

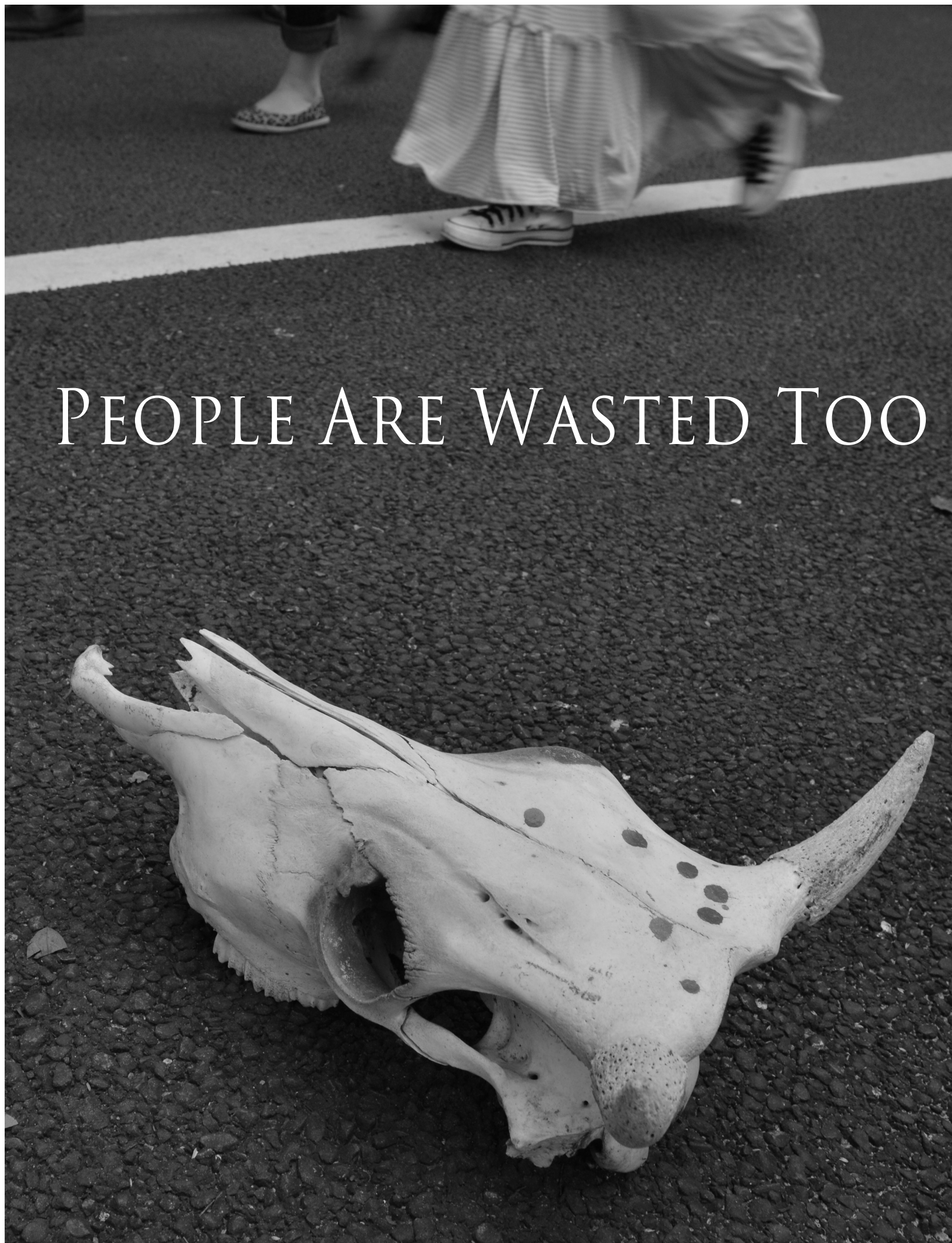
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The cow is brought to the Ministry of Environment. Media and police officers flood the area and chaos ensues

SERIES FUKUSHIMA

PHOTO&TEXT
BY YUKI IWANAMI

TOKYO, Japan - "We are wasted people. The cows were ditched. The people were, too. They couldn't come searching for us, you know. So we were abandoned". Wearing a T shirt and cap, not the usual attire here in Kasumigaseki where the central government buildings are clustered, a man mournfully shouts.

