

# The Tears of Sanriku (三陸). The Death Toll for the Great East Japan Earthquake Nuclear Disaster

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Global Research, October 31, 2011

31 October 2011

Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Environment](#)

## The Tears of Sanriku (三陸)

The Japanese government is many years away from declaring a final death toll for the Great East Japan Earthquake (三陸沖地震), which occurred on March 11, 2011. More bodies continue to be found, but the recovery effort is hampered by lack of resources (especially in Ishinomaki City, Miyagi) and difficult conditions in other coastal localities. The statistics (based on the home pages of Japanese prefectures as of October 26, 2011) that I have obtained for extremely hard hit Coastal Regions (North to South) and Inland Regions do not agree with National Police Agency (NPA) statistics. However, the NPA (警察庁) has already acknowledged that their statistics for Fukushima Prefecture do not reflect many bodies left on the ground and unrecovered due to nuclear radiation. Virtually none of the estimated 376,000 tons of rubble in six towns (Namie-machi, Futaba-machi, Okuma-machi, Tomioka-machi, Naraha-machi, and Hirono-machi) in the “Off Limits” Zone has been cleared to date.

The collection and reporting of statistics by prefecture has actually served to obscure many important facts, and the statistics presented by the NPA simply do not conform to reality. The NPA statistics (deaths, missing, injuries, and property damage) appear to be the most complete and reliable for Ibaraki Prefecture. However, NPA statistics for Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures remain incomplete and unreliable because the NPA is dependent on other government ministries and agencies for almost all of their statistics. The multiple, non-standardized, and unconsolidated lists of evacuees, which total over 700 pages for Iwate Prefecture alone, are completely disorganized and have substantially hindered searches for missing persons. The daily reports of Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures present information using different methods and formats, and there are no discernible standards for reporting by the prefectures.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (経産省) failed to intervene with Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) until *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* (福島第一) was in full meltdown, and cold shutdown of that plant will not occur until January 2012 at the earliest. At least 150 subcontractors who worked at *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* cannot be located (or contacted). While the exposure of these workers might be limited, this is further evidence that TEPCO does not properly maintain records and remains out of control. Some hard-line, no-nonsense administrators need to be brought in to restore order. Despite an extremely long history of earthquakes off the coast of Miyagi, there were few contingency plans and the central government was unprepared for a disaster of this magnitude. The Japanese government has been making it up as they go along in a reactive mode. There has been no integrated, coordinated response to this disaster as public officials work in a vacuum without competent leadership and effective direction. So many ministries, agencies, and levels of government

have overlapping responsibilities as part of the government's response to the disaster that proper coordination was impossible without prior planning. The Japanese government's response to this disaster is a case study of poor judgment, lack of planning and preparation, and critical errors that should be carefully studied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) because similar scenarios can be envisioned for Hawaii, Alaska, and the West Coast of the United States. Many localities had only 30-40 minutes of advance warning before the *tsunami* (巨津波) breached 30-foot seawalls and inundated the Eastern coast of *Honshu*. However, the United States is even less prepared for a huge earthquake and *tsunami* than Japan.

The NPA has not reported statistics on the number of "Confirmed Missing, Declared Dead." The Ministry of Justice (法務省) has jurisdiction over that final adjudicative procedure. A simplified, expedited procedure for a Declaration of Death (死亡宣告) without a body was adopted so that the proceeds of life insurance policies, bank accounts, and survivor benefits could be paid to survivors 90 days after March 11, 2011. Nevertheless, the procedures to accept these filings were not in place until June 25, 2011. According to the Ministry of Justice, at least 3,492 Declarations of Death had been filed as of September 30, 2011. However, many citizens have not been able to file Missing Person Reports, Declarations of Death, and/or Property Damage Reports due to the lack of any functioning local government entities in many coastal areas of Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures. Nevertheless, it is expected that a Declaration of Death will eventually be filed for almost every reported missing person because receipt of substantial funds is tied to that procedure. Filings of workers' accident compensation (労働者災害補償) claims have also ballooned to nearly 1,800 claims because the overall compensation for a work-related death is much higher than a regular death benefit and/or survivor's pension. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (厚生労働省) expects about 4,000 claims for workers' accident compensation.

