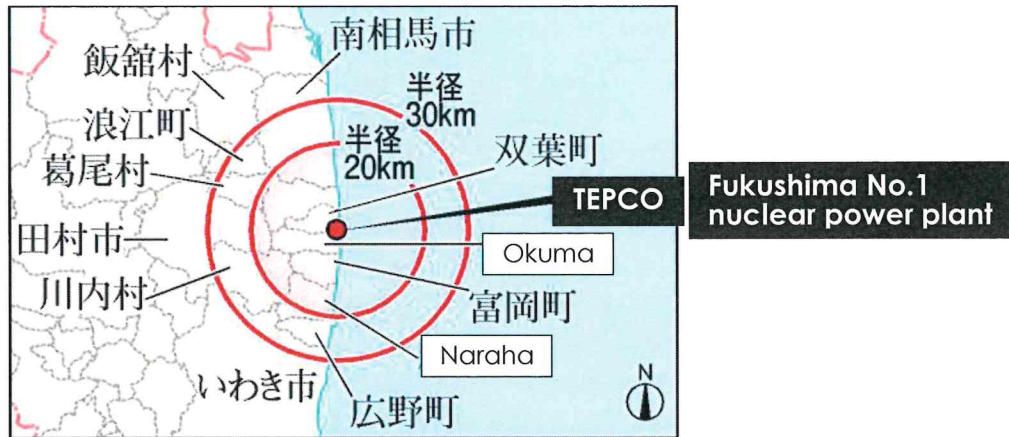


# FUKUSHIMA DESK NEWS

Sendai Diocesan Support Center  
No.19—November 2015

## A Soba Specialist Claims Tepco Destroyed His Life's Dream



Okuma Machi where Fukushima First Atomic Power Plant is situated has been declared as an area discouraging the return of former residents, while on September 5, 2015, the whole area of Naraha Machi was recently permitted to invite the residents to return. This permission to return, however, really means that the government stops the payment of the compensation. There exist complicated problems related to the government help for the rent of temporary houses. Those who do not wish to return to the village are made to feel uneasy, as if pressured to choose to go back to Naraha.

“Momi no Ki” (meaning Fir Tree), which is the name of the Support Station in Iwaki, makes it a rule for the staff members to visit ten groups of temporary houses twice every month, calling themselves Walking Free Coffee Shop for Communication.

On October 21, the administration of Naraha Town announced the final number of the residents who conclusively moved back was 321, consisting of 203 families. That is only 4 % of the total number of residents who were 7368, consisting of 2694 families. It shows that the “returning of the people of Naraha” is far from what it was.

The other day, on one of the visits of the “Momi no Ki” to the temporary

houses, we had a chance to listen to a man who used to run a Soba restaurant in Naraha before the Earthquake. “I was trained in Tokyo, and came back to Naraha to open a Soba restaurant, which I had to close after the Earthquake, expecting to reopen it after a while. However, I had to give up the idea of serving “my” Soba to only 3 or 4 percent of the residents in my town, where I could not even trust the source of the water supply. I really wanted to do something worthwhile for the people of my native town who really supported me. Now, if I give up my work here, I have to go back to Tokyo to find a job. Tepco really destroyed my dream. I am deeply frustrated.”

The day we listened to this Soba specialist was just like any other ordinary day, but it turned out to be a very special day for me. We were talking in a small dining room of the same old temporary house. The leader of the group introduced this man to me, a man probably in mid-fifties, and advertised the splendid taste of the Soba prepared by him. The calling card this man gave me said, “Yedo Soba no Kai, Tokyo. “Are you from the Soba specialists’ association known by the book entitled *Soba-tsu*?” I asked. He said I was right. I told him then that I had a copy of the book. The association called Soba-tsu had the power to authorize what they call “Sobalier”, a word they created analogous to “sommelier”. The book had just been published and known to those who were informed, though the number of its copies was modest. Knowing that I had a copy of his book, Mr. Y’s eyes lit up, and he started to tell me about his life.

