

FOREWORD

March 22, 2012

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1. Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accidents and an intellectual meltdown

On June 6, 2011, I visited Iitate Village of Soma County in Fukushima Prefecture as a member of the nuclear disaster research mission. Iitate Village is a member of “the Most Beautiful Village Association,” full of green mountains, a deep blue sky and a clear valley stream and they had produced the tasty “Iitate beef.”

There was neither earthquake nor tsunami damage in Iitate. There was only one problem-radioactivity from the TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Reactor meltdown. Villagers say radioactivity had been increasing, and then the International Atomic Energy Association, IAEA, recommended evacuation on March 30, 2011. Even after that, on April 10, a “health adviser,” a professional under the Japanese government authority, advised that there was no health threat to the human body. For all that, right after this advice, the government designated Iitate Village as being an evacuation district. All of the villagers were ordered to evacuate from the native land, all declaring they shall come home someday.

If intelligence is to ever have any meaning whatsoever, we have to answer for the villagers’ hope through the power of intelligence. We should focus on the following fact:

TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant has absolutely changed the world completely. Japan has become one of the sources of nuclear pollution instead of being the only victim of nuclear warfare in world history.

Japan has become responsible for global environmental pollution. This time the nuclear accident is doubtlessly of human origin, which clearly shows the collapse of the intellectual scheme made since the end of world war II. The earthquake has revealed to us the meltdown of intelligence.

2. The 3/11 Northeastern Japan and Pacific Ocean Earthquake and the weight of the global responsibility on us

On March 26 at Narita International Airport in Chiba Prefecture, I was sending Bunkyo University students off to a study abroad program at Oregon State University in the United States., It was then that I decided to change the location of the July 1 through 3 international symposium. We had originally planned to hold the symposium in Tokyo and Kanagawa, Japan. At Narita Airport, the exodus rush of foreigners and rich Japanese familys’ children had decreased for a while. Yet aftershocks were continuing and getting worse, and any recovery from the nuclear disaster, Fukushima Daiich meltdown, had not yet made progress. Therefore, first of all, it was absolutely natural that we as an academic society of the nuclear pollution source country should take safety measures for our overseas guests.

The safety measures strongly depended on the geological distance from the nuclear pollution source, and also the earthquake sources.

3. Meio University Symposium and its historical meaning

On April 12, 2011, at Meio University, Nago Okinawa, I visited President Eiki Senaha to ask him to hold the international symposium there from the first through the third of July. Dr. Senaha answered that they would willingly accept our request. At that moment the Post-3/11 Perspective Symposium had achieved the appropriate time and place. Less than three months were left before the beginning of the symposium.

It has been said that “natural” disasters are more or less man-made disasters. Notably, this time the nuclear accident was caused by human factors. Though at a very small amount, radioactive materials originating in Fukushima were detected in Korea, the west coast of America, and even in Scotland. Japan has become a global nuclear polluter.

Some people say to remember the recovery from the aftermath of the last war. Yet we should not be isolated from East Asia and the rest of the world because it is important how we respond to the growing assistance wave from abroad for the earthquake and the tsunami and the fact that we have become a global nuclear pollution source.

Here, intercultural studies should play a not small role in the following context. How can we conceive the meaning derived from the 3/11 disaster that will impact human and its civilization history over the next few decades, or even up to a century ?

Okinawa has a long history as an East Asian strategic center of trade and culture, embodying interculturality itself. From that point, a method of communication between people beyond national borders was just going to begin.

The special symposium is composed of the keynote speech and three symposia, which will show unavoidable themes to overcome today’s difficulties as follows:

- The keynote speech “Recovery from Disasters and International Cultures in Okinawa”
- Symposium 1 “East Asian Community and Intercultural Studies”
- Symposium 2 “Globalized Popular Culture and Intercultural Studies”
- Symposium 3 “Migration of People and Interculturality”

The proceedings will be the first step of the Japan Society for Intercultural Studies to respond to our greatest task ever.

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