

A message to all people in the world concerned about the fate of the people of Fukushima

Never in my life has a year seemed so severe as the one that followed, in 2021, the tenth anniversary of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear accident: I had the constant sensation of being bitten by the icy cold of an ever-lasting winter. I must start by saying that last year I lost five very close friends one after the other. All of them lived in Fukushima and were in their fifties at the time of the accident. I can't prove that their deaths are related to the nuclear accident, but I can't help but thinking that they were. And many people around me share the same doubts.

Since last year, the Japanese government, the Fukushima Prefecture and the media have decided to more radically pursue their course. It's no longer a question of dealing with the dramatic reality caused by the ongoing nuclear accident, but of preaching for the "reconstruction" of the Prefecture and acting only for its implementation. Despite the spread of Covid-19, the Tokyo Olympic Games was imposed in an incredibly authoritarian way. The Torch relay started from Fukushima, more precisely J-Village Stadium, a sports complex which was an important base for the workers in the aftermath of the nuclear accidents. In addition, in April 2021, the government endorsed a plan to discharge into the sea huge quantities of radioactive water accumulated at the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant site, despite the many voices in Japan itself, but also in other countries, which strongly protested this decision.

Yet, the most serious issue for me is the problems faced by the younger generation. The government, in order to replace the numerous evacuees who refuse to return to their commune of origin, allocated in 2021 a budget of 1.8 billion yen (13.9 million euros) to persuade newcomers to settle in the 12 municipalities formerly designated as mandatory evacuation zones after the accident. In concrete terms, a premium of 2 million yen (€ 15,500) will be granted to each household having recently moved into these 12 municipalities. In addition, at four kilometers from the crippled nuclear site, on the lawn of the *Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum*, a local tourism company organizes various activities to attract high school and university students as well as young working adults: meals, stargazing nights, yoga classes etc. Finally, at an increasing pace, "discussion meetings" for young people are organized by the Ministry of the Environment and other organizations, on topics such as the release of radioactive water into the sea or the reuse of contaminated soil. All these appear to me as a staging to manipulate the minds of the young people. As for the "Supplementary reader on radiation", distributed from 2011, after the accident, to all primary and junior high schools in Japan by the Ministry of Education, its latest version considerably reduces the paragraphs devoted to the dangers of radioactivity and the question of responsibilities of the nuclear accident. On the other hand, there are some pages in the appendix that praise the harmlessness of the radio-contaminated water accumulated at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant.

On January 27 this year, six young people who were between 6 and 16 years old at the time of the accident, and who have been suffering from thyroid cancer, filed a lawsuit against TEPCO, the operator of Fukushima Dai-ichi. They demand that the causal link between the nuclear accident and the triggering of their thyroid cancer be investigated. Indeed, the Prefectural Oversight Committee for Fukushima Health Management Survey in charge of evaluating the prefectural health survey still refuses to recognize any cause-and-effect relationship between these two factors. The young plaintiffs hope that this causality, if recognized at the end of the trial, will lead to the establishment of a system of aid for all other post-accident thyroid cancer patients, who are experiencing the same suffering as they are. This would cast a small glimmer of hope on their future. The consequences of the accident are made less and less visible. At the same time, the "reconstruction" of Fukushima (repopulating the evacuation areas, creating high-tech industrial zones, managing experimental agricultural sites to grow edible crops, etc.) is pushed forward at all costs. In this context, it must have taken extraordinary courage for these young people to file such a lawsuit. I call on all adults to support them in every way possible.

As a Fukushima resident and victim of the nuclear accident, I was deeply shocked by the European Commission's proposal earlier this year to include nuclear energy in the green taxonomy. Nuclear reactors, no matter how small they become or how peaceful their use is claimed to be, use the same technology developed to create the atomic bomb. And throughout all the stages, nuclear energy production leads to the exposure of workers and local residents to radioactivity. Privilege the conquest of great power without hesitating to sacrifice small people - this is, in my opinion, the state of mind that still governs the nuclear industry today. Moreover, humanity has not totally mastered safety and security in this domain, and is also unable to find a solution to the perennial problem of disposal of the toxic waste. Finally, it is clear that nuclear facilities do great harm to the environment. For all these reasons, we refuse to consider this energy as "green" or "clean".

On a positive note, a growing number of countries are ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). So the time has also come to say farewell to nuclear energy production.

Despite the troubled times we are going through, and all the difficulties we will still face in the future, let us continue to walk together step by step, supported by the solidarity of our fellow human beings who continue the struggle in the four corners of the world.

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