

The 1st Western Japan Flood Relief Volunteer Report

July 15, 2018

Kobe International Sustaining Organization

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<Introduction>

The amount of rainfall in the 48 hours at the wide area of the Chugoku region was recorded the first level in the history. The amount of rainfall across 11 prefectures from northern Kyushu to Gifu Prefecture was very unusual level. Including missing people, it was reported that the number of casualties would be over 150 people by July 9th. As a result, scholars have announced scientific analyzes. However, we need to think about why we could not forecast this in advance. Regarding the damage, the greatest reason was that we forgot the lesson from the heavy rain in northern Kyushu area on last July (July 6, 2017).

We must reflect what we underestimated the natural disasters occurring throughout Japan.

Nepal, the poorest country in Asia, is damaged by flooded that caused by heavy rain in the region around the Himalayas, including the highest mountain in the world, Everest.

On July 7, 2018, we received a request for food distribution from the Kurashiki City countermeasures headquarter. We purchased food materials about 300 servings for every meal for 1 week, and we carried it by our organization's car. We departed to able to reach until the dinner time on the 8th of Sunday to the Kurashiki Municipal 2nd Fukuda Elementary School at Kurashiki City. Kenjiro Oshima at Kumamoto Branch office, who just joined the 6th northern Kyushu volunteer two weeks ago, also started to join in us from Kumamoto to Kurashiki. Kurashiki is also his hometown. He is our companion since he hoped to join in the Tohoku volunteer from Kurashiki, and he worked together with us at Mashiki town after the Kumamoto-Oita Earthquake (April 14, 16, 2016). He is also an administrative staff of our organization.

When we reached at the Kurashiki Municipal 2nd Fukuda Elementary School, the city officials were waiting for our arrival, the first volunteer for food supply at the devastated area in Western Japan Flood. Regional elected city councilors were also actively served. We did volunteer at the gymnasium, in listening the unspeakable nightmare of disaster. We also met with the local members of Okayama Prefecture who participated in Tohoku volunteers. Food distribution started from the Kurashiki Municipal 2nd Fukuda Elementary School, the evacuation center where has the largest number of affected people.

On July 11, secretary general Mr.Toshihisa Honda also join in the lunch distribution at the 5th Fukuda Elementary School, and Mr.Anees Ahmad Nadeem [Head of Missionary of Japan Ahmadiyya Muslim Community] came to support us on July 9. We moved at the 5th Fukuda Elementary School to do food distribution through the help of Mr.Takuya Okamoto, who is the supporter of KISO.

At 9 am on July 9 (Monday), “Christian Today” introduced immediately about the volunteer activities of the Kobe International Sustaining Organization. ⇒
<https://www.christiantoday.co.jp/articles/25776/20180709/kiso-kurashiki-mabi-takidashi.htm>

(1) Foreboding

a. The 2018 Northern Osaka earthquake

The block wall collapsed, and an elementary school girl was dead. We heard it during our stay in Masue for the 6th visit.

The damage that occurred last year at Masue in Fukuoka prefecture was not limited at mountain areas. We must anticipate about landslides, falls and flood disasters in the city as well. We should not have inflated mind even for the Rokko mountain area in Kobe, which has the incomparable developed the sediment control landslide dam in Japan. Kobe experienced an unprecedented difficulty at the Hanshin large flood in 1938 (933 deaths. 72% of Kobe city, 660,000 people were affected). (Reference my thesis, “Christianity and Volunteer-Dō” Tokyo University 2015 p.21)

In 2008, a total of 26 people was drifted and 5 people were killed by flash flood at the Togagawa River that comes from the Mt. Rokko. Until that time, the administration had given a safe myth to the civilians that Toga River is the “river of communication in prevention”. For the parents who lost their children, the administration did not show publically any apologies, compensation / atonement, and result of investigation.

b. Sediment disaster in Tarumi area, Kobe City

Tarumi area at Kobe City where the office of the Kobe International Sustaining Organization is located. Sanyo Electric Railway cancellation. Photograph at 4 pm on July 6, 2018.

