It is the irony of ironies that the only country on Earth ever attacked by the nuclear bomb is now facing the peril of massive radioactive contamination from another nuclear crisis. The country bombed by both the Enola Gay and Bockscar, the country that experienced deadly "black rain" and massive human annihilation at the end of WWII, is now confronted not only by the outcome of the natural catastrophes caused by earthquakes and tsunami waves, but also the man-made disaster of massive radiation leaks from nuclear reactors in Fukushima.

As of today, nearly 36,000 people are reported dead or missing due to the destruction caused by the earthquake and tidal waves. Most of those deaths and structural damages occurred in the Prefecture of Miyagi, the prefecture being Japan’s geopolitical jurisdiction equivalent to statehood in the United States. On the other hand, the nuclear disaster in the nuclear plant in Fukushima, south of Miyagi, has yet to kill anyone. Nonetheless, the massive radiation leaks will threaten the lives of tens of millions of people in the northern and central region of Japan for many years to come.

Natori City, tidal waves, and the destruction of local farming and fishing traditions

I was born and raised in Sendai and lived in the Hanneromachi Ward of Sendai City. My family included my parents, grandmother on my mother’s side, and younger sister. When I turned fifteen, my father, Yoshikichi Fukurai, built a new house in Natori, a neighboring rural city located in the south of Sendai. Natori was still a small town with a population of barely 30,000 people. The house was built in the middle of the rice-paddy fields and we were still able to see locomotives from our house.
My sister and her family still live in Sendai. It is truly impossible to describe the sadness I felt when I first saw pictures of destroyed landmarks and buildings in many places I know personally. I still have many friends in Sendai. As of today, I have yet to hear from some of my closest friends and old classmates from elementary and junior high school.

My father now lives in Natori City, just south of Sendai. This sleepy town was hit hard by tsunami waves that destroyed my cousin’s house and his entire business, including his family farm. My father’s house was, fortunately, spared. However, four cousins in Natori were not as fortunate. Hiromichi Sekurai and his wife were found dead in their car. They were on their way to Natori to pick up their elderly parents who lived near the Natori beach. The car was swallowed by the tidal wave and they drowned together inside it, and the elderly parents were found dead after the seawater subsided.

Geographically, Natori is surrounded by the Natori River, which extends from the north to the west, and another river, Masuda, which runs from the north to the south. Natori, in other words, is located in the middle of the fertile deltas created by both the Natori and Masuda rivers. The samurai feudal lord named Masamune Date moved to the area, built the castle, and claimed its lordship in 1601. Natori then became one of the major granaries of the Date feudal lord.

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the feudal system was abolished and replaced by the new modern government that introduced the western conception of township and cities. The town of Natori was originally established in 1955 by annexing two small towns and four remote villages, and it received city status in 1958.

After we claimed our Natori residence in 1978, the city began to grow. Today it holds more than 70,000 people. It is often cited as a “bed-town” of Sendai City, which is a municipality with a population of one million, the largest in northern Japan. Many residents of Natori commute to Sendai to work or to attend schools. Natori also has a large agricultural farmland. Nonetheless, only seven percent of Natori residents continue to work in agricultural sectors, while some are also employed in fishing industries.

My cousin, Teutomu Sekurai, lived in the coastal Kitagawa Ward of Natori, and came to be known as the last full-time agricultural worker in the entire Prefecture of Miyagi. Right after he graduated from the Miyagi Agricultural High School, more than thirty years ago, he decided he would become a full-time farmer and take over his father’s agricultural business. The local newspaper ran a big story about him, because becoming a full-time farmer and taking over a traditional agricultural business was not considered a popular thing to do among many Japanese youths at that time.

The name Natori has its origin in an indigenous word, Nubatori, representing the meaning of wetlands. Until quite recently, the indigenous people of Japan inhabited much of the northeast region of Honshu, the
The indigenous people had called the land of Native a wetland, and sure enough, the city represents a territorial municipality that is largely flat and thus suitable for the agricultural cultivation which was promoted by many settlers, one of the reasons that the Ainu, a fishing and hunting people, were forcibly driven out of this area into the mountains. Just like with the colonial expansion of many indigenous populations in North America by the British forces or in Mesoamerica by the Spaniards, Ainu people who resisted colonial policies were eradicated and some who accepted new ways of life had been forcibly made into farmers and assimilated into the settler-state social system imposed by new immigrant populations in the region. I sometimes wonder what my Ainu ancestors went through in the colonial policies of forced assimilation imposed upon their ways of life.

