

The Rage of Exile: In the Wake of Fukushima 亡命の憤り 原発事故で故郷が奪われた福島 of 被災者の証言

Shoji Masahiko, Tom Gill

Japanese translation of introduction [available](#)

Translated and introduced by Tom Gill

A Statement by one of those who lost their homeland to the Fukushima nuclear disaster



A cherry blossom party at Nagadoro in the days before the disaster [photo: Shigihara Yoshitomo]

Translator's foreword: For the last two and a half years, I have been studying the inhabitants of Nagadoro, one of the twenty small hamlets in Iitate village, which has been evacuated and barricaded due to particularly high levels of radiation. Present government policy is to maintain the status of Nagadoro as a no-go zone for at least another four years. Among the 250 inhabitants is Shoji Masahiko, who until the nuclear disaster supported his wife and

four children as a part-time farmer and part-time carpenter. In March of this year, Masahiko handed me the document which, after an inexcusable delay, I have now translated below. The Japanese original follows. TG

Recently I have started to take a first, tentative look into the things being said [about the situation in Fukushima] by university professors, world opinion, the specialist media, and experts from various foreign countries, and I feel moved to set down on paper my own thoughts and ideas, before it is too late, about how things are, what should be done, and to give my opinion and an appeal on what should be done internationally, socially, humanly and humanitarially, regarding this important and weighty issue.

Shoji Masahiko, 2013.3.10 (Sunday)

All of a sudden two years have passed since that once-in-a-thousand-years calamity, the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the explosions that followed at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant – and nothing has changed. All that has happened is that our houses are crumbling, our fields are running to weeds, and our village is drifting back to a primitive state. Today I am thinking, I am worrying, and I am starting to feel resentment. “For us, in this reality, in this situation, what really matters? The village we were living in? To defend, to inherit, and to pass on to generations the home-place we were living in, the land our forefathers built upon, our property? Ah, but now what really matters is human health. That’s where it all starts” – with such words I question myself, then question

once again. The national government and the village mayor insist now as ever that they will decontaminate the village, that they will enable us to go home, to return to the village as soon as humanly possible, that their plans will be executed swiftly, that the living environment will be getting the top priority as they open up the road to recovery, and no-one wants to abandon their homeland. But why, when human life and health should be the top priority, should that be reason to choose return, return to the village, as a higher priority than the people's health, our children's health, our grandchildren's health? – That is something I cannot fathom.

For my part I have actually started to think that we are being used as the world's first human guinea-pigs, in an experiment to demonstrate to the world that "here in Japan, in the prefecture of Fukushima, in the village of Iitate, in an area of particularly high radiation, the people have come home, the village has been repopulated, and we have succeeded in restoring life as it was before the Great East Japan Disaster, and before the nuclear accident." The youngsters, the young couples bringing up children, have been forced into activities and a living environment of extremely exaggerated caution, in which information on radiation and on health is zealously collected and shared. I think that is only natural for parents, for mothers. As such, these young people, these households with children, will not contemplate going home, they think not of returning to the village, nor will they until the radiation level is below world standards, and it is possible to live safely, with a sense of security, living off the fruits of the land – until that happens, I think it is only natural to stay away from the village, and as a parent of children myself that is the best I can hope for. To avoid having to shut up our children and grandchildren indoors. That seems to be something that the officials, cabinet ministers and bureaucrats in the capital cannot apprehend.



Shoji Masahiko, photographed on 24 April 2011 with two baskets full of home-grown shiitake mushrooms that had to be destroyed because of their radiation level [photo: Tom Gill]

The only way for the officials, cabinet ministers and bureaucrats to convince and persuade the local people that it is safe to return is for them to come and experience life in the village for themselves, to prove by experiment with their own bodies that one can live in safety and peace of mind in our village; unless they turn their own experience into data, we will not be able to believe anything they tell us – this is the minimal responsibility of the nation that promoted nuclear energy and the Tokyo Electric Power Company. Electricity from the Fukushima nuclear power plant was electricity for Tokyo; we villagers of Iitate saw no benefit from it but only suffered the consequences – we could not see the radiation, we were told there was no immediate threat to health, even as hydrogen explosions burst out one after the other at the plant after March 12, 2011; only on April 22 were we told by the authorities – as a means to evade responsibility – to prepare for planned evacuation about a month later. And as a matter of fact, although our village was a high-level radiation zone, we accepted evacuees from Minami-Soma and some of those