Nearby is something even more out of place. A dirty truck with a black *wagyu* cow in the back. Men and women in suits shoot alarmed looks at the animal but mostly keep walking on. The cow, speckled with white spots, was brought from a farm in Namie just 14km from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. The man is 60 year old Masami Yoshizawa, representative of Farm of Hope Fukushima. He has come all the way to the Ministry of Agriculture in Tokyo to demand that more research be done on the cows affected by the nuclear fallout, and to stop the slaughter of livestock in the former no-go zone.

Yoshizawa was tending to his cows as the farm foreman of M Farm Ltd. in Namie when the earthquake struck. The power was knocked out so he had to rely on a generator to pump drinking water for the cows to survive. Then, the nuclear accident happened. Even the police fled the farm but Yoshizawa stayed behind to look after the cattle.

About a month later, a 20km radius within the power station was declared a no-go zone. With no one to care for the farm animals, they were left to starve or let loose to roam. Another month later, the government ordered the livestock to be exterminated. Many were slaughtered but Yoshizawa kept his cattle. The cows contaminated by radioactive fallout no longer held any value

marketwise, but as a cattle raiser, he couldn't bring himself to simply kill them off. Amid criticism from other farmers who, having no other choice but to carry out the slaughter, Yoshizawa asked himself over and over why he was keeping his cows alive. But he still continues tending to them believing that the "cows are living proof of nuclear exposure, and examining and studying them should be of great value for the future". "I don't want them to be killed off as if this tragedy never even happened" he also says.

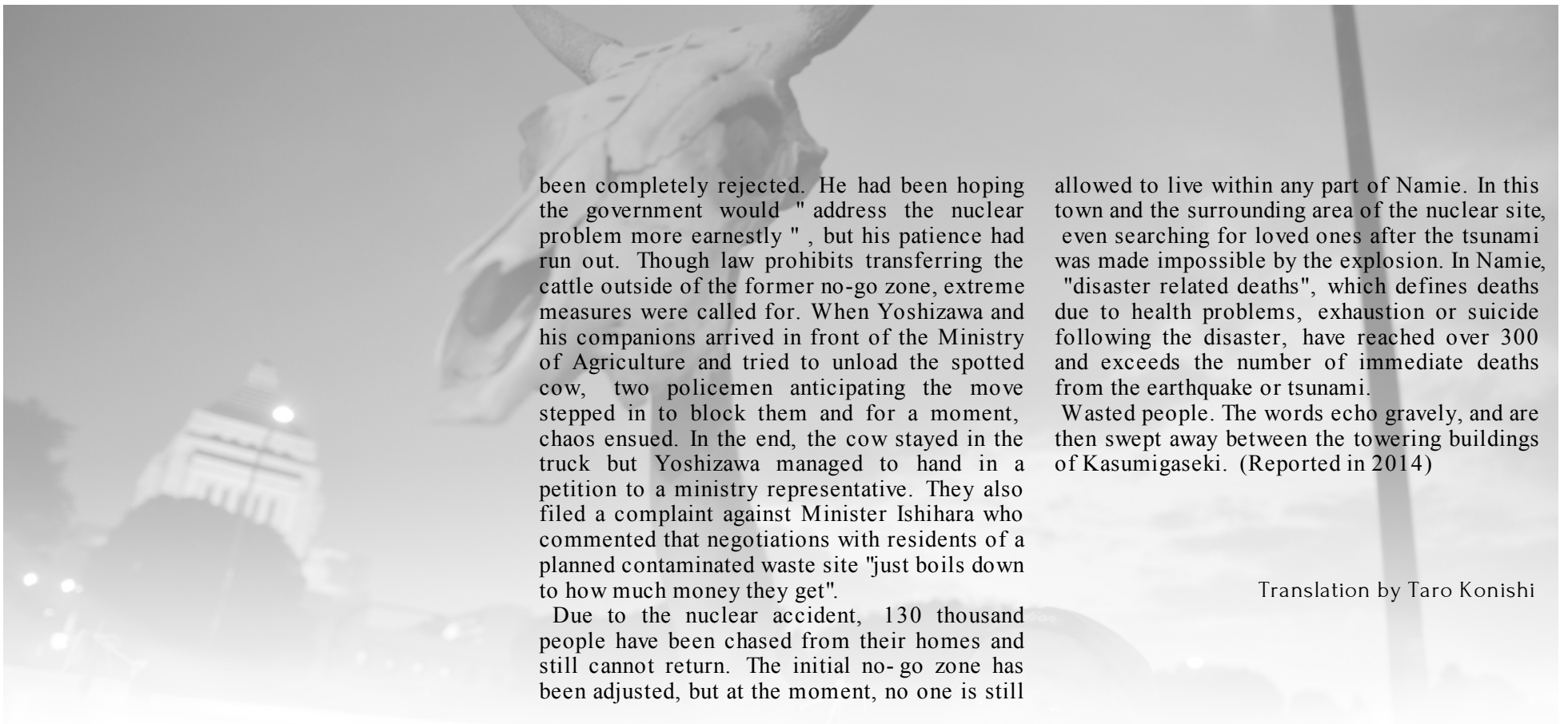
Farming was what enabled Yoshizawa's father to make a living after returning from internment in Manchuria, and for forty years, Yoshizawa followed in his father's footsteps. The cows had sustained his family and he could not look upon