Due to the warnings of landslide and water flood by the heavy rain, schools were closed. At 5pm on July 5, 2018, one person died at the construction site of Inagawa-cho and two others were injured. Between Sumaura-Koenmae station and Sanyo-Shioya station of Sanyo Electric Railway was cancelled on afternoon of July 6, due to the sediment flow into the railroad. JR ran only local trains. We received information by Mr.Hidenori Takahashi, who lives near the site, that he evacuated with his wife because two houses in neighbor were affected by landslides.

I reached Shioya Elementary School at 10 pm when people were evacuating from there.

Two people of Tarumi-Ku administration office were accompanying. A 68-year-old woman was resting at the gymnasium.

Just like the stairs (about 200 steps) of the Shioya 3rd railroad crossing of Sanyo Electric Railway at Shioya-Cho 2-chome was gouged out from the bottom, the landslide was occurred. Sand flowed into houses at hillside. We heard from Mr. Takahashi that Sanyo Electric Train also stopped

operating for three days.

⇒ Damage of Tarumi <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ki0uUXhrr4Y&t=10s>

c. Masue, Haki, Asakura City, Fukuoka Prefecture is forgotten.

⇒ One year after of Masue. <https://youtu.be/e8jCG0vhnIk> Shirakidani

Reference: The Northern Kyushu Heavy Rain Volunteer

<http://kisokobe.sub.jp/article/10343/>

On July 6, 2017, on the next year after the Kumamoto-Oita Earthquake (April 14, 16, 2016), Mr. and Mrs. Ogawa from Kogouchi in Masue, Fukuoka were also drifted by the heavy rain. It has been past almost a year, reconstruction of residence and agriculture and forestry for life living are still abandoned. As Japan, the frequent disaster country, what the most important thing at the Osaka Earthquake damage is “受縁力(Jyuen-Ryoku = Receiving relationship in times of disaster takes skill)”. Rather the tragic decision of “self-responsibility”, please do not think that you are making trouble to volunteers. And if we cannot change the world for “I am indebted for your care”, we will be in an unprecedented difficulty if there will be only an administrative support power when the Nankai megathrust earthquakes will occur.

Nakamura district in the watershed area of Otoishi River at Masue, Asakura City, Fukuoka Prefecture. The house where Ms.Kizue Higuchi (76 years old) was born was gone. Ms.Kazuko Ide (60 years old) at the base in front was drifted. Someone said “There is no one anymore”, even there were 30 houses at Nakamura village before.

⇒ One year after of Otoishi River at Nakamura village.

<https://youtu.be/ixSQwBNkYaw>

Mr.Shigemi Ojima (69 years old) was living in a two-story house at 255-1 Shirakidani, Masue. There were about 30 houses in Shirakidani. But only 2 or 3 houses remain. He was used to be a plasterer of the buildings before. Although he had recovered from pharyngeal cancer in January of this year, he suddenly encountered a landslide. He was on the 2nd floor, but his wife, Hatsuko was taking care of their pet on the 1st floor. They had a dog whose name is Gon in the house. Then, there was a warning alert when the mind was not ready, she was swallowed by the muddy stream and drifted for 1 kilometer away from their house.

Even one year has passed, only one car can pass through the road at the Shirakidani. The trees that are not pruned or cut go into or over houses violently.

Mr.Mutsuto Ito, president of Masue Community Center, pour out his painful feeling over an hour. Once of the way for Masue to survive is Masue Soba. You can purchase the spring shoot in July. It

is a pesticide-free and organic. Just like rice reaping, after harvesting and drying, all lady beetles and grasshoppers will be removed from it. Each 22.5 kg of black buckwheat will be checked for grade. We believe it is the 1st grade.



Mr.Mutsunori Hayashi (52 years old), who is busy harvesting soba. (The 4th person from the right), instructed us.

