

# FUKUSHIMA DESK NEWS

*Sendai Diocese Support Center*

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## Fukushima Regains Daily Life after Sharing the Data With Visitors both from Abroad and Local



(Students from Indonesia, Malaysia and France)

It is called Suetsugi Area, a part of Kunohama Town in Iwaki City, a small town with the population of only 390, at the north end of the city, right next to Futaba Gun.

At the time of the Atomic Plant accident, the residents within 30 km from the First Tokyo Nuclear Plant were instructed to take shelter. However, after a month, a bus was sent from the City to take them home without sufficient explanation. The residents were tossed back and forth without grasping the situation.

“If they don’t tell us the facts, we’ll find out ourselves,” the residents said and decided to measure the dosage of the earth and of the air by themselves. They are gradually grasping their situation.

Even now, every Tuesday they get together and measure the radioactive element of various foods. They collect different vegetables from their fields, and sometimes even mushrooms. The collection of the data accumulated is offered as the common information as a result of their study. The waiting time is a nice meeting place. Instead of discussing radioactivity, they love to talk about their daily life, cooking, and so on. Thus they enjoy mutual exchange, more than they used to before the Earthquake.

With the D Shuttle method, the residents measure their personal amount of outside radiation, and submit to the whole body counter periodically to measure the internal amount of radiation. The meeting of listening to the explanation of the measurement is held several times a year, sitting around a doctor from Fukushima Medical College, at the assembly hall of their area. The



The atmosphere there is not the vertical relation between the doctor and patients, but that of sitting around and talking among good friends.

“My husband has a weakness for bamboo shoots. We eat only those which passed the detector, but he eats an incredible amount of them. I don’t eat as much as he does, but we both take the same food naturally. Afterwards both of us went and took the WBC test, but there was no problem.” Those people’s steps are slow and steady. They are convinced that it is all right to live there. Their food life is safe, rich and comfortable again, just like their everyday life before the Earthquake.

There are always numerous tourists who come and visit Suetsugi Area. Students and research scholars including from outside Japan, government officials of various departments and many kinds of visitors appear. The residents receive all these people with the same simplicity.

Why is it that the people of other areas of Fukushima could not do the same thing? These people of Suetsugi say that all they do is something very basic and simple. They have overcome their attachment to their own opinions and contentions. By measuring the dosage and sharing the results with each other, they have regained the peace and harmony of their daily life.

During the summer 2016, the people of Suetsugi received about 30 visitors from Indonesia, Malaysia and France, as well as some students from Toyama High School, Tokyo and some high schools in our own Fukushima Prefecture, who came to participate in the program named “Hello, Fukushima Foods! Let’s Overcome Rumors by our Youthful Energy!” The movement was organized by Fukushima Prefecture, with the cooperation of Fukushima High School, and was carried out from August 15 to 20. The

visitors spent their time in Hirono Machi, Naraha Machi, Aizu Wakamatsu City and Date City, listening to the explanations of our farmers producing fruit, as well as to persons working in the Tokyo Electric Company. They were happy to know something about the tradition and culture of Fukushima. Some high school students from Malaysia told us that their mothers were very worried when they heard that their sons and daughters were to visit Fukushima.

On the last day, a workshop was held at Fukushima High School. We had excellent members as speakers, such as professors of Tokyo University, Fukushima Medical College, and so on. D shuttle had been sent to the overseas high school students ahead of time, with which they had measured if they had been exposed to radiation while at home, and wearing the D shuttle on them they had travelled to Tokyo, and then to Fukushima. The workshop proved to be extremely useful for those who attended.

It had been a forsaken area. That was why they measured the dosage by themselves in order to influence the government, they said.

### **All the Rice Proved Safe!**

This is the season of the early crop of rice. Again this year, we have to submit all the bags to be examined. The first testing day this year was August 24, when a farmer of Nihon Matsu City sent in 69 bags of early rice (2070kg.) All the rice that went through the testing machine was below the lower limit, i.e. 12 Bq per a kg. This year Fukushima Prefecture is planning to test about 10,000,000 bags, which will be about the same amount as 2015.



Information on rice, vegetables, soba noodles and soybeans can be obtained in <https://fukumegu.org/ok/contents/>. About the result of radiation tests concerning fishing, see <http://www.fsgyoren.jf-net.ne.jp/siso/sisotop.html>.



### **Endangered Species is now a Messenger of Life**

At the site where the huge Tsunami invaded at the time of East Japan Earthquake, clumps of tiny pale blue flowers catch our eyes. They are called mallows, which used to grow around rice fields. They were classified as useless weed, and the excessive use of weed-killers threatened their survival, until they were called one of the endangered species by scholars.

In addition to mallows, there are many “resurrected” plants thanks to the stirring of the tsunami, after many years being victims of human exploitation.

Through painful experience of tsunami, some wild life returned in its original shape. Plants are regaining their original life and a variety earlier than humans. The pretty blue flowers of mallow are reminding men and women of the hope for revival.

