

Nuclear Issues Column: Monju has been Decommissioned but... (Japan Gospel Lutheran Minoridai Church Pastor Shingo Naito)

On September 21, the government stated that they would reexamine and decommission the fast breeder reactor "Monju". It seemed that harvest had finally come for those that had for years called out about the dangers of the reactor. However this statement by the government was not to be. It was not yet time to relax. "Monju" was completely worn out, and recommissioning the reactor was out of the question. Even if the equipment and safety examinations passed, the reactor would still not be of use. Despite this the decommissioning of the reactor did not take place. This is because the government has for years preserved plutonium.

This is why the government decided to hold a fast breeder reactor convention and decided to continue with the fuel rod cycle policy even after having to accept the need to decommission "Monju". They started plutonium thermal use in order to keep the plutonium. There was even talk of restarting the "Joyo" experimental reactor, the older generation of "Monju". They also decided to carry out co-operative research on "ASTRID", a new fast breeder reactor that France was planning to construct. This was decided with France two years ago. The government is now involved in researching about reactors that can handle fast paced neutrons. These neutrons use plutonium for its coolants. This means that it is now necessary for there to be high-purity plutonium. Of course this is not presented to the public. It is explained to us that it is to research the mutation of nuclear fallout of neutrons with a long half-life. This is completely inefficient and emits a mass of radionuclides. Moreover, this makes a very dangerous radiator.

Sodium burns in air and explodes when it touches water. The material used for the piping is similar to Sodium. This is why the piping made very thin so that changes in temperature will not lead to any ruptures. Furthermore the fast breeder reactor using MOX fuel can suddenly explode. If there were to be a big accident, it could mean the end of the world. In fact the reprocessing plant is also equally dangerous. The government is spending massive amounts of funds and it is difficult to concur that it is being mindful of resources. What the government does have in mind is military prowess and arms trades. We as Christians have a role to keep watch.

Pipes used for Monju only 11mm.
It is weak to earthquakes



Recommendation from the Nuclear Issues Column

Nuclear Energy and Religion - Tomisaka Christian Centre (Inochino Kotobasha Publication) 1800yen before tax.

The March 2011 Tokyo Electric Power Fukushima Daichi Nuclear Power Plant accident. This book takes the stance that nuclear energy is fundamentally incompatible with the natural world and looks at the responsibility of Christians from a medical, political, legal, and a civil movement perspective.

Seinangakuin University Volunteer Team Otsuchi-cho Aid Work

Yokosuka Nagasawa Christ Church Ayako Osuga

This year, the Seinangakuin University Volunteer Team worked together with Baptist convention churches and carried out aid work at Otsuchi-cho in August and October. There was a total of 20 volunteers that came as teams. The volunteers travelled to Iwate prefecture on Wednesday, and stayed at a lodging centre close to Otsuchi-cho. They trained, prepared, and carried out aid. On the last day, Sunday, they attended the Morioka Church service and returned home.

The reconstruction work has plateaued at Otsuchi-cho. It is only recently that the embankment and road constructions are starting to be completed. However only a third of the needed reconstruction housing estates have been completed. It is estimated that it will take two years for the city to be fully reconstructed and the temporary houses to all be taken down. And this estimated is still very vague. The future is unforeseeable. There is a continued state of threat such as that of typhoon disasters.

Within this reality, the "Baptist-san's tea parties" have come to be trusted and accepted in Otsuchi-cho where there are fewer and fewer volunteers. People always greet the volunteers when they are at the lodging centres, when they are shopping, or just walking down the street.

The lives of all the people that have attend the tea parties, those that live in the temporary housing, those that were moved to new temporary estates, those that built new homes, those that moved into the reconstructed houses, are drastically changing. It is at the tea parties that the volunteers meet these people. At times they talk and joke, at times they talk about the tsunami. In these conversation, the label of "disaster area" and "victim" are replaced with "grandma", "grandpa", and people start to get to know each other as individuals. The volunteers are encouraged with words like, "I am so happy to have met you".

In October, the volunteers got to know the bus driver and learnt that he was able to swim to survival when the tsunami hit. He told us that he was encourage at the site of the volunteers. He is one of the people who supports the work of the volunteers.

It seems that again this year, the volunteers were able to get to know the lives of and makes relationships with the individuals. And this will surely remain in their hearts.



Autumn craft shop (top)



Tea Party (bottom)

Participating in the Children's Evacuation Recreation Project

Fukushima Asahi-machi Christ Church Kanako Kawasaki

Thank you for always having the Tohoku in your mind and prayers. I am also thankful for the recreation work being carried out for the children after the disaster.

From July 28 to 30, 7 adults and 10 children took part in the "Children's Evacuation Recreation Project". We visited Zao-machi, Tendo-shi, Yamagata Prefecture. (2adults and 2 children joined from the second day).

At Tendo-shi we had wonderful weather. We went to the Yamagata Prefecture Sports Park and heartily played for three hours in the flowing pool and the water slider. After the Great East Japan Earthquake, using outside pools has always been a worry due to the way radiation reacts to water. People have avoided swimming outside for extended periods of time, so we thank God for providing a time for us to play in the water without worry.

The next day we joined the Tohoku convention church conference at Zao-machi. We exchanged with people from other churches and was reminded that God is always with us. The children got to try out pottery making and created many things. The children marvelled at the pottery wheel that they saw for the first time and played with the clay. It was a very special experience for them and once the pottery pieces were sent to their homes, they shared what they made with pride.

It has been 5 years since the disaster and life is starting to go back to normal, but it is yet an easy life in Fukushima. We hope that we will be able to live free from radiation risk, and live without fear, in Fukushima.

Group photo in front of hotel



Pottery experience



September Disaster Relief Donation Goal for 2016 Donations: 6,000,000Yen

3,400,000Yen Collected so far (by September)

Donations made in August and September 2016: we give thanks to the 24 donations were made

Omura Kogashima, Ijuin, Kagoshima, Seinangakuin, Chofu, Nakano, Mejirogaoka, Kubo Yuko, Ainoura Hikari, Megumi, Marugame Jyotouchu, Koga, Keisen, Meinohama, Chofu, Sameh, Toyohashi, Omura Kogashima, Fujimino, Nishikanto Convention Women's One Day Training Donation, Miyahara, Hitachi, Tohoku Baptist Convention Conference Opening Ceremony Donation, Fukuma