Four members of the organization work hard for the soba volunteers. We know how to use 4 kinds of equipments for cropping, so I hope that we can contribute at least for Masue soba, which can be the door of reconstruction, restoration and rebuilding. There are “three soba makers” at Masue, I pray that they will be a key of reconstruction, restoration and rebuilding.

Is it okay to lead a village of 270 houses in Masue to the countdown of extinction?

I am convinced that if Masue could not be restored, human beings will be reluctant for any kinds of natural disasters that will occur in Japan from now.

Caption:

Collapsed prefectural road at Takagi district, Asakura City. June 18, 2018

Even after a year, the road is closed completely. Route 79, Takagi village. It remains broken. Hirotaka Murakami, chief of our organization office, went weak at his knees. We saw the trace of cracked guardrail, at 50 meters away in front of us.

(2) Confusion of the National government and the administrations

a. The damage in the Mabi-cho at Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture was abnormal. 4pm on July 7, 2018

People of Mabi-cho were also screaming, “Please help!”

From the local non-flooded area, we could prepare to bring food materials for 2,000 meals, volunteer members and propane gas for food distribution. When I applied to the crisis management section of the Okayama Prefectural Government at 9 pm on July 7, they replied us “This is a wrong

section”, “Wait until its calm down”, and “Wait for reply”. I was disappointed for their slow reaction.

A world that manage everything by manual, vertical system, and ignoring the real site by “from above”. Work on the desk is not useful in emergencies. Delay of relief by Social Welfare Councils and volunteer centers has been proved by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami (March 11,2011), the Kumamoto-Oita Earthquake (April 14, 16, 2016) and the Northern Kyushu Heavy Rain (July 6, 2017). However, at the time of flooding in the Kinugawa River (9th September - 11th September 2015), the administration of Nikko City considered the victims and was in a low attitude to facilitate volunteering. Officers were working on restoration, reconstruction and reconstruction centered on volunteer work.

Rather than thinking about excuses of the secondary disasters, we should give priority to life, living, rebuilding of our hearts “now, immediately”.

It seems that there will be no future for the frequent disaster country Japan, if we cannot change Japan that is “share feeling”, “share sufferings”, “coexistence” to help each other.



Cooking materials and propane gas that we brought from Kobe.



At the food distribution, soup meals are preferred than bread.

The Kurashiki Municipal 2nd Fukuda Elementary School in Kurashiki City. July 9, 2018.

b. Rather than managing volunteers, divide into the role

“Volunteer” and “tourism” are different.

The state has established an evil law to “tie” that people cannot collect transportation expenses money for volunteers if there is no approval from the Japan Tourism Agency. Therefore, a group of government agencies around the site announce volunteer recruitment twice a year, and they provide free transportations for volunteers to go to affected area.

Even if only the bottom system of the “government” make action, manpower is necessary, so it is like a drop in the bucket.

Life is involved. Voices of volunteers are rising that country must do something to improve.

Unfortunately, politicians have never done volunteer work at the affected site, so they announced last year that the volunteer bus problems were improved like in a rose.

“Volunteer” and “tourism” are different.

Although the volunteer bus issue has been improved, the “Travel Agency Act” has become a big wall.

If the volunteer organizer do such as ①receive transportation and accommodation expenses, ②perform certain work such as arranging accommodations, and ③call for participation in public, it will be determined as a travel agency business.

The group that does those three items will be treated as “travel industry business”. I would like to ask the government that they will consider this evil law, which only registered group (generally travel agencies) for the Travel Agency Act can do volunteering.

Ruling party should reconsider the law to protect human rights, rather than putting effort to change the constitution.

Administrative officers are suitable for restoration of food materials, electrical systems and water supply. On the other hand, volunteers are far better to communicate with humans. Therefore, at the affected site, we need to divide the activities into different roles.

Volunteers, disaster prevention experts and medical professions should communicate with affected people at the site. The administrations should shift their work to support volunteers while they focus on communicating with locals, delivering information and distribution.

By doing so, the whole of Japan can share victim’s groaning, sorrow and anger and we can help each other organically.

From the first year of volunteer of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, it has been passed 22 years. We must have a complete overhaul once again.

