'Atom-Politics' in East Asia : Towards a Border-less Democracy

SASAKI Hiroshi*

Abstract

This paper discusses the term "Atom-Politics", which refers to the cross-border political phenomenon that derives its power not only from nuclear weaponry but also from the generation of electricity by nuclear power. When seen from this comprehensive viewpoint, this research suggests that greater insight can be made into the political dynamics and process of globalization taking place in East Asia.

Following a survey of the expanse and present influence of "Atom-Politics" in the Asian Region, this paper will focus upon the anti-nuclear movements taking place in Niigata, Japan, and will seek to understand the profound ramifications these activities have for the future of democracy.

Introduction: Chernobyl's Prayer

2001 marks fifteen years since the Chernobyl tragedy. In those fifteen years, we have witnessed a number of drastic and sometimes dramatic changes in the world. The political structure of the Cold War has collapsed, and the word 'globalization' has become a key concept for explaining the circumstances of the new age.

However, with so many serious events and incidents that could affect the future of the world,

*SASAKI, Hiroshi [Niigata University of International and Information Studies]

we are sometimes apt to think of past events as simply the 'past' and forget to consider the profound ramifications such events hold for our age. As Maruyama Masao once pointed out, the Japanese people, in particular, have tended to subordinate the past to the present throughout history—a dynamic which he calls *ima-chūshin-shugi* (Maruyama, 1992). Symptoms of this 'disease' have begun to resurface recently in Japan. Like Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the experiences of Chernobyl seem to have gradually lost their impact for many in Japan. Some even conclude that history is an expedient means to manipulate present political affairs. This is possibly one of the unfortunate consequences of 'globalization'.

Fifteen years after the tragedy, what is most forgotten? One book, *Chernobyl's Prayer*, written by Svetlana Alexievitch (1997), attempts to answer this question by turning our attention to the reality of ordinary people (people she calls the "tiny-people") in Chernobyl. Although many were exposed to enormous levels of radiation by the accident and suffered from the loss of relatives and other serious aftereffects, they continued to live in the contaminated area for years without any assistance. Alexievitch's (1997) book highlights the cries of these people, and reminds us of the simple fact that we have ignored their voices for over ten years.

This paper investigates the meaning of 'globalization', especially in terms of East Asian nuclear politics. Although there is an exhaustive corpus of literature on this subject, and there are many arguments about the essence of 'globalization', it is still necessary to further analyze this problem, so as to understand the ramifications it holds for today's world. I would like to reexamine this problem by listening to the "voice of the voiceless", those who have been left abandoned for a long time and have been hidden by the numerous arguments of 'globalization'. Only when we take into greater consideration the people whose voices have been ignored or excluded from the public debate, can we grasp the true nature of 'globalization'. To think of 'globalization' will inevitably lead to 'democracy'.

We can hope that, while 'globalization' might create greater numbers of 'weak', 'voiceless', and 'marginalized' in this world, it might also create opportunities for people's empowerment.

Indeed, the oppressed of the world seem to be slowly finding their place in public affairs (*Chernobyl's Prayer* is just one illustration). In East Asia, for instance, we can observe structural changes that might be described as 'radical' and 'border-less' democratization.

Globalization as a Political Consequence

No one can provide a single definition of 'globalization', and it is not the aim of this paper to classify or integrate the various theories of the term (cf. Waters, 2001). Nevertheless, as a preliminary consideration, I will mention three key characteristics of this many-sided process briefly, before studying the political processes behind nuclear power in East Asia.

Firstly, as mentioned above, 'globalization' is most favorable to the strong, to those who have large power resources in the capitalist system. Globalization is a process of progressive spatial segregation, separation, and exclusion. Alongside the emerging global business, trade and information flows, a 'localizing' space-fixing process is set in motion. In other words, 'globalization' promotes the process of 'polarization' (Bauman 1998), 'ghettoization' (Hobsbawm 1995), and 'global apartheid' (Richmond 1994) with a loss of substantial communication throughout most of the world. These arguments could be synthesized into the concept of "global totalitarianism" by analyzing the system of warfare and its victims (Sasaki, 2000b). What is significant is that these processes are not like a natural disaster, but are intentionally created and underpinned by influential industrial capital and powerful states. The so-called 'neo-liberalism', which is the most influential way of thinking in the contemporary world, especially in the center of the system, is no more than the ideological amalgam of global capitalism and state-centric realism.

