

DISSIDENT VOICE:

Fukushima Darkness

Part 1 of a 2-part Series

by Robert Hunziker / November 22nd, 2017

The radiation effects of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant triple meltdowns are felt worldwide, whether lodged in sea life or in humans, it cumulates over time. The impact is now slowly grinding away only to show its true colors at some unpredictable date in the future. That's how radiation works, slow but assuredly destructive, which serves to identify its risks, meaning, one nuke meltdown has the impact, over decades, of a 1,000 regular industrial accidents, maybe more.

It's been six years since the triple 100% nuke meltdowns occurred at Fukushima Daiichi (March 11th, 2011), nowadays referred to as "311". Over time, it's easy for the world at large to lose track of the serious implications of the world's largest-ever industrial disaster; out of sight out of mind works that way.

According to Japanese government and TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) estimates, decommissioning is a decade-by-decade work-in-progress, most likely four decades at a cost of up to ¥21 trillion (\$189B). However, that's the simple part to understanding the Fukushima nuclear disaster story.

The difficult painful part is largely hidden from public view via a highly restrictive harsh national secrecy law (Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets, Act No. 108/2013), political pressure galore, and fear of exposing the truth about the inherent dangers of nuclear reactor meltdowns. Powerful vested interests want it concealed.

Following passage of **the 2013 government secrecy act**, which says that civil servants or others who "leak secrets" will face up to 10 years in prison, and those who "instigate leaks," especially journalists, will be subject to a prison term of up to 5 years, Japan fell below Serbia and Botswana in **the Reporters Without Borders 2014 World Press Freedom Index**. The secrecy act, sharply criticized by the Japanese Federation of Bar Associations, is a shameless act of buttoned-up totalitarianism at the very moment when citizens need and, in fact, require transparency.

The current status, according to Mr. Okamura, a TEPCO manager, as of November 2017:

We're struggling with four problems: (1) reducing the radiation at the site (2) stopping the influx of groundwater (3) retrieving the spent fuel rods and (4) removing the molten nuclear fuel.¹

In short, nothing much has changed in nearly seven years at the plant facilities, even though tens of thousands of workers have combed the Fukushima countryside, washing down structures, removing topsoil and storing it in large black plastic bags, which end-to-end would extend from Tokyo to Denver and back.

As it happens, sorrowfully, complete nuclear meltdowns are nearly impossible to fix because, in part, nobody knows what to do next. That's why Chernobyl sealed off the greater area surrounding its meltdown of 1986. Along those same lines, according to Fukushima Daiichi plant manager Shunji Uchida:

Robots and cameras have already provided us with valuable pictures. **But it is still unclear what is really going on inside.**²

Seven years and they do not know what's going on inside. Is it the China Syndrome dilemma of molten hot radioactive corium burrowing into Earth? Is it contaminating aquifers? Nobody knows, nobody can possibly know, which is one of the major risks of nuclear meltdowns. Nobody knows what to do. There is no playbook for 100% meltdowns. Fukushima Daiichi proves the point.

When a major radiological disaster happens and impacts vast tracts of land, it cannot be 'cleaned up' or 'fixed'.³

Meanwhile, the world nuclear industry has ambitious growth plans, 50-60 reactors currently under construction, mostly in Asia, with up to 400 more on drawing boards. Nuke advocates claim Fukushima is well along in the cleanup phase so not to worry as the Olympics are coming in a couple of years, including events held smack dab in the heart of Fukushima, where the agricultural economy will provide fresh foodstuff.

The Olympics are PM Abe's major PR punch to prove to the world that all-is-well at the world's most dangerous, and out of control, industrial accident site. And, yes, it is still out of control. Nevertheless, the Abe government is not concerned. Be that as it may, the risks are multi-fold

and likely not well understood. For example, what if another earthquake causes further damage to already-damaged nuclear facilities that are precariously held together with hopes and prayers, subject to massive radiation explosions? Then what? After all, Japan is earthquake country, which defines the boundaries of the country. Japan typically has 400-500 earthquakes in 365 days, or nearly 1.5 quakes per day.