First recorded in Japanese history as a distinct group of inhabitants in 668 A.D., the Ainu had long developed trading contacts with various neighboring people in different regions, including settler populations for the Wajin to the south, the Manchurians to the west, the Orok and Nivkh to the north in Sakhalin, which is an island north of Hokkaido, and the Kham in Kamchatka Peninsula (part of Russia) to the east and northeast.

As the expansion of Wajin populations began to incorporate the Ainu into its nation-state project, many resisted such an imposition of colonial policies from the south. There were three noted wars between the Ainu and the settler populations of the Japanese islands. The most significant conflict was the Shikushan War in 1669, as a war of independence against the powerful Japanese authority, which led to the defeat of Ainu leader Shikushan in 1672. Nonetheless, he later became a famous Ainu cultural hero.

Today, the Ainu government has revealed that there are only 25,000 people who identify as Ainu, most of whom reside in the northern island of Hokkaido. Other studies indicate that the population of Ainu is much greater than what the official statistics indicate, because many people still refuse to identify themselves as Ainu, fearing discrimination against their families, I always wondered what would happen if I proclaimed my remote ancestral connection to the Ainu people and identified myself as an Ainu who once lived in Natori and adjacent areas for thousands of years. Using the one-drop-of-blood theory, my family members who live in California are all Ainu descendants.

Before the sagas of the settlers moved into Natori, there were no distinct permanent residential areas near the coast, nor any substantial rice paddies to grow the huge amount of rice necessary to feed the settler population. Ainu had no huge boats to engage in industrial fishing and no international airport to transport people or commodities. I wonder, if people had followed the indigenous ways of the Ainu, how many would have been affected by the recent earthquake and/or tsunami? How much do the naturally occurring seismic changes and oceanic activities affect the populations who follow the indigenous ways? I am not mentioning the Ainu culture, but it still makes me wonder how much our blind submission to the western conception of civilization led to the loss of human lives in the last earthquake and tsunami disaster.

In the city named after the Ainu term for wetlands, my father's current house is located nearly five miles from the shore of the Pacific Ocean, but its foundation lies only five meters above sea level. The large flat areas of fertile ground allow the huge rice fields to extend on the west side of my father's house. I've always liked to run through the open paths between the rice fields since my adolescent years. I studied metallurgical engineering at the National College of Technology in Miyagi, which is located on top of Medeshima Mountain on the western side of Natori City. I watched and observed the rice field from my building on the college campus for five years. When we pay pilgrimage to my father's house and stay there for many weeks every summer, I still love to run or walk through the rice fields with my children and wife.

Nonetheless, for many Natori residents, the flatness of this geographical landscape was a curse, allowing the powerful tidal waves into the interior of the city, destroying many farmlands on the east side, carrying with the waves many automobiles, farm equipment, and residential buildings, and pushing...
I need to mention my cousin now. I literally grew up with my cousin, Tatsuo Sakurai, and his little brother, Tsuyoshi, both of whom were born and raised in Natori. Even when my family lived in Sendai, I visited my cousin’s family every summer and spent much time playing, swimming, and fishing with them. My cousin’s house became our second home and we spent much time fishing at the nearby Teitaizturi canal, which was built 158 years ago. It extends nearly sixty kilometers from the Matsushima Bay in the north to the estuary of the Abukawa River in the south.

After we moved to Natori, I frequented my cousin’s house even more. When I was eighteen years old, I spent a summer working for another cousin, Hironobu Sakurai, who, as I mentioned earlier, was found dead with his wife in his car. He needed an extra hand on their farm, and I stayed with them and worked for them, picking watermelons and taking them to a local market. I would then play with my cousin in the afternoon.

Many of my friends commented on the horrifying videos they saw on American television, showing the black waves of the tsunami moving up the Natori River in the north, while swallowing and eating up much of the farmland and buildings, including my cousin’s house, in the process. Now my cousin’s old house, where I spent many summers, no longer exists. It only exists in my memory. My cousin, Tatsuo, also lost his entire collection of family photos and videos. The visual proof of their existence now exists only in memory.