Secondly, 'globalization' brings about a "global risk society". This term was invented by Ulrich Beck (1986) who was perhaps the first person to regard the Chernobyl accident as the starting point for thinking of 'globalization'. He considers the reactor disaster to be one of the

key experiences that characterize our new age, and he argues that the institutions of industrial society and their claims of control and security are being refuted by the "global risk society". In a "risk society", according to Beck (1986), political control over scientific technology is structurally weakened by industrial and 'non-political' activities—a term he calls "sub-politics". The existing political-administrative system no longer continues to be the center of political activity. The influence of "sub-politics" goes beyond borders and sometimes causes borderless, uncontrollable unrest or catastrophe (called the "globalization of side-effects"). This dynamic is more or less undermining the legitimacy of existing political power. Yet, on the other hand, the indiscriminate and borderless 'risk' is the outcome and product of developing modern scientific technology or 'modernity' itself. So we now suffer from the 'second nature' that has been produced by ourselves in the process of modernization.

Thirdly, in connection with the second characteristic, a further political consequence of 'globalization' is the 'multi-stratification' of the political arena (Sasaki, 1998). Some argue that the nation state will 'retreat' from the world in the near future because of the surging waves of 'globalization', while others advocate that the sovereign status and competence of the state will never be damaged by such non-political influences. I think, however, that both extremes fail to grasp the actual political situation. The nation state, which has historical authority and power, will never disappear so easily. On the other hand, many states are in the process of transformation: changing their strategy, their very nature, to adapt to the new political environment (cf. McGrew, 1997). 'Globalization' unquestionably acts on all political levels —the individual, local, national, regional and international— as well as many new political subdivisions. States have been shaken and transformed by the claims of 'decentralization' from below and 'internationalization (globalization)' from above. In addition, 'civil society' has already lost its clear definition and sometimes splits into more than two sections, in terms of the meaning of the word 'citizen(-ship)'. 'Globalization' creates political fronts and limits the ambiguous, multiple and plural.

'Globalization' opens the possibility for individuals to participate in public affairs and even to

be involved in the crucial decision-making processes that may determine the fate of the world. When we analyze this process, we must not miss the phenomenological and epistemological dimensions. The 'industrial society' was joined with "simple modernity" just as "risk society" is now involved in a new stage of modernity—"reflexive modernity". In the individualizing process of modernity, the functions of recognition, knowledge, information, and political will are very important in order to access, plan and alter social structures. 'Globalization' also provides opportunities for people to self-consciously reflect upon their society and to plan, create, and establish an alternative society.

The Meaning of 'Atom-Politics'

Arguments about the problems of nuclear power plants and governmental policy on nuclear energy should also involve a more comprehensive definition of terms, such as the before-mentioned 'globalization' and 'risk society'. This is necessary because the system and the power complex for the development and utilization of nuclear energy have essentially developed on a global basis. This has brought forth new forms of political structures in which politics and technology, the government and social sector, the military and civil governments are uniquely interconnected. The social institutionalization of the latest and most highly developed technology, as a logical consequence, determines the nature of existing political systems.

Robert Jungk (1977), an eminent German journalist, once indicated that the harnessing of atomic energy for 'peaceful' purposes is directly linked to the military usage of plutonium, and, especially, with the government's antagonism against the residents and people of it's own country under the pretext of the 'safety' of its installations. He uses the term "Atom-Staat" ('Atom State') to express the authoritarian and anti-democratic regimes produced by the combination of nuclear industries and government (Jungk, 1977).

Following the example of Jungk (1977), I would like to introduce the term "Atom-Politics", which is defined as the cross-border political phenomenon in which power is derived not only from the possession of nuclear weaponry, but also from the generation of electricity by nuclear power. The implication is that "Atom-Politics" must encompass all of the political consequences stemming from the development and utilization of atomic energy. When seen from this comprehensive standpoint, we can grasp the relationship between scientific technology and political power. This term also suggests that greater insight can be gained into the political dynamics and processes of globalization taking place, especially in East Asia.

For instance, in Japan up to the present, the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been commonly discussed only in the context of historical suffering caused by atomic bombs. However, contemporary problems from nuclear technology have hardly been mentioned. In Japanese, the word *genshiryoku*, or 'nuclear energy', is usually applied to the 'civil use' of nuclear energy, but never to its 'military use', while the English term may imply both. The term "Atom-Politics", therefore, may aid in the understanding of the potential 'duality' involved in nuclear technology.

In fact, from a historical viewpoint, the 'peaceful' use of atomic energy was originally a spin-off from the military use of nuclear power. The turning point was the public announcement of President Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' program in 1953. His message appealed to developing countries seeking a level of technological independence, as well as to technically developed countries whose military-based nuclear complexes were searching for a peaceful nuclear mission and a market for their inventions. To date the 'military use' and the 'civil use' of nuclear energy have been mutually interdependent and repeatedly rise and fall together over time (Yoshioka, 1999).