According to the NPA, approximately 92.8 percent (14,553 bodies) of all bodies recovered (15,689 bodies) in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures had been positively identified as of August 31, 2011. Survivors have provided 90 percent of all positive identifications, and about 10 percent of all recovered bodies have been positively identified through analysis of fingerprints, DNA analysis, and dental charts. Over 80 percent of the 300 bodies found in July, August, and September 2011 were recovered by fishermen. The NPA stated that the total of unidentified bodies had declined to 942 persons by October 11, 2011. Actual conditions remain extremely difficult to determine in many coastal localities due the extent of flooded areas, volume of rubble (over half of the estimated 22.6 million tons of rubble in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures has been cleared), nuclear radiation, and overworked public employees. Nevertheless, it is certain that that at least 22 cities and towns in the coastal region of Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures each had at least 100 deaths. Japanese Self-Defense Forces (自衛隊) were not immediately dispatched to *Tohoku* after the earthquake and *tsunami* as the Kan administration vacillated and first sent eight jets on a reconnaissance mission over the region. The Prime Minister finally dispatched 50,000 troops on Saturday, March 12, 2011. That initial contingent of troops was inadequate, and it was doubled to 100,000 troops on Sunday, March 13, 2011.

Most of the evacuation centers were "makeshift" facilities (former schools and other older buildings that had not been used in many years). There were influenza epidemics, overcrowding and poor hygiene, dehydration, malnutrition, food poisoning, and lack of fuel oil (and blankets) in many evacuation centers in March 2011, but the danger in the summer was the brutal heat and humidity without air conditioning. "Temporary" prefabricated

housing units are being assembled, but thousands of people will be forced to remain in evacuation centers for the foreseeable future. Iwate Prefecture closed its last evacuation center on October 7, 2011. Although Miyagi Prefecture now has 214 residents in their 16 remaining evacuation centers, more than 8,000 Miyagi evacuees are being housed outside of Miyagi Prefecture.

As of June 10, 2011, only about 44 percent of the completed units were occupied as bureaucrats dithered over the criteria to be used in determining priority in allocation of housing units to evacuees. In late September 2011, temporary housing units for 138 residents in Sukagawa City, Fukushima had to be rebuilt due to their improper location on a flood plain and subsequent flooding due to Typhoon No. 15. Problems with temporary housing continue to mount, as housing units are now being refitted to withstand the cold *Tohoku* winters. There also have been some suicides and other deaths in temporary housing units. According to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (国土交通省), 98 percent of the needed temporary housing units (51,352 units) had been completed as of October 11, 2011. The occupancy rate (74 percent) of temporary housing units continues to lag in Fukushima Prefecture.

Bureaucrats at all levels of government, including the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, also delayed assistance to evacuees by establishing detailed procedures and committees (復興支援委員会), which devised schemes based on the extent of damage to determine distribution of the huge amount of charitable contributions (251.4 billion yen) received from around the world. Tragically, by early June 2011, less than 15 percent of these charitable funds (37.0 billion yen) had been distributed to evacuees. As of July 22, 2011, charitable contributions had increased to 305.3 billion yen, but only 98.6 billion yen (about 32 percent) of the funds had been distributed to evacuees and others in need. At best, politicians and bureaucrats continually haggled over substantial cash resources, while thousands of people languished in filthy evacuation centers for months. No one has been so indelicate as to suggest that some bureaucrats treated the charitable contributions as their own not so little slush funds for dispensing favors and facilitating kickbacks. The “mistake” that the Japanese Red Cross Society (日本赤十字社), Central Community Chest of Japan (中央共同募金会), and many other charities made was to transfer funds to the national coffers of Japan, which guaranteed months of delay in the distribution of charitable funds. Charities, if they really want to be effective and ensure timely distribution of charitable contributions, should remit funds directly to localities.

According to the *Asahi Shimbun*, cities, towns, and villages in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures have received approximately 1,290 applications concerning persons who died in evacuation centers or after transport to hospitals. Some of these 163 “earthquake related deaths” (震災関連死亡) already recognized (認定) include suicides and cases that appear to be due to the nuclear accident. Ishinomaki Red Cross Hospital alone identified 127 possible earthquake related deaths in response to an April 2011 survey conducted by the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. These types of deaths, which are not included in the NPA death toll, are expected to balloon as hospitals are thoroughly audited and more information becomes available. Procedures for recognition of earthquake related deaths are proceeding unevenly in 53 cities, towns, and villages in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima, and the entire recognition and payment system, which produces varying results by locality, might be revamped by national legislation. About 80 percent of the hospitals in the coastal areas of Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures were damaged or destroyed, and there were cancer patients in evacuation centers because of a shortage of hospital beds. Japan’s system of public health

has virtually collapsed in many coastal areas inundated by the *tsunami*. Many doctors who had clinics and hospitals provided medical treatment in tents through the fall, but access to medical treatment will decline in the winter months and the number of earthquake related deaths is expected to increase. There also will be a significant number of deaths due to overwork (過労死) and suicides as local public employees bear inhuman workloads.

