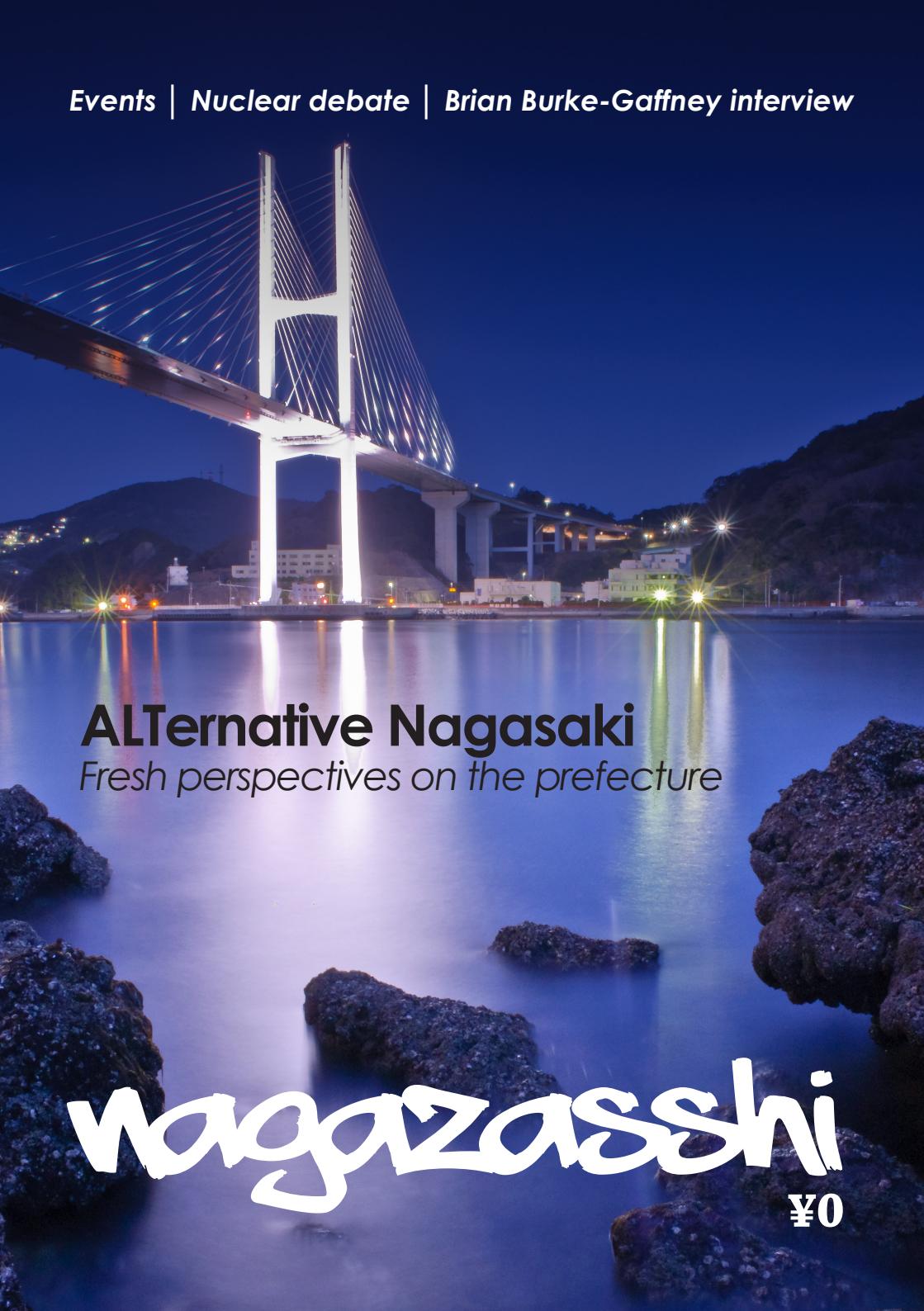


Events | Nuclear debate | Brian Burke-Gaffney interview



# ALternative Nagasaki

Fresh perspectives on the prefecture

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**F**ollowing the earthquake in the north east, the residents of Japan have come together the way only a small country can. From giving blood to donating money to conserving energy, everyone is doing their best to help those in need. The Nagazashi staff would like to give thanks to our supporters and Nagasaki City's Club Dindi for helping us raise ¥60,000 for the Red Cross Tohoku relief fund.

Despite the fact that we here in Kyushu can carry on with our lives as usual, we need to remember that there's still a great deal of work to be done in the relief efforts up north. Get an idea of the current situation in Fukushima and what you can do help on page 13. The nuclear plant explosion in Fukushima has refueled the debate about nuclear power so be sure to brush up on your knowledge of both the pros and cons of nuclear energy on pages 16 and 18, respectively.

