

音のない3.11

被災地にろう者もいた

3.11 Without Sound

There were deaf people in the disaster area too.





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Message from the director

Ayako Imamura



At 2:46 pm on March 11th, 2011, I was meeting with some people in Kariya city. We felt the earthquake and turned on the television. On the TV screen was the ocean of Miyagi, but I didn't know what was happening, because there were no captions. In Japan, earthquakes were frequent, so I didn't think much about it. But in the evening when I got home, I turned on the television and saw on the screen a town being swallowed up by a tsunami and a huge number indicating the number of people who were missing. Something unimaginable had happened. From that day, on the television and in the newspapers, there was much information about the disaster, and the number of dead or missing people increased every day. It was painful to watch the television and read the newspaper, but as I did I had a question. There were deaf and hard of hearing people in northeastern Japan too. But there was no information about them. Were they safe? Were they getting the necessary supplies? My work consists of making documentaries and giving talks about deaf and hard of hearing people, so I thought I should report on the condition of deaf people in the disaster area, and so I went to film in Miyagi eleven days after the earthquake. I was shocked to hear that there were some deaf people who died because they couldn't hear the tsunami warnings. One month after the disaster, while filming in Fukushima, I myself experienced a level six aftershock, and also experienced the fear of not being able to hear the tsunami warning. Now on smart-phones and i-pads in Japan there are various applications for getting information. When I got a smart-phone I was surprised by how convenient it was. It is possible to get necessary information anytime, anyplace. But even though things are very convenient, there is still something that is very irritating. Even though scientific technologies have progressed so far in Japan, even now, deaf people can't get information about tsunami warnings and evacuation warnings. Information that could mean the difference between life and death should be available to everyone equally. Not just earthquakes, but recently with very strange weather conditions, damage from heavy rain storms and typhoons is spreading all over Japan. This is a problem not for somebody else, but for all of us ourselves. Up until June of 2012 I have been to the earthquake disaster area seven times for filming. I have filmed up to forty-six hours of tape. There are so many things I would like to convey through my documentaries, but there is one very important thing. 'There should be no differences in the ability to get information that could make the difference between life and death' is the important message edited into these twenty-three minutes. 3.11 Without Sound is complete. I made this film with a focus on deaf people, but while filming I saw that people with other disabilities and people from other countries also have problems when a disaster strikes. With this DVD, I hope we can improve our understanding of what to do for people with disabilities, people from other countries, and all people, when another disaster strikes.

音のない3.11のあらすじ

Outline of 3.11 Without Sound

The main character in the documentary is Kikuchi Nobuko (deaf) who lives in Iwanuma city on the Pacific coast, in southern Miyagi prefecture. Nobuko, at the time of the earthquake, was able to escape from the tsunami only because a neighbor told her, using gestures, that a tsunami was coming. Just after that, the tsunami washed away her home. If her neighbor had not told her about the tsunami, Nobuko and her husband would have been washed away by the tsunami and perished. From the evacuation shelter to the temporary housing, the documentary follows Nobuko for a year, and shows the various problems that deaf people run in to.



Ten Questions

Students should recall what they saw in the DVD.
To help them remember, here are ten questions.



- 1 On March 11th Mr. and Mrs. Kikuchi and Mr. and Mrs. Watanabe were able to escape from the tsunami. How?

Mr. and Mrs. Kikuchi[02:52~03:17]

Mr. and Mrs. Watanabe[18:29~19:02]



- 2 After the tsunami had withdrawn, the couple from the hair salon stayed in their house and did not go to the evacuation shelter. Why?

[04:38~05:11]

- 3 Why was it difficult to determine whether the deaf members of the Miyagi Prefecture Deaf Association were safe or not?

[05:47~07:26]



- 4 What problem did the deaf couple living in Iwaki city in Fukushima prefecture have with the television broadcast?

[08:15~08:37]

- 5 When there was an aftershock of 6, what did the deaf filmmaker do?