(Iwamura, Y. Quarterly magazine “Shien”. No 20. August 4, 2017. p.2-3)

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who wants to revise article 9 of the Constitution, boasts that “ 30 thousand SDF personnel are going to the affected areas”. However, former Self Defense Forces executives said that the disaster allowance per day is more than 15,000 yen. Just being on the 30th disaster area, SDF's member will receive an extra 450,000 yen.

On the other hand, the reward of the living firefighter team is small in the local area.

Volunteers must pay for transportation fees and work without payment.

Do you think that it will become a “safe” country if you let SDF personnel who are paid high in disaster area do it?

c. We must do “Resurrection of Rice Field, Mountain, and Bay” now!

⇒“Resurrection of Rice Field, Mountain, and Bay”

(3) The road that the frequent disaster country should go.

a. Break of dams and sediment control dams that brought by human-made disaster.

Weather forecasters say that since there are scientific basis for sediment disaster warning information, so we should have escaped immediately by informing each other. However, it is a kind of cheating for Japanese whom are weak against the magic of the word “scientific basis”.

For example, regarding Asa district in Hiroshima Prefecture, 77 deaths of people were issued due to the sediment disaster in August 2014. The mass media won't pick up the biggest reason why the residents did not evacuate this time again. It is a deception. At the Asa district Yanohigashi 7 in Hiroshima City, more than a dozen buildings collapsed among Umego complex (about 100 houses). 10 people are missing. On the mountain side of the complex, the new Check dam was just completed this year, but it collapsed by the heavy rain.

Last year, on May 15, 2017, “Sankei Shimbun” and others reported “Completion of the Sediment Control Dam Emergency Project in Hiroshima”. According to the article, Toshiki Shimamoto (25 years old) who is a graduate student at Hiroshima University said, “The resident's trust on technology made people think, ‘We didn't like the heavy rainy day because we were afraid about sediment, but now we are relieved’, and it let people thought about the evacuation warning like a fire on the other side of the river. Therefore mass medias must report about this reality.”

In Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture, the embankment on the left side of the Oda River was broken. A quarter of the area of the Mabi-cho (about 8,900 houses) was submerged. The city office branch had stopped functioning due to submergence and blackouts. No one was able to give answer about the grasp of the damage situation. Mr. Chuichi Mizukawa (77 years old), who was evacuated to the Kurashiki Municipal 2nd Fukuda Elementary School, said that he went to see his rice field at 1:30 am on July 7 because he worried about his field, and he saw that increased water reversed and covered his rice field. Therefore he followed the evacuation warning of 2:30 am. He also mentioned that about 450 people who escaped to the roof were rescued by the fireman's rubber boat.

His younger sister Ms. Haruko Senoo (76 years old), who has a difficulty in walking due to a stroke 7 years ago, had no choice but escape to the 2nd floor. The water flood reached to the ceiling of the 2nd floor. Therefore her son Hisashi lifted up her by using a bath towel to the roof and he could save his mother's life.

Ms. Senoo at Evacuation shelter, July 8, 2018.

It means, people thought that since there are many dams in the Takahashi River, it should be able to control water flood. This time flood damage can be said to be a human-made disaster rather than a natural disaster.

Caption:

The Sediment control dam by high technology at Takagi district, Asakura City. June 18, 2018.

The whole of the Japan seems in full of enthusiasm due to the world cup game. Since around March 2018, the VAR (Video Assistant Referee) has become to give influence on judgement of the referee in order to prevent misjudgments. Player's scene is analyzed by 33 cameras to judge whether the play is handball or not. However, opinions at the video confirmation room were divided, and it took time. The player asked for a VAR, so the game was interrupted. "NHK" Close-up Gendai (October 14, 2014) had mentioned that "Humans are tied by the technology that is adopted by humans, and it seems to be destroying football itself".