On March 11, at 2:46 p.m., when the earthquake struck, Tatsuo was at work at his construction site. Ten years ago, the income he earned as a full-time farmer was no longer sufficient to support his growing family. He decided to work as a part-time construction worker for a contracting firm started by one of his friends who lived nearby. They themselves are also farmers, but still needed extra income to support their families as well. So they created their own construction company and my cousin decided to join them. However, the construction work is still not a steady job. Many part-time farmers in the company only get paid when local customers decide to build new sunrooms, fix the leak in their roofs, add new bathroom, and so on. My father’s living room was refurbished by this company, and my cousin did the actual work.

When the earthquake hit, Tatsuo’s eldest son was working in Sendai, and his two younger daughters and youngest son were at school. His mother was away, running an errand. The two living souls in the house belonged to his wife Yoko, and the family dog. In the nearly thirty minutes from the time of the earthquake to the first wave of tsunami to hit the coast, Yoko was busy getting things together to escape. She then realized that the huge waves were hitting the house and tried to escape to the second floor, while the rising water rushed up every step of the stairs. When she reached the second floor, she instinctively closed all the windows. She said that trapping the air inside led to the entire house being lifted, and it began to float, rotating slowly. She also realized that her family dog had somehow managed to enter the room. She and her dog floated for nearly an hour while trapped inside the room on the second floor. Right before the house stopped moving, she realized that the house had suddenly begun to rotate “viciously.” She hung on to whatever she could to maintain her balance while still holding her dog. When the whole structure stopped moving, she maneuvered to get outside and searched for her cell phone. Miraculously, the cell phone worked and she called her husband. Her shattered house was stranded in the middle of debris surrounded by water, and she spent a freezing night without dry clothes, holding her dog close.

My father’s house and piano

When the earthquake hit, my father was sitting in his living room. He had just taken a bath after playing a recreational game with his elderly friend in the nearby park. The game is called gateball, which is a golf-like sport extremely popular among the older generations in Japan. The earthquake suddenly knocked down the 32-inch TV, and the tiny residential Buddhist shrine was about to crash to the floor. According to my father, the huge piano in the entry hall (literally “walked” for about one meter. Two huge Japanese cabinets full of clothes that used to belong to my deceased mother and grandmother crashed to the tatami floor. If the earthquake had occurred in the night, my father would surely have been killed by the weight of the fully loaded cabinets.

Once the tremors subsided, he checked the safety of his long-time neighbor, Seiko-san, and a new neighbor, Watanabe-san. Both of them responded that they were okay, though they also said that the insides of their houses were a complete mess. They also told my father that the radio had just warned about the danger of potential tidal waves in the coastal areas and residents were being asked to prepare for immediate evacuation.

My sister rushed to my father’s house, located near the main artery extending from the Natori Japan Railway station to the Natori Cancer Hospital, where many cancer patients receive life-saving treatments. Many cars and motorcycles could be observed heading toward the mountains, and drivers were abouit about the danger of the tidal waves coming this way. My father, sister, and neighbors decided to evacuate to the nearby evacuation center, which happened to be the gymnasium of Masuda Nishi Elementary School. My father brought with him bank deposits and family seal stamps (used as a signature for contractual purposes, called Hanpo or inkan), among other important documents.

This is the same school where, when my children were small, my wife and I enrolled them during the summer in order for them to learn Japanese culture and language. When they grew up, we enrolled them in another nearby
My grandmother on my father’s side died when I was small, but my grandfather lived until he reached eighty-two years of age. His eldest son went to war and became part of the Japanese imperial army that reportedly killed nearly three hundred thousand Naniwai residents in 1937. He was able to survive the deadly war and returned to his home in 1945. But he carried with him many psychological scars, traumas, and tropical diseases, including malaria, and he passed away when I was small. Ever since he died, his wife, Tsubo Kano, had taken care of his husband’s parents until they passed away. My father and his two brothers insisted that all the inheritance be left to the widow who had taken care of the aging parents and their grandchildren.

All the women insisted on their entitlement to the rightful share of the inheritance. Fifteen years ago, the death of the widow created the opportunity for all siblings to get together and share their emotive feelings against each other. The death of his sister’s daughter also brought them together. Gradually, their wounds began to mend. Nowadays, they’ve become so close to one another that they hold an annual “brothers and sisters reunion” at the nearby shrine (hot spring). My father’s two sisters moving in to help him out was a sign of their genuine concern and caring for the welfare of their sibling. If this earthquake could be said to have brought out any positive human element, I would say that it created the opportunity for the bonds and feelings of caring and loving that my father’s siblings have for one another to solidify.

