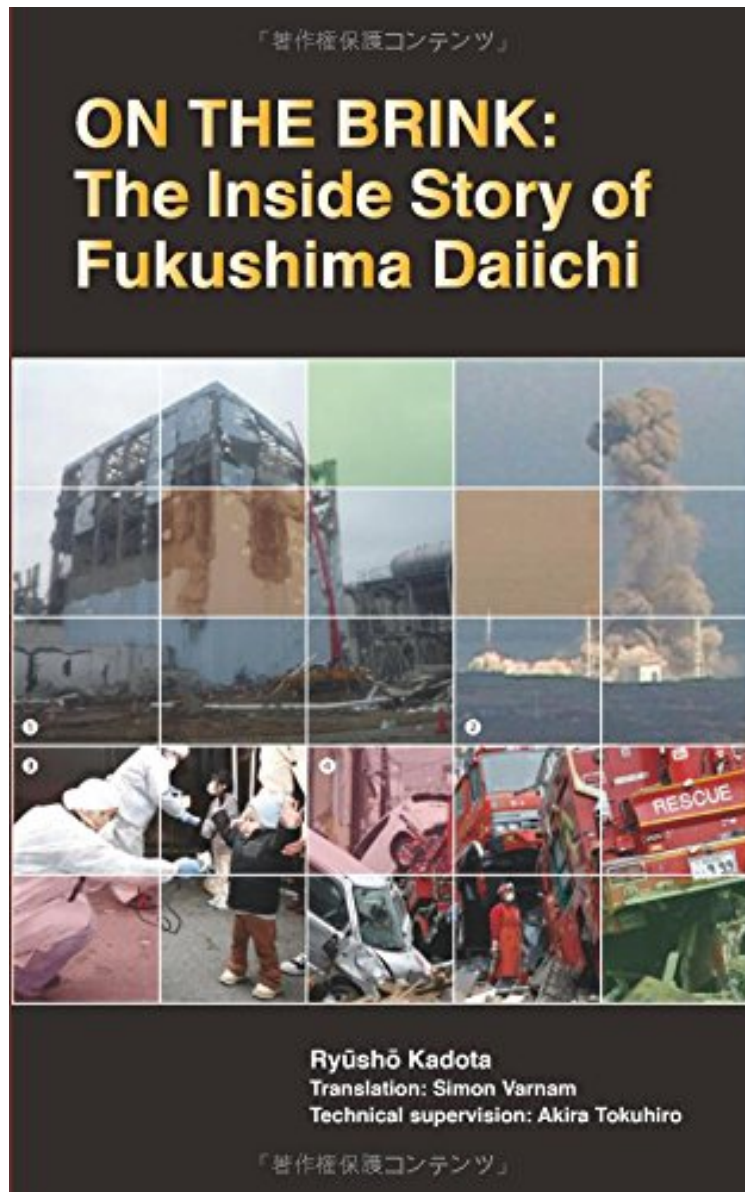


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On the Brink: The Inside Story of Fukushima Daiichi

Ryusho Kadota

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Ryusho Kadota : On the Brink: The Inside Story of Fukushima Daiichi before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On the Brink: The Inside Story of Fukushima Daiichi:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good detailed account of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant disaster from the plant superintendent.By pjfConcentrating on the activities of the superintendent of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear plant, Masao Yoshida, from the events of the earthquake until cancer caused him to go on sick leave