In the wake of this tragedy, spring has once again brought with it a feeling of hope and recovery. So, in this scenic springtime, it's important to appreciate what we have here in Nagasaki. Take the time to notice things we may have overlooked before. Nagasaki has so much to offer no matter where you are. Let some local residents lead you to some of Nagasaki's hidden treasures at the ALTernative photo exhibit, introduced on page 20. So take this opportunity to soak in as much of Nagasaki's charm as possible before this beautiful weather is replaced by stifling heat and humidity!

**Kim Durinick, Deputy Editor**

**N**ot long after the two-punch hit of earthquakes and tsunamis in the Tohoku region back in March, a few friends and I decided to go to the Red Cross. Living in Nagasaki, where most of us were hardly affected by the northeastern shake-up, there was an overwhelming eagerness to help in any way we could.

Donating money felt too easy, like chucking bills into a black hole: you had no idea where your money was going and how it was being utilized. No matter how much you gave, it still felt insignificant and impersonal. Donating blood seemed to be the next best thing we could do from Kyushu.

To our surprise, however, we were turned away. Too many people had donated blood, so at that moment there was no need for donors. It was a strange feeling; I felt elated that so many people had taken action—but at the same time I felt useless and helpless.

Before we left, the Red Cross nurse stopped us. “Please come back in April, and after that too,” he said. “By then, many people will have forgotten. That’s when we’ll need it the most.”

So here we are, two months after 3/11. Have people forgotten? Certainly not in Japan, where the after-effects are as fresh as ever, and the issues of the nuclear power plants and radiation are just as heated. The summer looks to be particularly brutal, with projected power

cuts. Despite these very serious issues, Japan has slowly drifted off the front pages of the foreign media, replaced by the new horrifying stories of the month. The sad truth is that stories of recovery and repair, while heartbreakingly tragic, aren’t as titillating. There’s always a new disaster waiting to replace the last one.

There were grossly exaggerated stories in the foreign press of foreigners fleeing Japan in droves. In reality, most of those people were probably tourists. Expats living in Japan, whether it’s been for two years or ten, somewhere along the way stopped being “guests” in this country, and started calling it “home.”

Foreigners living in Japan are in the unique position of serving as cultural ambassadors to both Japan and our home countries. I believe we have a great opportunity – and responsibility – to continue to keep Japan on the minds of the international community. Relief aid and assistance sound less glamorous than other thrilling headlines, but they’re equally as important.

By continuing to keep the people of Tohoku at the forefront abroad – whether through charity groups, fundraising events, or simply educating friends and family about the situation – we hope it can be one small way we can repay Japan for the hospitality and generosity it has shown us. Let’s continue to keep the people affected up north in our thoughts and make the effort to help out in any way we can.



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Photo: Michelle Cheng

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## Event of the month

**Kashima Gatalympics**

**Kashima, Saga Prefecture, May 29**

A short drive from Nagasaki Prefecture, Kashima City will turn a giant mud-filled marsh into an international sports arena. Whether going as a participant or spectator, this event is a must see.

Photo: Colin Cookman  
[www.flickr.com/  
photos/mc\\_masterchef](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mc_masterchef)



## Events



### Swinging London 50s-60s

**Nagasaki Art Museum, April 3 - May 22**

The Beatles. The Kinks. The Rolling Stones. Twiggy. The 1950s and 60s were iconic decades in London and this special exhibition at the Nagasaki Art Museum takes a look at some of the most famous British designs of the period. It features everything from fashion, vintage electric guitars and interior design to the greatest mod icon of them all, the Vespa scooter. General admission fee is ¥1,000; see [www.nagasaki-museum.jp](http://www.nagasaki-museum.jp) for details.

## **Nagasaki's Modern Artists #4: Seiryo Ikawa**

**Nagasaki Art Museum, April 16 - June 26**

Nagasaki-based painter Seiryo Ikawa studied under French contemporary painter Claude Viallat, a pioneer of the Supports/Surfaces Movement. This exhibit features 15 works, starting from his first piece to his latest, including his masterpiece, "Uzumaki." General admission fee is ¥400; see [www.nagasaki-museum.jp](http://www.nagasaki-museum.jp) for details.

## **Flower: It Became Art - From Mucha to Lichenstein Huis Ten Bosch, April 23 - June 19**

This exhibit displays about 90 works of art, tracing the trend of flowers and botany as prominent features in art prints, ceramics and porcelain, ranging in various art styles like Art Nouveau and Art Deco. It coincides perfectly with Huis Ten Bosch's "Flower Kingdom" event.