from Namie whose escape had been delayed, and in each of the village's twenty hamlets, we prepared food for those evacuees, thinking it was aid, but we fed them irradiated food, and unnecessarily increased their dose of internal radiation. The possibility of internal radiation poisoning implies heavy responsibility. We meant well, and can but pass on the responsibility for the deed to the government and Tokyo Electric Power, but if my memory serves me, we accepted some 2,000 evacuees. The national government should take absolute responsibility for any harm to health that emerges from internal or external radiation absorbed by those people. We who gave them the emergency supplies are full of remorse that we knew not of the danger in what we were doing, and we pray from the bottom of our hearts that no harm to health will result.

Only a tiny part of the decontamination plan drawn up by the government for FY2012 (April 1, 2012~March 31, 2013) has been implemented, and no site has been secured for storing the radioactive materials to be removed after decontamination. At present the information I have says that only 1% of the area slated for decontamination has actually been treated. Moreover, as the work of decontamination has commenced, it has proved difficult to secure workers with the right technical expertise to do the work, even in the numerous areas with low levels of radioactivity, where the forests are far from the houses, where there is plenty of space around the living quarters and where there are plenty of forests to serve as windbreaks [factors considered to help decontamination work]. This makes it highly questionable whether the decontamination plan can be carried out, and even if it were, I believe it would only be for the sake of being able to say they gave it a try, though without succeeding in reducing the radiation to a level where people could actually live there again. It is totally incomprehensible to me why vast amounts of the taxpayers' money is being invested in this, even though it

is unclear whether a safe and reassuring environment will result; nor can I understand why they are once again planning to put the local people's lives at risk by making them go back before it is safe. Goodness knows how many billions of yen the work will cost, but the village office's estimate for Iitate village alone is 322 billion yen (over \$3 billion).



A single Coca-cola vending machine in a field in the evacuated hamlet of Nagadoro on 30 May 2011 [photo: Tom Gill]

The village only has about 1,700 households, so even if they were compensated to the tune of 100 million yen (about \$1 million) per household, that would still come to 170 billion yen. A much larger sum than that is now being spent on decontamination - and it is perfectly clear that this is mostly to give more jobs to the big construction companies. I believe this is a truth that cannot be concealed. Even if the village is decontaminated, the young people will not return, and if they cannot come back then the village will naturally perish, and it will be reported around the world as a ruined village. Rather than trying to protect the village, should not more attention be paid to the health of its people? Surely none of the villagers want their community to become a

guinea pig for the world – but if guarantees and compensation payments are cut off, then I think most of the villagers will have no choice but to return to the village, more out of resignation than anything else. The sad fact of the matter is that those people are mostly old people with nowhere else to go. Such, I think, is the unspoken truth. We will never forgive those responsible – the national government, the Tokyo Electric Power Company, and those who helped make this happen!

Translator's afterword: After the disaster, Masahiko and his family were evacuated to a temporary housing facility on a disused industrial estate in Matsukawa, in the south of Fukushima city. When he wrote this document, marking the second anniversary of the 3.11 disasters, he was still living there, in very cramped conditions, with his wife, mother and one of his sons. I am glad to say that a few months later he was finally able to buy a house on the outskirts of Fukushima city, paid for in part by compensation payments from Tokyo Electric Power Company, where he is now starting to settle down and plant vegetables on a small plot of land. While he still dreams of returning to his ancestral homeland, he has no idea when that might become possible, and for now, he feels he must improvise a new way of life elsewhere.

After the spectacular hydrogen explosions at the Fukushima No.1 nuclear power plant, the government ordered a series of evacuations from areas close to the plant. But the evacuation orders were based on the false assumption that safety increased with distance from the plant. In fact, as the world now knows, prevailing winds carried the radiation in a northwest direction, where a lot of it was deposited on the village of Iitate. Consequently, as Shoji-san says, some 2,000 evacuees sent to Iitate from Minami-Soma (closer to the plant than Iitate, but lying to the south and hence away from the heart of the radiation plume) were actually evacuating to a more dangerous

location, where they were given contaminated food and water by the villagers who had no idea of the possible danger. It later transpired that the government knew about the direction of the radioactive plume thanks to its SPEEDI early warning system, yet withheld the data from people in the affected region, ostensibly to avoid causing panic. This was one of the many scandals arising from the early days of the Fukushima crisis.