Political systems based on the utilization of applied science are apt to be highly centralized and oppressive—especially to the disenfranchised. "Atom-Politics" emerges first from anti-democratic and controlled societies. The risk that follows the development and utilization of

atomic energy is always intentionally hidden from the citizens' eyes through the feigned priority given to technological and economic exploitation. Yet, once accidents take place, we find that the risk is unequally distributed, meaning that governments refuse take responsibilities for unforeseen damages that come to light, and the politically weak are marginalized in the process. The nuclear power complex regularly disregards the "voice of the voiceless" until actual accidents or damages become public knowledge.

"Atom-Politics", therefore, includes the study of the condition between the "people's security" and national interests, and between democracy and the politics of exploitation. Looking back over the twentieth century, we can regard it, in terms of the mass destruction of people's subsistence in the name of social progress, not only as a 'nuclear age' but also as an age of 'genocide'. For that reason, "Atom-Politics" must also include the study of democratic movements which aim to overcome the problems produced by confrontations and find alternative solutions for modernization.

Although there is the possibility that this definition is too wide-ranging to adequately analyze concrete issues, it is generally admitted that we need fresh approaches to deal with the contemporary problems which have arisen from the political process of 'globalization' (Komori and Yoshimi, 2000). As Alexis de Tocqueville once pointed out, "Quite a new world needs quite a new political science".

Global Regime Formation and 'Atom-Politics' in East Asia

Nuclear power has long been promoted in the west as an inexhaustible supply of energy, a history which is being repeated in East Asia. But, this time the pace and coerciveness of the introduction of nuclear energy is far more prominent than compared to the western experience. A primary impetus for the shift to nuclear energy has been the rapid economic and energy growth experienced by the region. The intense development of technology in this region can be

explained both as the result of each nation's desire to create technological competency, and a shared perception that the technology represents the most economical response to the energy demands stimulated by economic growth. Presently East Asia is rapidly becoming the world's largest producer of nuclear-generated electrical energy (Kim and Byrne, 1996).

The 'Atomic regime' formed for both the exploitation and utilization of nuclear power is essentially a global phenomenon. It is not the sum of all countries' atomic regimes, but a further integrated global system. Of course, the countries of East Asia display a great diversity of social and political forms. Yet, despite the great diversity of their regimes, countries in this region have created remarkably similar nuclear technocracies. After the Eisenhower announcement, in the context of a global political economy which promoted nuclear technology, the US and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) offered basic nuclear technological know-how to Japan and South Korea. This eventually led to the formation of the first corporations of domestic nuclear scientists and experts in the 1950s.

During the Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s, the nuclear arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States intensified. Also during the same period, the civil use of nuclear power was promoted, institutionalized and made rapid advances around the world. In the early 1960s, General Electric (GE) developed the Boiling Water Reactor (BWR) and created a market. Another corporation, Westinghouse (WH), soon followed with even larger reactors. This brought about a global 'water reactor boom' in the mid-1960s, and enabled nuclear power generation to become an independent industry. These companies' activities served as the conduit for nuclear public relations in East Asia.

In Japan, for instance, the financial sector (*zaibatsu*) was stimulated by companies which had invested in nuclear power. Technical cooperation was established between Mitsubishi and WH, as well as between Toshiba, Hitachi and GE. Japan entered the nuclear era earlier than any other East Asian country during the 1960s and 1970s. In South Korea, like in Japan, the '*zaibatsu*' also played an important role in building an energy complex. A single public unity,

the Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO), was organized and given the responsibility for the construction of power plans, the generation and distribution of electricity, and the planning and finance for future energy needs. In South Korea, foreign companies such as WH and Framatome were major players during the early stages.

From the onset, each domestic 'atomic regime' in the East Asian region was strongly influenced by international political economies and formulated into highly centralized systems that concentrated nuclear technology in the hands of a few companies and governments.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, western countries gradually reconsidered their programs for enlarging the scale of electrical generation by nuclear power. Following the nuclear test by India in 1974, the international community sought to prevent nuclear proliferation, which also involved the curtailment of nuclear trade and the transfer of Sensitive Nuclear Technology (SNT). The Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty in 1987 also accelerated the decline of nuclear industries. Moreover, by the mid-1970s, international public opinion, which had favored nuclear power during the early 1970s, gradually became antagonistic towards nuclear technology because of safety concerns. The catastrophic accidents at Three Mile in 1979 and Chernobyl in 1986 were benchmarks in the shift of public opinion. Consequently, during the late 1980s and 1990s, the US and many European countries gradually scaled back the construction of new nuclear power plants. The decision by the French to abolish the 'Super-Phoenix (SPX)' in 1998, the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1995, and the 1995 Japanese Monju accident made it clear that the use of nuclear power, both civil and military, could not be maintained in the West.