## **Haiki Tea Market Sasebo, May 27-29, June 7-9**

Following a 400-year bartering tradition, over 400 shops will be selling tea. It's prime time for picking the first tea leaves of the season.

## **Nagasaki Otakusa Festival Nagasaki City, May 21 - June 12**

Back in 1829, Siebold returned to Europe and introduced the Japanese hydrangea flower (known as *ajisai*). The particular type he brought back, known as *hon ajisai*, bloom all over Nagasaki City this time of year. Recommended viewing locations are Siebold Memorial Hall, Dejima and Nakashima River, but

for those who want to see more, tours in Japanese are also available.

## **Tsuyoshi Tea Market Hirado, May 27 - 29**

Over 100 stalls will be selling teas, in addition to various events throughout the day. With it being prime season for picking the first tea leaves of the season, you're bound to find something good.

## **Spain's Maestro Miró: Beyond Paintings**

**Nagasaki Art Museum, May 28 - July 10**

The first exhibit in 25 years in Nagasaki to feature Catalan painter Joan Miro's art prints. General admission fee is ¥1,000; see [www.nagasaki-museum.jp](http://www.nagasaki-museum.jp) for details.

## **Kyushu Pyrotechnician Contest Unzen City/Obama Port, June 12**

Pyrotechnicians all over Kyushu will compete against each other by displaying their individual fireworks designs. From 8:00 pm.

## **Goto Nagasaki International Triathlon Fukue, Goto Island, June 19**

Although, no longer affiliated with Iron Man, the Goto islands are featuring a new triathlon, but keeping the same rigorous distances.

## **Hotaru no Furusato, Soukasen Festival**

**Kami Goto Island, May 25 - June 25**

At this night-time festival which has recently been gaining popularity, people from all over gather to watch hundreds of fireflies dance along the river. ■

# An onomatopoeia a day

Brush up on your naminihongo (natural Japanese speech) with **Kim Durinick's** guide to Japanese onomatopoeia



goro  
goro  
shita

**T**here are many differences between English and Japanese, from word order to grammar, but one of the more entertaining differences is the use of onomatopoeia. Whereas onomatopoeia are not often used in English, in Japanese they are commonly found in everyday conversation.

In Japanese, there are so many onomatopoeia, they must be separated into two classes: 擬音語 (*giongo*) and 擬態語 (*gitaigo*). *Giongo* express voices or sounds, while *gitaigo* mimic human emotions and actions. So, take a break from your routine studies and check out this short guide to get you started.

One onomatopoeia you will hear fairly often is ***giri-giri***. *Giri-giri* means ‘barely’. For example,

*'Densha ni noreta kedo, giri-giri deshita.'*  
(I made the train, but just barely.)

Be sure not to confuse *giri-giri* with ***goro-goro***, which means ‘to idle’ or ‘to be lazy’.

*"Shumatsu nani o shimashita ka?"*  
(What did you do this weekend?)  
*"Goro-goro shita."*  
(I was lazy./ I did nothing.)

Similar sounding to *giri-giri* and *goro-goro* is ***guru-guru***, which describes movement in circles. If you are describing more controlled spinning in place, be sure to use ***kuru-kuru***, instead, but in many cases the two are interchangeable. A useful way *guru-guru* can be used is;

*"Onaka ga guru-guru naru."*

(My stomach is turning - this statement implies, “I have diarrhea.”)

*"Guru-guru mawatte kara, batto de suika wo tataite."*

(Spin in circles, then hit the watermelon with the bat.)

*"Aisu suketa wa kuru-kuru mawatta."*

(The ice skater did spins.)

Another useful onomatopoeia is ***doki-doki***, which describes the sound of your heart beating when you are nervous or excited. As expected, this phrase is often used in love stories, songs and romances.

*"Kare ga chikazuite kuru. Doki-doki desu!"*  
(Here he comes. I’m nervous!!)

***Pera-pera*** describes fluency and is usually used with regards to language.

*"Watashi wa nihongo ga zenzen pera-pera ja nai desu."*

(I am not fluent in Japanese at all.)

Rounding out this short list is ***bara-bara***, meaning scattered, separate, disconnected or falling apart. It can refer to people, objects, and ideas.

*"Anata no hanashi wa bara-bara desu."*

(Your story is all over the place. / Your story doesn’t make sense.)

Although these are just a few of many onomatopoeia in the Japanese language, add them to your daily conversations to sound truly *pera-pera*. 



