Climate Justice and Social Transformation

Japan’s stickiness to Coal-fired Power Generation and Japan’s Superficial Implementation of SDGs for Transformation

OHASHI, Masaaki
Univ. of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo, JAPAN and Co-Chair of Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs on July 11, 2020
## Personal Profile – OHASHI Masaaki (大橋正明)

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<td>Present</td>
<td>Professor (NGO Studies &amp; South Asian Studies), University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<td>Board member (ex-Chair), Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)</td>
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<td>Co-Chair, Japan CSO Coalition for Disaster Risk Reduction (JCC=DRR)</td>
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<td>Board Member, AYUS Buddhist Network for International Cooperation</td>
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<td>Treasurer, COMET (Social Welfare Cooperation for the mentally impaired)</td>
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<td>Secretary General, SHAPLA NEER (Tokyo, JAPAN)</td>
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Fukushima still in Evacuation

- At the end of 2018, 43,214 people (2.3% of Fukushima population) are still evacuation in and outside of the Fukushima Prefecture due to the Fukushima No.1 Nuclear Power Station Disaster in 2011.
- GOJ used to argue that after decontamination, local residents can return to homes. Now says even without decontamination, they can.
- Actually not decontaminating, but only shifting it to other places.
- Still the Red Areas are highly contaminated and not habitable for decades or more.
- GOJ and TEPCO have stopped their livelihood and rent assistance to evacuees outside Fukushima.
TEPCO may discharge Radio-active water to sea

- TEPCO urges “Dumping water laced with tritium poses no safety hazard”
- In April 2020, 1.2 million tons of radioactive water produced in the aftermath of the disaster is in storage tanks in the Fukushima No.1 Power Station.
- Technically no way to remove the Tritium.
- Groundwater flowing in reactors + reactor cooling water are increasing day by day, and tanked.
- Of course, many people, fishing industries and marine industries are strongly opposing to the plan.
GOJ’s 2018 Energy Mix Policy

- GOJ likes to maintain the Energy Mix Policy; Renewables, Nuclear, LNG, Oil and Coal.
- In 2030, Japan’s energy will be 20% to 22% nuclear power, 22% to 24% renewable energy, and 56% thermal (fossil fuel) power.
- After the Fukushima No.1 Nuclear Power Station Disaster in 2011, people in Japan prefer to stop all nuclear energy generation, while GOJ has been trying to resume nuclear stations by strengthening safety regulations.
- GOJ has recently reduced the purchasing prices of electricity from small renewable energy producers, thus reducing its growth speed.
GOJ keeps coal-fired plants and its emission goal.

- GOJ (METI) recently announced to shut down 71% (of 140 low-efficiency coal-fired thermal power plants) w/i 10 years,
- But GOJ keeps high-efficiency ones operating and some new ones constructed in & outside of Japan, such as in Tokyo Bay and in Bangladesh.
- France shut down all coal plants by 20, UK by 25 and German by 38,
- GOJ will not change its goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, a decision that calls more int’l condemnation that Japan is not doing enough to deal with climate change.
Nuclear Electricity and CO2/Climate Justice

• GOJ may excuse that as 100 Coal Plant would be scrapped, Nuclear Electricity must be expanded to secure electricity reducing CO2 Emission.

• From our experience in Fukushima, Nuclear Electricity seriously damages environment and human and is extremely expensive especially if a serious accident take place.

• No nuclear waste management system existing.

• Nuclear Electricity is unsustainable.

• We should reduce domestic electricity consumption while increase clean one in needy countires/areas.

• UN’s SDGs does not touch Nuclear Electricity.

Greta Thunberg says,
Personally I am against nuclear power, but according to the IPCC, it can be a small part of a very big new carbon free energy solution, especially in countries and areas that lack the possibility of a full scale renewable energy supply (The rest omitted).
SDGs as Universal Goals: Pros & Cons

**Pros.**
- No One Left Behind
- End poverty
- Inequality
- Migrants
- Call for Transformation

**Cons**
1) No cause of Unsustainability
2) Not useful for refugees
3) Contradictions w/i SDGs
4) No mention how to transform
1. **SDGs Promotion Headquarters**
   The SDGs Promotion Headquarters (SDGs HQ) at the Prime Minister’s Office established in May 2016. The SDGs HQ holds its main meeting twice a year, presided over by the Prime minister, assisted by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and the Minister of Foreign Affairs as vice Chairs, and attended by all other Cabinet members.

2. **SDGs Promotion Round Table Meeting** in the HQ
   To ensure the multi-stakeholder partnerships mentioned in SDGs, the SDGs Promotion Round Table Meeting (Roundtable) was set up in Sept. 2016 in the SDGs HQ. This includes 4 academicians, 4 from CSOs, 2 from the business sector, 2 from UN organizations, 1 each from the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo), and the Government Pension Investment Fund (GPIF). This meeting take place, in principle, twice a year only for 2 hours each, prior to the HQ’s semi-annual main meeting.
2. The Latest Development

(1) Efforts so far: the SDGs Promotion Headquarters (Established May 2016), the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (Decided Dec. 2016), and the SDGs Action Plan (Decided every 6 months since Dec. 2017)

(2) Promoting Japan’s SDGs model based on the concept of human security, ① Business and Innovation, ② “Localization of SDGs”, ③ “Empowerment of the Next Generation and Women.”

(3) The UN expressed the sense of crisis at the SDG Summit in 2019. The 2018 report by the Bertelsmann Foundation of Germany gave Japan higher ratings for achieving SDG4 (Quality Education) and 9 (Innovation), but lower for SDG5 (Gender Equality).

3. Priorities

(People) 1. Realization of gender equality and a society where everyone can play an active role 2. Achievement of good health and longevity

(Prosperity) 3. Creating growth markets, revitalization of rural areas, and promoting science technology and innovation 4. Sustainable and resilient land use, promoting quality infrastructure

(Planet) 5. Energy conservation and renewable energy, disaster risk reduction and climate change countermeasures, sound material-cycle society 6. Conservation of biodiversity, forests, and oceans, and other environments

(Peace) 7. Achieving peaceful, safe and secure societies

(Partnership) 8. Strengthening the means and frameworks for the implementation of the SDGs
Major Characteristics of the GOJ’s SDGs Implementation and Need of Civil Society

1. **Administration Centered Implementation**: mainly administrative organs are working, although the 2030 Agenda calls essential roles of national parliaments for SDGs. The SDGs HQ locates at Prime Minister’s Office, most work is carried out by the MOFA.

2. **Cherry Picking**: Influential ministries interpreted the SDGs as a useful tool for their original missions, especially to promote business and technical innovation, regional revitalization and so on. Most of these are more for economic development and less for social development. As a result, the Principles, its revised one, and annual Action Plans of SDGs seem cherry-picked by those ministries.

3. **Conservative Thoughts**: The GOJ seems to utilize SDGs as a good chance to boost Japan up again, in terms of its economy, technology, regional and/or global influence in the face of a growing neighboring country. These nationalistic and conservative thoughts of the GOJ blocked the inclusion of Poverty in its priority list.

4. **Need of Advocacy by Civil Society**: SDGs is not a binding agreement. The SDGs themselves allow national government flexibility to set its own goals and adopt different approaches. In other words, a government can intentionally or unintentionally interpret, if not distort, SDGs according to its convenience. This is the very reason that NGOs and CSOs should play the role of watchdogs, advocating the implementation of the SDGs.
STOP Nukes, No More FUKUSHIMA!

Thank you for Listening