However, many countries in East Asia have not given up efforts to build new nuclear power plants even after the events of the 1990s. The main reason is that the nuclear industries in developed countries including US, France, Canada, Russia, Japan, and Korea have induced the rest of the East Asian countries to continue to import nuclear power plants and materials. Because these nuclear industries could no longer depend on the domestic demand for their

products, they have found a way out to export their goods on a newer, larger, and more vulnerable international market.

As many analysts suspect, China will be the most important potential new nuclear market in the twenty-first century. France, Canada, and Russia have taken the export offensive in China and have reached a number of nuclear cooperation agreements with the Chinese. North Korea originally seems to have pursued the development of an atomic weapons system over that of supplementing the country's means for generating electricity. Recently however, North Korea has also been seeking assistance for the construction of two pressurized-water reactors (PRW) that would be built in exchange for giving up the generation of weapons-grade plutonium in graphite-moderated reactors. Operating under US, IAEA and Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) management, South Korea and Japan will build and finance these PRWs (Molts and Mansourov, 2000). Taiwan has also become a battlefield for a marketing campaign by these nuclear energy corporations. Above all, Japan has played the most important role in exporting and constructing new nuclear power plants in this region, and has sought to manipulate public opinion in its scheme to accelerate nuclear exploitation (Miyajima, 1996).

At this point, it is necessary to redefine the concept of 'East Asia'. While the concept of 'region' has various implications, from this paper's point of view, 'East Asia' involves the political space produced by the industrial-political complex formed for the express purpose of exploiting and utilizing atomic energy. If worst comes to worst, all nations share a common destiny in terms of suffering from not only nuclear accidents but also the chain reaction of nuclear militarization in this region (Calder, 1996). To put it succinctly, 'East Asia' is an 'Atomic Region'.

'Atomic Regimes' as the Denial of Democracy

As previously mentioned, each 'Atomic Regime' in East Asia has pursued a similar path of

development in creating a commercial nuclear power complex. Upon achieving this, each regime then steadily established centralized forms of energy control, and a nuclear regime arose either for the purpose of powering commerce or for military strength. In the process of either of these developments, the control of large-scale technologies, such as the creation of nuclear reactors or the planning of comprehensive nuclear power programs, led each 'atomic regime' to become an autocratic system. In addition, this contributed not only to the emergence of an 'arrogant' technocratic elite, but also a festering and corrupt political system.

Generally, in East Asia, the promotion of nuclear development has been strongly linked to dictatorial and highly centralized governments. While North Korea would be the first country to spring to mind, Paul R. Josephson has noted that Russia's nuclear power program from Stalin to the present can be regarded as "atomic powered communism" (Josephson, 2000). The Chernobyl catastrophe has become the crucial icon of the bankruptcy of Soviet political leadership as well as symbolizing the failure of Soviet nuclear program itself. In South Korea, The Pak Chong-hui Administration once intended to develop nuclear weapons in 1970s. Both the Chon Du-hwan and No Tae-u Administration were involved in bribes from foreign nuclear companies. These so-called "authoritarian regimes" promoted the development of nuclear industries in South Korea. In addition, in Taiwan, Jiang Jie-shi was secretly committed to the development of nuclear weapons in an arms race with mainland China, especially after the mainlanders announced their first successful nuclear test in 1964. Taiwan currently operates six reactors. Moreover, all were built without any systematic opposition, because martial law had been in effect since 1949. An electric power company in Taiwan is still the only state-owned "Taiwan Electric Power Company", and has exclusive control over the Taiwanese Atomic Energy Commission.

Furthermore, an 'Atomic Regime' by necessity produces center-periphery relationships within its borders. Nuclear power plants are usually constructed not in the urban areas, but in the provinces where the government can easily buy pieces of land and where people lack the power to object to state policies. As a result, the risks and costs of electric power production are

always forced on the peripheral regions in order to supply the fruits to the center. This system of inequality is found not only in the problems surrounding nuclear power plants, but also in the problems of military bases, because national security is sometimes preserved at the sacrifice of the residents around the base, as can be observed numerous crimes committed by American service personnel in Japanese Okinawa. In such cases, however, the voice of the minorities is typically ignored. An example of this can be observed in the problem of radioactive waste disposal. For instance, in Taiwan, over sixty percent of nuclear waste is kept on a very small island, Lan-Yu Dao , in which the aboriginal Yami tribe have lived for centuries. Therefore, in a sense, the problem of nuclear politics is sometimes linked to the problems of ethnic minorities throughout the world. We can witness similar incidents occurring in Russia and China.