Shoji Masahiko (far right) with Tom Gill (second from right) and two friends, Matsukawa temporary housing complex, 15 August 2011 [photo: Manami Gill].

Shoji-san's factual references are generally correct. The figure he cites of 322 billion yen for decontaminating the village is on p. 8 of a report from the Iitate village office dated September 28 2011. He also writes that no more than 1% of the land of Iitate has been decontaminated so far. That was what the government claimed in March 2013. Accessing the relevant page in December 2013 shows that the government is now claiming about 2%. The government also claims to have decontaminated 110 houses, or 6% of the housing stock of Iitate. But who would return to

a house surrounded by land and forests not yet decontaminated? As for Masahiko's hamlet, Nagadoro, it has been formally excluded from the decontamination project anyway, as having too high a level of radiation.

The Environment Ministry decontamination data for Iitate is available at [this website](#).

Tom Gill is a professor at Meiji Gakuin University. He is the author of [Men of Uncertainty: the Social Organization of Day Laborers in Contemporary Japan](#) and co-editor of [Globalization and Social Change in Contemporary Japan](#).

For more on this topic, see my paper, "This Spoiled Soil: Place, People and Community in an Irradiated Village in Fukushima Prefecture," in the recently published collection, *Japan Copes with Calamity: Ethnographies of the Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disasters of March 2011* (Oxford: Peter Lang). A Japanese version of the paper, 場所と人の関係が絶たれるとき——福島第一原発事故と「故郷」の意味 may be found in the Japanese version of the collection, 東日本大震災の人類学——津波、原発事故と被災者たちの「その後」(京都: 人文書院). Both books are edited by myself, Brigitte Steger and David Slater. Shoji Masahiko is featured in the paper, and there is a photograph of him on p.212 of the Japanese edition.

Recommended citation: Shoji Masahiko, 'The Rage of Exile: In the Wake of Fukushima,' translated and with an introduction by Tom Gill, The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol. 11, Issue 49, No. 2, December 9, 2013.

亡命の憤り

原発事故で故郷が奪われた福島の被災者の証言

《私が最近、諸専門分野の大学教授、世界の見解、専門メディア、諸外国の専門分野の見解、の情報を少しか

じり始め思い、考え、成すべきと思うこと、又は、国際的、社会的、人間的に成すべきことの重要な、重大な、課題としての、意見及び訴えたいことを過ぎ去らないように書く!》

2013.03.10 日曜日

庄司正彦

千年に一度といわれる東日本大震災、それに伴い福島原発の爆発事故が起きてから早くも2年が過ぎ去ります、あれから何も変わらない。それどころか、住宅、田畑は、風化、老朽化、原始化し続けているばかりです。そんな今日この頃、思い、悩み、怨み始めたことです。「私たちは、この現実で、この状況の中で、住んでいた村が大事なのか、住んでいた故郷、先祖が築き上げた土地、財産が大事なのか、それを守り、受け継ぎ、後継する事の方が重要なのか?、いま一番大事なことは、人間の健康だろうが。それが原点のはずだろう!と」、自分を問い詰め、問いただしてみる。政府(国)、村(村長)は、除染をして住めるようにするから、一日も早く帰村できるようにするし、早い段階で実行するという考えで、帰還、帰村の考えを崩さないし、住環境除染だけを最優先的な復興の筋道と自負しているが、誰しも、故郷を捨てたくはないし、それ故に、「命と健康を大事にすること」が優先であるはずなのに、何故に、人間の、子供の、孫の健康よりも、帰還、帰村を優先の選択にするのか見当がつかない。自分的には、「日本の福島県の飯館村で原発事故による、特に放射線量が高い区域で帰還、帰村して東日本大震災、及び原発事故以前のように復活しました。」ということの世界にアピールするための実証試験にしか思われなく、世界初の人間モルモットの存在にされているのではないかと、現実的に思い始めています。若者、子育て中の若い世帯は、放射線に関して、健康に関しての情報を収集し、共有し、極めて過敏な行動、生活環境を強いられています。それは、親として、母としてあたりまえな行動だと思います。それが故に、若者、子育て世帯の家族は、帰還、帰村の考えはしないと思うし、放射線量が世界基準値以下、そして安心安全で生活でき、自給自足できる生活が成り立つまでは村から退避するのが当然であると思うし、それは子の親としても最大限望むことである。子孫を閉ざさないためにも。そんなことは、被災者ではない都会にいる国の役人、