My old classmate in Sendai and his tears

Masaki Goto was my classmate in both the fifth and sixth grades in the Harasonomi Elementary School in Sendai. We were in the same class again three years later at Miyaginohara Junior High School. After graduation, I moved to Natori and had not seen him until five years ago when he suddenly emailed me, asking whether I was interested in participating in the first ever reunion of our elementary school classmates. In June of that year, twenty men and women had gathered at the same place some forty years ago and got together at a pub in Sendai. Since then, he and I have begun to exchange emails across the Pacific.

On March 13, two days after the earthquake and tsunami waves swallowed the coastal cities of northern Japan, I emailed him about the condition of the disaster areas he witnessed when he joined the rescue team and traveled to the Sendai Port. His house was badly shaken but remained structurally intact. As it was built in a hilly area, he was able to escape the tidal wave, though the deadly tsunami found its way nearly seven miles into the interior of the Wakabayashi District of Sendai City. His family has always lived in the same house, as far as I can remember.

He has had a very interesting, up-and-down career. He worked for a large multinational corporation and had to travel a lot. Many years of work-related stress, however, finally precipitated physical ailments and psychological distress and disorder. By his wife’s urging, he decided to quit his
Shortly before the March earthquake, TEPCO also admitted that it had failed to inspect thirty-three pieces of equipment inside the plant’s cooling systems, including water pumps at the Fukushima plant. The company also missed safety checks over a ten-year period up to two weeks before the March 11 disaster and piled up spent uranium fuel rods inside the forty-year-old nuclear facility. TEPCO also arrogantly turned down U.S. offers of help to cool the reactors shortly after the disaster and waited too long to pump dangerous seawater into the stricken reactors.

People also wonder why the Prefecture of Fukushima, which is in the northeastern region of Japan, houses six nuclear reactors whose sole purpose is to supply electricity, not to the residents or industries in Fukushima, but to the population, commercial interests, and industrial sectors in Tokyo and its neighboring regions some 158 miles down south. Fukushima also houses TEPCO’s four additional nuclear reactors in its Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant located ten kilometers south of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant. What’s so surprising is the fact that these reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant are some of the oldest nuclear plants ever designed by General Electric. GE held the intellectual property rights of the nuclear power plant and supplied the reactor for Unit 1 along with Units 2 and 3, while Toshiba supplied structural materials for Units 3 and 5 reactors and Hitachi for Unit 4. All six reactors were based on the GE design and built by Kemashi, another multinational Japanese corporation. With GE nuclear experts, the Unit 1 nuclear reactor was built in 1968, commissioned in 1971, and has been operating ever since, more than forty years.

It was supposed to be decommissioned last January after having operated for forty years. Nonetheless, Japan’s Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) gave TEPCO an approval to extend its operation for an additional ten years. This is despite the fact that on February 26, two weeks before the earthquake, many grassroots organizations, including the Fukushima Environmental Protection Organization (Fukushima Shiiren Hogo Kyokai) and the Green Fukushima of Future (Madori no Mirai Fukushima), submitted to TEPCO a petition to disclose information on numerous safety checks and inspections on the Fukushima plant that have been kept from the public. With new nuclear technologies available, TEPCO continues to rely on the ancient plant to generate electricity. Just imagine how strange you would look if you were driving your automobile which had been designed some fifty years ago. It has no seatbelts or airbags because the installation of those safety conditions was not required in the original car design back then.

The safety of this old reactor plant design has been questioned since 1972. Japan is forbidden to engage in nuclear power research and Japan itself does not produce any reactors. In 2002, the GE-Hitachi joint venture company was created in the U.S. to collaborate on the development of the new generation of nuclear reactors. Nonetheless, existing Japanese nuclear plants have been based on designs produced by foreign companies, including GE.
The design flaw of the GE nuclear plant in Fukushima had already been pointed out by many experts, including the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), which said in 1972 that this design should never have been licensed. In 1985, the NRC said that there was a ninety percent chance that in a severe accident, the spent fuel rod containment would fail. In 1976, three GE nuclear scientists also blew the whistle on the structural flaw of the nuclear design used to construct the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. In the event of a disaster, the practice of putting the spent fuel rods pool on an upper floor of the reactor building, not at a ground level, would make it nearly impossible to fill it with water to cool and stop them from melting. They were later forced to resign for their public statement.