Aerial photography, satellite images, and onsite surveys were employed to map the flooded regions of Japan. At least 600,000 people resided in the flooded regions of Japan (Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, Ibaraki, and Chiba Prefectures), and Japan's evacuation centers housed nearly 470,000 evacuees at the peak (March 15, 2011). The difference (130,000 persons) between the population of the flooded regions (approx. 600,000 residents) and the number of evacuees (almost 470,000 persons) causes considerable concern. Information concerning injuries and hospitalizations is particularly difficult to obtain, and few of the Miyagi cities devastated by the *tsunami* have reported any injury totals to date. Most of these residences were households, and the number of evacuees for Miyagi Prefecture peaked at about 321,000 persons on March 14, 2011. Thousands of evacuees had no food, water, heat, medical supplies, or electrical power for four days after March 11, 2011 because many communities were accessible only by sea or helicopter. Therefore, I am extremely nervous about the actual situation in Miyagi Prefecture and elsewhere in *Tohoku*. According to Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency (消防庁), the NPA, and other agencies, the national totals for private property damage, which also remain incomplete, were 119,086 Residences Totally Destroyed, 184,330 Residences Substantially Damaged, and 621,013 Residences Partially Damaged as of October 24, 2011.

The injury total (188 persons) for Iwate Prefecture is not even within the realm of possibility. No injury totals have been reported for the Iwate's Rikuzen-Takata City, Ofunato City, Kamaishi City, Otsuchi-cho, or Yamada-machi to date. However, it is very well known that many elderly evacuees died in evacuation centers. All of these "earthquake related deaths" will eventually be added to the death toll, and I expect that earthquake related deaths will account for at least 15 percent of the final death toll. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will have much to say about the final total of earthquake related deaths, which will be in the thousands. Additionally, there were more than 15,000 suicides in Japan in the first half of this year, and the number of suicides has increased continually since the earthquake, *tsunami*, and nuclear accident. There also have been hundreds of bankruptcies due to the disaster, which is fueling the suicide rate.

According to the Geographical Survey Institute (地理院) of Japan, flooding in three wards of Sendai City totaled at least 52 square kilometers. Half of Kesenuma City was underwater and the other half of the city burned for four days (approx. 40,331 citizens resided in the flooded area of the city). Higashi-Matsushima City also experienced flooding of 37 square kilometers, which accounted for over 80 percent of that city's households (approx. 34,014 residents in the flooded area). At least 28,000 residences were completely destroyed or swept away, and more than 73 square kilometers were flooded in Ishinomaki City, Miyagi. According to the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (総務省統計局), about 70 percent (approx. 112,276 citizens) of Ishinomaki's total population resided in the flooded area. Although the daytime population of that area was unknown, I await updated statistics from Ishinomaki City with increasing dread. The more than 5,000,000 tons of rubble remaining in Ishinomaki City probably cannot be cleared in accordance with the government's plan (by March 31, 2012). Electrical power has not yet been fully restored to all areas of Miyagi Prefecture.

Conditions are horrible in six coastal localities of Iwate Prefecture (Miyako City, Yamadamachi, Otuschi-cho, Kamaishi City, Ofunato City, and Rikuzen-Takata City). A 15.8-meter *tsunami* coupled with ground subsidence of 84 centimeters completely ravaged Rikuzen-Takata City. Without including any Missing - Declared Dead, the “hard count” death toll for Rikuzen-Takata City is approaching 10 percent of the population of its flooded area. Iwate Prefectural Hospital in Otsuchi-cho was destroyed by the *tsunami*, and it seems unlikely that Otsuchi-cho will be rebuilt or even survive. The future of these six coastal localities is very much in doubt. Iwate Prefecture also lags in terms of reporting of private property damage (almost 32,000 residences damaged or destroyed). Iwate Prefecture simply does not have the resources, and there is no confidence that Japan’s national government will devote any significant resources to Iwate’s coast.

