japanese enterprises nor with the policy of the Indonesian government.

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NUKE INFO TOKYO is a bi-monthly newsletter which aims to provide foreign friends with up-to-date information on the Japanese nuclear industry, as well as on the movements against this industry in Japan. Please write to us for a subscription (subscription rate: supporting subscriber \$40/year or 5,000 ¥/year, subscriber \$20/year or 3,000 ¥/year). The subscription fee should be remitted from a post office to our post office account No:Tokyo 6-185799, HANGENPATU-NEWS by postal money order. We would also appreciate receiving information and newsletters from groups abroad in exchange for this newsletter.

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**Citizens' Nuclear Information Center has MOVED!**  
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The office is 2 min. from Higashi-nakano station on the JR line, which is just 5 min. from Shinjuku! So, if you ever have a chance of coming to Tokyo, please drop in for tea or coffee.