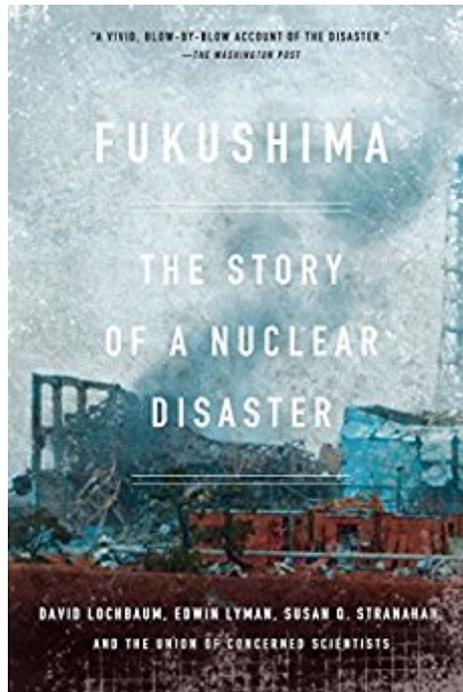


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Fukushima: The Story Of A Nuclear Disaster



Synopsis

• (Kirkus Reviews) with a • (International Business Times), Fukushima teams two leading experts from the Union of Concerned Scientists, David Lochbaum and Edwin Lyman, with award-winning journalist Susan Q. Stranahan to give us the first definitive account of the 2011 disaster that led to the worst nuclear catastrophe since Chernobyl. Four years have passed since the day the world watched in horror as an earthquake large enough to shift the Earth's axis by several inches sent a massive tsunami toward the Japanese coast and Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, causing the reactor's safety systems to fail and explosions to reduce concrete and steel buildings to rubble. Even as the consequences of the 2011 disaster continue to exact their terrible price on the people of Japan and on the world, Fukushima addresses the grim questions at the heart of the nuclear debate: could a similar catastrophe happen again, and "most important of all" how can such a crisis be averted?

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Customer Reviews

For what this book is I would have to say it's not the best. The making of the Fukushima One disaster had many facets some technical and many political or cultural. This book Fukushima: The Story of a Nuclear Disaster skims over too many of the rough edges that do not fit into the books agenda. Fukushima: The Story of a Nuclear Disaster tiptoe around issues like why did TEPCO remove earth to lower the Fukushima Plant making it more susceptible to being overrun by water. It was also well known that the Mark 1 containment for GE boiling water reactors were just plain junk. Why weren't upgrades made to better reinforce the Mark 1 containment as was done here in the USA. It appears certain Mark 1 Containment upgrades were not applied because, it appeared the Japanese were so certain such an accident could not happen here. This book avoids too many hard questions technically and politically and full exploration of these areas is vital to understanding the Fukushima One Disaster. Fukushima: The Story of a Nuclear Disaster omits the main story which is the arrogance of TEPCO and the fact that political people were making decisions that tied the hands of those trying to manage 4 dying reactors. The reactors were dying a slow death that had the experts been given a free hand to do what was right in a timely manner the Fukushima disaster may have just been a minor footnote in history. Thanks to inept politicians delaying critical reactor safety venting and other steps that would have likely lessened or prevented meltdown they gave our world an utter disaster. In Chernobyl and Fukushima 1 the politics of fear and mindless servitude in each of the respective cultures invaded the nuclear reactors control room.

As a long-time UCS supporter, I'd hoped for better from the authors. In speaking with Lochbaum in SF last week, I asked why they failed to mention TEPCO's removal of many meters of natural seawall elevation at Fukushima, simply to lower construction costs. His answer, "It was in the draft", but the publisher had a word limit -- really? I asked further why no mention of the Onagawa plant, ~30 miles closer to the quake center and receiving of a higher tsunami, yet surviving and even housing refugees from the tsunami. No answer. The "inconvenient truth" for UCS and these authors is that Fukushima demonstrates the safety of well-regulated and implemented nuclear power. TEPCO officers had a long history of malfeasance and collusion with government and regulatory officials. Onagawa, in fact, was designed using Lochbaum's own criterion of: "X plus One" -- design for at least known worst case X and add one more level of safety. In court, we must swear a 3-part oath. This book fails on two of the parts, at least. If one wants the whole truth and nothing but, read: "Atomic Accidents" by Mahaffey, or...<http://tinyurl.com/o852xg5> or...www.nirs.org/fukushima/naic_report.pdf or...www.unis.univie.ac.at/en/pressrels/2013/unisinf475.html AAAS Science, Vol 340, p678, 10 May 2013

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Fukushima: The Story of a Nuclear Disaster Except for a few instances, Fuku is an even-handed book. However, careful reading reveals an anti-nuclear bias. "Fukushima" gave me pause in its brief introduction, where I read that "many in the US, Japan and elsewhere are pushing hard to defend the status quo and hold fast to the assertion that severe accidents are so unlikely that they require scant advance planning." Really? How many is many? And who are these people who oppose advance planning re. accidents? Chapter 1 describes the events of March 11, the day of the tsunami " and it does it well " but on page 27, a two page insert begins that discusses radiation and its effects on the body. While that's timely, no mention is made of LNT theory or its flaws, though the subject appears briefly (and inadequately) later in the book. Chapter 2 is notable for its apparently accurate description of the relationship of Tepco and the Japanese government agencies, which it termed "incestuous." Moving on, it reviewed events at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, but for some reason neglected to note that Chernobyl lacked a robust containment structure that is required elsewhere in the world - structure that could have greatly reduced the disaster if it had been in place. Then, on page 48, I learned something new " that "Tepco had been falsifying safety records for years." The writers are competent, and their research impressive, but I'd complain that the subject of LNT, which finally showed up on page 216, received little comprehensive attention, and nothing like the information in Robert Hargrave's Radiation: the Facts, was included. That information is available free from tundracub@mchsi.com.

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