The remarks and behavior of Mr. Ryu Matsumoto led to severe political repercussions. The selection of a *Diet* Member from Fukuoka City to oversee the reconstruction of *Tohoku* was an extremely ill advised choice and an insult to *Tohoku*. His suggestion that sorely needed funds might be withheld from *Tohoku* was heartbreaking and absolutely unforgiveable. His successor, Mr. Tatsuo Hirano, is a Member of Japan’s House of Councillors from Kitakami City, Iwate. However, the person to watch is Mr. Ichiro Ozawa, a *Diet* Member from Mizusawa City, Iwate. Mr. Ozawa is one of the most powerful and influential politicians in Japan, and he might eventually accrue the power to force funding of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (農林水産省) and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) in order to revitalize *Tohoku*. In any event, Prime Minister Naoto Kan of Yamaguchi Prefecture is out as of August 30, 2011. Mr. Yoshihiko Noda of Chiba Prefecture is Japan’s new Prime Minister. The resignation of Mr. Yoshio Hachiro as the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry due to his remarks and “joke” about Fukushima also caused more political problems. He was replaced by Mr. Yukio Edano, who was the Chief Cabinet Secretary during the Kan Administration. However, it does not really matter who is Prime Minister or in the Cabinet because the central government remains in the denial and cover-up phase, and lacks legitimacy.

In addition to the horrible problems caused by the earthquake, *tsunami*, and nuclear accident, Japan has yet to face the “hollowing out” (空洞化) of their economy and the rapid relative aging of their population (高齢化). Thus, the massive consolidation and reorganization of Japan’s ministries and agencies effected in the late 1990’s must now be deemed an abject failure. Like the United States, Japan’s public finances are built on corruption, lies, broken promises, and unsustainable sovereign debt. Therefore, the downgrading of the sovereign debt of both nations should come as no surprise. The government bonds and currencies of both nations are really nothing more than belief systems, and it should be noted that almost all belief systems collapse in the end. While there is “policy” (方針) for the rebuilding of *Tohoku*, the funding details lack specificity and will be revised by subsequent administrations. Therefore, I am extremely concerned that Japan will inevitably begin to repatriate funds by reducing its massive holdings of U.S. Treasury securities (over USD900 billion), and that the Chinese government will follow suit. A disorderly market for U.S. Treasury securities may be the result.

Many citizens (30,583) of villages, towns, and cities in Fukushima Prefecture are subject to Mandatory Evacuation Notices (強制避難指示), and the administrative functions of many villages and towns have been transferred to other cities and towns in Fukushima and Saitama Prefecture. Many others have already left “voluntarily” as people are effectively being forced out of their homes without compensation. There also have been numerous reports of arson,



vandalism, and looting of vacated residences. Additionally, the NPA announced on June 15, 2011 that it would henceforth cease to tabulate statistics on the number of evacuees. If you can control access to data and information, then you control the press.

Many villages and towns will probably cease to exist even though some Recommended Evacuation Notices have not yet been upgraded to Mandatory Evacuation Notices. Some citizens of Fukushima Prefecture have been relocated as far away as Okinawa Prefecture, and there is increasingly strong resistance to forced relocation. At least 966 square kilometers of Fukushima Prefecture are now in an “Off Limits” Zone, which will most likely be uninhabitable long into the future. The “Off Limits” Zone has essentially already been expanded due to many “hot areas” found outside the Zone. It also has been admitted that at least eight employees of Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) have been exposed to 250 millisieverts or more of radiation. Cancers and other maladies from low-dosage radiation over an extended period may take years to develop. Any radiation-related deaths also will be counted as “earthquake related deaths,” the number of which is my greatest fear.

Like the HIV-tainted blood scandal of the 1980’s, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has once again been blind sided due to the lack of a proactive plan. Radioactive cesium has been detected in the food chain numerous times (a partial listing includes tap water, milk, eggs, rice, fish, spinach, green onions, cucumbers, *shiitake* and *nameko* mushrooms, bamboo shoots, *wasabi*, plums, green tea, hay, beef, and mothers’ milk), but I doubt that a soil decontamination project will be attempted due to the huge expense. It appears that there will be a whole new class of *hibakusha* (persons exposed to nuclear radiation). Part of TEPCO’s “risk management strategy” was to locate their nuclear power plants as far away from the Tokyo metropolitan area as possible. Unfortunately, the people of Fukushima Prefecture are now paying a horrible price for that decision. Therefore, there is suspicion that much of Fukushima Prefecture will soon be designated as a Special Administrative District (特別区) under the direct control and administration of Japan’s national government. The cleanup of *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* will take decades.

