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Article : Get Those Geothermal Energy Plants Up and Running

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

The government's current power-saving measures signal defeat in energy policy, which should be a fundamental part of government function.

When I visited the Himalayas [for the first time in](#) two and a half years at the beginning of April 2022, what surprised me the most was that the glacier by Mount Everest's base camp had melted into a large river. The sherpas mournfully remarked, "If this continues, we won't be able to use the base camp."

And, just the other day, Nepalese authorities officially announced plans to move the base camp. Similarly, in the European Alps, the rapid melting of glaciers has caused serious issues.

Taking Stock of Japan's Energy Initiatives

Due to climate change, glaciers are melting on a [global scale](#). At the G8 Summit in Toyako, Hokkaido (2008), and the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit held in Beppu City, Oita Prefecture (2007), glaciers melting as a result of climate change was brought up as an issue. But the situation is worsening at a faster pace than expected by most experts.

I have felt that society has toned down its efforts to tackle climate change since the nuclear accident. Nuclear power plants have been used as one approach towards addressing climate change.

In 2009, then-Prime Minister Yukio Hatayama announced at the United Nations Climate Change Summit that, by 2020, Japan would reduce greenhouse gas to 25% of 1990 levels. In response to this, the government put forth an energy plan to raise nuclear power to 50% of energy produced.

However, there was then a nuclear power accident, and countermeasures against global warming were brought back to a blank slate. Thermal power plants, which had been shut down due to aging, were hurriedly restarted, and forests were broadly cut down throughout the country to build solar mega-power plants.

This goes beyond just a blank slate, it represents a regression.

Source: **Get Those Geothermal Energy Plants Up and Running**
[JAPAN Forward](#)

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Walking the Energy Tightrope

It's a necessity for Japan, which has one of the world's leading [geothermal](#) resources and generation technology, to increase the ratio of geothermal power.

There are some opinions that "[even if](#) a majority of nuclear power plants are shut down, there is enough power."

But one thermal power plant director says, "We are forcing aging thermal power plants to stay in operation. It's a precarious situation of when it might shut down, like tightrope walking, or a fully-occupied jumbo jet just barely flying over the ocean surface."

The government's power-saving measures signal defeat in energy policy, which should be a fundamental part of government function. There are some voices that say "lives are more important than energy," but we must not forget that these lives are being saved by energy.

Source: Get Those Geothermal Energy Plants Up and Running
[JAPAN Forward](#)

2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. geothermal 地熱の

- Low-temperature **geothermal** energy can be used for heating greenhouses, homes, and so on.

2. for the first time in ～ ～ぶりに、～以来初めての

- We had a drink together **for the first time in** a long time on high school reunion.

3. global scale 地球規模・レベルで、世界的規模で

- The **global scale** of the coronavirus disaster demands a global response.

4. even if たとえ～であるとしても

- **Even if** I get accepted to Harvard, I won't be able to afford the tuition.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What is happening to Mount Everest's glacier due to global warming?
2. How much greenhouse gas was Japan trying to reduce by 2020?
3. What sources of energy are mainly used in Japan?
4. Do you think the world could be fully powered by renewable energy?

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日本語関連記事：命守るため「地熱発電」推進を

4月上旬、2年半ぶりにヒマラヤを訪れたが、驚いたのはエベレストのベースキャンプ手前の氷河が解け出し、大きな川になっていたことだ。シェルパたちも「このままではベースキャンプが使えなくなる」と嘆いていた。そしてつい先日、ネパール当局が正式にエベレストのベースキャンプの移動計画を発表した。ヨーロッパアルプスでも同様に氷河の急激な融解が深刻な事態を招いている。

気候変動により世界レベルで氷河が融解しているのだ。洞爺湖サミット（平成20年）や別府で開催された第1回アジア・太平洋水サミット（19年）でも「気候変動による氷河の融解」が訴えられたが、多くの専門家たちの予想よりもはるかに速いスピードで事態は進行している。

気候変動への取り組みについて、あの原発事故以降、社会がトーンダウンするのを感じてきた。温暖化対策の切り札のひとつとして「原子力発電所」の存在があった。21年、鳩山由紀夫首相（当時）が国連気候変動首脳会合で「温室効果ガス1990年＝平成2年比25%削減」を打ち出した。これを受けて政府は、原子力発電の割合を5割に引き上げるエネルギー基本計画をまとめた。しかし、その原発が事故を起こしてしまい、温暖化対策は白紙に戻った。老朽化で停止していた火力発電所を慌てて再稼働させ、全国各地で山林を大規模に伐採して太陽光のメガソーラー発電所が建設された。

これでは白紙どころか逆行していると言わざるを得ない。世界有数の地熱資源と地熱発電技術を有している日本で地熱発電の割合を高めない手はない。

「原発の大半が停止しても電気は足りたじゃないか」という意見もあるが、「老朽化した火力発電所を無理やり動かしている。いつ停止してしまうのかギリギリの状態。満席のジャンボジェット機が海面すれすれを飛んでいる綱渡りの状態」とはある火力発電所所長の言葉だ。

政府による「節電要請」は国家の根幹でもあるエネルギー政策の敗北を意味する。「電気より命が大切だ」という声もあったが、「その命を守っているのが電気」ということを忘れてはならない。