

Research on Dialogue Session for Making Visions of Communities

~A Case Study on Nuclear Power Plants Located areas ~

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1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Bringing the public enterprise or so-called “troublesome facility” to local communities often causes a conflict among the locals and break local community into pieces. State of mutual distrust happens among the locals, and between the locals and the local government, and between locals and people living in the neighboring regions. Once the conflict occurs, it takes long time until the situation to be settled and it has been pointed out that people will have difficulty in communication or cooperating well among themselves. The nuclear power plants located areas have been facing with uneasy situation in terms of communication. After Fukushima disaster happened, the operation of all the nuclear power plants was stopped while the Japanese government still does not decide whether the country rely on the nuclear power for electricity or not. For the communities depending on nuclear power plants economically, new visions toward sustainable communities should be built. In some regions, local governments and citizen groups have started discussion each other to make new visions. This research focuses on the action of “dialogue sessions” in the two study areas and the objectives are to find out how the dialogue sessions bring change into the communities and affect its progress.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is based on the interviews and participatory observations in Kashiwazaki city Niigata prefecture and Wakasa area of Fukui prefecture. The target groups are “The local safety monitoring committee of Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plants by disclosure (Committee-A)”, “The project group for making vision of Kashiwazaki (Project-B)” and “The power of dreaming in Wakasa (Group-C)”. Each group consists of the supporters, the opponents and the neutrals for nuclear power plant.

3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Committee-A was established in 2003 by the local government and have been managed by locals. Under the support of the local government, the supporters, the opponents and the neutrals work together in monitoring the nuclear plant operations and disclosing the information regarding the power plant. Monthly meetings are held with executives of electric power company and government officeholder. Their aim is to create the place in which people can live peacefully. Actors in Project-B, which is organized in 2012 are same with actors in Committee-A and have a 40 years history of conflict among the supporters and opponents of nuclear power plant. To change the situation, the group invites a facilitator from Tokyo to promote the communication. With the assistance of the outsiders, the new community vision without depending on nuclear power plants is now under making process. Group-C started in 2012 based on a grass-roots movement for creating a place to communicate among locals. Main actors are young people and the elders support their activities. Also outsiders and consumers of electricity join their new movement for creating a new vision. Although there are still many difficulties in both areas, three important attempts useful for making fruitful visions at dialogue sessions are derived by this study as; to focus on the local issue, to find common subjects and to make rules for the discussion. The local patriotism and passion of parties would support these movements. The dialogue and cooperation among different actors are bringing new local visions gradually.