

FUKUSHIMA DESK NEWS December, 2014

Merry Christmas!

How I wish I could say “Merry Christmas!” innocently to the Earthquake victims who are living away from home, waiting for the definitive news of the day they can finally return to their own homes. Certainly the coming of the Messiah did happen, and certainly God cares about us, but today I am asking myself how I could help those who are suffering here today by bringing them this Good News.



Trees in illumination in front of Fukushima Station(Taken from Fukushima Mimpo News)

Radiation Consulting Room

Since the accident of Tokyo Electric Company Fukushima First Plant, there is a strong anxiety among the inhabitants. There are still many people worried about possible dangers while perplexed by different kinds of information, including the strange new words like “Sieverts” or “Becquerels”. They need to be exposed to correct information, so that whether they

are afraid or contented, their judgment may be logical. In order to help such people, the Town of Hirono opened the Radiation Consulting Room, where there is a full time specialist available all the time. Besides, this particular specialist, being a registered nurse is also qualified to give advice on childbirth and many other items in the field of general health. It is three years and nine months since the Earthquake, and the situation in Fukushima is quite different from that of March, 2011. One can guess that the motive of the opening of the Radiation Consulting Room on the part of the town authority of Hirono is certainly their desire to entice the evacuees to return.

Whether the evacuees decide to return or not, it is naturally desirable that their decision making be based on the correct knowledge about radiation. The full time specialist hired by Hirono Town is a mother of two children, and has the experience of being an evacuee. From the memory of her own difficult past, she, too, understands the indecisive attitude of the young mothers. The ardent desire of the mothers to protect the lives of their children is shared by all.

Flourishing Activities of High

School Students

Some high school students in Fukushima have manifested their enthusiasm in contributing to the reconstruction of their home town.



Invention of a New Method of Cesium Elimination

Flammable garbage produces cesium while burning, which flies in the air around us. *Fukushima Minpo News* reported on November 5 that a new technique to eliminate from 90 to 95 percent of such cesium was successfully developed by the students of Fukushima Technical College. Since the famous accident of the Nuclear Plant, the people living around the plant have become extremely nervous about anything produced out of nuclear waste. It is one of the vital reasons why the disposal is being delayed. The new technique invented by Fukushima Technical College has succeeded in bringing down the cesium from 5100 Becquerels to 309 per 1 kg.

Magic Water to Alleviate

Stress of Fish

Fukushima Minpo News reported on November 1 that some high school students of Fukushima proved that what is called Magic Water or Environment Improving Water which allows the cohabitation of both freshwater fish and saltwater fish alleviates the stress of the fish by reducing the amount of oxygen consumption, thus leading to the speedy growth of the fish. This was the first actual verification in the country. The Tsuchiyu Hot Spring has started to investigate bringing this achievement into their actual business. The Tsuchiyu Hot Spring is already developing the binary power generation by utilizing geothermal energy, and is considering the use of the Magic Water for breeding fish. These new developments are hoped to help the reconstruction of Fukushima, even though the steps are often hindered by problems.

The Influence of Low Dose

Radioactivity on Food

On November 10, a public lecture on the influence of low dose radioactivity on food was given by

Dr. Kazuko Utsu at the AOZ hall, Fukushima, as a part of the Fukushima Security and Safety Course. The speaker, Dr. Utsu is the head of the Interferon and Body Protection Laboratory, attached to Louis Pasteur Medical Research Center. The main topics were: the cause of the confusing results of the influence of low dose radio activity; genetic hindrance caused by radiation as well as its recovery system; the influence of radiation on DNA; the data on the world's radioactivity, and the effect on our eating habits re all these matters. Dr. Utsu's delivery was very clear and helpful for our daily life in Fukushima today.

Decontamination Work in

Fukushima

Noda Machi, Fukushima City ... this is the little area where the writer lives. The work of decontamination of the houses is being done slowly and gradually, one after another. This is how it is carried out: -- first some city men come and measure the dose of radioactivity of each house, record it and keep it with the photo of the house they take. Then, before starting the decontamination by a

powerful washing machine, they put up scaffolding around the house. Also, they protect the neighbors' houses lest the contaminated water splash on the houses nearby. Finally, they come for the actual work of decontamination, starting with the roof, then the drainpipes especially, then the outside walls. Then they come to wash the fence around the ground the next day, and the washing of the house of our Fukushima Desk is completed. The next and the last step is the garden (or the grounds). They clean them, carefully covering the top of the vinyl sheet so that the soiled water may not splash all over. However, one of the working men, holding the cover, takes it home with him. What about *him*? My head was occupied by a big question mark. This morning I ran into a group of such men doing the decontamination work in our neighborhood. As I passed, a man working close by the road greeted me very politely. It was the same kind of scene as I saw in the exhibition of photo panels of the decontamination of Tomioka Machi just a few days ago. I greeted him, and said, "This is very hard work for you people, isn't it? I am always very grateful to those of you who are devoted in this." Tears came to his

eyes as he said, "Thank you for saying that, Ma'am. I'll tell the rest of the guys what you just said. They will be very consoled." I wondered why he was so particularly moved. He said that they always receive complaints for being slow rather than being thanked. (Photo: the house in Tomoika Machi where the exhibition was held.)



Contaminated Earth in School

Yards

The decision by the Ministry of Environment that the waste of the decontamination produced before the enforcement of the Special Measures Law and preserved in the grounds of elementary schools, junior high schools and kindergartens of Fukushima Prefecture should not be carried into the space for temporary storage, roused a serious doubt in my heart. After studying the situation, the Ministry of Environment made a final decision that all the contaminated soil be carried into the temporary storage space.

The incoherence between common sense and the attachment to keeping the law! Does not the law exist for us, not us for the sake of law?

Sister Yukie Nogami, ACI