

# The future on Japan N-industry in question: against the power of money

Saturday 16 July 2011, by [BIGGS Stuart](#), [Kyodo News](#), [Mainichi Shimbun](#), [NAGATA Kazuaki](#), [NISHIKAWA Jin](#), [WATANABE Chisaki](#) (Date first published: 15 July 2011).

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## Reactor stress tests heavy on redundancies

The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency on Friday submitted the outline of a two-stage stress test for the nation's reactors, focusing on four categories, including earthquakes, tsunami, loss of power sources and loss of cooling systems for fuel rods.

According to the outline submitted to the Nuclear Safety Commission, the first stage will target reactors currently out of operation for regular inspections and maintenance.

The government will decide if the reactors are able to endure severe events beyond the current safety standards in terms of the four categories.

For the second stage, tests will be conducted on all reactors, including those covered by the first stage. But there are exceptions \ the reactors at the Fukushima No. 1 and No. 2 plants as well as those now being decommissioned and do not have nuclear fuel rods inside.

The second stage will also check the reactors' endurance levels in the four categories.

The tests are aimed at identifying what level of tsunami or earthquake would cause severe damage to fuel rods.

There are numerous redundancies in the tests, according to NISA.

A NISA official explained that the difference between the first and second tests is that the first is designed to make sure "fuel rods will not be damaged if something beyond expectation based on the design standard" were to occur, while the second is to check how much stress a reactor can take and for how long before it breaks down.

The stress test outline will be reviewed by the NSC, which has to approve it.

If the tests go ahead, utilities will check their reactors based on the outline and submit reports to NISA, which will review them.

NISA said once the test plan is approved, utilities can submit the reports for the first stage when they are ready.

The power companies can't fire their halted reactors back up unless they finish the first stage and receive approval.

For the second stage, NISA expects the utilities to submit reports by the end of the year.

By **KAZUAKI NAGATA**, *Japan Times* Staff Writer  
<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20110716a2.html>

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### **Utility's campaign to outvote opposition to atomic plants worked**

FUKUOKA (Kyodo) — Kyushu Electric Power Co.'s email campaign mobilizing utility and nuclear power plant employees apparently worked in drawing more e-mail opinions supporting the restart of reactors than those against in a TV program aired in late June, utility sources said Wednesday.

The TV program received a total of 286 opinions in support by e-mail and fax, while those opposed totaled 163. While the margin was 123, the utility sources said around 130 people associated with the utility posted their opinions and most of them were thought to be in support.

Kyushu Electric Power has also identified its former Executive Vice President Mamoru Dangami as having instructed his deputy to launch a campaign to send e-mails to the TV program in favor of restarting its nuclear reactors, the sources said.

The utility will admit its organized e-mail campaign in a report that it will submit to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry possibly on Thursday, the sources said.

Dangami instructed Akira Nakamura, deputy head of the utility's nuclear power control department, to enliven discussions on the TV program, which was designed to win support for restarting two reactors after regular checks at the Genkai nuclear plant in Saga Prefecture, the sources said.

Nakamura then conveyed the instruction to his deputy who asked Kyushu Electric employees, including those at affiliates of the company, to send e-mails supporting the restart for the TV program aired June 26, they said.

Kyushu Electric had earlier denied an organized e-mail campaign, indicating it was initiated voluntarily by a senior employee.

Dangami resigned as executive vice president in charge of nuclear plants in late June.

The TV program was aimed at paving the way for restarting Genkai and other nuclear reactors after regular checks, but they had not been restarted due to the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant

caused by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami in northeastern Japan.

**Kyodo**, July 14, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/07/14/20110714p2g00m0dm007000c.html>

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## **Nuclear safety group in 1993: Power losses no big threat**

A Nuclear Safety Commission of Japan (NSC) working group concluded in 1993 that a complete loss of power sources at a nuclear plant in Japan would probably not cause any serious problems.

Reports of the group's discussions and conclusions were put online on July 13 for the first time following a request made under the information disclosure law.

The NSC, which is overseen by the Cabinet Office, said it will investigate how the group reached such a conclusion.

Severed power supplies and the failures of emergency diesel generators to cool reactors after the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami led to meltdowns at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl in 1986.

The group, including five nuclear experts and employees at Tokyo Electric Power Co., operator of the Fukushima No. 1 plant, and Kansai Electric Power Co., was asked to weigh the possible consequences of a blackout at a nuclear power plant.

