

## Criticizing the “Nuclear Village“ – Nuclear Laborers in Predicament

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Many laborers within the nuclear industry have been struggling with labor issues such as rack-off (*pinhane*), the obligation to keep everything they experience confidential, the enormous difficulties to get work accidents legally approved and to receive proper compensation, or the ubiquitous issue of radiation they face every day. Despite these adversities, nuclear laborers, as almost all other laborers in different fields too, need to reflect on the question of how to deal with these circumstances. This predicament between giving up this often well-paid job and expressing certain critic on the one side, or keeping the job while remaining quiet on the other, is putting many workers in compunction. Concerning the first case, only few of them did become public. Therefore, three examples shall be introduced to understand how different nuclear laborers in different historical periods sought of how to express their discomfort with parts of their daily work. Saitô Seiji, who worked in various NPPs in the 1980s as a subcontract laborer, later became one of the severest critics of the working circumstances in the nuclear industry and who founded the first (and last) labor union, that specialized on subcontract laborers in NPPs, will be introduced first. The second laborer is Kimura Toshio. He is a former TEPCO employee, who worked in Fukushima Daiichi in the 1990s as a reactor core manager and who not only after the triple disaster in 2011 but also before that criticized TEPCO and the nuclear industry openly. Mr. Tanaka<sup>1</sup> will be the third actor. There is not so much written about him in the literature until now, as he only gave very few interviews until I met him last summer. After a long working life in many professions and close to retirement, he became a TEPCO employee in 2011 and worked as a nurse in Fukushima Daiichi and the J-Village after the 2011 accident. All three of them have in common that once they started to articulate their concerns, they faced different obstacles, which in one way or another were connected to the conglomerate of interest consisting of the fields of politics, economy, the media, the bureaucracy and the (nuclear) scientists – also known as the nuclear village (*genshiryoku mura*).

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<sup>1</sup> Name changed because of privacy protection.