On March 16, one of the three scientists said on CNN with tears in his eyes that the condition of the Fukushima plant was worse than what he had warned nearly forty years ago. The difficulty of cooling the fuel rod and the breach of its containment was evident, because for the first couple of days after the earthquake, TEPCO was using Japanese helicopters to scoop the water, dumping it from the air to try to fill the pool at the Fukushima plants. The effort was obviously unsuccessful and the lack of cooling water facilitated the continued meltdown of fuel rods and released the steam that contained dangerous radioactive substances into the atmosphere. Meanwhile, two weeks after the earthquake, GE publicly stated that the design was flawed and it has been used in the construction of twenty-three of 164 nuclear reactors currently operating in the United States.

Governmental manipulation of Japanese media and the corporate complicity From day one, the Japanese government and TEPCO have efficiently operated to suppress the transmission of crucial information on the status of nuclear reactors and the safety of spent-fuel rods at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. As results of the coordinated corporate and governmental efforts, the Japanese and international communities were not given the correct information about the level of radiation leaks in Japan and potential contamination of regional residents in various prefectures. First, the foreign media were effectively shut off from attending the government press conferences, and much crucial governmental information was not released to the international media. The Japanese TV and newspaper media are also complicit in their failure to ask TEPCO engineers and government officers any of a number of emerging questions about the status of nuclear reactors.

TEPCO is the largest corporate sponsor of TV and radio programs and newspaper advertisements in Japan. It is also important to realize that the main sponsor of the ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has been the Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan (TEPCO), in which TEPCO continues to play a major political and financial role in influencing policy in Japan's nuclear programs. Consequently, TEPCO successfully took charge of the Japanese corporate media and influenced the release of information on the status of the Fukushima power plant.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yuki Edano has been the main spokesman for the Japanese government and provided crucial information of radiation emissions supplied by TEPCO scientists. Edano has been insisting that the situation at the Fukushima plant has been steadily improving and that there is no "immediate" effect of radiation exposure, while deliberately ignoring the long-term effects of radiation exposure to the Japanese people. After the hydrogen explosion of Unit 1, Edano said that the nuclear reactor was intact, and there was no sign of significant radiation leaks in the plant, which was later found to be false.

Many of his Edano's physiological effects of radiation were reported based on physiological consequences of the radiation impact upon healthy adults, not on small children, infants, or pregnant women who will be adversely affected by the exposure to radiation.

My brother-in-law who lives in Koriyama in Fukushima, sixty kilometers west of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, decided to purchase and send him a Geiger counter in the U.S. so that he can correctly measure the level of leakage radiation in his area. Nearly all radiation instruments have been sold out in Japan. Having no confidence in any reports issued by TEPCO, the Japanese government, or the Japanese media, he decided to send his two daughters to Koriyama to my house in Santa Cruz, California, until an arrangement is made for their new school transfer in another Japanese prefecture. My sister in Sendai is also extremely skeptical of the government reports on the level of daily radioactive activities in the city and surrounding regions.

Despite the government's effort to downplay the extent of radiation leaks, Japanese people are more intelligent than the government expects them to be and are clearly aware of the government's maneuvers of the Japanese corporate media in the censorship of crucial information. Many progressive people in Japan learned very hard lessons from their failure in not detecting lies or inaccurate information on the war. Japanese historians have estimated that several million Japanese citizens were killed by the misinformation given by the Imperial General Headquarters during WWII.

Foreign nuclear experts were also skeptical of the Japanese government reports and decided to conduct their own independent investigations. For example, they have issued very different interpretations on the effect of radiation leaks in Fukushima. Immediately after the explosion, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued the evacuation warning to Japanese residents who live within an 80 kilometer radius from the Fukushima nuclear plant. Even the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Chairman Gregory Jaczko warned that the nuclear meltdown and subsequent contamination was "extremely high" in the Fukushima nuclear plant and much wider evacuations were absolutely necessary. On March 18, the NRC also warned that the containment pool at Unit 4 had already ruptured and could approach the
The Japanese government has also been quite busy in its legal maneuvers and in trying to change the legal standard of nuclear-related government regulations. The government first changed the scale of the earthquake magnitude from 8.9 to 9.0, and such a change was only applicable for the extraordinary earth-shaking event. The Japanese government has then decided to allow it for the first time in its history. The international independent earthquake experts have estimated the magnitude of the March 11 earthquake to be a mere 8.3 or 8.4, much less than what has been reported in the Japanese media. The special application of the extraordinary scale will likely downplay the man-made components of catastrophes and help replace them with the natural disaster of earthquake and tsunami. This substitution will further help exonerate the extent of the man-made components and the criminal and financial liability of both the Japanese government and Tepco in the future.