閣僚、官僚の人間には察知できないのではないのかと思う。

安全であることを住民に納得させるには、役人、閣僚、官僚が身をもって体験し、安心安全に生活できる事を実証体験し、データ化しなければ、何も信用はできないであろう。全ては、国策で原子力発電を推奨してきた国と、東電の最低限の責任であるから。福島原発の電力は、東京のための電力であり、私たち飯館村民は、一際の恩恵も受けておらず、ただ犠牲になり、目には見えない、直ちに健康に被害はないと、2011.3.12から次々に水素爆発の原発事故後、ようやく責任逃れに4月22日に計画的避難の指示を出し、概ね1カ月をめどに避難の準備をし、避難することの避難勧告指示。また、現実的には、高放射線量の区域の村だったのに、南相馬、一部逃げ遅れた浪江町の避難者が、高線量区域の飯館で一時避難受入れし、村の要請で村の各行政区(20行政区)に避難して宿泊滞在している人々に対し、炊き出し支援を行い、救援と思いきや、被爆食料を支援し、無用な被爆をさせた。この時点で内部被爆をさせた疑いは責任重大であるが、「無知の善意で」国と東電への責任転嫁になってしまうが、確信持てる記憶ではないが、2,000人規模避難者を受け入れたという記憶が残っている。この事実、状況原因により、内部被爆及び外部被爆被害が発覚した状況時は、国が絶対的な責任を取るべきであるはず。汚染された支援物資を提供した我々としては、そんな事とは知らず本当に申し訳なかったなあと、心より、健康に被害が及ばないことを心底祈るばかりです。

現段階の除染状況では、当初の除染計画の、平成24年度の実施計画の目標のほんのわずか一部分しか、実施できず、除染後に発生した放射線

汚染物を移染する仮置きする敷地も確保できず、現段階では、飯館村全村の除染面積の1%の実績にしか至らないとの情報もある。ましてや、案外、除染作業するうえで、放射線量も低い地域で、森林も民家より、遠ざかっている地域なのに、これから除染する区域の中には、屋敷の面積も広く、屋敷周辺の防風林も多い地区が多数あるのに、その道の専門技術者も確保できず、如何にして、計画を達成できるのか、見当もつかないし、やったとしたら、ただ除染を試みたというだけで、放射線量を下げて、生活できる住環境に改善したという状況下には至らない結果にあると思う。何故に多額の税金を投資して、安心安全な住環境も補償保証出来ない状況なのに行事消化のように、国民の税金の無駄遣いをするのかさっぱり意味不明であり、再び、地域住民を健康被害の危険にさらそうとするのか理解できない。そんな何千億か見当はつかないが、飯館村内だけの除染費用の見積額だけでさえ3,224億円とか。飯館村の全世帯が約1,700世帯程度、1世帯当たり1億円の配分としたとしても、1,700億円の出費で賄えるのに、労働者の雇用拡大にかまけて、日本のゼネコンの雇用拡大にしか思えない状況は見えない。この現実には、隠しきれない現実であると思う。除染しても、若者が帰還、帰村できなければ、村は、自然消滅してしまうだろうし、廃墟の村として世界に報じられることと思う。村を守る事より、そこで生活してきた住民の健康を重視すべきではないか。飯館村民を世界のモルモットにしては欲しくないと村民誰しも願う心境であるはず、ただ単に保証、賠償が打ち切られ、生きていけないがために、諦め半分以上で帰村する人が大半であると思う。それも行き場のない年寄りばかりであるのが、悲しい現状であり、誰も認めたくない事実であると思う。一生怨みます。東電と国とこの事を推進した人物を!