Indications of Domestic Opposition and a Border-less Solidarity

As mentioned above, the meaning of "Atom-Politics" includes not only the international politics of oppression, but also the generation of anti-nuclear politics by the people. In South Korea, the full-scale anti-nuclear movement started in the late 1980s as the totalitarian regime gradually lost its power. Transition to more democratic rule has also accompanied a critical analysis of the past military governments and their politics. This has included an examination of their commitments to nuclear development. In 1990, strong local resistance in Ahn-Myun Do broke out against the government's attempt to place a spent fuel interim storage site on the small island. After this incident, the South Korean government faced bold and unyielding protests against any proposed generating and waste disposal site.

In Taiwan, after lifting the martial law in 1987, a number of green non-governmental organizations were formed. These groups cooperated with each other and organized a nationwide anti-nuclear movement. The Taiwan Environment Protection Union (TEPU), which was established in 1987, played a central role in forming the network of resistance. At the same time, a new leader of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Chen Shui-bian pledged to put an

end to construct new nuclear power plants and, as a result, won the presidential election in 2000. The social problems accompanied by nuclear power generation have become a crucial issue for the process of democratization in Taiwan. Although it was decided later that the construction of the fourth nuclear power plant (which was essentially 'made in Japan') would be continued as a result of the DPP's compromise with the National Party (KMT), it is believed that the Bush Administration's declaration to change nuclear policy in US had some influence on the outcome of this decision. At any rate, it seems that Taiwan has taken its first step towards becoming a 'non-nuclear nation'.

As mentioned earlier, since the formation and function of the nuclear complex is essentially global, the anti-nuclear movement should seek to create international cooperation as well. Indeed, through the 1990s, a global network to protest against nuclear regimes and to support the creation of a non-nuclear society was realized. For example, the movement of "Abolition 2000" was established by numerous NGOs in 1995 and gave impetus to the 'Middle Power Initiative' in 1998 (Green, 1999). These activities, which were supported by an empowered civil society, not only stand firm against the might of nuclear regimes, but also have the ability to formulate plans and make proposals within the existing political order. It is hoped that these developments will stand as promising examples for the creation of a 'Nuclear-free Zone in East Asia',

Each movement that has developed has gradually improved its cooperative relations with others beyond its national borders. An instance of this was when the Kansai Electric Power Company in Japan was forced to discontinue its use of plutonium-based mixed oxide (MOX) fuel in 1999. Mox was scheduled to be used at the Takahama nuclear power plant in Fukui Prefecture, but in this case, the fabrication of data concerning MOX was detected. This instance not only exposed contradictions in the company's plan to recycle plutonium (*Purusaamaru Plan*), but also demonstrated strong cooperative relations among people from a local antinuclear NGO with others from Greenpeace International, as well as a Korean environmental NGO. Such cooperation helped to change the policies of enterprises associated with nuclear power plants

and the Japanese government which is the driving force behind the creation of nuclear power plant (Green Action, 2000).

Moreover, another noteworthy movement has been the "No Nukes Asia Forum". This movement started in 1992 and has been convened every year since in many Asian countries. The first forum was held in Japan in 1993, and the latest (the ninth) was in Korea in 2001. There are three remarkable points about this movement. First, it grapples with comprehensive problems of both military and civil uses of nuclear power. Second, it links democratic and post-nuclear movements by considering the stark realities of people working in each country. Third, it creates an international open forum for people to cooperate with each other. These significant points of contact outside the control of local authorities have created a groundswell of support for opposing the policies of the existing nuclear regimes. With a growing number of successes in changing government policies, it could be said that this phenomenon constitutes the growth of democracy on a global level.

The Political Movement against the Nuclear Power Plant in Niigata: A Case Study of Japanese 'Atom-Politics'

Historians have established that the Japanese city of Niigata was targeted for US nuclear attack in 1945. Although Niigata narrowly escaped this tragedy in 1945, the residents of Niigata now suffer serious anxiety from living in the location which houses the largest nuclear power plant on the entire planet. The Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant, which was constructed by the Tokyo Electric Power Company, has a maximum generating capacity of over eight million kilowatts, and can supply the equivalent of at least seventy-five percent of Tokyo's electrical energy needs.