According to Dr. Shuzo Takemoto, professor, Department of Geophysics, Graduate School of Science, Kyoto University:

The problem of Unit 2... If it should encounter a big earth tremor, it will be destroyed and scatter the remaining nuclear fuel and its debris, making the Tokyo metropolitan area uninhabitable. The Tokyo Olympics in 2020 will then be utterly out of the question.⁴

Since the Olympics will be held not far from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident site, it's worthwhile knowing what to expect; i.e., repercussions hidden from public view. After all, it's highly improbable that the Japan Olympic Committee will address the radiation-risk factors for upcoming athletes and spectators. Which prompts a question: What criteria did the International Olympic Committee (IOC) follow in selecting Japan for the 2020 Summer Olympics in the face of three 100% nuclear meltdowns totally out of control? On its face, it seems reckless.

This article, in part, is based upon an academic study that brings to light serious concerns about overall transparency, TEPCO workforce health and sudden deaths, as well as upcoming Olympians, bringing to mind the proposition: **Is the decision to hold the Olympics in Japan in 2020 a foolish act of insanity and a crude attempt to help cover up the ravages of radiation?**

Thus therefore, a [preview](#) of what's happening behind, as well as within, the scenes researched by Adam Broinowski, PhD (author of 25 major academic publications and Post Doctoral Research Fellow, Australian National University):⁵

The title of Dr. Broinowski's study provides a hint of the inherent conflict, as well as opportunism, that arises with neoliberal capitalism applied to "disaster management" principles. (Naomi Klein explored a similar concept in *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Knopf Canada, 2007).

Dr. Broinowski's research is detailed, thorough, and complex. His study begins by delving into the impact of neoliberal capitalism, bringing to the fore an equivalence of slave labor to the Japanese economy, especially in regards to what he references as "informal labour." He preeminently describes the onslaught of supply side/neoliberal tendencies throughout the economy of Japan. The Fukushima nuke meltdowns simply bring to surface all of the warts and blemishes endemic to the neoliberal brand of capitalism.

According to Professor Broinowski:

The ongoing disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station (FDNPS), operated by Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), since 11 March 2011 can be recognised as part of a global phenomenon that has been in development over some time. This disaster occurred within a social and political shift that began in the mid-1970s (ed. **supply-side economics**, which is strongly reflected in America's current tax bill under consideration) and that **became more acute in the early 1990s in Japan with the downturn of economic growth and greater deregulation and financialisation in the global economy**. After 40 years of corporate fealty in return for lifetime contracts guaranteed by corporate unions, as tariff protections were lifted further and the workforce was increasingly casualised, those most acutely affected by a weakening welfare regime were irregular day labourers, or what we might call 'informal labour'.

In short, the 45,000-60,000 workers recruited to deconstruct decontaminate Fukushima Daiichi and the surrounding prefecture mostly came off the streets, castoffs of neoliberalism's impact on

... independent unions, rendered powerless, growing numbers of unemployed, unskilled and precarious youths (*freeters*) alongside older, vulnerable and homeless day labourers (these groups together comprising roughly 38 per cent of the workforce in 2015) found themselves not only (a) lacking insurance or (b) industrial protection but also in many cases (c) basic living needs. With increasing deindustrialisation and capital flight, regular public outbursts of frustration and anger from these groups have manifested since the Osaka riots of 1992. (Broinowski)

The Osaka Riots of 25 years ago depict the breakdown of modern society's working class, a problem that has spilled over into national political elections worldwide as populism/nationalism dictate winners/losers. In Osaka 1,500 rampaging laborers besieged a police station

(somewhat similar to John Carpenter's 1976 iconic film Assault on Precinct 13) over outrage of interconnecting links between police and Japan's powerful "Yakuza" or gangsters that bribe police to turn a blind eye to gangster syndicates that get paid to recruit, often forcibly, workers for low-paying manual jobs for industry.

That's how TEPCO gets workers to work in radiation-sensitive high risks jobs. Along the way, subcontractors rake off most of the money allocated for workers, resulting in a subhuman life style for the riskiest most life-threatening jobs in Japan, maybe the riskiest most life threatening in the world.

Japan has a long history of assembling and recruiting unskilled labor pools at cheap rates, which is typical of nearly all large-scale modern industrial projects. Labor is simply one more commodity to be used and discarded. Tokyo Electric Power Company ("TEPCO") of Fukushima Daiichi fame adheres to those long-standing feudalistic employment practices. They hire workers via layers of subcontractors in order to avoid liabilities; i.e., accidents, health insurance, safety standards, by penetrating into the bottom social layers that have no voice in society.

