

## **“This Is About How We Live...”**

### MUTO Ruiko's Speech

Anti-Nuclear Demonstration by 60,000 Citizens

Tokyo, Japan

19 September 2011

Hello, I am from Fukushima.

I came here with busloads of my peers from Fukushima and from shelters in other places.

For many people this is the first time to join this kind of rally or demonstration. But we encouraged each other saying that WE must tell stories of the bitter experiences caused by the Fukushima nuclear disaster, WE must raise our voices against nuclear power. First of all, I want to say that I deeply respect each one of you who is fighting and doing things to protect lives while enduring all the hardships since March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Also, I want to thank all of you who reach out your hands to Fukushima people and support us in every way you can. And I'd like to apologize to the children and young people who I am burdening with the huge baggage brought about by this disaster. As a member of the generation who created this reality, I am very sorry.

Everyone, Fukushima is a very beautiful place. Hamadori is hugged by the deep blue Pacific Ocean to the east. Nakadori is a treasure box of fruits -- peaches, pears, apples. The Aizu plain abounds with golden rice ears hanging low. Lake Inawashiro and Mt. Bandai are surrounded by more deep mountains. The mountains are green. The water is pure. This is our home country.

Since 311, unseen radiation has been raining down on this landscape and we have all become “hibakusha” (radiation victims). In the middle this confusion all kinds of things have been happening to us. Bonds between

people have been torn apart by the swift “safety” campaigns and by anxiety. So many have been suffering and lamenting in their communities, at work, in school and at home.

Like it or not, we have been pressed to make decisions. To go or stay, to eat or avoid, to hang our laundry outside or inside, to make our child wear a mask or not, to plow our fields or not, to raise our voices or keep our mouths shut. Anguished decisions.

And now, over the last 6 months, gradually things have become clearer to us.....

- Truths are covered up.
- The government does not protect its citizens.
- The catastrophe has not ended.
- People of Fukushima have become the subjects of a nuclear experiment.
- Vast amounts of radioactive waste will remain.
- In spite of the huge sacrifice, the clout of the proponents of nuclear power prevails.

We have been abandoned.

We sigh deeply because of fatigue and heartbreak.

But we can't help but to say, “ Don't treat us like fools” and “Don't take our lives away”. People of Fukushima, in their anger and sadness are quietly taking a stand....

To protect the children, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers are speaking out, and younger generations, too, are trying to save their futures. And laborers are trying to save nuclear workers being exposed to massive radiation as they struggle to contain the disaster.... And farmers are in despair over their contaminated land. And disabled people are trying to avoid new discrimination due to radiation exposure...

And one by one, we citizens are questioning the responsibility of the government and Tokyo Electric Company, saying we don't want nuclear power. We are “ogres of the northeast” quietly burning flames of wrath. We, the people of Fukushima, who stay or leave, will continue to support each other sharing our bitterness, commitment and hope.

Please join us.

And please pay attention to our various actions. Negotiations with governments, lawsuits to seek evacuation, relocation, recuperation, decontamination, measurement, learning about nuclear power and radiation. We will go anywhere to talk about Fukushima. One of us is talking in New York today. We are doing everything we can think of. Help us. Do not forget us.

I'd like to say one more thing. This is about how we live. We need to imagine the world existing on the other side of the outlet that we casually insert our plug into. Think about how our convenience and prosperity are built on discrimination and sacrifice. Nuclear power plants exist on the other side. Humans are just one species. Is there any other species that robs their own kind's future? I want to live decently in harmony with this beautiful planet earth. While carefully conserving energy, I want to pursue a rich, creative life. How can we create a world completely different from one with nuclear power?

Nobody has a clear answer. What we must not do is follow somebody else's rules. Each of us should think for himself or herself, look around, decide what to do, and then do it. Remember we have that power. Everyone has the courage to change. Take back your confidence. Join with others. If the nuclear proponents are a vertical wall, we can go around it horizontally. That's our strength. Gently hold the hand of the person next to you. Look at them. Listen to each other's pain. Forgive anger and tears. Spread the warmth in your hand to others all over Japan, all over the world. Even though our burden is heavy, no matter how hard the way is, let's support one another and not turn away. Let's carry on with light and cheerful hearts.