タバから遠く離れて第二部

Futaba kara toku hanarete dainibu

Nuclear Nation II

Atsushi Funahashi

Producer Yoshiko Hashimoto. **Production companies** Documentary Japan (Tokyo, Japan); Big River Films (Tokyo, Japan). **Director** Atsushi Funahashi. **Director of photography** Atsushi Funahashi, Yutaka Yamazaki. **Sound** Atsushi Funahashi. **Music** Haruyuki Suzuki. **Theme song** Ryuichi Sakamoto. **Sound design** Tomoji Kuwaki. **Editor** Atsushi Funahashi.

HDCAM, colour. 114 min. Japanese.
Premiere 15 November 2014, Tokio **World sales** Wide House

In 2012, Atsushi Funahashi presented *Nuclear Nation*, his film about the consequences of the March 2011 nuclear disaster in Fukushima Daiichi. 1400 people from nearby Futaba were evacuated to a school building in a Tokyo suburb. Funahashi documented people's desperation with true empathy and showed the full extent of the destruction. This year, he presents the sequel. We learn that the former mayor – previously a fervent advocate of nuclear energy and now a passionate fighter for the victims of the catastrophe – has now been replaced by someone younger. The single-minded cattle breeder also makes another appearance, originally having resisted the government's orders to evacuate the disaster zone and kill his livestock. Today, a look at his animals lays bare the consequences of radioactive contamination: they all have ulcers and open wounds. It wasn't until late 2014 that the final people left the school building – but they're unlikely ever to be able to return to their homes. The epicentre of the catastrophe has been declared a toxic waste disposal site. The inhabitants of Futaba, to whom nuclear energy once brought affluence, are now alone in paying the high price for it.

Gabriela Seidel-Hollaender

The Faustian bargain

Many people have forgotten what happened in Fukushima. For them, it's ancient history. But radiation still leaks from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Contaminated water is flowing into the ocean, unstoppable, though the Prime Minister has announced it is 'under control'. Every time the plant's operator, Tepco, removes debris from the destroyed reactor buildings, radiation levels increase in places as far as 100 kilometres away.

Almost four years after the accident, more than 100 thousand people are still displaced. Most of them are living in temporary housing or subsidised apartments in Fukushima.

All the townspeople of Futaba (about 7,000 people) have been forced from their homes since ninety-six per cent of the town is a so-called 'difficult-to-return' zone – the government's euphemism for a 'no-return zone'.

Tepco is starting to compensate them. Through property assessments, they put a price on houses and land, based on what they were worth on 10 March 2011, the day before the accident. Century-old heritage homes in Futaba are valued at next to nothing, about the same as an empty plot of land. People from the 'difficult-to-return' zone are not fully compensated since it's assumed they will be able to return 'someday'. But the government won't say when they can expect that 'someday' to come.

Japan's Minister of the Environment says 'it's just a matter of *kaneme* (money)'. Is that really all the people of Fukushima have lost? The community is dissipating. Connections between townspeople are disintegrating. The history and culture of Futaba, fostered over generations, is dying. It's as though time stopped there on 12 March 2011, the day they evacuated. There is no future where the town's 600 children can grow up together, in a safe and secure environment. But neither Tepco nor the Japanese government take responsibility for this.

A form of modern colonialism

The government has planned to build what they call 'interim storage sites' for contaminated waste. They will start loading in radioactive soil in January 2015. Why do evacuees have to sell their homeland so it can become a nuclear dump?

It's a question of ethics. Their towns were used by Tepco for more than forty years without being told what they stood to lose in the event of an accident. They were not told they could lose their land, their more-than 1,000-year history, the prosperity that was supposed to continue beyond the first forty years after the plants were built.

Almost 100 per cent of the electricity Fukushima Daiichi produced was sent to the Tokyo metropolitan area. Tokyo has blindly pushed this risk far away, onto rural communities like Futaba. It's a feudalistic relationship between small towns and the central government that has persisted despite the Meiji Restoration [the political and social renewal in Japan at the end of the nineteenth century –Ed.] and the loss of the Second World War. I call it modern colonialism. We now realise we were selling our souls to demons just as Goethe's Faust did. The contamination is not limited to Fukushima. It is spreading all over Japan and the Pacific Ocean. When we imported the technology, we swallowed whole President Eisenhower's idea of 'Atoms for Peace', as something separate from the A-bombs that hit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But we have now subjected ourselves to the same contamination and after-effects.

We brainwashed ourselves into thinking this would make our future bright. Now our ignorance and recklessness are backfiring, but many Japanese, including government officials, don't want to admit it's our own fault. Our Faustian bargain has come back to haunt us. I strongly believe we need to face this inconvenient truth.

Atsushi Funahashi

Futaba, to be continued

The nuclear disaster arising out of March 2011 has inspired hundreds of documentaries, but the first to receive international acclaim was Atsushi Funahashi's 2012 *Futaba kara toku hanarete*, about the exile of 1,415 residents from the area housing the crippled Fukushima Daiichi plant. Premiering at the Berlinale Forum less than a year after the meltdowns, it provided an extremely intimate look at an unconscionable situation, following the fates of evacuees from Futaba Machi, who had been forced to move 250 kilometres away to an abandoned high school in Saitama.