As such, **TEPCO is not legally obligated to report industrial accidents when workers are hired through complex webs or networks of subcontractors; there are approximately 733 subcontractors for TEPCO.** Here's the process: TEPCO employs a subcontractor "shita-uke," which in turn employs another subcontractor "mago-uke" that relies upon labor brokers "tehaishilninpu-dashi." At the end of the day, who's responsible for the health and safety of workers? Who's responsible for reporting cases of radiation sickness and/or death caused by radiation exposure?

Based upon anecdotal evidence from reliable sources in Japan, there is good reason to believe TEPCO, as well as the Japanese government, suppress public knowledge of worker radiation sickness and death, as well as the civilian population of Fukushima. Thereby, essentially hoodwinking worldwide public opinion, for example, **pro-nuke enthusiasts/advocates point to the safety of nuclear power generation because of so few reported deaths in Japan.** But, then again, who's responsible for reporting worker deaths? Answer: Other than an occasional token death report by official sources, nobody!

Furthermore, **TEPCO does not report worker deaths** that occur outside of the workplace even though the death is a direct result of excessive

radiation exposure at the workplace. For example, if a worker with radiation sickness becomes too ill to go to work, they'll obviously die at home and therefore not be reported as a work-related death. As a result, pro-nuke advocates claim Fukushima proves how safe nuclear power is, even when it goes haywire, because there are so few, if any, deaths, as to be inconsequential. That's a boldfaced lie that is discussed in the sequel: Fukushima Darkness (Part 2.)

As one labourer stated re Fukushima Daiichi: 'TEPCO is God. The main contractors are kings, and we are slaves'. In short, Fukushima Daiichi clearly illustrates the social reproduction, exploitation and disposability of informal labour, in the state protection of capital, corporations and their assets. (Broinowski)

Indeed, Japan is a totalitarian corporate state where corporate interests are protected from liability by layers of subcontractors and by vested interests of powerful political bodies and extremely harsh state secrecy laws. As such, it is believed that nuclear safety and health issues, including deaths, are under-reported and likely not reported at all in most cases. Therefore, the worldview of nuclear power, as represented in Japan at Fukushima Daiichi, is horribly distorted in favor of nuclear power advocacy.

Fukushima's Darkness: Part 2 sequel, to be published at a future date, discusses consequences.

1. Martin Fritz, "The Illusion of Normality at Fukushima", *Deutsche Welle-Asia*, November 3, 2017. []
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3. Hanis Maketab, Environmental Impacts of Fukushima Nuclear Disaster Will Last 'decades to centuries', Greenpeace, Asia Correspondent, March 4, 2016. []
4. Shuzo Takemoto, "Potential Global Catastrophe of the Reactor No. 2 at Fukushima Daiichi", February 11, 2017. []
5. "Informal Labour, Local Citizens and the Tokyo Electric Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Crisis: Responses to Neoliberal Disaster Management," Australian National University, 2017. []

Fukushima Darkness

(Part 2 of a 2-Part Series)

by Robert Hunziker / November 24th, 2017

The impact of Fukushima Daiichi's nuclear meltdown extends far and wide, as the hemispheric ecosystem gets hit by tons of radioactive water. Additionally, surreptitiousness surrounds untold death and illness, yet it

remains one of the least understood and deceitfully reported episodes of journalism in modern history.

At the same time as Japan passed its totalitarian secrecy act in December 2013, it passed **an obstructive Cancer Registration Law, which made it illegal to share medical data or information on radiation-related issues**, denying public access to medical records, with violators subject to fines of two million Yen or 5-10 years in prison, a pretty stiff penalty for peeking into medical records, giving the appearance of somebody running scared.

Furthermore, and more egregiously yet, **a confidentiality agreement to control medical information about radiation exposure** was signed in January 2014 by IAEA, UNSCEAR, and Fukushima Prefecture and Fukushima Medical University. Thereafter, all info of illness from radiation is reported to a central repository run by Fukushima Medical Centre and IAEA. In turn, the Fukushima Centre for Environmental Creation was created in 2015 to communicate “accurate information on radiation to the public and dispel anxiety.” Ahem!

Well now, isn't that convenient, a central depository controlled by the International Atomic Energy Agency – IAEA – to report on Fukushima Daiichi radiation exposure and medical illness. It's not hard to figure that's rotten to the core, sounding a lot like words lifted directly off the pages of **George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)**.

