

FUKUSHIMA DESK NEWS No. 14

February 2015

Fukushima Moves Out of Emergency Toward Future

Fukushima Prefecture is still in the “emergency state”. More than 120,000 people of Fukushima still lead the life of evacuees whether inside or outside the Prefecture. In the midst of this situation, *the Fukushima Minpo News* on January 29 reported the number of deaths related with the Earthquake reached 1851. This makes us feel as if the prolonged life of evacuation is affecting the lives of Fukushima people steadily.

However, the people of Fukushima are not all that lifeless. There are some high school students who think seriously what they can do to help Fukushima rise again. After their experience of the Earthquake, they meditate, on the meaning of life. For example, in particular, an article introducing the children of Iidate Village who are making their effort to live “carefully” caught our attention. Four years after the Earthquake, there are already many children without the experience of that unforgettable disaster. It is important for us to transmit the value of the experience to the next generation. The youngsters today have grown up in an economic depression. While we adults are prone to say to children, “Study hard if you want to live comfortably”, children today are more influenced by such advice as “Study hard if you want to be useful for others.” A story named “Snow and Pineapple” written by Dr. Minoru Kamata, a sincere pro-life medical doctor, was adopted in the public high school textbook of Japanese literature. The children of Iidate Village Junior High, after studying the chapter written by Kamata, wanted to meet him in person, and the school invited him to talk to the students. The students listened to him very seriously, and many enthusiastic questions followed, such as: “We had a snowball fight soon after the accident of the nuclear reactor. Do you think that was dangerous?” “Dr. Kamata, when do you think we can live in Iidate Village again?” Dr. Kamata, much moved with the children’s sincerity and interest, encouraged them with all his heart, saying “Each one of you has a precious gift called Freedom.” After Dr. Kamata’s talk, some children wrote: “Dr. Kamata told us the two important things in our life are courage and freedom. This will stay in my heart all my life.” “I want to live every moment of every day with much care.” Kamata said the children gave ~~him~~ courage by understanding the spirit of his talk.

Mr. Munenori Kawasaki, a well known baseball champion, was also invited to Iidate Junior High for a special baseball class. Before the training, Kawasaki invited the children to recite "All we have to do is GO FORWARD." He also told the students how discouraged he was tempted to be in the beginning of his professional life, and how the encouragement of his family helped him. After meeting these junior high children, Kawasaki said, "My, they are strong children. I cannot get over the power they have, and the life in their eyes!" Those children's power also tells how "carefully" they live their life.

(イチゴパンの写真)

Strawberry Flapjack, an invention of Iwaki Commercial High students and Family Mart.

Reconstruction is On the Way in Tomioka

Recently mass media is now busy informing us of the threat of the building of Tomioka Station ready to collapse any day. The citizens were hoping that the rail way company would start working sooner since the end of December, but now that the press has started talking about it, we hope the work will start soon and as usual, once it is started, it will finish in no time. I drove over to the sea shore area, since I hoped to impress in my memory the scene of the station before it disappears. Well, the scenery is already making changes. I took the high way as far as Tomioka IC, from which I drove back to Tomioka Station. I detoured around the residential area where there is a warning about the danger of radiation (where nobody lives now) and came out to Route 6. After driving about the place, I left Route 6 and made my way back to Tomioka. Since the last time I came, there is no change in the presence of the barricades along the national highway. However, I found there are newly decontaminated places here and there, where many packs of polluted earth were piled up nearby. Some weeds were also cleared, and the fields were surprisingly neat.

I arrived at Tomioka Station. The site of the planned station building was already fenced. The big sign of the station had been taken down, and scaffolding had been up. Most probably the whole thing will be completed in a matter of several days. However, the houses around the station are in the same wrecked condition as after the damage on March 11, 2011, looking as if enduring with all their strength to stay in the same

appearance as on the doomed day. The cars which had been carried by the tide wave were still left in the same positions as they landed, upside down or sitting sideways, or whatever position. However, the houses that had been pushed around by the tidal wave as far as the middle of a field or a wide street, were tidier. They had been cleared up. Whether cleared up or still left in a mess, the state “no more original” makes one feel sad.

(写真 2 枚)

Miyakoji and Kawauchi Village

(写真 5 枚)

On April 1, 2014, the government order of evacuation was cancelled for a part of Miyakoji area in Tamura City. This area was within radial 20 km. from the Fukushima First Nuclear Power Plant. After the announcement of the cancellation of evacuation, the people who returned to the village were only 33% out of the 357 (coming from 117 families), according to the record of the village as of August, 2014. When you drive from Fukushima to Kawamata, then to Yamakiya, Miyakoji and finally to Kawauchi Village, all along the way you see piles and piles of polluted material temporarily left there. You can see a Family Mart just returned to Miyakoji, too. In January 2012, Kawauchi Village announced its official return of the entire members since the Earthquake, the first of such an announcement in the whole world! However, since that day the compensation money has stopped coming in to the village, although those who returned counted only 52% of the population. The construction of a nursing care home for the elderly was started. The village authority of Kawauchi is starting the preparation for welcoming the rest of the villagers. Kawauchi Village is known for Tenzan Library in memory of the famous poet Shimpei Kusano. It is also well known to scholars for the special habitat of polypetatsids. Those rare frogs must miss the people, too. The inhabitants who just returned started their new life there, trying to appreciate what they find, instead of complaining what they do not have, in order to regain their own village they used to be so proud of.

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