As in other countries, nuclear power plants designed to supply major metropolitan areas with electric power were constructed in distant provinces, for example, Fukui, Fukushima, and

Niigata Prefectures (Kamata, 1996), which points to the existence of a so-called domestic 'North-South problem' in Japan. There are remarkable inequities between the center and the provinces in the degree of development. Although this is a common feature among the developing countries, as many studies have already pointed out, the situation also exists in Japan. In this structure, the development of provinces depends on the distribution of resources from the central government. The central government takes advantage of this dependency and exerts great influence over the process of development of nuclear power plants in Japan. The development process of provinces and prefectures is improved by the center, which uses the prefectures to serve its purposes and manipulates them by dangling concessions. The current approach is one where nuclear power plants are invited into a prefecture by the central government, and while financial benefits for local residents are bandied about, the construction companies and bureaucrats undertaking the task benefit in ways which are far more lucrative than other public works projects.

It is not a coincidence that one of Japan's former prime ministers, Tanaka Kakuei, who created the basic framework for 'interest politics' in Japan, is also from Niigata Prefecture. Tanaka set up not only the Agency of Natural Resources and Energy under what was then the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), but also the grant system for developing new electrical power sites (known as the *dengensanpō* subsidy system). Under this system, huge subsidies are guaranteed for the provinces that accept nuclear power plants. These subsidies are far higher than those for hydroelectric and thermal power plants. It was also Tanaka who invited the nuclear power plants to Kashiwazaki in Niigata.

In addition to the 'center-periphery' structure used to support the regime of nuclear development in Japan, great efforts were made to justify the development of nuclear power plants by concerned ministries and agencies. These ranged from the Atomic Energy Commission to local electric power companies, all of whom had a stake in the growth and acceptance of Japanese nuclear power. As the Japanese Atomic Energy Commission recently highlighted in their "Long-Term Plan" policy statement, Japan's lack of indigenous energy

resources is generally used to justify its pursuit of a nuclear economy (Byrne and Hoffman, 1996). In Japan, nuclear power plants are regarded as a necessity, although the logic behind this assumption has never been investigated. The only political controversy is over safety issues (Yoshioka, 2000). Moreover, implausible and, at times, outrageous statements, such as "nuclear power plants are ecological", have been issued as justification for the creation of more plants in recent years.

The Japanese government-industrial complex, which was formed in the process of the development of nuclear power plants soon after World War Ⅱ, also created a political system which is structurally closed to the people. However, this system has fallen under attack since the Monju accident of 1995. Repeated accidents and scandals—for example, the explosive accident of the Tokai plant during the re-treatment of radioactive waste materials in 1997 and the critical accident of Tokai JCO in 1999—have created a climate of distrust and unease about governmental nuclear policies and the safety of nuclear power plants. As part of this national tide, Japanese citizens have started to reexamine the necessity of nuclear power plants in this country.

The local referendum of the Maki Township in Niigata, which was held to decide whether or not a nuclear power plant ought to be constructed, was the first case in which a prefecture publicly took issue with national administration on nuclear power plants as a national policy (Niigata-Nippo, 1997). The planning of the Maki nuclear power plant was headed by the powerful Tohoku Electric Power Company, which proposed the project as far back as 1969. From the beginning, a power struggle existed at the local political level among conservative politicians (many who supported the plan) partly because of the characteristics of the Japanese medium-sized district electoral system. That is the reason why both sides, for and against to the construction, had maintained the balance of power for a long time. Yet, as antagonism grew against the plan, the confrontation became clear, especially after Sato, a proponent of the nuclear power plan, was elected town mayor three times in 1994.

Influential residents in the area, including many who were successful independent businessmen and generally considered establishment conservatives, banded together and provided the leadership necessary to strengthen the various groups opposing the ongoing construction of the nuclear power plant. These groups first insisted on the importance of considering the will of the residents before arguing the pros and cons of the building project. They then carried out a local referendum without any legal force in 1995. As a consequence, Mayor Sato was eventually forced to resign, and a local referendum resulted in the establishment of local ordinance law in 1996. As a result of that referendum, it became clear that the majority of residents were opposed to the construction of the nuclear power plant. The new mayor, Sasaguchi, who was a representative of the movement which held the local referendum based on a local ordinance law of Maki (where the nuclear power plant was to be built), declared that property in the town would never be sold to Tohoku Electric Power Company or to the Japanese government. The result was that it became impossible to construct the plant in the Maki Township.