Meanwhile, much, but not all, **mainstream media reports about radiation-induced illnesses and deaths at Fukushima are feeble grossly incompetent journalism**, as follows: “The latest update (in April) by the World Nuclear Association re the Fukushima disaster: There have been no deaths or cases of radiation sickness from the nuclear accident...”¹

According to The World Nuclear Association, as of October 2017:

There have been no deaths or cases of radiation sickness from the nuclear accident, but over 100,000 people were evacuated from their homes to ensure this. Government nervousness delays the return of many.

Here's one more statement of zero deaths at Fukushima, by Hannah Ritchie, published in *Our World in Data*, July 24, 2017:

In the case of Fukushima, although 40-50 people experienced physical injury or radiation burns at the nuclear facility, the number of direct deaths from the incident are quoted to be zero.²

And one more, an article in Forbes by Dr. James Conca, an expert on energy, nuclear and dirty bombs:

Strangely, the costs that never materialized were the most feared, those of radiation-induced cancer and death... No one received enough dose, even the 20,000 workers who have worked tirelessly to recover from this event.³

Au contraire, it is believed that **official reports of Fukushima radiation-induced sicknesses and deaths are horribly under-reported and/or intentionally manipulated to show few, if any, cases.** Based upon numerous testimonials obtained by independent journalists and researchers in Japan and U.S. attorneys, there is considerable evidence of radiation-induced deaths and sicknesses.

Seemingly, somebody is dead wrong on the issue of radiation-induced deaths, whether it's (1) official sources via mainstream news or (2) independent researchers/journalists/U.S. attorneys that claim to personally know of deaths. One of those two sources is dead wrong and seriously misleading the world, which, in and of itself, should be classified as a criminal act, like the Nazi Nuremberg trials (1945-49). In point of fact, if it can be proven that people are covering up and/or lying about Fukushima radiation-induced illness and death, they should be tried and imprisoned, similar to Nazi war criminals. The implications of widespread radiation are not a trifle.

When it comes to uncontrollable radiation, there's an ecumenical obligation for full transparency as a basic right for all humanity, worldwide.

It's a real shame that the authorities hide the truth from the whole world, from the UN. We need to admit that actually many people are dying. We are not allowed to say that, but TEPCO employees also are dying. But they keep mum about it.⁴

Individual medical doctors in Japan have reported serious radiation-related problems, for example:

In April 2014, Dr Tsuda Toshihide, an epidemiologist at Okayama University, declared this a ‘thyroid cancer epidemic’ and predicted multiple illnesses from long-term internal radiation below 100 mSv/y and advocated for a program of outbreak (emergency or rapid) epidemiology in and outside Fukushima.⁵

Similarly, a Tokyo-based physician, Dr Mita Shigeru, circulated a public statement notifying his colleagues of his intention to relocate his practice to Okayama due to overwhelming evidence of unusual symptoms in his patients (roughly 2,000). Given that soil in Tokyo post-Fukushima returned between 1,000 and 4,000 Bq/kg, as compared to an average of 500 Bq/kg (Cs 137 only) in Kiev soil, Mita pointed to a correlation between these symptoms and the significant radiation contamination in Tōhoku and metropolitan Tokyo.⁶

The ashes of half a dozen unidentified laborers ended up at a Buddhist temple in a town just north of the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant. Some of the dead men had no papers; others left no emergency contacts. Their names could not be confirmed and no family members had been tracked down to claim their remains. They were simply labeled “decontamination troops” — unknown soldiers in Japan’s massive cleanup campaign to make Fukushima livable again five years after radiation poisoned the fertile countryside.⁷

Mako Oshidori, director of Free Press Corporation/Japan, investigated several unreported worker deaths, and interviewed a former nurse who quit TEPCO:

I would like to talk about my interview of a nurse who used to work at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) after the accident... He quit his job with TEPCO, and that’s when I interviewed him... As of now, there are multiple NPP workers that have died, but only the ones who died on the job are reported publicly. Some of them have died suddenly while off work, for instance, during the weekend or in their sleep, but none of their deaths are reported.⁸

They are not included in the worker death count. For example, there are some workers who quit the job after a lot of radiation exposure... and end up dying a month later, but none of these deaths are either reported, or included in the death toll. This is the reality of the NPP workers.⁶

Greenpeace has been conducting radiation readings throughout Fukushima ever since 311. Accordingly:

The Japanese government will soon lift evacuation orders for 6,000 citizens of Iitate village in Fukushima Prefecture where radiation levels in nearby forests are comparable to the current levels within the Chernobyl 30km exclusion zone – an area that more than 30 years after the accident remains formally closed to habitation. Seventy-five percent (75%) of Iitate is contaminated forested mountains.⁹

Over time, high levels of radiation from the mountains leach onto cleaned up areas down below. In point of fact, based upon several Greenpeace analyses throughout Fukushima Prefecture, former inhabitants of several communities are returning to towns and villages where spot checks show unacceptable levels of radiation.