When I added that I had already visited the famous Soba restaurant in Katsushika, Tokyo, which was mentioned in the book, Mr. Y took out another calling card, this time of the restaurant by the name of Gen’an. That was the very place where Mr. Y learned how to prepare his excellent Soba when he was still young and inexperienced. Mr. Y, so eager to express his



gratitude to Gen’an for the training, is now actively involved in training professional Soba specialists, since he himself can no more run his own restaurant in Fukushima.

This was a real surprise for me. I had been involved in planning small trips with some of my friends twice a

year: one in the spring and one in the fall. Under the name “our literary strolls”, we, as a group were interested in reading and enjoyed drinking together, and visiting interesting places we found while reading. About seven or eight years ago, our group visited the Soba restaurant by the name of “Gen’an, travelling all the way from the local city of Kumagaya to Tokyo. Mr. Y could have been one of the men preparing the Soba there that day, and today I met this man who had to live in the very temporary house I visited. Would you call this only accidental?

(from Momi no Ki Support Station, Iwaki)

### March 11, Now the Memorial Day of Nuclear Plant Accident Only 4% of Residents are Back in Naraha

At 2:49 p.m. on March 11, 2011, which was three minutes after the Earthquake, all the cities, towns and villages along the shore of the Pacific started busily reacting to the warning of a great Tsunami issued by the local government. The town of Naraha had already prepared a hazard map for a Tsunami, with the help of the residents of each of the small areas they had divided. As soon as the Earthquake came, the town administration called over the P.A. system to tell the residents to evacuate immediately, and the fire department men tried to lead the people out to a safer place. That was the starting point of the Fukushima method of facing the Nuclear Plant Accident.

To the four towns in which Nuclear Plants were respectively situated (Okuma, Futaba, Naraha and Tomioka), some members of Tokyo Electric were sent out to inform the people about what was happening to the Nuclear Plants by the minute, though not to a satisfactory degree. However, only a limited number of people had sufficient knowledge of the explanation given. In Naraha city office, there was a man who had formerly worked for the Nuclear Plant for many years. This man, luckily able to foresee the following step, judged it proper to instruct all the residents there to evacuate at 8:00 a.m. on March 12, way before the time the government order arrived.

In May 2014, the town of Naraha announced their plan to allow residents to return in the spring of 2015. As of May 27, 2014, Naraha’s population was 7,499. 5,772, which was 89% of the 6,462 who had moved from Naraha to places within Fukushima Prefecture, were in Iwaki City.

At the same time, in Iwaki City, a policy as to ways to reduce its future

population was being developed. After the Earthquake, while the city was facing how to attend to the problems of its own citizens, about 24,000 new evacuees poured in from outside such as Futaba Gun, in addition to the temporary residents such as those involved in decontamination of houses and abolishing nuclear reactors. This caused new problems such as the shortage of medical help, the increase of the need for the land for building houses, the rising prices of lands, the need for more trash incineration, and so on. (Quoted from *Rebuilding of Autonomy* by Teru Imai, 2014)

## The Present Situation of Evacuation from Naraha

(The number of evacuees out of Nahara)

### **1) Prefectures other than Fukushima Total : 1,037**

Hokkaido: 15	Aomori: 7	Miyagi: 99
Yamagata: 13	Tochigi: 45	Gunma: 28
<b>Saitama: 138</b>	<b>Chiba: 135</b>	<b>Tokyo: 165</b>
Kanagawa: 86	Niigata: 63	Toyama: 4
Ishikawa: 2	Yamanashi: 5	Nagano: 7
Gifu: 4	Shizuoka: 18	Aichi: 5
Mie: 1	Shiga: 3	Osaka: 6
Hyogo: 3	Okayama: 1	Kagawa: 2
Fukuoka: 9	Oita: 8	Miyazaki: 3
Okinawa: 1	Unknown: 7	

### **2) Within Fukushima Prefecture Total : 6,462**

Fukushima City: 59  
 Koriyama City: 130  
 Aizu Wakamatsu City: 90  
 Aizu Misato Machi: 241  
**Iwaki City: 5,772**  
 Other: 170

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