The Japanese government also changed the upper limit of workers' nuclear exposures from 100 millirems to 250 millirems, elevating the legal limit to extend the activities of the workers at the nuclear plant. For agricultural crops, the Japanese government also tried to change the legal limit of contamination, but was persuaded to maintain the pre-earthquake standard.

The most unique effort to pacify the public was the use of cartoons, in which the boy-like character called "Pluto-kun" was used to dispel fears of the effect of plutonium produced by the nuclear power plant in Japan. Pluto-kun explains that he is not a monster and wants the people to understand how peaceful and safe he truly is. He says that he will not pose any danger as long as people use him peacefully and will be a reliable friend who can provide an endless source of energy to Japanese people for many years to come.

Just like my brother-in-law, sister, and many progressive thinkers, independent and young freelance Japanese journalists have also been extremely critical of the Japanese government and its information on the radiation leaks and contamination of regions close to the Fukushima Plant. The consistent inquiries to Tepco scientists and press spokesmen finally revealed that the Japanese government agreed to Tepco's requests to dump more than three million gallons of radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean on April 4. The decision was carried out without any consultation of the fishing industries, local authorities, or foreign governments of adjacent countries in the region. The Japanese government also failed to take into critical consideration the possible violation of international law on environmental pollutants.

Legally speaking, the mass dumping of highly radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean is a clear violation of the 1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matters. The act of this illegal mass dumping of highly radioactive water has also shifted the perception of Japan in the world community. The illegal dumping transformed the position of Japan from the victim of inevitable, naturally caused catastrophes to the criminally liable nation-state which knowingly released tons of toxic water into the ocean, causing potential massive contaminations of oceanic resources and causing health hazards of their consumers in the world.

Last summer, I sponsored Dr. Suresh Park from South Korea and supported his research for one year at UC Santa Cruz. He has since told me that he is amazed by the extremely pacified responses of Japanese people to this nuclear disaster. He says that if the same nuclear disaster would have happened in Korea, people would have engaged in massive demonstrations to pressure the government and the power company to rectify the situation by any means necessary. Many progressive scholars and grassroots activists would be swarming the residence of the top CEOs and government bureaucrats to demand the immediate solution to the problem.

In Japan, up until now, the collaborative effort of the government and the corporate media has successfully eradicated the potential tsunami of public condemnations and protests. The near-perfect control of the Japanese corporate media may not last forever, just like the complete media control by the Imperial General Headquarters during WWII. Independent Japanese journalists and critical thinkers like my brother-in-law and sister have begun to rely on the use of social networking devices like Twitter and Facebook to mobilize grassroots movements.

In the near future, it is possible that computer-literate populations may bring about the necessary changes to the traditional top-down system of media (informational dissemination). What happened in the social networking revolution and resistant mass demonstrations in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Thailand may happen in Japan. This new nuclear disaster may bring about much needed changes in Japan's democratic movements.

International lane on the survivability of the nuclear industrial complex

A French nuclear fuel company, Areva, produces the uranium-plutonium mixed oxides (MOX) fuel, so called, used at the Unit 3 reactor in Fukushima. Areva has been commissioned by Tepco and other Japanese electric power companies to process MOX fuels. Its use has been much criticized by nuclear experts, as it is considered one of the most dangerous nuclear fuels because...
Meanwhile, "Operation Torsomachi" (Operation Friends) mobilized fourteen U.S. Navy ships, more than one hundred aircrafts, and nearly twenty thousand U.S. service members stationed in Japan to provide much needed support to disaster victims in remote areas and islands. Military nuclear experts have also been invited to join the emergency committee to deal with the breach of both fuel containment and possible nuclear core reactors at the Fukushima nuclear plant.

