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Japan after earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima: testimonies

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An associate of ACDN shares with us the testimonies of his Japanese friends, inhabitants of Sendai and survivors of the tsunami. He translated these into French from the Japanese.

Extracts from messages from my friends in Sendai

16 March:

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Both safe and sound; house damaged, nothing to eat, no petrol. We go every morning to fetch water. It's weird to see Japan reduced suddenly to being an underdeveloped country, I am ashamed for Japan's politicians.

20 March 2011 at 8.55 pm

Every day we live in dread of the aftershocks... we don't sleep well at night. It's too cold in the car, so we sleep in the house. Yesterday the wind changed and we shut ourselves into the house because rain was predicted.

For petrol, the only station open in the town is the Idemitsu one. But everyone rushes there, so I don't go. Many little supermarkets have just opened, so I'll get on my bike and have a look.

We still have a fair amount of rice at home. No more meat, fish or milk. As for vegetables, a little cabbage and potatoes.

Yesterday we cooked up some hijiki [little black algae, spindle-shaped]. We eat heaps of marine algae such as Konbu [a sort of laminated algae] because of the radioactivity.

Not having any more fresh food, we're falling back on traditional preserve-based Japanese cuisine. The gas won't be back on for two months: not being able to bath is hard on us - we're Japanese!

23 March:

The konbu and hijiki contain a lot of iodine. Since the government is saying not a word about iodine, we're doing self-medication with marine algae.

Nobody at all in the media has mentioned that France has sent rescue teams. We are told about Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis in Kanagawa [Yokohama prefecture] who came to serve curry to people unable to leave... The earthquakes keep coming... At night we sleep fully dressed with the radio on, so that we can take cover immediately if need be.

No problem with banking. The power came back on the 13th. Running water reaches only the ground floor. We will have to wait a month for gas. For petrol, only Idemitsu is open. Even if you queue from dusk to dawn you can't be sure you'll be served in the morning! And that's 2 weeks after the big quake!

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I got a shock yesterday: they announced that the tap-water in Tokyo is polluted with radioactivity and unfit for babies. It is polluted also in Tohoku, but that is not announced! Gradually it will become impossible to buy water in the provinces.

To protect Tokyo, the nation's hub, the government is letting the provinces fall. When I speak of this to my friends they laugh with incredulity. Everyone believes the government's announcements! At TEPCO [Tokyo Electric Power Company] there are lots of civil servants "parachuted in" - being connected to the central authorities, they don't tell the truth. Ministers, top civil servants and even Udeno do not inform us of the truth!

26 March 2011 at 11.03 pm

On TV they talk continuously of the consequences of the quake, but we're not helped to understand whether the situation is getting better or worse. Being inside a storm, we don't understand what the situation is outside it.

Tell me how Japan's situation is viewed from abroad, please.