The real story is the many thousands more who were swept out to sea and have not even been reported as missing. Japan’s National Tax Agency (国税庁) will eventually assist the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (another repository of Family Registers) in identifying many more missing persons. The names and other identifying information of the approximately 600,000 persons who resided in the flooded regions of Eastern Japan are already known due to Japan’s Family Register (戸籍) system. Over 57,000 citizens of Fukushima Prefecture remain “housed” in evacuation centers and other facilities scattered throughout the other 46 prefectures of Japan.

## **Current Prefecture of Residence**

### **Number of Evacuees from Fukushima Prefecture**

Yamagata Prefecture

11,816

Tokyo Prefecture

6,266

Niigata Prefecture

6,249

Saitama Prefecture

4,819

Chiba Prefecture

3,197

Ibaraki Prefecture

2,787

Tochigi Prefecture

2,563

Gunma Prefecture

1,964

Hokkaido Prefecture

1,828

37 Other Prefectures

15,598

**Total (As of October 18, 2011)**

**57,087**

There are now more Japanese on welfare than at any time since immediately after World War II. However, the Japanese government bailed out Tokyo Electric Power Company through a *de facto* nationalization so that TEPCO could pay compensation for mental anguish to evacuees (the base amount of 100,000 yen per month does not even reach the subsistence level in Japan). TEPCO is “too big to fail” simply because it provides electrical power to tens of millions of people in *Kanto*.

In the United States, physician Janette Sherman, MD, and epidemiologist Joseph Mangano have published an essay about a 35-percent spike in infant mortality in northwestern cities that occurred after the Fukushima meltdown, which may be the result of fallout from the failed nuclear plant. The eight cities included in the report are San Jose, Berkeley, San Francisco, Sacramento, Santa Cruz, Portland, Seattle, and Boise. It is hoped that the medical community will thoroughly review their research and conduct other independent studies. Causal relationships are often difficult to establish, so it is hoped that the scientific

community will thoroughly examine both their premise and the supporting data. While their premise may be plausible, I still have reservations about the supporting data. In Canada, Scotland, and China, there also are reports of higher amounts of radioactive materials in the atmosphere. The international media has been complicit as the Japanese government and TEPCO have continued to withhold information vital to the public. No one should be surprised at this behavior, though. Similar conduct was exhibited by Chisso Chemical and the Japanese government for decades after the mercury poisoning incident at Minamata, Kumamoto.

One receives the distinct impression that the Japanese government is treating the release of information as a national security matter. On June 7, 2011, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (文部科学省) finally admitted that it had failed to release a substantial amount of data concerning the monitoring of radiation emitted at *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* that was collected between March 16, 2011 and April 4, 2011. This withholding of information from the public has only fueled public anger, palpable distrust, and a complete lack of confidence in the Japanese government. The Japanese love their country, but many of them now openly voice contempt and hatred for their government (“lies” and “betrayal” are the words used most often). Much more could have been done to cut bureaucratic red tape, waive unnecessary procedures, and eliminate excessive documentation so that evacuees could quickly receive funds, leave evacuation centers, and rebuild their lives. Although the “fiscal hawks” at the Ministry of Finance (財務省) would prefer to ignore *Tohoku* and concentrate on repairing Japan’s extremely fragile public finances, this is not the time for unyielding government at the expense of the people (国民). The callous response of Japan’s central government to the *Tohoku* disaster underscores the long-standing prejudice against that region of Japan. Those same “fiscal hawks” had absolutely no qualms about bailing out Japan’s banking sector, which collapsed from nonperforming loans in the early 1990’s. That unprecedented bailout became the global prototype for the looting of national treasuries to prop up insolvent financial institutions that had quickly morphed into criminal organizations.

The NPA had an excellent, well-deserved reputation for professionalism in law enforcement. However, the NPA, which had no particular expertise in communicating information to the public, was set up to fail. Enforcement of Mandatory Evacuation Notices and reporting of information to the public should not have been assigned to the same agency. Japan’s Fire and Disaster Management Agency (FDMA) could have been used much more effectively as a clearinghouse for the reporting of information to the public. The role of the FDMA, which is a very small agency with about 162 employees, will almost certainly be expanded to include the functions of FEMA in the future. FEMA and the FDMA should engage in collaboration and exchanges of information.