them as mere commodities. It was natural for him to keep feeding them. He heard the explosion from the farm and saw smoke rising from the nuclear plant with his own eyes. But he didn't consider running away. Watching the Self Defense Force dousing the nuclear plant with water, he resolved to "do whatever share I could as a cattle raiser" and stayed behind. He sourced bean sprout husks from a nearby factory, and broke through barricades to feed and save the cattles' lives. Still, he had to face many of their deaths.

After an year or so, white spots started to appear on several of the cows, something Yoshizawa had never seen before. He has repeatedly requested the government to examine the phenomenon thoroughly and make use of the findings, but has



Demonstrators march through Kasumigaseki along with a cow sculpture brought from Farm of Hope



been completely rejected. He had been hoping the government would "address the nuclear problem more earnestly", but his patience had run out. Though law prohibits transferring the cattle outside of the former no-go zone, extreme measures were called for. When Yoshizawa and his companions arrived in front of the Ministry of Agriculture and tried to unload the spotted cow, two policemen anticipating the move stepped in to block them and for a moment, chaos ensued. In the end, the cow stayed in the truck but Yoshizawa managed to hand in a petition to a ministry representative. They also filed a complaint against Minister Ishihara who commented that negotiations with residents of a planned contaminated waste site "just boils down to how much money they get".

Due to the nuclear accident, 130 thousand people have been chased from their homes and still cannot return. The initial no-go zone has been adjusted, but at the moment, no one is still

allowed to live within any part of Namie. In this town and the surrounding area of the nuclear site, even searching for loved ones after the tsunami was made impossible by the explosion. In Namie, "disaster related deaths", which defines deaths due to health problems, exhaustion or suicide following the disaster, have reached over 300 and exceeds the number of immediate deaths from the earthquake or tsunami.

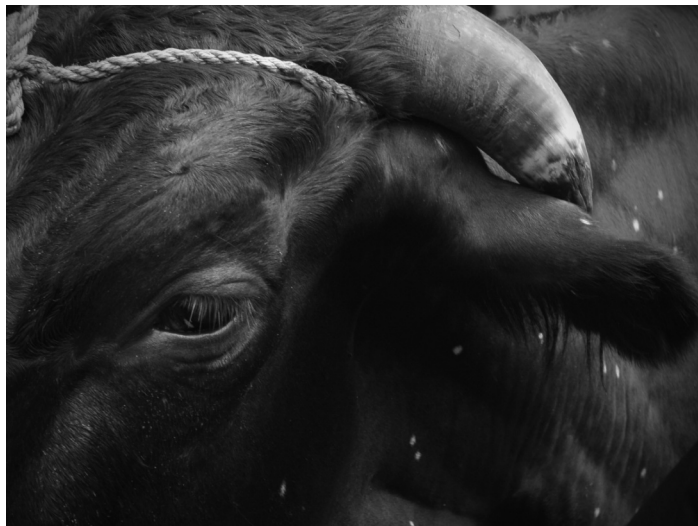
Wasted people. The words echo gravely, and are then swept away between the towering buildings of Kasumigaseki. (Reported in 2014)

Translation by Taro Konishi

Protesting From Fukushima, Cow In Tow



Scuffles break out between police officers when Yoshizawa tries to unload the cow in front of the Ministry of Agriculture. The removal of livestock from the former no-go zone is prohibited



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