Certainly TEPCO, GE, Areva, and both the Japanese and American governments expressed their concern over not only the extent of potential nuclear contamination in the region in Japan and other countries around the world, but also possible legal liability, economic loss of corporate profits and revenue, and potential compensatory payment to millions of disaster victims. The radioactive contamination could become so severe that, just like the Four Corners area of the Navajo Nation and the Black Hills of South Dakota are designated as "National Sacrifice Areas," some of Fukushima and its adjacent regions might become Japan's national sacrifice region due to permanent environmental damages through radiation.

A nuclear power plant's main purpose is to boil water and create steam, which is then channelled into turbines whose high-speed spinning motion generates electricity. In other words, the primary purpose of a nuclear power facility is to boil water. This is the essence of the fuel rods to boil water was extremely expensive, as it also collaterally burned the economic and financial foundation of millions of people's livelihoods. Their culture, their regional identity, and people's connections to ancestral lands and memories have already been destroyed by the forced evacuations.

It is also important to mention that the TEPCO nuclear plant was not built in the middle of the Tokyo-Shinjuku area, but in the tiny town of Okuma and Futaba in the Fukushima Prefecture. In a country without any nuclear resources, the construction of nuclear power plants was sold to the public as a matter of national security, as well as a necessary and essential government program to secure future energy sources for millions of city dwellers and support commercial and industrial sectors in metropolitan areas.

Fukushima became the ideal and preferred site for the construction of nuclear power plants because of its high unemployment, poor economy, and its record of low educational achievement and competencies among younger students, standing at the bottom, only better than Okinawa. Though the aforementioned issues of corporate legal liabilities are important, epic natural disasters could result in apocalyptic radiation leaks with permanent and horrific effects in Japan and the world, and make GE's liability issues with respect to the disaster a matter of concern.
Kamikaze, nationalism, and the "Hyper-Rescue" team

In the past, when a collaborative project between the state government and giant private corporations failed and led to a national disaster like an uninhabitable war, the Japanese government exhibited the tendency to promote the nationalistic sentiments to call for sacrificial contributions from individual citizens to help save the nation from the disaster. Currently, in dealing with the nuclear crisis at the Fukushima power plant, a special group called the "hyper-rescue" team of the Tokyo Fire Department was summoned in order to restore normalcy at the crippled nuclear power plant in Fukushima. The top bureaucrat of the fire department made a patriotic speech imbued with a passionate, nationalistic tone, asking the members to sacrifice themselves to deal with the crisis "for the sake of the country (kokuine o kakeru)."

His strong nationalistic expression resonates with many speeches given by military government leaders to many patriotic soldiers, including young Kamikaze pilots at the end of WWII. As the Japanese imperial force engaged in predatory military actions against other Asian neighbors in order to secure material, natural, and human resources to feed Japan's military industrial complex and its modernization, an army of soldiers was recruited from all over Japan, Korea, and Taiwan to participate in the imperialistic project, which ultimately resulted in the death of millions in the imperial process. At home, nearly 785,000 civilians were incinerated by America's atomic raids over two hundred cities, towns, and villages from late 1944 to the morning of August 16, 1945 when the Japanese government finally signed its complete, unconditional surrender to the U.S. and its allied forces.

In 1947, at the age of thirteen, my father was conscripted to work in a Hitachi-owned bomb factory in Mito, a sleepy coastal town north of Tokyo. His job was to weld wing-wraps to bombs. He began to talk about his war experience in detail only recently. He painfully talked about his attempt to help resuscitate his roommate whose stomach was blown away by bomb shrapnel. He was so hungry that, during a U.S. air raid, instead of running to his regularly assigned bomb-shelter, he ran towards a potato field, lay down low, and started to use his fingers to search for potatoes to eat. He soon realized that he could have made a life-threatening mistake when he saw many telephones poles being chopped into pieces like match sticks by the sharp shrapnel of exploded bombshells.

He said his life in the Hitachi dormitory was a hell, as he was beaten every day by older roommates for no reason. It is ironic that nearly seventy years later, my father found himself in a similarly helpless situation, in which the nuclear reactor built by the same company, Hitachi, is endangering his life once again.

The nationalistic rhetoric given by TEPCO CEOs in encouraging their employees, rescue workers, and subcontracted workers to make collective personal sacrifices for the sake of the company, and ultimately, the Japanese people, sounds extremely hollow. In past nuclear accidents, the majority of the workers exposed to radiation have been subcontracted workers who were hired for brief periods to do the most dangerous work at the nuclear plant. These subcontract workers are called "Genpatsu Gypsies" (nuclear gypsies), and they move from one nuclear plant to another throughout the year, making up eighty-nine percent of employees in the industry and receiving more than ninety percent of all radiation exposure.

