

Year #3 : A New Chapter

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After 3/11, at the very least, the media
Sounded the Fukushima alarm.
But at some point, the reports lessened.
Those not directly exposed
Became inured.
Fewer cared.

“Year #3: A New Chapter”: 3/11/2014
A memorial ceremony,
Attended by their majesties The Emperor and Empress
And the prime minister,
Opened on a grand scale,
Not in Fukushima, but in Tokyo.
All there said “I’ll never forget Fukushima.”
But “Never forget”
Sounds like someone
Eulogizing the dead.

Soon after, on March 25th,
At the Nuclear Security Summit held at The Hague in Holland,
Prime Minister Abe declared,
“Rest assured that Japan shall
Eliminate its large stockpiles of plutonium
By restarting our domestic nuclear power program,”
Even though the post-accident comprehensive safety check
Hadn’t yet finished.

Before the accident, the standard for allowable levels of radioactive exposure
For contaminated materials like soil
Was 100 bq/kg.

For measurements in air 1 meter above ground,
It was 1 msv/year.

So the Japanese government and TEPCO promised,
“Moving from the evacuation centers back to the contaminated areas
Will only occur after
These safe radiation levels have been reached
And decontamination is complete.”

But at some point,
100 bq/kg quietly became 8000 bq/kg (an 80-fold increase)
And 1 msv/year 20 msv/year (20-fold)

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The prime minister issued a directive
Lifting the evacuation order for areas under 20 msv/year, declaring:
“Three years have passed. Now, let us pull together fully and lift our spirits.
Most of you 140,000 evacuees can return home as your areas become safe.”
Accordingly, Fukushima prefecture also issued a directive to its
Elementary and junior high schools:
“Let’s feed the children Fukushima-grown rice in their school lunches
To show the world it’s safe.”

All radioactive topsoil
Measuring more than 8000 bq/kg
In expected resettlement areas
Has been removed.
But the removed soil has no place to go.
It’s temporarily stored only under a vinyl covering.

The ones who most wish to forget about the radiation
Are the people of Fukushima.
Yet, going back home,
Closing their eyes, covering their ears
And living as before
Won’t make the radiation go away.
No matter what,
They still must breathe.

They cannot escape
The highly-dosed air
That their bodies would take in.

An unceasing battle against
This deeper dread would begin.

The accident continues on from that day,
Hour by hour through today.
The extemporized emergency band-aid measures
Have come undone.
Toxic radiation is still being discharged.
Moreover, the French-made radiation water purification equipment
Is still having trouble.

Actual mind-numbing sleep medicine
Is prescribed for anxiety in Fukushima's people
With the advice, "You're overthinking things."

Whole body counters aren't the answer either.
They measure cesium and iodine,
But not
The very poisonous
Strontium and plutonium.
Cases of depression and of domestic violence
Have risen.

Prime Minister Abe has unleashed,
"To revitalize Japan".
An embarrassingly cheesy but
Oft-repeated phrase
To try and bring closure to 3/11
In this third year.
He has even deployed
Public health nurses to
Advocate for returning home, saying
There is no need to worry
In areas of less than 20 msv/year.

At the same time,
He's Japan's top salesman abroad
Pitching its trouble-prone nuclear reactors, asserting,
“We're stimulating the Japanese economy.”



In one high radiation area, 350 head of black-haired cows
Were being raised on a private breeding farm
To investigate the effects of the radiation.
Recently, many white spots of unknown origin
That even a veterinary surgeon cannot identify
Have appeared in their black hair.

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The government issued a directive to
“Kill them all.”

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The prime minister, the government and TEPCO, too
Seem to want to move all Fukushima victims,
Both the broken-spirited and the mentally ill,
Back to the high radiation zone,
To bury them alive.

Year #3: A New Chapter.
For Prime Minister Abe
To smile and smoothly declare
That Japan is now as it was,
That Japan is revived,
That Japan is fully safe,
Every inconvenient obstacle
Will be made to disappear easily.

Under the banner of “Peaceful Usage”,
He has intransigently defended
Japan's diligently accumulated plutonium reserves,
Which can easily be diverted

To make nuclear weapons.

In exchange for these Japanese lives...

...they work towards 2020,
The Tokyo Olympic Games,
To be held “on a grand scale.”

Note 1:

Bq=Becquerel, a unit for measuring radioactivity from materials.

Sv is a unit that measures how much radiation a person has absorbed into the body.

In connection with this, 5 msv/year and above is the international standard for defining a radiation controlled zone (this guide is used, for instance, for radiation for people who work in nuclear power production facilities and medical radiation facilities. Only those over 18 who are not pregnant are allowed to work in such areas).

According to this criterion, all residents in areas around the Chernobyl accident with an ambient radiation of 5 msv/year were forced to move. Despite this, many cases of thyroid cancer and other diseases have been well documented.

Note 2: On March 20, 2014, the UN Special Ambassador on the Right to Health, Anand Grover, came to Japan and issued the following warning regarding the Japanese government's declaration that up to 20 msv/year is safe. This warning, also included in a published UN Report for the Japanese government in May of 2013, said, “We recommend that 1) health checks including blood screenings and urine screenings be implemented for those living in areas with radiation levels greater than 1 msv/year, and 2) A plan be put in place as early as possible to reduce radiation levels to less than 1 msv/year, and 3) the citizens participate in all government decisions regarding support for the victims.

Note 3: TEPCO = Tokyo Electric Power Company