The disaster like a road turns into a river due to the rainfall can be happened anywhere. When the Sediment control dam at upstream part breaks down, water increase, embankment breakdown, and landslide occur in a moment. Everyone thought dangerous about the confluence of meandering Oda River and Takahashi River at Mabi-cho, Kurashiki City in Okayama Prefecture. Mina Kabashima (20 years old), who was evacuated to the gymnasium of the Kurashiki Municipal 2nd Fukuda Elementary School, told that local people were worrying about the site would cause a disaster someday.



Mina Kabashima in the center. July 8, 2018
the Kurashiki Municipal 2nd Fukuda
Elementary School

On July 9, 1967, sediment disasters and river flooding were occurred many places of the Rokko mountain area due to the heavy rain of about 300 mm in 6 hours. 38,305 houses were damaged and 92 precious lives were lost. Despite of the construction of more than 600 sediment control dams, this tragedy was occurred.

The landslide dam could not prevent the damage of debris flow on July 9, 2014. The sediment control dam, which was completed in March 2014, was also useless and many people became victims.

Instead of filling the valley with concrete materials, it is better to make use of the water control power of natural forest, or if natural landslide activity is inconvenient for human beings, we can try to dredge sand at downstream. From that, we can restore the life with the nature.

b. Gimmick of the trust in technology

In the Bible, there is an expression that progresses continue “from faith to faith” (Romans 1:17 *ek pisteos eis pistin*). One of the many Japanese TV programs that monopolize the attention is the suspenseful stories. The complicated story that cannot identify easily the real criminal is popular. The audiences pay attention closely the way to reveal the criminal’s difficult crime trick. Scenes of scientific analysis of security camera are also essential. It is deepening “from evil to evil”, not by the “faith”. Even in the United States, mistaken arrests by 30 million security cameras are becoming problems.

According to the FBI training officer, he said that “The video is actually processed at the recording stage. The first thing we teach is that what you see in the video is not a fact”. Even the head of the FBI investigator stated that security cameras are not absolute. “*The Washington Post*”. July 2, 2016.

High-Technology industry [advanced high technology industry], Apple, Intel, Google, Facebook and Adobe Systems are giving influence to the thought of children all over the world including Japan, and those are deeply rooted.

On the topic of technological development such as personal computers, smartphones, and AI (Artificial Intelligence), human beings are worshiping it like a universal god. If a machine developed by humans is a savior against the natural disasters, there should have been no dead of 200 people at the Western Japan Flood.

c. Arrogance of Technicians

Technical experts, the administrations, and mass medias have reached the extreme level of arrogance. Those people, who forgot about the heavy rain disaster at Masue that killed more than 40 people last year, were surprised.

I think that this time the Western Japan Heavy Rains might have brought an intense shock to civil engineers, weather and earthquake prediction researchers and corporate engineers.

Academians, the administrations and the government, which don’t want to let go their authorities and technologies, must try to make everyone can work on reconstruction, restoration and rebuilding at the affected area. But even though they are incompetents, they just manage the situation from the top to seek self-righteousness. At the Fukushima nuclear meltdown in March 2011, there were dangers of low level radiations, problems of thyroid cancer in children, radiation damage of crops and living things.

However, the government ignored the opinions of the ordinary mothers who refused to let their children eating school meals. I have a doubt that professionals who denied that there is no scientific basis, academians of the government, and officers of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare had arrogant minds.

Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, was exiled from the Garden of Eden and killed his brother Abel. After that, Cain “was then building a city (Genesis 4:17)”. Moreover, Tubal-cain, who is the descendant of Cain, debuted in human history as a technician “making various tools with bronze and iron”. Nimrod, who reached the extreme level of arrogance, showed off his technical

capabilities as “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth (Genesis 11:4)”. It is a sprout of modern technology. Professionals have pursued technological rationalism so they believe that they can compete against dangers of any disease, poverty, and war by technologies as well.

Computer, automation, and mass production brought convenience, comfortableness and service. It became like a worshipping, which like even put Aum Shinrikyo to shame, that the technicism made mankind happy.

Monopolized domination over the technology has changed into technology = god and it became the back support of the authority of the country. The ruler of the country, the government, makes decisions on meteorological satellite, linear, and restarting of the nuclear power plant.