Many of them come from Burakumin and other ethnic minority background and lower classes who have difficulties in finding jobs in more stable primary labor markets. These workers are recruited from predominantly minority areas and city slums such as Sanyo Ward in Tokyo, Komagaseki in Osaka, as well as Burakumin residential areas throughout Japan. With more jobs at nuclear power plants in recent years, additional workers, including poor farmers, fishermen, day laborers, and even homeless have been recruited to work as temporary employees, to supplement their incomes or simply to get by. They find themselves working at dangerous nuclear fuel facilities, such as waste storage and storage facilities, snapping up radioactive water, snipping out shells and storing them, and typically getting paid a fraction of the actual cost of the equipment, and removing radioactive dust from mechanical parts inside nuclear reactors. They are attracted by high daily wages and sent into the plants with hardly any knowledge of the danger of radiation. The fragmentation of subcontract workers and their diverse backgrounds also contributed to the utter failure to form a union to improve their working conditions. In many plants, subcontract workers are required to make formal apologies to the nuclear power company if they get injured. They have no medical guarantees for their job-related illnesses or injuries.

A similar scenario is played out for "foreigner squads" who are sent from the U.S. by GE and Westinghouse, another nuclear plant manufacturer, to work at the plants they built in Japan. It has been reported that Americans subcontracted by GE to work at the Fukushima plant have been largely African-American.

It is ironic that those who are asked to restore the operation of the nuclear power plant by the leaders of the company and the Japanese government officials who use the nationalistic and patriotic rhetoric encourage them to sacrifice even their lives on behalf of the company and, ultimately, millions of Japanese residents are the very people who have been subject to social and economic discrimination in society. The ultimate fate of TEPCO, the lives of millions of Japanese residents, and even the survival of nuclear industries in Japan and elsewhere now depend on the sacrifices of nameless subcontract workers who themselves are victims of the very systems that they are asked to rescue.

Libya and depleted uranium ammunitions

While those subcontract workers were struggling to restore the nuclear power plants and battling the effects of radiation at the nuclear plant
Last remarks and Haitian President and the Tsunami of love

One week after a deadly tsunami swallowed many of the cities and towns on the northeastern coast of Japan, another powerful tsunami hit the coast of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean nation of Haiti. On March 18, former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide finally returned to his home country and was greeted by tens of thousands of enthusiastic Haitian supporters who welcomed him at the airport and followed him to his residence. "Tsunami of love" was the word used by Aristide to capture the tidal wave of warm welcomes expressed by the Haitian people. In 2004, President Aristide was kidnapped by a U.S. special forces unit and dropped off in the Central African Republic. Despite the U.S. threats against him and his family, Aristide finally returned to Haiti with the support of actor Danny Glover, lawyer Randall Robinson, U.S. representative Maxine Waters, and many other human rights activists and Haitian supporters in the U.S. and around the world.

The name of his political party is called Lavalas, which also means the "tsunami" of a cleansing flood in Creole. This time, the huge tidal wave of love and affection has literally poured down out of the Haitian streets and slums and stormed out of the city toward the airport and his residence, with the expectation that former President Aristide will help reconstitute the earthquake-devastated country of Haiti. Haiti suffered the deadly earthquake on January 12, 2018 and more than three hundred thousand people died. More than ten thousand Haitians have also lost their lives to the recent cholera epidemic which was ironically brought by United Nations peacekeeping members who came in to provide assistance to Haitian people.

What former President Aristide plans to accomplish is quite similar to what the Japanese people and its leaders must do in their effort to reconstruct the socioeconomic foundation in northern Japan. Many volunteers, American military forces and personnel, and rescue teams sent by many other countries poured their "tsunami of love" and support on the victims in northern Japan.

The question still remains whether or not Japan's new tsunami, after having killed nearly thirty thousand people and still threatening millions of Japanese residents through a potential nuclear meltdown, may be morphed into the tidal wave of love, affection, and the goodwill of many international organizations and governments.

Until then, the fates of the Japanese people, TEPCO, the government of Japan and other crucially connected organizations such as GE and Arava are hanging by a thread, all hoping that this tragedy will not lead to an even greater disaster.