At that time, discussions of all NSC working groups were held behind closed doors.

The group studied power losses at U.S. nuclear power plants and compared regulations on nuclear facilities.

It said no such power losses have occurred in Japan, and that Japanese nuclear plants can restore power within 30 minutes, much quicker than in the United States.

The group also said the likelihood of emergency diesel generators failing was small.

The group concluded that the "chances of losing all alternating currents are slim" and that "a reactor will unlikely enter a serious situation since outside and other power sources can be expected to return in a short period of time."

The group did not provide a clear basis for its conclusion.

Discussions for the NSC's safety-design guidelines for nuclear power plants set in 1990 reached a similar conclusion.

"There is no need to consider a situation in which all alternating currents are lost for a prolonged period because power cables and emergency alternating current equipment are expected to be restored," according to the guidelines.

Haruki Madarame, chairman of the NSC, said the 1990 guidelines were an “obvious mistake.” The commission is working on new guidelines.

**BY JIN NISHIKAWA**, *Asahi Shimbun* Staff Writer, July 16, 2011  
<http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201107150338.html>

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## **Fukushima Prefecture vows to shift away from nuclear plants**

FUKUSHIMA (Kyodo) — Fukushima Prefecture vowed to shift away from nuclear power plants in its reconstruction vision compiled Friday after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami triggered a serious nuclear crisis.

The about-face came after Prime Minister Naoto Kan’s declaration Wednesday of pursuing a society free from dependence on nuclear energy and is expected to affect the policies of other prefectures where nuclear plants are located.

Fukushima may be the first Japanese prefecture that has had nuclear plants and has vowed to eliminate them, said an official at the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy.

It has coexisted with nuclear plants since the No. 1 reactor of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant started commercial operation in 1971. It now has 10 reactors, including those at the plant plagued with the crisis.

On June 27, Fukushima Gov. Yuhei Sato specified his change in policy from tolerance of nuclear plants before the disaster, saying he concluded that Fukushima should pursue a society that does not depend on nuclear energy.

The vision calls for promoting renewable energy sources instead of nuclear energy, overcoming the present nuclear crisis and building a society invulnerable to disasters.

The prefectural government will officially adopt the reconstruction vision in early August after subjecting it to public comments. The vision will be the basis for a specific reconstruction plan to be developed by the end of this year.

**Kyodo**, July 15, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/07/15/20110715p2g00m0dm103000c.html>

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## **Disaster-hit Miyagi town questions dependence on nuclear money**

ONAGAWA, Miyagi — During a public hearing on the town’s reconstruction plan at the prefectural Onagawa High School on May 27, some town residents asked why the town’s reconstruction scheme made no mention of the Onagawa Nuclear Power Plant.

The nuclear power plant run by Tohoku Electric Power Co. came to a sudden halt due to the disaster. It is reachable from the heart of the town in about 30 minutes by car and is located in the middle of the Oshika Peninsula.

The nuclear power plant began commercial service in 1984 and created as many as 2,000 jobs. The town reaped huge benefits from the plant in fixed property tax and subsidies based on three electric power laws including the Electric Power Development Promotion Law.

Onagawa's total revenue in fiscal 2009 came to about 6.4 billion yen. The so-called "nuclear power money" including the fixed property tax and subsidies based on the three laws accounted for 65 percent of the revenue — a national record.

The deep-pocketed town built a sports park, which is now being used as an evacuation center, various tourism spots, a hospital and other buildings.

The subsidies also helped to maintain and manage those facilities and pay salaries for nurses and nursery staff. "We could draw up a budget thanks to nuclear power money," a senior town official said.

The March 11 disaster struck the town hard, with the fisheries industry, the town's key industry, suffering catastrophic damage. The town is certain to face a big drop in revenue, and though risks associated with the Onagawa nuclear power plant have risen due to the ongoing crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant the town is likely to rely more on nuclear power money.

But the Fukushima crisis is changing residents' attitudes toward nuclear power.

"I can no longer say I wholeheartedly welcome the nuclear power plant," said a 61-year-old housewife living along the coast near the Onagawa Nuclear Power Plant.

Her son has worked at the Onagawa plant for more than 20 years instead of inheriting his family's fishing business. Debate on a possible graduation from nuclear energy makes him uneasy.