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## The making of a scholar

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Brian Burke-Gaffney is an academic at the Nagasaki Institute of Applied Science. He talks to **Kyle Hammond** about lessons learned during his journey across the world

**O**riginally from Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada, Brian Burke-Gaffney came to Japan in an unconventional way. Planning to take one year off from college to “find himself” in 1971, Burke-Gaffney, like many Americans during the 1960s and early 1970s, took to the “Hippie Trail”, motivated by what he describes as “a desire to find answers and discover a new vision of the world.” Hitting Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia, Burke-Gaffney spent nearly a year on the road. At the end of a five-month stay in India, he knew he had to make a decision: return to his life in Canada or continue on his journey in hopes of finding what he was truly interested in, Zen Buddhism.

Deciding to leave everything behind and continue to Japan, Burke-Gaffney hopped on a freight ship in Singapore and landed in Kobe in the summer of 1972. With no plan, no friends, and little knowledge of the language or culture, he set off for Kyoto in search of Zen Buddhism.

When describing how he survived and made his way in Japan, Burke-Gaffney reveals a spirit and courageousness that few travelers possess today. It was just “a matter of chance” he states.

**“To revive Nagasaki as a cultural forerunner, Burke-Gaffney would like to see the city shut out cars, turning it into a walking city in the hopes of making it more of a leader in environmental protection”**

Rather than first gaining the basics of Japanese language and culture and meticulously planning his trip, Burke-Gaffney says he simply “came with a burning interest in Japan and wanting to [discover Zen Buddhism] in an authentic way. After that, [making his way in Japan] was just a matter of encounters with people.”

After his arrival in Japan, Burke-Gaffney was at long last able to become a Buddhist monk. He would spend the next nine years of his life working in different monasteries around Japan and becoming fluent in both spoken and written Japanese. However, those nine years did not quench his thirst for Japan.

In the spring of 1982, following his decision to leave the monastic life, Burke-Gaffney went to Nagasaki in hopes of figuring out what to do next. When asked why he chose Nagasaki, Burke-Gaffney stated that he became fascinated with the city and its history on a previous trip as a monk.

Studying the history of Nagasaki during his free time, Burke-Gaffney found the city’s historic foreign settlement particularly fascinating, as areas such as Glover Garden filled him with a deep curiosity. Although never

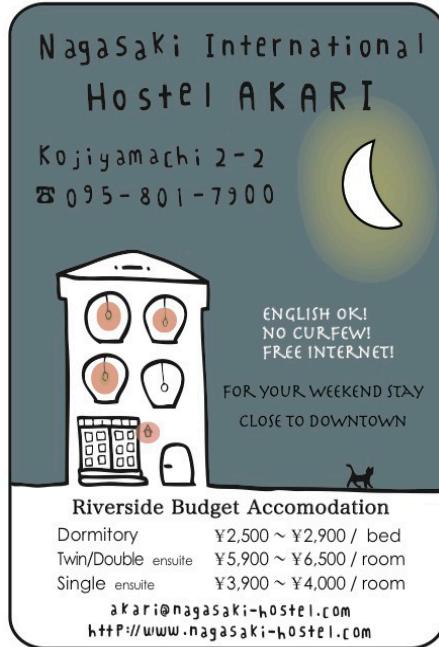
formally studying history, his interest turned into a personal enterprise. Over time, the papers he wrote on the foreign settlement were published in journals and eventually compiled into books. His newfound recognition earned him a career at the Nagasaki Institute of Applied Science and after a long absence from formal academia, Burke-Gaffney obtained his PhD in 2007.

Having lived in Nagasaki for nearly thirty years, Burke-Gaffney has seen a number of changes in the city. He is most concerned with the “lack of interest in maintaining the historical atmosphere,” as the city’s historical ambience is giving way to the physical destruction of history for economic development. In an effort to revive Nagasaki as a cultural forerunner, Burke-Gaffney would like to see the city “shut out cars and turn Nagasaki into a walking city in hopes of making it more of a leader in environmental protection.”

Despite his concerns, Burke-Gaffney has high hopes that Nagasaki will be able to, at least partially, return to its historic roots as a harbor for foreign cultural exchange. As Japan has recently liberalized its laws concerning Chinese tourism, Burke-Gaffney believes this is the first step toward a renewed influx of foreign tourists and will pave the way for further cultural exchange.

Brian Burke-Gaffney has lived in

Japan in a way most foreigners never dream of and he has connected with the culture on a deeper level than many locals have. Possessing years of experience in a new land, he offers advice for anyone learning a new language: “The best way to learn [a language] is not to study it for the sake of studying {the language}, but for the sake of gaining a tool to do something else with it. When you study language that way, I think your progress is much faster.” While in a foreign country “get out of your shell, experience [the country] and meet [the] people. Don’t let the language barrier bother you too much because the best way to get beyond the language barrier is to push up against it.” ■



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# 3 months on



**Galileo Yuseco** reports on the current situation  
in Ishikawa-machi, Fukushima prefecture,  
three months after the Tokoku disaster

Photo: Noel Feans

**O**n Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, at 2:46 p.m., a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck off the east coasts of Fukushima and Miyagi Prefecture, triggering a tsunami and in effect, a nuclear power plant failure. The effects of all three are still prevalent in the minds and lives of many people all across Japan.