Japanese TV dramas are one pattern. Such as “Mito Komon”, “Toyama Kinshiro” and “Tokugawa Yoshimune”, people please with the “right or wrong” story, which the “upper person” punish the bad people. However, in many of overseas dramas, there are stories that take down a corporate executive who exploit the lower people such as the poor and discriminated slaves, politicians who piles up own properties, and evil magistrate. Among Japanese people, volunteer of un-paid, self-devotion and dialogue do not grow easily, since people naturally think that the government will take care of everything when the disaster occurs, such as water flood. The consciousness of putting the government above the people is strong, so it is regrettable that the idea of “civil rights” cannot be established easily.

<Conclusion>

I visited Masue with 3 accompanies June 16-20, 2018, where was affected by the Northern Kyushu Heavy Rain last June. One of them was Mr. Kenjiro Oshima (33 years old), who participated in the 1st Kumamoto-Oita Earthquake (April 14, 16, 2016) Volunteer. This is the 6 times visit to Masue. A year passes, but as the disaster risk area, agriculture and forestry in the rebuilding of dwellings and living is also abandoned.

Even though we are sacrificing more than 200 people in this Western Japan Flood, the country is not recognized as a human disaster.

According to the Sabo law of 1897, the civil engineering work for the disaster due to landslides, sliding, flash floods was thriving all over the country. Driftwoods such as dams, erosion control dams, cedars deposited on flood control dams caused greater damage. Broken dams are scattered around the pine trees a year ago. Even though we are sacrificing more than 200 people in this Western Japan Flood, the country is not recognized as a human disaster. Obviously there was a problem with the 打 Dam, landslide dam, flood control dam. Who do you get with cement orders for tide breakwaters, dams, and roads?

Earthquake damage in the northern part of Osaka, the greatest disaster country What is most important in Japan is “Receiving relationship in times of disaster”. Sustain “relationship” and Support

“Aid” is different, Receiving “Aid” and Receiving “Relationship” is different as well. The fringe and edge are suggestive of hierarchical relationships, for example, from government and others. Hiring courage, hope, power is given to people who are in trouble with “marginal” which begins to crawl among people unfamiliar with the view from the side.

Japanese media, especially television programs, will flow out only about “self-responsibility” such as escape, prevention, preparations, etc., about natural disasters. Fukushima's meltdown as well. Even though there is human error, no one will take responsibility.

“Self-responsibility” has been established in Japanese by former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at the time of Iraqi hostage incident of Japanese young man. It is a convenient term for government. You should escape from the sad determination of the keyword "self-responsibility" given by the government. If you do not think that it will cause inconvenience to volunteers, if you do not change to a good world with “you are in good care”, in the case of the Nankai Trough, administrative power alone will lead to an unprecedented difficulty.

As Japan, the frequent disaster country, what the most important thing at the Osaka Earthquake damage is “受縁力(Jyuen-Ryoku = Receiving relationship in times of disaster takes skill)”. We should escape from the tragic decision of “self-responsibility” that is given by the government. And if we cannot change the world for “I am indebted for your care”, we will be in an unprecedented difficulty if there will be only an administrative support power when the Nankai megathrust earthquakes will occur. Unfortunately, in 23 years, the number of volunteers decreased less than 10 %, compared to about 1.4 million volunteers at the time of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, which was called as the 1st year of volunteer. Mr.Minoru Higuchi (78 years old) from Masue said that “We must remain the spirit” to help each other.

After one year from the disaster, if we cannot see or hear about the public policy, blue prints, and plans for damages, we cannot solve the difficulties and sufferings of victims. The sprout of “live together”, “share sufferings”, “relationship to share sufferings” will never grow, unless people accept the person who has no-name, no-qualifications but only have compassions from the whole Japan.

I believe that there is a Buddha, Christ in the “poor”, who is affected by the disaster. If young people work on the Volunteer-Dō, it will become an opportunity to change from values of technology, economy and greedy.