



Post-Fukushima Dilemma of the Korean Nuclear Policy and Challenge of Communication

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The nuclear accident at Fukushima in Japan did not influence much on Korean nuclear policy. Nuclear power will continue to increase as a way to curb the carbon dioxide emission and, thereby, realize the 'green growth.' However, there is a rising voice among environmental groups as well as other members of the society who urge to reconsider the nuclear-based energy policy. Unlike the 'anti-nuclear' movement which regularly exploded for the past 20 years, they are now insisting on 'de-nuclearization'. The nation's nuclear power is faced with critical challenges after thirty years of operation. Currently there are twenty-one nuclear power plants in operation in Korea and the government plans to increase up to 59% of energy supply by 2030.

Civil society argues that the accident at Fukushima should serve as an impetus for Korea to abandon its nuclear-based energy system and growth-and-supply-based energy paradigm and shape a sustainable and democratic energy system. This implies the need for a closer examination of the problems such as excessive government subsidy, undemocratic and vague decision-making process, energy savings and efficiency, and little investment in renewable energy source. Germany's decision to abolish the nuclear plan has added confidence and hope for them to raise the voices.

Their voice, however, is still minor. Nuclear power, in Korea, is not only a source of energy, but also has a mythical connotation, such as national pride, modernization, and international competitiveness. We are excited to see whether the Fukushima incident would shake the foundation of this 'nuclear power myth'. Some believe that nuclear power is a viable means of responding to climate change, but at the same time there is a growing awareness that it is an obstacle to responding to climate change. Amidst such controversy, the risk of nuclear energy continues to rise and the imperative of communication in making decisions on energy policy attracts more attention. Accordingly, journalism is required to deeply dwell on its way of covering issues