Incumbent town assemblymen are noticing a change in public sentiment toward nuclear power.

"If we do not call for an end to nuclear power, when are we going to do it? We have to prepare a reconstruction plan for the town without the nuclear power plant," town assemblyman Shigeru Abe, 46, says.

But a senior town official warned, "If there is debate on the pros and cons of the nuclear power plant, restoration and reconstruction may be delayed."

Seiro Kimura, a 66-year-old, six-term assemblyman and speaker of the town assembly, commented, "I never talked about nuclear power during past election campaigns. But I honestly wonder if it is OK to build things that man cannot control."

The 14-member town assembly is also scrambling to deal with the issue of nuclear money which has been the backbone of the town's budget.

**Mainichi Shimbun** , July 15, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/07/15/20110715p2a00m0na004000c.html>

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## **Rejecting ¥160 million offer from J-Power, Aomori family left with view of nuclear plant**

OMA, Aomori Pref. \ Atsuko Ogasawara's family rejected offers of some ¥160 million for their property on the northern tip of Honshu during a two-decade bid to prevent construction of a nuclear plant. The result: Their fenced-in house is little more than a stone's throw from a facility that opens in 2014.

The family's protest illustrates the challenges facing opponents when they go up against the nuclear industry, a pillar of Japanese energy policy since the late 1960s.

Ogasawara says her mother faced harassment that included letters from local authorities and neighbors pressuring her to sell, unidentified men following her and anonymous phone calls that included a threat to sabotage the family's fishing boat.

"The calls were so frequent my mother hated answering the phone," Ogasawara said in an interview last month in her living room, where a photo of her mother with a freshly caught tuna hangs on the wall. Her mother died in 2006.

"She came from a generation that knew of the dangers of radiation because of Hiroshima. She didn't care about the money."

Ogasawara says she is now the last holdout among 176 families that owned land where Electric Power Development Co., better known as J-Power, is building its first atomic plant, in Oma, Aomori Prefecture, a windswept town of 6,300.

The other residents agreed to the plant in exchange for government subsidies that have totaled almost ¥11 billion over 29 years since the plant was proposed, official data show.

While J-Power offered to buy the land, it didn't pressure Ogasawara's mother to sell, Masato Honda, a spokesman for the company, said. Honda declined to say how much the company offered.

The family's log bungalow, now surrounded by J-Power's land, is a focal point for the nation's antinuclear movement, attracting letters and visits from supporters across Japan. A supporter stopped by with a journalist on June 1 after driving nine hours from Tokyo. Ogasawara says the bungalow forced the company to move the reactor 250 meters away.

J-Power says the distance is about 300 meters to comply with government radiation guidelines.

Ogasawara's protest is part of the grassroots opposition facing the nuclear industry in the only country to be hit by atomic weapons, when the U.S. dropped bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II.

Opposition to nuclear power, in recent years mostly confined to legal battles in courtrooms, has moved to the streets since the March earthquake and tsunami caused meltdowns of three reactors at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima No. 1 plant, about 460 km south of Oma. According to nuclear companies' plans, Oma will be the first new station to come online since the Fukushima

accident.

Antinuclear protests were held across Japan on June 11, three months after the Fukushima plant began spewing radiation.

More than 60,000 people marched in demonstrations in cities including Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima and Fukushima.

About 74 percent of the public supports the “gradual abolition” of nuclear power, which supplied a third of Japan’s energy before Fukushima, the Asahi Shimbun said June 14, citing its own poll. A survey two weeks earlier found 48 percent of Aomori Prefecture residents want the Oma station scrapped.

The Fukushima crisis is giving Ogasawara’s protest a second wind, even as the cranes visible through her window indicate the 1,383-megawatt nuclear plant is near completion.

Outside, a guard sits in a box at the end of the new private road leading to her house, monitoring all visitors.

“This is a great chance to think about a way of life and power generation not dependent on nuclear,” Ogasawara said. “What happened in Fukushima was a man-made disaster.”

A drive through Oma shows it fits the bill as the usual economically deprived rural area chosen by the atomic power industry to host a nuclear plant.

Oma also had a decreasing and aging population, town officials said.

What sets the town apart is Japan’s most iconic fishery, where Pacific bluefin tuna weighing as much as 555 kg are still caught using a rod and line. In January, an Oma bluefin fetched ¥32.5 million at the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo.

