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## Nuclear power plant worker confesses cover-up of his own radiation doses

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“At my own decision, I concealed the actual radiation dose I was exposed to,” confessed Itoh Takashi (in his 30s) who had engaged in emergency work at TEPCO’s Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant following the accident.

When asked why he did this, Itoh answered, “Because workers there are forced to make a choice between ‘leaving the job’ or ‘underreporting their radiation exposure’.”

Soon after the accident, Itoh was engaged in the emergency work at the highly-contaminated Unit 3 Reactor Building at the plant. Despite wearing a protective suit and a full-face mask, he was exposed to more than 3millisieverts (mSv) of radiation after just a few hours. In the following 5 months, the radiation levels he was exposed to totaled 40.10mSv.

Judging from the government-set standards allowing no more than 50mSv per year, Itoh applied for a change of worksite. However, what he faced was choosing between alternatives: early termination of employment or keeping his radiation exposure levels hidden.

Itoh chose the latter. He decided to work without carrying a dosimeter one every five days.

He said, “Subcontractors try to supply as many workers as possible to meet TEPCO’s requests because this will determine the subcontracting prices. On the other hand, restrictions on acceptable radiation doses exist. So, nuclear plant-related subcontractors often ask workers who received high levels of radiation to find another job. In order to continue working, these workers are forced to hide the actual amount of their radiation exposure.”

Iwaki City in Fukushima Prefecture has a lot of nuclear plant-related companies located there. Watanabe Hiroyuki, an Iwaki City Assembly member of the Japanese Communist Party, has taken up the various problems regarding the practice of the disposable use of nuclear power plant workers. The company where the use of lead-covered dosimeters and workers without alarm pocket dosimeters were discovered is a TEPCO subsidiary: Tokyo Energy and Systems Inc. TEPCO should fulfill its responsibility for plant workers safety as the parent company.