Needless to say, it has been hard times for all, especially for the coastal towns heavily affected by all three disasters.

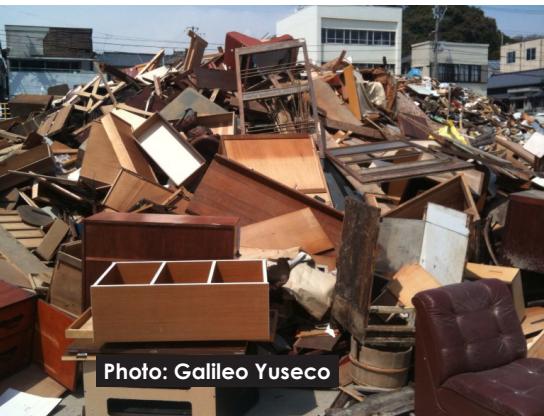


Photo: Galileo Yuseco

Fukushima's agriculture and produce industry will negatively affect the prefecture's economy during the decades it will take to recover.

As the shock slowly subsides and people try their best to return to their normal lives, I've been impressed with the hard work of the people of Fukushima.

The pending situation and high uncertainty at the Dai-Ichi nuclear power plant made it difficult for the

people of Fukushima to decide what to do following the disaster. Decisions like: Stay or go? Work or stop? Keep going or give up? People were either evacuated from their homes or had nowhere to live. Thousands lived in community centers and local gyms for weeks on end. Separated only by cardboard walls, many were only able to bathe once every two to three days.

There are people still living in these conditions.

There are stories of people from Fukushima trying to restart their lives in other prefectures, but many are being denied shelter and basic necessities. I have heard accounts of people from Fukushima banned from using *onsen* facilities or from staying at hotels due to fear of radiation. This is a problem for the future of Fukushima and greater Japan.

Despite all this, the people of Fukushima are pressing on and doing their best. Areas that weren't severely affected by the disasters are opening their doors and allowing the refugees to stay for free. Many schools throughout the prefecture have accepted students and staff from the east coast. These are signs of the strength of the people of Fukushima and their unwillingness to give up. They continue to live and carry on with their everyday lives.

So, what now?

Two months have passed since the

earthquake, tsunami and nuclear power plant incident. Even though the media continues to dramatize the nuclear power plant situation and radiation fallout, the real focus should be on the cleanup and restoration of the east coast. There are mountains of rubbish and debris everywhere and the coast remains lined with rubble. It is essential that we clean up the destruction caused by the tsunami and start over as soon as possible. Communities from all over Fukushima are putting their weekend plans aside and committing to clean up and down the coast. Furthermore, there are thousands of unnamed volunteers working every day to restore disaster-struck areas.

Foreign Fukushima residents have also been active in and out of Fukushima during the past two months. Many of them have returned to their home countries and have organized fundraising events for Fukushima. They shared stories and brought back a level of humanity to the disaster, which was originally

overshadowed by the media making it out to be a Hollywood-esque Armageddon. It was a shocking disaster - but now is the time for action.

There are numerous charity groups that have been set up specifically by Fukushima JETs and the people of Fukushima (see side bar).

Thank you for taking the time to read this article and I hope that you will consider helping Fukushima in any way you can. 

## How you can help

There are several charity groups set up specifically by Fukushima JET participants and local communities. All proceeds go to Fukushima Prefecture's Disaster Countermeasures Office.

### I Love Fukushima T-shirt

[fukushimatshirt.blogspot.com](http://fukushimatshirt.blogspot.com)

### Hearts for Haragama

[hearts4haragama.wordpress.com](http://hearts4haragama.wordpress.com)

### Minami Soma T-shirt

[nomorenuclear.net/en](http://nomorenuclear.net/en)

### Friends of Soma

[somafriends.com](http://somafriends.com)

### Save Iwaki

[savejapan.com.au/donations.html](http://savejapan.com.au/donations.html)