The policy on nuclear power plants was also reconsidered by the small village Kariwa in Niigata Prefecture, which lies about 160 miles northwest of Tokyo and has a population of 5,000. In this region people had never struggled against the landed class and had never had any resistance movement, which is rather unusual in Niigata Prefecture. This was perhaps why Tanaka Kakuei was able to construct a sphere of influence around him in the region, and why the biggest nuclear power plant in the world was constructed. However, the first local referendum concerning a plan to use recycled plutonium for Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant, which was developed by the Japanese government and Tokyo Electric Power Company, was held in May 2001 in spite of resistance from the mayor of Kariwa Village, Shinada, who was a former supporter of the nuclear power plant. The result was that a majority (53.4 percent) of residents opposed the plan due to their distrust of the plant and their safety. The plebiscite was held in the wake of a series of accidents and cover-ups that had made many Japanese uneasy about nuclear power. In addition, the residents found that the grant allowing for the plant was only temporary legislation. In other words, the amount of the grant would decrease after construction, meaning the economic benefits would only be ephemeral. As such,

side effects such as corruption could develop rather easily and could potentially be harmful to the interests of the community.

What do these two local referendum in Niigata mean (cf. Imai, 2000)? In a local shed, which is the base of opposition to construction, residents have often said, "This is the first chance for us to demonstrate our opinion." So far, the construction of nuclear power plants has been executed, based on prior agreement, *jizen-ryokai*, basically among the national government, the heads of local government and electric power companies. They have not always reflected the 'voice of the voiceless', that is to say the residents. Therefore, I think it is important to consider these movements for local referendums on this matter to be a movement of "radical democracy".

A more important issue is that the actions of a small local government could have such a great influence on the whole state and the world. Taking advantage of the Maki case, the rising tide to direct democracy by means of local referendums has expanded not only to Okinawa but also throughout Japan. The attempt of the residents in Kariwa village, who regarded the residents of Maki Town as forerunners, drove the Japanese government to reconsider its policy on nuclear power plants. In fact, it is difficult to continue to execute the plan of using recycled plutonium because it must be developed on a national scale. Criticism that a local referendum is not an appropriate way for subjects concerning national policy to be discussed or decided, and that it is just the ego of the residents, has no validity anymore. After the local referendum of Kariwa Village, members of "The Society to Voice Kariwa Residents Opinions to the Government", the group which organized that referendum, immediately held a meeting in Tokyo to hold a discussion with residents in the metropolitan area. Kashiwazaki-Kariwa had been introduced as an example of a successful nuclear power plant, but, in reality, the plant's existence has been controversial. These events may have an impact on the use of nuclear power plants internationally.

Conclusion: Towards a Border-less Democracy

As described above, during the 1990s the nuclear regime in East Asia has been gradually compelled to change due to the increasing influence of civil society in the region. Japanese intellectuals recently have believed too easily that the debate about the nuclear power problem has not attracted any interest. Yet, they have not grasped the ramifications this problem has for our future. Atom-politics has to be studied in a framework of 'democracy' and must include international and military dimensions.

Obviously, the nuclear regime that is forming and developing on a global level will, however, try to recover from such setbacks. Last July, researchers in five countries and regions—the US, Japan, South Korea, China, and Taiwan—have agreed in principle to take part in a joint research project on the disposal of spent nuclear fuel deep underground. In addition, nine countries, including the US, Japan, and South Korea, recently came to an agreement to develop a new type of nuclear power plant cooperatively. Furthermore, in order to propel the plan to recycle plutonium (the *Purusaamaru Plan*) in Japan, the nuclear complex is about to develop new forms of public relations to acquire residents' understanding (*jumin-rikai*) throughout Japan.

However, the value of people's 'security' and 'safety', which has been neglected by nuclear administrations up to the present, constitutes a crucial political issue. Namely, nuclear policy can no longer avoid dealing with the problem of 'legitimacy'. And little by little, border-less cooperative relationships made by many kinds of civic activities will be formed, and these can bring about the plurality of politics on the local, national, and global levels. The given conditions of nuclear policy in terms of either international politics or 'national projects' will begin to erode. The trend leads towards the possibility of a 'border-less democracy' in the region, and in this instance, these movements against existing 'atom-politics' may not be far off the mark (Sasaki, 2000a).

References

Alexievitch, Svetlana (1997), *Chernobyl's Prayer,* Iwanami-Shoten.

Bauman, Zygmunt (1998), *Globalization: The Human Consequences,* Polity Press.

Beck, Ulrich (1986), *Riskogesellschaft: Auf dem Weg in eine andere Mderne,* Suhrkamp Verlag.

Byrne, John and Steven M. Hoffman (1996), "The Ideology of Progress and the Globalization of Nuclear Power," in John Byrne and Steven M. Hoffman (eds.) *Governing the Atom: The Politics of Risk,* Transaction Publishers, pp.11-46.