Reporting on the Great East Japan Earthquake is an outrageous example of “news management” on many levels. NHK (日本放送協会), PBS, and CBS can continue to air their whitewash propaganda films to assist the Japanese government, but it will not change the reality on the ground. As is so often the case in Japan, a benign facade (面子) has been erected to conceal the ugly truth (醜態). TEPCO and *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* remain out of control. In fact, on April 6, 2011, a Letter of Request from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications was issued to associations of telecommunications service providers, cable TV providers, and Internet service providers to ensure that content is moderated and only “proper information” is conveyed to the public. No one dares call it an attempt to censor the Internet in Japan. A country is dying when their old men start committing suicide, and the



tears of *Sanriku* continue to flow.

So, the situation is very bad in *Tohoku* and Tokyo. The populace of *Tohoku* is very jittery about the almost daily aftershocks, which could continue for another five months or more. A panicked, desperate political elite in Tokyo now realizes and admits, at least tacitly, that it really did not have a crisis management plan. Japan, like many nations, has a long history of being run by and for a parasitic elite at the top of the system. Parasitic elites fear but one thing – the loss of their power and perquisites. None of these machinations (denial, obfuscation, suppression of information, lies, and censorship) on the part of TEPCO and the Japanese government were for the sake of the nation (国家). Rather, it was nothing more than some empty suits trying to maintain their favored positions in society, but the people have got their number. They know that their central government let them down in a big way. The development of proactive plans to protect the populace is among the most difficult of functions of government to fulfill. But, the “social contract” has been severed. The Japanese people have long accepted one of the highest tax burdens in the world in return for good government, and they have now received one of the worst possible outcomes. There is now a widespread perception that Tokyo politicians and bureaucrats are nothing more than “tax thieves” (税金泥棒). As a result, there is real, raw fear in Nagata-cho and Kasumigaseki right now. The politicians and bureaucrats know that a second *tsunami* is coming, a political one that could easily drown all of them. There is going to be a far-reaching purge of high-ranking bureaucrats, and the personnel actions will indicate accountability and culpability. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, NPA, Cabinet Secretariat, and Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications are going to be torn apart because of their involvement in attempting to suppress information and institute censorship (a critical error that public relations agencies cannot fix). Japan’s bureaucracy will begin serving up those responsible in order to preserve itself. It will start with administrative vice ministers (副大臣) and bureau chiefs (局長), and go right on down the line. *Shikata ga nai* (“It can’t be helped”) is not going to cut it this time.

But, it could be much worse. I hate to think what the result might have been if the earthquake had occurred at 2:46 AM in heavy fog rather than 2:46 PM on a fairly clear day. Once again, the heroes were the many well-trained local police, firefighters, teachers, doctors and nurses (especially those who refused to abandon patients and save themselves), and public officials who performed admirably but lost their lives while trying to help their fellow citizens. Ibaraki Prefecture, which is not a wealthy prefecture, stands out in terms of preparations by their leveraging of limited resources to promote citizen involvement in local safety councils, public education, and drills to ensure immediate evacuation. Thorough review of statistics by prefecture also clearly shows that Ibaraki Prefecture has been the most timely of all the prefectures in reporting of deaths, missing persons, injuries, and property damage (including damaged roads and bridges). While Ibaraki experienced flooding in 10 localities (over 40,000 residents in the flooded areas) and extensive property damage (over 184,000 residences damaged or destroyed), loss of life was minimized in that prefecture. Ibaraki did have a proactive plan, which encompassed preparations through recovery, and it continues to bear results. Their plan was well conceived and executed, and it produced much better outcomes. According to a July 2011 survey conducted by the Cabinet Office, 42 percent of evacuees in Miyagi, Iwate, and Fukushima Prefectures did not immediately evacuate and had not clearly heard the *tsunami* warning.

Despite the huge expense and opposition of most villagers, a previous mayor of Fudai-mura,

Iwate insisted on building a much higher seawall (approx. 15.5 meters), which minimized the flooding and loss of life. TEPCO measured the height of the *tsunami* at *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* at 14-15 meters. The seawall at *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* was only about 5.5 meters high, and there were inadequate provisions for auxiliary, backup power to ensure adequate water circulation and cooling of fuel rods (evidence of criminal negligence). TEPCO did not build a higher seawall at *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* despite being informed of the deficiency. There will be prosecutions of TEPCO executives and government bureaucrats.