You can also donate to **Red Cross Japan**

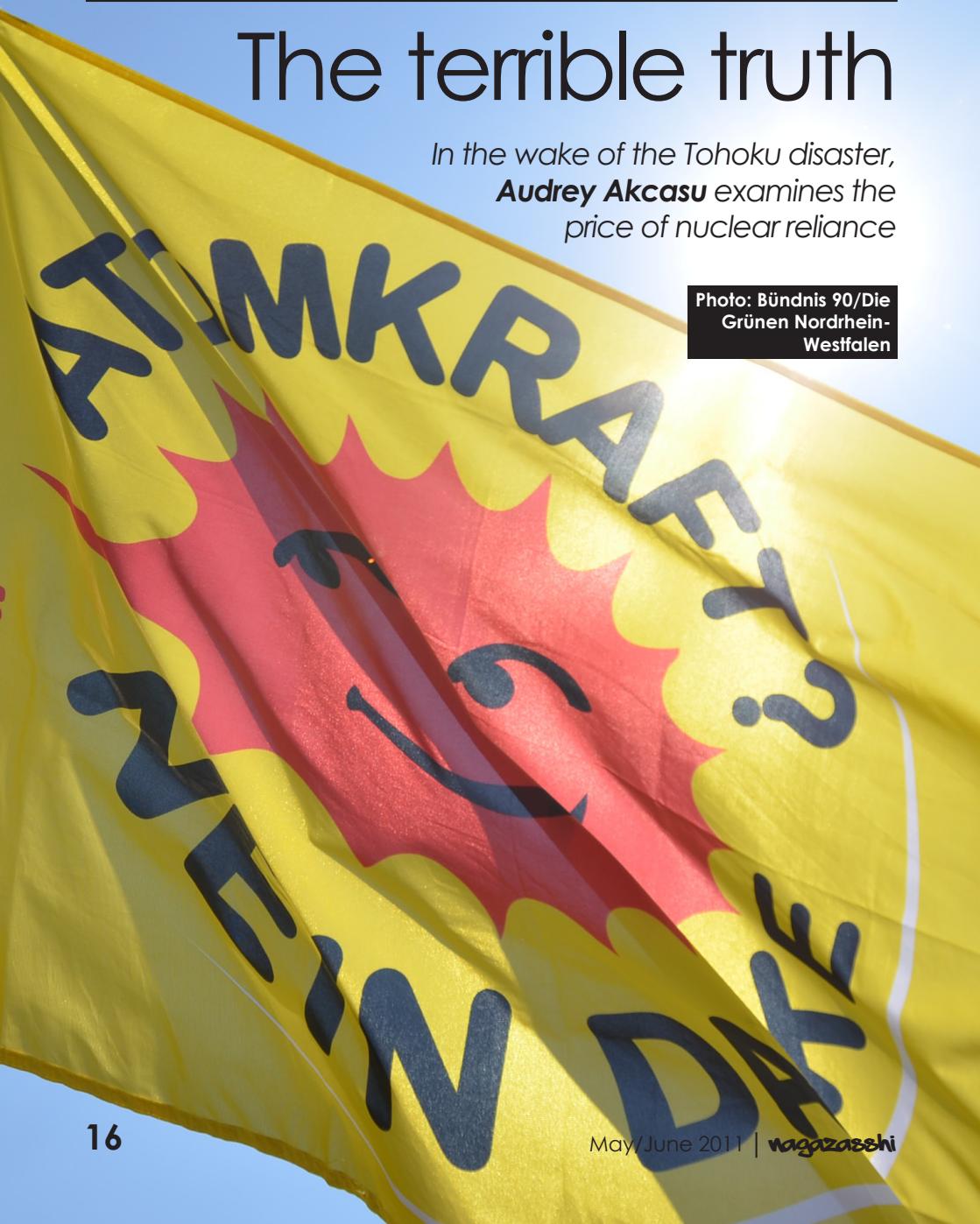
[www.jrc.or.jp/english/index.html](http://www.jrc.or.jp/english/index.html)

# Nuclear debate

## The terrible truth

*In the wake of the Tohoku disaster,  
Audrey Akcasu examines the  
price of nuclear reliance*

Photo: Bündnis 90/Die  
Grünen Nordrhein-  
Westfalen



**A**pproximately 4,000 people died of cancer and the Soviet economy was crippled by the Chernobyl disaster.

While the full effects of the incident in Fukushima will not be known for years, thousands have already been displaced and the land will be uninhabitable for years. Are these incidents not enough to prove that nuclear power should not be exploited when safe, sustainable energy is easily accessible?

The nuclear industry has spent billions of dollars trying to convince us that nuclear energy is a clean energy source, especially when compared to coal. However, most people are not aware of the danger of the waste associated with its production. Nuclear reactors are fueled by uranium: a scarce, expensive and dangerous resource. The extraction of uranium has not only resulted in high rates of cancer among workers, but also causes the release of noxious gasses and depleted uranium, which contaminate ground water - endangering the lives of humans, plants and animals.