Faced with the post-311 reality of government (and corporate) policy that protects economic and security interests over public health and well-being, **the majority of the 2 million inhabitants of Fukushima Prefecture are either unconscious of or have been encouraged to accept living with radioactive contamination.** People dry their clothes outside, drink local tap water and consume local food, swim in outdoor pools and the ocean, consume and sell their own produce or catches. Financial pressure after 311 as well as the persistent danger of social marginalisation has made it more difficult to take precautionary measures (i.e. permanent relocation, dual accommodation, importing food and water) and develop and share counter-narratives to the official message. Nevertheless, some continue to conceal their anxiety beneath a mask of superficial calm.

As Fukushima city resident Shiina Chieko observed, the majority of people seem to have adopted denial as a way to excise the present danger from their consciousness. Her sister-in-law, for example, ignored her son's 'continuous nosebleeds'; while her mother had decided that the community must endure by pretending that things were no different from pre-311 conditions. (Broinowski)

Radiation exposure shows up years later as one of several illnesses. This gives the nuclear industry an advantage of time lapses in its position statements about the safety of nuclear energy. After all when enough time lapses, who knows for sure the cause of death?

However, Chernobyl provides a perfect case study of radiation-caused deaths of workers with a direct link, "liquidators," exposed to Chernobyl radiation (1986), keeping in mind that radiation takes several years to show up as cancer and other severe ailments:

By 2001, of 800,000 healthy Russian and Ukrainian liquidators (with an average age of 33 years) sent to decontaminate, isolate and stabilise the reactor, 10 per cent had died and 30 per cent were disabled. By 2009, 120,000 liquidators had died, and an epidemic of chronic illness and genetic and perigenetic damage in nuclear workers' descendants appeared (this is predicted to increase over subsequent generations). The full extent of the damage will not be understood until the fifth generation of descendants. By the mid-2000s, 985,000 additional deaths between 1986 and 2004 across Europe were estimated as a direct result from radiation exposure from Chernobyl. (Broinowski)

Chernobyl likely foreshadows a dismal future for those exposed to Fukushima radiation whether residents, workers, or untold recipients throughout the extent of flowing seas, which is universal.

As Chernobyl clearly demonstrates: Over time, radiation cumulates in bodily organs. For an example of how radiation devastates human bodies generation by generation, consider:

There are 2,397,863 people registered with Ukraine's health ministry to receive ongoing Chernobyl-related health care. Of these, 453,391 are children — none born at the time of the accident. Their parents were children in 1986. These children have a range of illnesses: respiratory, digestive, musculoskeletal, eye diseases, blood diseases, cancer, congenital malformations, genetic abnormalities, trauma.¹⁰

As for Fukushima's direct impact on Americans that helped at the time of the meltdowns, former Senator John Edwards is representing cancer-ridden sailors who interceded on a humanitarian basis aboard the USS Ronald Reagan. According to Edwards:

We have all these sailors. Sailors whose case is now five years old, who have died or are in the process of dying right now. Edwards noted that some of his sailor clients have children born with birth defects.¹¹

We now have a 250+ young sailors with all kinds of illnesses, we've had three die. We had one of the sailors who came home and impregnated his wife. They gave birth to a little baby born with brain cancer and cancer down the spine, lived for two years, and just died in March of this year.¹²

TEPCO's attorney Gregory Stone claims his client accepts responsibility for the radiation released but maintains the amount sailors were

exposed to was negligible. Stone: “People get sick at different times of their lives for different reasons.”

As people unceremoniously, more times than not anonymously, die from radiation exposure, the Abe administration keeps a tight lid on the reality and the potency of Fukushima Daiichi radiation. And, when faced with the prospect of not knowing what to do, bring on the Olympics! That’s pretty good cover for a messy situation, making it appear to hundreds of thousands of attendees, as well as to the world community “all is well.”

But, is it really?

Postscript:

These sailors are supposed to be very healthy. It’s not a normal situation. It is unbelievable that just in four or five years that these healthy sailors would become sick... I think that both the U.S. and Japanese government have something to hide.¹³

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