An evacuation center can never be up high enough. Although the Japan Meteorological Agency (気象庁) measured the height of the *tsunami* at 7.3 meters in Miyako City, Iwate, the wall of water barreled right on up the hill in the Aneyoshi district (安永地区) to a runup height of **38.9 meters**. Stone markers that are hundreds of years old have served as warnings not to build below those points in Aneyoshi. Down the road in Kamaishi City, Iwate, more than 50 people died in an evacuation center that everyone thought was up high enough to be safe. Think twice before you get in an automobile to flee from a *tsunami*. You must consider road conditions because many people lost their lives when they were caught in traffic jams. Move inland *immediately* after being warned about an approaching *tsunami*. The *tsunami* penetrated inland as far as eight kilometers (approx. five miles) in some areas of Japan. If you can see the *tsunami*, it is already too late (a *tsunami* may move inland at a speed of 30-40 MPH). Get in a tree or on top of a building, and pray.

At present, it is believed that more than 90 percent of all deaths in Japan caused by the disaster were drowning related, and persons aged 60 or older accounted for at least two-thirds of all fatalities. A mega-thrust earthquake in the Cascadia subduction zone could cause extensive damage, but lack of preparations for a *tsunami* will kill thousands of people. Many cities and towns on US 101 are vulnerable because a bad *tsunami* would limit access to many of these cities and towns only from the sea or by helicopter. Prepositioning of at least four days worth of food, water, fuel, and other necessities is recommended. It is clear that an earthquake and *tsunami* similar to that of January 26, 1700 would inundate the entire Pacific Coast. That catastrophe has been verified by the oral histories of Native Americans, archeological finds, and Japanese historical records of the *tsunami*.

## Notes and Links

1. The Sendai District Meteorological Observatory (仙台気象台) has documented the history of earthquakes in or near Miyagi Prefecture. (Japanese Language)

<http://www.jma-net.go.jp/sendai/jishin-kazan/higai.htm>

2. The Cabinet Office (内閣府) of Japan commissioned a survey to estimate the volume of debris and rubble caused in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures by the Great East Japan Earthquake. (Japanese Language)

<http://www2.ttcn.ne.jp/honkawa/4363e.html>

3. Web versions of newspaper articles pertaining to earthquake related deaths (死者) (Japanese Language)

<http://www.asahi.com/special/10005/TKY201110160449.html>

<http://www.kobe-np.co.jp/rentoku/shakai/higashinihon/0004457613.shtml>

<http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/storyid-179589-storytopic-232.html>

<http://www.yomidr.yomiuri.co.jp/page.jsp?id=39356>

4. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to the cutoff of public assistance to 219 households in Minami-Soma City, Fukushima (Japanese Language)

[http://www.sanyo.oni.co.jp/news\\_k/news/d/2011072201000769/](http://www.sanyo.oni.co.jp/news_k/news/d/2011072201000769/)

5. Web versions of newspaper articles pertaining to Declarations of Death (死亡) without a body filed with the Ministry of Justice (法務省) (Japanese Language)

<http://www.nikkei.com/news/special/article/g=96958A9C93819695E2EBE2E2988DE2EBE3E2E0E2E3E39180EAE2E2E3;q=9694E3E3E2E1E0E2E3E3E5E3E6E2;p=9694E3E3E2E1E0E2E3E3E5E3E1E6;o=9694E3E3E2E1E0E2E3E3E5E3E1E1>

<http://hochi.yomiuri.co.jp/topics/news/20110906-OHT1T00151.htm>

<http://sankei.jp.msn.com/region/news/110906/iwt11090622490000-n1.htm>

<http://mainichi.jp/select/today/news/20110802k0000e040045000c.html>

<http://www.iza.ne.jp/news/newsarticle/event/disaster/517382/>

6. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to the withholding of radiation monitoring data for *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (文部科学省) (Japanese Language)

<http://www.news24.jp/articles/2011/06/07/07184117.html>

7. Graphic and tabular data pertaining to the surface areas of flooded regions in *Tohoku* (Geographical Survey Institute (地理院) of Japan) (Japanese Language)

<http://www2.ttcn.ne.jp/honkawa/4363d.html>

8. Graphic and tabular data pertaining to ground subsidence in *Tohoku* (Geographical Survey Institute (地理院) of Japan) (Japanese Language)