A nuclear plant produces power for forty years, but produces waste for hundreds of thousands; when the fuel is spent, the irradiated waste takes hundreds of thousands of years to decay and there is no way to safely contain or dispose of this waste. In most cases, the waste stands immobile in pools or containers and is vulnerable to disaster. One product of nuclear energy production is the very radioactive and hazardous carcinogenic, plutonium. Most people are familiar with the dangers of plutonium as it made up the

core of the atomic bomb, "Fat Man", which devastated Nagasaki in 1945.

Nuclear power is also said to be more cost-effective than other forms of fuel. However, in the case of an accident, the costs are astronomical. For instance, the Chernobyl disaster cost the former Soviet Union three times the profit from every other reactor in the nation from the preceding 40 years. Further, while originally proposed to be "too cheap to meter," nuclear power plants in the US get billions of dollars in government subsidies, yet still struggle economically.

Finally, plants are rarely well-maintained and safety precautions are often neglected. While this is not a direct flaw of nuclear power, it is common all over the world. Such precarious behavior goes unnoticed, or more likely, is ignored due to economic or political pressure.

While nuclear power is currently a staple energy source, Germany has proven that sobering up from nuclear energy is possible, with their recent vow to shut down all of their nuclear reactors and change to renewable, sustainable energy. There are viable alternatives and we have the technology, so let's use it. As alternative energy advocate Crystal Uchino says, "the crux of this debate should not be whether nuclear is "cleaner" or "cheaper." The real question is 'Do we as a people willfully choose to live in an increasingly poisoned world when there are alternatives?'" We should not be risking our lives or planet for nuclear power when other options are in our grasp. ■

# Nuclear debate

## The lesser evil

**Steven Dempsey** purports that nuclear power is still the safest energy source

**H**uman intelligence and ingenuity have spawned the wonders of modern society, yet we easily fall victim to irrational thinking that can cloud our judgment. Take air travel for example; in the wake of an airplane accident, many call into question the safety of air travel and forgo flying in favor of driving and other methods of transportation. This temporary aversion to air travel is illogical when considering that the actual rates of fatalities, in terms of distance traveled, favors flight. With images of recent tragedies emblazoned in people's memories, dangers perceived often become skewed from actual risk.



Photo: Patrick McGarvey

Modern society functions primarily on electricity. It lights and heats our homes. It drives mass transit systems. It creates potable water and extends the shelf-life of food. Entertainment. Global communication. Medical technologies. The list goes on. Electricity is the force behind this age of information.

Baring the abandonment of these wonders provided by electricity, we have some freedom in choosing

our sources of power, albeit with varying degrees and types of risks. On a per terawatt hour basis, the biggest offenders are fossil fuels. As of 2008, coal and oil supply over

60% of global energy. The airborne pollution of coal and oil account for over 1 million deaths per year. Even taking Chernobyl into consideration, nuclear power accounts for fewer deaths per terawatt hour than fossil fuels by more than two orders of magnitude. A UN study found fewer than 50 deaths in the wake of Chernobyl, with an upper bound of 4,000 eventual deaths due to radiation. Even if we take the highest

estimate, there would need to be 250 Chernobyl-scale disasters with explosive ejection of reactor cores to equal the annual deaths from fossil fuels. Nuclear power may not be the be-all-end-all source of electricity; however at this time, it appears to be one of the safest and most viable options.

Carl Sagan once wrote: "We've arranged a global civilization in which most crucial elements—transportation, communications, and all other industries; agriculture, medicine, education, entertainment, protecting the environment; and even the key democratic institution of voting—profoundly depend on science and technology. We have also arranged things so that almost no one understands science and technology. This is a prescription for disaster."

Chernobyl and the more recent Fukushima events, paired with deficiencies in general understanding of the science involved in nuclear power, have disproportionately warped views and created this misconceived specter that is the atom. If we are to phase out any source of electricity, start with the biggest offender: fossil fuels. Nuclear power can tide us over as other technologies improve, and save tens of millions of lives ravaged by fossil fuels in the decades to come. ■

**“Even taking Chernobyl into consideration, nuclear power accounts for fewer deaths per terawatt hour than fossil fuels by more than two orders of magnitude”**

Photo: Jacky Lau

# ALTernative Nagasaki

**Audrey Akcasu** on a photo exhibit by the foreign community for the local one

**B**oris Yeltsin once said, "We don't appreciate what we have until it's gone. It's like air. When you have it, you don't notice it." For Jacky Lau, an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in Arie, Nagasaki, this "air" is the everyday environs in which he lives and works. However, he has very much taken notice of his "air" and found a way to cherish. Now he wants to share this appreciation of his with the entire community.

Lau's small town of Arie, unlike Nagasaki City or Huis Ten Bosch, is not known as a tourist destination.