Calder, Kent E. (1996), *Pacific Defense : Arms, Energy, and America's Future in Asia,* William Morrow and Company, Inc.

Green Action, et al. (eds.) (2000), *Kaku Nenryou Scandal,* Baifu-sya.

Green, Robert (1999), *Fast Track to Zero Nuclear Weapons: The Middle Powers Initiative,* Kobunken.

Hobsbawm, Eric (1995), "Ethnicity, Migration, and the Validity of the Nation-State," in Michael Walzer (ed.) *Toward a Global Civil Society,* Berghahn Books.

Imai, Hajime (2000), *Jumin-Tohyo: Kyakkan-Minshushugi wo Koete,* Iwanami Shoten.

Josephson, Paul R. (2000), *Red Atom: Russia's Nuclear Power Program from Stalin to Today,* W.H.Freeman and Company.

Jungk, Robert (1977), *Der Atom-Staat,* Kindler Verlag GmbH.

Kamata, Satoshi (1996), *Nihon no Genpatsuchitai,* Iwanami Shoten.

Kim, Jong-dall and John Byrne (1996), "The Asian Atom: Hard-Path Nuclearization in East Asia," in John Byrne and Steven M. Hoffman (eds.) *Governing the Atom: The Politics of Risk,* Transaction Publishers, pp.271-297.

Komori, Youichi and Yoshimi, Shunya (2000), "Gensetsu wo Meguru Dansho," in Kurihara Akira et al. (eds.) *Ekkyo-suru Chi 3: Gensetdu-Kirisaku,* Tokyo-Daigaku shuppankai.

Maruyama, Masao (1992), *Nihon no Shiso,* Iwanami Shoten

McGrew, Anthony (1997), *The Transformation of Democracy?,* Polity Press.

Miyajima Nobuo (1996), *Nuclear Power Terribly Increasing in Asia,* Heigen-Sha.

Moltz, James Clay and Alexandre Y. Mansourov (eds.) (2000), *The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy, and New Perspectives from Russia,* Routledge.

Niigata-Nippo Houdou-bu (1997), *Genpatsu wo Kobanda Mach: Maki-machi no Min-i wo Ou,* Iwanami Shoten.

No Nukes Asia Forum, *Wind of Life will Blow from Asia: No Nukes Asia Forum Tsuushin.*

Richmond, Anthony H. (1994), *Global Apartheid: Refugees, Racism, and the New World Order,* Oxford University Press.

Sasaki, Hiroshi (1998), "An Investigation of the Theory of 'Global Democracy'" in *Rikkyo Hogaku,* No.48.,pp.142-182.

———(2000a), "A Political Analysis of the 'Ottawa Process'" in *Rikkyo Hogaku,* No.55.,pp.378-394.

———(2000b), "'Global Totalitarianism' and the 'New War'" in *Rekishi Chiri Kyouiku,* No.612., pp.8-14.

Umebayasi, Hiromichi (ed.) *Nuclear Weapon & Nuclear Test Monitor,* Peace Depo and Pacific Campaign for Disarmament and Security.

Waters, Malcolm (2001), *Globalization: second edition,* Routledge.

Yoshioka, Hitoshi (1999), *Genshiryoku no Shakaishi: Sono Nihonteki Tenkai,* Asahi Shinbun-Sha.

———(2000), "Genshiryoku Hatsuden Ronso no Tenkai" in Kurihara Akira, et al. (eds.), *Ekkyo-suru Chi 3: Gensetdu-Kirisaku,* Tokyo-Daigaku shuppankai.

Newspapers:

Asahi-Shinbun

Niigata-Nippo

New York Times

※ 本稿は、2001年9月4日から8日にかけて英国で開催されたAnglo-Japanese Academy Fellowships（東京大学・シェフィールド大学主催）における筆者の報告原稿に若干の修正を加えたものである。きわめて有意義な国際共同プロジェクトにお招きいただいただけでなく、なによりも本稿執筆の契機を与えてくださった同フェローシップに心より感謝を申し上げたい。また、英文をより洗練する上で、とくに同僚のグレゴリー・ハドリー氏には多大なご助力を賜わった。

筆者は、同会議終了後の3日目に、「ニューヨーク同時多発テロ事件」の知らせをロ

ンドンで聞くことになったが、本稿の冒頭で論じたような「グローバル化」による「声なき声」の圧殺が、あのようなかたちで表出してしまったことにただ驚くばかりであった。9月11日以後、本稿で論じた「越境する民主主義（Border-less Democracy)」の可能性の探求は、むしろ世界政治における差し迫った課題になりつつあるといえる。