Highlighting the inhumane conditions, the on-going agonies, the unanswered questions about the true costs of nuclear energy and capitalism – and introducing us to feisty Futaba Mayor Katsutaka Idogawa, a cheerleader for nuclear power who was now regretting his support – the film quietly earned our moral outrage, as the government and Tepco continued to ignore demands for empathy and the information vacuum gradually sucked all hope from the survivors.

Futaba kara toku hanarete ended in December 2011 with over 600 residents still at the school, but Funahashi never stopped shooting. After cutting down over 400 hours of footage, he has now created the second chapter in the refugees' grim ordeal.

Futaba kara toku hanarete dainibu / Nuclear Nation II begins at New Year's 2012, and brings us forward to this past March, when the school is once again abandoned. In this chapter, there are no more bands coming to cheer up the evacuees, no more truckloads of fresh produce, no more visits from the emperor and empress, no more 'Gambare Futaba Machi!!' ['Hang in there, citizens of Futaba!' –Ed.] banners. But there are still the annual observances of prayer marking 11 March, the brief visits to crumbling homes in the exclusion zone (ninety-six per cent of the town is deemed uninhabitable), men shuffling into meetings they don't want to attend.

Quarrelling about temporary storage

There is also increasing desperation, bickering over differing levels of resident compensation, and a new mayor: (...) Shiro Izawa is less outspoken, but equally opposed to the co-opting of Futaba as a dumping ground for irradiated soil and other nuclear debris. Although it is not included in the film, it was widely reported in September that Izawa and Fukushima Gov. Yuhei Sato had met with Prime Minister Abe to accept the government's proposal.

Fortunately, the mayor was on hand after the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan's sneak preview of ***Futaba kara toku hanarete dainibu / Nuclear Nation II*** to set the record straight: 'While it's true that the governor did make the decision to accept plans to build temporary storage for nuclear waste,' Izawa said, choosing his words carefully, 'the town of Futaba is still discussing the issue. So contrary to what the Japanese media has reported, we have not totally accepted the construction of these sites.'

Funahashi immediately added: 'What's being forgotten is the landowners' [rights] to decide whether to sell or lease their land. The central and prefectural governments are going over their heads and accepting the facilities… and creating a context in which people are being forced to sell their land, even if it's against their will.'

Three and a half years after the triple disaster, close to 100,000 people still live in temporary facilities in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures due to construction delays on permanent housing. To a question about matching them up with suitable housing from the eight million vacant residences throughout Japan, Izawa said, 'For these people, everyday life is linked to a sense of community. They have their family, friends and relatives; they share an environment, share a history, and that's what makes a town… I think it's important to give them back the community they had, and not just let it collapse.' Funahashi added, 'I see it as a kind of human rights violation to force people to live in temporary housing.' Earlier, he had mentioned, 'The role of my film is to show they have lost something *kaneme* can never compensate.'
Atsushi Funahashi continues to document this on-going tragedy, and we should expect *Nuclear Nation III* to include Futaba's reactions to the controversial rebooting of Japan's nuclear program.

Karen Severns, 14 October 2014

Atsushi Funahashi was born in Osaka in 1974. He studied Film at Tokyo University before moving to New York in 1997, where he studied Film Directing at the School of Visual Arts. In 1999 he started a production company with Alyssa Jo Black and Eric van den Brulle. Funahashi has also directed several documentaries about social and cultural issues in New York City for NHK, Japan's public broadcaster. Along with his work as a filmmaker, Funahashi writes for Japanese film and art magazines such as 10 + 1, Kinema Junpo, and Eureka. He moved back to Tokyo in 2007.

Films

1994: *Blind Blue* (40 min.). 1998: *It Happens* (10 min.). 1999: *Talkie & Silence* (17 min.). 2002: *Echoes* (72 min.). 2002: *One Year from the Day – Annual Commemoration of September 11* (50 min.). 2002: *After-School Education* (50 min.). 2002: *New Yorkers Comedy Special* (50 min.). 2002: *New Yorkers Fort Greene Special* (50 min.). 2002: *New Yorkers Broadway Special* (50 min.). 2003: *Jazz on Sundays* (20 min.). 2005: *Big River* (Berlinale Forum 2006, 105 min.). 2005: *For the Joyful Moment of Life – Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease* (20 min.). 2006: *The Unforgettable – 5th Anniversary of September 11* (50 min.). 2006: *Dialogue with a Terrorist's Mother* (20 min.). 2007: *Stop Global Warming – the First Step* (20 min.). 2009: *Deep in the Valley / Yanaka boshoku* (Forum 2009, 135 min.). 2011: *Nishimura kyotaro Suspense Series, Murder Express Kusatsu* (90 min.). 2012: *Nuclear Nation / Futaba kara toku hanarete* (Berlinale Forum 2012, 145 min.). 2012: *Sakura namiki no mankai no shita ni / Cold Bloom* (Berlinale Forum 2013, 119 min.). 2013: *Radioactive* (35 min.). 2014: ***Futaba kara toku hanarete dainibu / Nuclear Nation II***.