How Information about Nuclear Power Plants was Reported:  
The Road to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident and the Aftermath

OGURA Jun’ichi

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident which occurred in March, 2011, triggered by the Great East Japan Earthquake has been a catastrophe. Vast land was polluted by radioactivity by the nuclear accident, and the land is partly not suitable for people to live in over a long term. Many people who were exposed to higher levels of radiation are at risk of health hazard.

Before the catastrophe, information about the “necessity” and “safety” etc. of nuclear power plants by the media had been quite greater than the information about problems of nuclear power plants. That seems to be one of the factors which led to the horrible accident. On the other hand, the fact that information about the important matters relating to nuclear power plants had not been reported enough seems to be another factor. In this paper, I have checked the information about the food pollution after the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986 in the former Soviet Union which was the worst nuclear accident until the nuclear accident in Fukushima occurred.

There were big troubles over radioactive contamination of foods in Thailand and Philippines etc. after the Soviet nuclear accident. However, those news were hardly ever reported in the media in Kansai area. I have confirmed the facts that had happened in the countries mainly from articles on local papers, and considered if those news were really worthless to report or not. I also have confirmed how much the media reported about the news in all over Japan by using the “Nikkei Telecon” which is the most powerful data base for news articles in Japan.

On the other hand, some news which are related to the nuclear accident have not been reported well recently again, five years after the catastrophic accident in Fukushima. Those news are on the radioactive contamination of foods and the health hazard by radiation. I have checked it by using the data base too, and considered it.

It seems that editors of the media tend to suppress information about the news fearing to cause social unrest. It may be one of the big reasons those news have not reported well. However, there seem to be problems in such circumstances. One of the big problems is that memories of the accident in Fukushima are fading rapidly. And another one is that the atmosphere to think nuclear power plants seriously has been gradually changing.

Key words: nuclear power plant, information, radioactively contaminated foods, cesium, thyroid gland