The importance of fishing made the nuclear plant a tough sell to residents, Hirofumi Hamahata, 69, the head of Oma’s fisheries cooperative, said in his office decorated with pictures of some of the bluefin he’s caught in a career that began at the age of 6. The 770-member cooperative was divided at first. About 99 percent of members supported the plant after receiving compensation of about ¥10 million each, he said.

“Of course we’re worried about the plant,” said Hamahata. “If people say they’re not concerned, they’d be lying. No one ever dreamed of an accident like Fukushima happening.”

He will be the last of three generations fishing for bluefin after his son took a job in the power industry.

“Without the nuclear plant, there’d be nothing here,” Yoshifumi Matsuyama, the 66-year-old head of the Oma Chamber of Commerce, said in an interview at the chamber’s offices, a few buildings up the street from where Matsuyama does his main job as the town’s butcher. “If the plant had come sooner, we would be better off. The young people have already left.”

Matsuyama’s comments resonate in rural towns throughout the country as the government stepped up its promotion of nuclear power to meet shortages after the 1973 oil shock sent the economy into recession.

This fueled the growth of the antinuclear power movement, which became absorbed by leftwing

groups invoking the memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The city of Obama, Fukui Prefecture, turned down a station in 1972, forcing Kansai Electric Power Co. to build a 4,700-megawatt plant in nearby Ohi. Fukui has the highest concentration of nuclear plants in the world.

About 34 towns and cities around the nation have rejected nuclear plants since 1961, leaving them based in 15 areas, according to the Citizens' Nuclear Information Center, a Tokyo-based group.

Other towns were more willing to take the money.

"I call it nuclear money fascism," said Tetsuen Nakajima, a priest at the 811-year-old Myotsuji Temple in Obama who opposed Kepco's plant. "Subsidies have always been used to sweeten nuclear deals."

In Oma, Ogasawara still has many of the business cards and letters sent to her mother by the mayor, lawmakers and local business leaders as they tried to persuade her to sell the land. One letter in 2001 from then Mayor Tsuneyoshi Asami says the nuclear power station was needed to finance the town's projects.

Asami acknowledged sending the letter and trying to persuade Ogasawara's mother to sell the land.

"The money helped the area because it was used to build an old people's home and to rebuild the hospital," Asami said.

In Oma and other Aomori towns, the grants helped offset declining revenues that threatened the survival of rural communities, officials said.

In Mutsu, a city of 60,000 about 35 km southeast of Oma, grants from hosting a Japan Atomic Energy Agency nuclear waste facility paid for a ¥6.2 billion sports dome, where residents can use a gym, pool, baseball fields and tennis courts for ¥300.

Aomori Prefecture, which this year received ¥3.9 billion from the government for hosting nuclear facilities, hasn't done a study to measure the economic impact of the industry, said Hiromi Arazeki, head of the prefecture's nuclear affairs division.

"Subsidies mean a lot to us as we try to restore fiscal health," he said.

"The industry has provided jobs to people who would have otherwise left the prefecture."

When Tepco's Fukushima plant was hit by the earthquake and tsunami on March 11, officials in towns throughout Aomori began to worry. Nuclear subsidies make up 20 percent of Oma's budget, said Kenichi Ito, an official in the town's planning division.

Before Fukushima, there were plans to build at least 14 more reactors by 2030. Prime Minister Naoto Kan has ordered a review of policy and forced the halt of the Hamaoka plant in Shizuoka Prefecture until tsunami defenses are improved. Construction of Oma was also suspended. J-Power says it still plans to open the plant in 2014.

"I'm not against nuclear power, even after Fukushima," said Matsuyama of Oma's Chamber of Commerce. "I just want them to go ahead with the plans quickly."

Ogasawara, who will be the first person affected if the new plant suffers a meltdown, isn't



convinced.

She's equipped her house with solar panels so she won't need power from the plant. She noted the irony that after the quake, family and friends came to her house to charge mobile phones because electricity to the town was cut.

"If nuclear plants are safe for people to live near, they should build one in the middle of Tokyo," she said, pointing to the construction site.

"If the residents there are OK with that, I'll be OK to continue to live here."

**By CHISAKI WATANABE and STUART BIGGS**, Bloomberg, July 15, 2011

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20110715f1.html>

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