<http://www2.ttcn.ne.jp/honkawa/4363c.html>

9. Graphic and tabular data pertaining to height of the *tsunami* in localities of Eastern Japan (Japanese Language)

<http://www2.ttcn.ne.jp/honkawa/4363b.html>

10. Tabular data pertaining to the estimated populations of flooded regions in Eastern Japan (Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (総務省)) (Japanese Language)

<http://www.stat.go.jp/info/shinsai/zuhyou/sinsui.xls>

11. Web versions of newspaper articles pertaining to the occupancy rate (43.8 percent) of

temporary prefabricated housing units in mid-June 2011 and flooding problems in September 2011 (Japanese Language)

<http://www.daily.co.jp/society/national/2011/06/10/0004158958.shtml>

[http://woman.excite.co.jp?News/society/20110927/Ntv\\_20110927066.html](http://woman.excite.co.jp?News/society/20110927/Ntv_20110927066.html)

12. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to the total number of evacuees at the peak (March 15, 2011) (Japanese Language)

<http://www.sankei.jp.msn.com/affairs/news/110315/dst11031500510004-nl.htm>

13. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to recalculation of the number of missing persons in Iwate Prefecture due to mistakes in processing Declarations of Death (Japanese Language)

<http://news.goo.ne.jp/article/asahi/nation/K2011070904400.html>

14. Japanese readers may prefer to read a different summary of the damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake (東日本大震災). (Japanese Language)

<http://www2.ttcn.ne.jp/honkawa/4362a.html>

15. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to the National Police Agency (警察庁) announcement that it would no longer collect statistics concerning the number of evacuees (Japanese Language)

<http://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/s/article/2011061501000910.html>

16. List of evacuees in Iwate Prefecture (Japanese Language)

<http://www.pref.wate.jp/~bousai/hinansyameibo/zentaimeibo.pdf>

17. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to the inability to recover bodies in areas of Fukushima Prefecture contaminated by nuclear radiation (Japanese Language)

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/national/news/20110327-OYT1T00470.htm?from=y10>

18. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to the increasing rate of suicide in Japan in the second quarter of 2011 (Japanese Language)

<http://koshiro-m.cocolog-nifty.com/blog/2011/07/post-2fba.html>

19. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to the inability of Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) to locate 150 subcontractors who worked at *Fukushima Dai-Ichi* (福島第一) (Japanese Language)

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/national/news/20110808-OYT1T00893.htm>

20. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to amounts of compensation paid to evacuees for mental anguish (Japanese Language)

<http://www9.nhk.or.jp/kabun-blog/600/91386.html>

21. Letter of Request (April 6, 2011) from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issued to associations of telecommunications service providers, cable TV providers, and Internet service providers (Japanese Language)

[http://www.soumu.go.jp/main\\_content/000110048.pdf](http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000110048.pdf)

22. Web versions of newspaper articles pertaining to bureaucratic delays in the distribution of charitable contributions (寄付金) to evacuees (Japanese Language)

<http://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/feature/tohokujisin/list/CK2011072602100011.html>

<http://news.livedoor.com/article/detail/5618056/>

<http://www.asahi.com/special/10005/TKY201106060583.html>

23. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to a July 2011 survey of evacuees conducted by Japan's Cabinet Office (Japanese Language)

<http://www.chugoku-np.co.jp/News/Sp201108170084.html>

24. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to positive identification of bodies recovered by the National Police Agency (Japanese Language)

<http://www.asahi.com/national/jiji/JJT201109090138.html>

25. The Fire and Disaster Management Agency (消防庁) of Japan also provides statistics concerning deaths, missing persons, injuries, property damage, and fires. (Japanese Language)

<http://www.fdma.go.jp/bn/data/>

26. Web versions of newspaper articles pertaining to the number of workers' accident compensation (労働者災害補償) claims filed (Japanese Language)

<http://www.asahi.com/national/jiji/JJT201107280063.html>

<http://www.asahi.com/national/jiji/JJT201108160083.html?ref=chiezou>

27. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to suicides and deaths due to overwork (過労死) (Japanese Language)

<http://www.sankeibiz.jp/compliance/news/110609/cpd1106092231018-nl.htm>

28. Web version of newspaper article pertaining to positive identification of bodies (Japanese Language)

[http://www.excite.co.jp/News/society\\_g/20111011/Jiji\\_20111011X212.html](http://www.excite.co.jp/News/society_g/20111011/Jiji_20111011X212.html)

*The above version of this study does not include the author's detailed tables pertaining to deaths and missing persons classified by town and village.*



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