from his duties after the plants were "subdued" with seawater injections and drenches, this is a detailed and riveting account of the hours and days following the events of 3.11. There hasn't been a book like this published yet so far - most have been simple overviews from news media sources followed by pundits talking about legislative or sociological themes. This book covers the events on the ground, and in the control room, from those struggling to deal with the reactors, in the face of daunting physical conditions and unbelievably incompetent company and government management. As an example, these people had little food and water (not enough to drink, much less decontaminate) and even the masks and suits needed to do repairs were running extremely short. When the Prime Minister chose to visit, he interrupted their efforts to get the reactors under control. The fire engines that arrived to cool one of the units sat for an hour and a half while the cores melted further while the P.M. was sent off in his helicopter. His staff and TEPCO insisted the plant provide safety gear for him, rather than him bringing it for him OR FOR THEM, even though they had not enough for their own repair efforts. Even as the operators were disconnecting and reconnecting car batteries to get control room instrument readings, (to save the batteries) the TEPCO staff were criticizing them for failing to keep them updated. I had a lot of larger questions after this, in that if they could air lift the PM in by helicopter, why not protective gear, batteries, generators, compression pumps, even food and water. Once the station lost both landline power and the generators, and they knew they only had a few hours of battery power, the company and government should have focused on getting them power. Rather than the local personal scavenging for car batteries in vehicles and local stores. TEPCO management off site was very ineffectual. And the government at least at some junctures, actually hindered the efforts to stop the core meltdown and hydrogen explosions, rather than help. It's obvious from the book that the operators themselves were dedicated to the point of risking their lives. They also disobeyed orders when orders from company management and the government were clearly wrong. But there was an amazing disconnect of purpose, on both sides, after this catastrophe. I don't think it is unique to Japan, though I think cultural distinctions and propriety made them more reluctant to challenge and demand what they needed in an emergency, and left many solutions in the hands of lower level people taking initiative, then good management and procedures instigated from the top down, and the government lending resources in a crisis that affected its citizenry. This book has faults - it tends to ramble after the health issues that caused Yoshida to leave the action. Then it concentrates on his health issues and the fate of the two workers who drowned in Unit 4 during the tsunami at a later point in the book. It thus leaves the final status of the plant murky, as if the author didn't have the same access to others as to Yoshida. This is clearly his story. Still, the first 3/4 of the book is a fascinating account of details that aren't readily available from any other source to date. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very good summary and timeline of this disaster...By Stephen Armstrong I have now read three books on nuclear plant meltdowns. This one clearly is the best one: detailed, understandable, and human. Kadota details the problems faced by plant superintendent Yoshida, the immense courage of the plant operators, firefighters, and other persons. The tidal wave was totally unanticipated and overwhelmingly large, perhaps as high as 70 meters (? not sure about that). The wave destroyed all of the backup equipment and shorted all of the electrical systems. The operators were left in a pitch-black control room without sensors. They had to use DC batteries to hook up any sort of sensors. It was amazing that the operators had any control at all. The players who come off worst in this book are the Prime Minister and some of the TEPCO (electric company) officials from Tokyo. Nevertheless, Kadota has tried to be fair: he interviewed most of the players up to two years after the event, to get their "side" of the story. I wish a book like this had been written about Chernobyl or Three Mile Island. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Grim, exciting, and humbling. By Vicki M. Very interesting backstory about the brave technical and support staff, firefighters, and military workers who remained on site to contain the disaster and prevented contamination of vast areas of Japan. The workings of the reactors are explained so well that a layman can develop an understanding of how difficult and dangerous the work was and appreciate the ingenuity of the staff in over-coming totally unexpected problems using the limited materials present. Ends with a discussion of alternate reactor technology. Well worth the read.

March 11, 2011. The Tohoku earthquake struck just before three on a Friday afternoon. Massive earthquake damage was followed by tsunami rising to heights of 40 meters that swept 10km inland, scouring the land of homes, school, communities, and people. The earthquake and tsunami alone were disasters of incredible proportion, resulting in over 15,000 deaths, over 100,000 buildings destroyed, and economic losses estimated as high as \$235 billion by the World Bank. And that was only the natural disaster. The manmade disaster began the same day, as the tsunami swept over the seawall of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, flooding the facility and destroying much of its equipment, including its onsite emergency power generators. Cut off from all external power sources, the reactors and spent fuel-rod assemblies began to overheat. Three reactors suffered meltdowns. Hydrogen gas explosions blew apart the outer containment buildings on three reactors. And the world watched as Japan struggled to bring the situation under control before the worst scenario came to pass. Despite further natural and manmade obstacles, the men and women at the plant succeeded in their efforts, gradually bringing the reactors under control, restoring power, and edging back, one inch at a time, from the very brink of disaster. This is their story, based on extensive interviews with the people who fought and won that battle, and especially with Masao Yoshida, the man who drove them all to get the job done. Here

at last is the inside story of what they faced, what resources and information they had to work with, and why they made the decisions they did.