

+++For Immediate Release+++

April 10, 2012

Atomic Age II: Fukushima

University of Chicago hosts all-day symposium investigating the multiple dimensions of the ongoing Fukushima nuclear disaster through discussion by experts from Japan and the U.S.

Saturday, May 5, 2012: 8:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Social Science 122, the University of Chicago, 1126 East 59th Street, Chicago, IL 60637

This event is free and open to the public. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

For full information and details, visit <http://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/atomicage/aboutsymposium/> or call 773-702-8647.

The Fukushima nuclear disaster is not over. It is not just that the reactors at the Daiichi Plant remain unstable, and that experts can only speculate as to what is happening inside, but that we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg of the social, political, economic, and health implications of this disaster. The crisis will only deepen in time as radioactive substances spread through the air and water and human activities, including the recycling or incineration of debris and the transport of foodstuffs beyond Fukushima, beyond northern Japan, and far beyond the boundaries of Japan itself.

In “The Atomic Age from Hiroshima to the Present” symposium held in May 2011, we began the task of questioning the dichotomy between nuclear weapons, acknowledged to be problematic, and nuclear energy, thought necessary for progress, that has informed the postwar global order. This seemed an especially fitting topic to investigate at the University of Chicago, where the first controlled nuclear chain reaction took place in 1942 as part of the Manhattan Project. This year, we gather speakers from Japan and the US with a variety of expertise to inform ourselves on the multiple facets of this crisis as well as its implications for those of us living in the U.S.

Our two keynote speakers come from Japan. The first, **Hiroaki Koide** of the Kyoto University Research Reactor Institute, entered the field of nuclear science believing that it held the key to Japanese prosperity. Determining through his studies, however, that nuclear power and human well-being were incompatible, he has devoted his research to exploring its risks and making its operations accessible to ordinary citizens. His respondent will be **Robert Rosner** of the University of Chicago, Departments of Physics and Astronomy & Astrophysics, past Director of the Argonne National Laboratory, whose nuclear engineering division has played a leading role in the development of nuclear technology.

The second keynote speaker, **Ruiko Mutō**, hails from Fukushima. She is an antinuclear activist dating back to Chernobyl. After working as a print artisan and special needs teacher, she opened a café emphasizing the natural products of its woodland setting. Thus, she knows firsthand the debilitation of being cut off from one’s livelihood by a nuclear disaster. With a special commitment to actions by women, she has been active in pressing for the human rights of local residents and evacuees as well as speaking about the effects of Fukushima nationwide.

The challenge of Fukushima is not just a Japanese issue. We will have presentations from **Bobbie Paul** of Women’s Action for New Directions, a peace and environmental justice activist who has monitored the Savannah River nuclear reprocessing and storage site in Georgia; **Jeffrey Patterson** of the University of Wisconsin Medical School and past president of Physicians for Social Responsibility; **Dean Wilkie**, a retired nuclear plant operator and manager for the Department of Energy; and **Nancy Foust**, an online media expert who has collaborated with Wilkie and others to maintain the SimplyInfo website on the disaster. A roundtable with all participants will conclude the day.

All statements in Japanese will be translated into English.