[08:37~09:52]

- 6 When the filmmaker went to visit Ms. Kikuchi in April, what kind of problems did she find?

[11:06~11:37]



- 7 What did the round blue marks on the Miyagi Prefecture Deaf Association map signify?

[12:23~12:40]

- 8 When the filmmaker went to visit Nobuko in August, something happened. What happened?

[15:21~16:08]



- 9 When the teacher and students from the Miyagi Prefecture Deaf School evacuated to the dormitory, what did the teacher do for the students?

[17:19~17:57]

- 10 What was the condition of the head of the Miyagi Prefecture Deaf School Alumni Association and his wife in the temporary housing?

[19:03~19:58]

When there is an earthquake, what should you do?

Before a disaster:

- ① What should you do to help people in your neighborhood, workplace, or school, understand what it means to be deaf?

()

- ② What kind of preparations should you make in case there is an earthquake?

()

When there is an earthquake:

- ③ What should you do after an earthquake has occurred?

()

- ④ What should you take with you when you go to the evacuation shelter?

()

At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing:

- ⑤ At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing, how can you tell others that you are deaf?

()

- ⑥ At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing you won't be able to hear the announcements and get the important information.

You won't be able to communicate with the people around you either.
So what should you do?

()

When there is an earthquake, what should you do to help each other?

If you can't hear, what should you do?

Before a disaster:

1 If you didn't know what way to go, what would you do?

()

2 The trains have stopped, but it appears there's some kind of announcement. What should you do?

()

When there is an earthquake:

3 If there is an earthquake, what kinds of things are problems for deaf people?

()

4 For those deaf people, what kind of things can you do?

()

At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing:

5 At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing, what kind of things are problems for deaf people?

()

6 For those problems, what kind of things can you do?

()

[Answers]

When there is an earthquake, what should you do?

There is not just one answer. You should exchange opinions with others
and try to deepen your understanding of disasters.

Before a disaster:

- ① **What should you do to help people in your neighborhood, workplace, or school, understand what it means to be deaf?**

(Answer) You should tell people that you can't hear and ask them to write what they want to say to you.)

- ② **What kind of preparations should you make in case there is an earthquake?**

(Answer) You should make sure of where the evacuation shelter is, how to contact your family, and be sure how to get disaster applications on your cell phone.)

When there is an earthquake:

- ③ **What should you do after an earthquake has occurred?**

(Answer) Check the information on TV or on your cell phone. Go to the evacuation shelter or another safe place. If the TV doesn't have captions, ask the people around you what the information is. Check to see if there are any warnings or evacuation notices, and ask people around you to write down any important information.)

- ④ **What should you take with you when you go to the evacuation shelter?**

(Answer) Writing materials (paper, writing board, etc.) hearing aid batteries, disabled person identification.)

At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing:

- ⑤ **At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing, how can you tell others that you are deaf?**

(Answer) Tell the person in charge to write that you are deaf on a piece of paper and post it.)

- ⑥ **At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing you won't be able to hear the announcements and get the important information.**

You won't be able to communicate with the people around you either. So what should you do?

(Answer) Have someone write the content of announcements on paper, or try to get a sign language interpreter to come.)

[Answers]

When there is an earthquake, what should you do to help each other?

There is not just one answer. You should exchange opinions with others
and try to deepen your understanding of disasters.

If you were deaf, what could you do?

Before a disaster:

1 If you didn't know what way to go, what would you do?

(Answer) Since you can't hear, you would worry about whether
you could find someone to explain things clearly to you.)

2 The trains have stopped, but it appears there's some kind of announcement.
What should you do?

(Answer) You would write that you can't hear, and ask if there were
any announcements. If there were announcements,
you would ask to be told the content of the announcements.)

When there is an earthquake:

3 If there is an earthquake, what kinds of things are problems for deaf people?

(Answer) You wouldn't know if there were any warnings,
or if there were any announcements.)

4 For those deaf people, what kind of things can you do?

(Answer) Write or gesture to explain the contents of
warnings or announcements.)