However, Lau has found pride and appreciation for his town, which many Nagasaki locals take for granted or even pay no mind to. With the clock ticking before his return home to America, he is determined to share the hidden beauty and charms of his small town, not only with the foreign community, but with Nagasaki locals as well. This was Lau's inspiration for a photo exhibit entitled "ALTernative Nagasaki."

Lau and many other Nagasaki ALTs have collected the photos that they feel encapsulate what Nagasaki means to them. As foreign residents of the community, they have the unique opportunity to see Nagasaki through the eyes of a tourist and resident.

The ALT often connects with the community and bonds not only with the people but with the physical world around them. In addition, because their time in the environment is often limited, they are forced to evaluate what it means to be in those surroundings in a way that most other foreigners and even some locals have never experienced.

When asked what kind of message he hopes to send through the exhibit, Lau said, "Go to the [Nagasaki] Peace Park. Go to Glover Garden. Go to Mt. Inasa. But check out the islands, Shimabara,

Matsuura, Saikai. Those places have their own charms that can't be found in the big cities."

**“ Lau hopes that the exhibit will not only inspire his fellow foreigners to explore the prefecture but also encourage the locals to do the same ”**

Lau hopes that the exhibit will not only inspire his fellow foreigners to explore the prefecture, but also encourage the locals to do the same. He remarked, "If my *bara-bara* (rusty) Japanese could [allow] me [to have] such a fantastic time, I could only imagine what a fluent speaker could do."

**ALTernative Nagasaki will be presented at the following locations:**  
**June 10 - 14, Kokuraya Gallery 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor (Hamanomachi, Nagasaki)**  
**June 11 - July 8, Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture (Tateyama 1 Chome, Nagasaki) ▀**



# East Asian cinema primer

Who's who and what's what?

Part 3

For the final part of his examination of east Asian cinema, **Brendan Thornton** looks at the scene here in Japan

## Japan

### Background

Cinema in Japan has a prolific history that spans more than a century. The first widely-recognized Japanese film – a piece detailing the sights of Tokyo – was released in 1897. As Japanese cinema progressed through the early 1900s it

was criticized for being too “theatrical” in nature. This was due to its use of elements from *kabuki* (Japanese classical drama) and *shinpa* (melodramatic theater and cinema), including male actors who impersonate female roles, called *onnagata*. This criticism was understandable considering Japan’s rich history in theater and performing arts,

and it wasn't until the mid-1920s that filmmakers began to mix elements of traditional Japanese theater with modern cinematic techniques.

Similar to South Korea, the Golden Age of Japanese cinema began in the 1950s and lasted until the 60s. Two landmark films in Japanese cinema were released in the 1950s – Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* and Ishirō Honda's *Godzilla*, both hitting the box office in 1954. The second Golden Age for Japanese cinema is unofficially marked as the 1990s and 2000s, due in large part to the widespread popularity of Japanese animation (anime). Of the three major movie-producing countries in East Asia, Japan is by far the most prolific and most successful in terms of animation and live-action film.

## Who's Who

**Hayao Miyazaki:** It is not possible to talk about the classics of anime film without mentioning Miyazaki. This beloved director has been writing and directing animated feature films for over fifty years. He co-founded Studio Ghibli in 1985, a production company which houses his many works. Miyazaki's films garnered international recognition with the release of *Mononoke Hime* (Princess Mononoke) in 1997 and *Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi* (Spirited Away) in 2001, which was honored with the Academy Award for Best Animated Film.

**Akira Kurosawa:** A Japanese film director and producer recognized for films such as *Shichinin no Samurai* (*Seven*

*Samurai*) and *Ikiru* (To Live). He is regarded as one of the most important and influential filmmakers in the history of Japanese cinema and is single-handedly responsible for introducing the art of Japanese cinema to the West. Not only has he written original stories but has also faithfully adapted several works by Western authors, such as Shakespeare and Dostoevsky.

**Toshirō Mifune:** The lead actor in many Kurosawa films and a legend in the industry, Mifune appeared in almost 170 feature films throughout his career. Mifune is quoted to have said in regards to Kurosawa: "I am proud of nothing I have done other than [that I have done] with him."

## What's What

**Evangelion:** This mammoth post-apocalyptic anime series has defined the Japanese "mecha anime" (robot anime) genre and is acclaimed as the most influential anime of all time.

**Tokyo Sonata:** Similar in scope to *American Beauty*, this masterful piece of storytelling from director Kiyoshi Kurosawa depicts the dynamics of a Japanese family after the father loses his job.

**Battle Royale:** The definition of a cult classic and then some, this story follows a Japanese ninth-grade class that is captured and sent by the government to a deserted island. Upon arrival, they are told that their only means of survival is to be the last man standing in a battle to the death among their classmates. ■

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