At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing:

5 At the evacuation shelter/temporary housing,
what kind of things are problems for deaf people?

(Answer) You wouldn't know about the announcements
distribution of food or other information.
You would feel stress because you couldn't communicate.)

6 For those problems, what kind of things can you do?

(Answer) Tell the person in charge that there are deaf people,
and ask that the content of announcements be written down
and put them where they can be seen.
And you should try to be a communication partner using
writing and gestures.)

Commentary

Terms for referring to people who can't hear.

There are different terms for referring to people who can't hear. The terms can differ depending on the severity of the hearing loss, the time of the hearing loss, or whether or not the person can use sign language or not. It is important to ask the persons themselves.

For administrative purposes, 'hearing disabled' or 'person with a hearing disability' are used.

- [**Deaf**] A person who can't hear and uses sign language in daily life. There is a cultural component too.
- [**Hard-of-hearing**] Indicates a person who has hearing difficulties. There are some hard-of-hearing hearing people who can use a telephone.
- [**Late-hearing-loss**] These are people who have acquired spoken language and then lose their hearing later in life.

Ways of Communicating

There isn't just one way to communicate with people who can't hear. Find the best way to communicate for the people involved.

- [**Sign Language**] The language that Deaf people use in daily life.
- [**Spoken Language**] Using voice and reading lips.
- [**Writing Messages**] Writing messages on paper or writing board. You can write on the ground, or even make drawings.
- [**Air Writing**] You can write messages in the air.
- [**Gestures**] Using the hands and body, or facial expressions to convey meaning.

In addition, writing with portable computers or cell phones and showing the other person are some of the other many methods.

Notes of a Deaf Person Who Experienced the Great Hanshin Earthquake

(Mr. Takahira Suehiro (deceased), Kobe city, Nakta ward)

On January 17th, 1995, the day of the Great Hanshin Earthquake, me wife and I lived in Kobe city apartments. My wife and I are both deaf. At the time of the earthquake, my wife and I were sleeping in different rooms. There was a big horizontal shaking, and the clothes dresser, Buddhist alter, and mirror fell, and the whole room was covered with broken glass. I pushed the fallen things out of the way and went to the room where my wife was sleeping, and we went outside together. There was smoke rising from different locations, and there were fires in many places. There were blind people and elderly people, and we all helped each other and went to the first floor. One of the other couples said we should go the meeting room, so we all went together. About twenty people gathered in the meeting room, and it was crowded, so we couldn't even lay down, so we slept sitting up. The next day there was food distributed, just bread everyday, and people were tired. My wife also got worn out and was feeling bad, but the nearest West Hospital had collapsed and there was no treatment. Other hospitals had burnt down, And we didn't know what to do. At this time I thought we would be able to find out about the distribution of food from the hearing people's conversations and movements but, for a deaf person like me, I couldn't notice the calls for food distribution or other information, and was uneasy all the time. It was quite a while later that a sign language interpreter finally arrived at the meeting room. There was sign on the interpreters chest reading "I am a volunteer sign language interpreter, I will help deaf people". I wasn't only happy because I was told that if we had any problems we could go to the Kobe Deaf House, but we were just happy to be able to use sign language. We were able to be selected to move into temporary housing, and on April 22nd we moved into the West ward temporary housing. The others in the housing were all hearing people from the area. We formed a group and had a place to meet, had events and distributed leaflets. In this way even a deaf couple like my wife and I were able to get to know the people around us, exchanged things with them, and got to know them well. I was really happy about this. When there is some big disaster, hearing people can get away, but we deaf people can't hear the warnings or announcements. Local groups should share information like "There are deaf people living in those houses", and have keys for the houses. If there is some kind of system for letting people know, for example, when there is some emergency or disaster, then someone can go to the houses and let the people know, I think we deaf people would feel safer.

Mr. Takahira died in August of 2008. His family and the Kobe Deaf Association cooperated in providing his notes.