Crisis and Disaster in Japan and New Zealand

Actors, Victims and Ramifications

Edited by **Susan Bouterey**
and **Lawrence E. Marceau**

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The editors dedicate this volume to the victims—and the survivors—of the tragic events of 2010 and 2011 in Japan and New Zealand.

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Editors' Notes

All Japanese names are written according to the standard East Asian convention of family name first, followed by the given name. An exception is made for those authors with Japanese names writing in English.

Macrons are included to indicate long vowels in Japanese. An exception is made for terms found in standard English dictionaries without macrons (e.g., Tokyo).

Notes on Contributors

Susan Bouterey is senior lecturer in Japanese Studies at the University of Canterbury where she teaches across a range of fields, including Japanese society, culture, literature, and film. Her key areas of research are contemporary Japanese literature, especially women writers' fiction, atomic bomb literature, and contemporary Okinawan fiction. Since the 2011 Christchurch Earthquake and Great East Japan Earthquake, she has been engaged in ongoing collaborations with colleagues in Japan and New Zealand on disaster related issues. She is author of *Medoruma Shun on Sekai: Rekishi, kioku, monogatari* (2011) and co-editor of *East Meets West: China and the World* (2013).

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institutional settings and non-governmental organisations. They worked with NCWNZ members and other volunteers to document women's earthquake experiences in Christchurch. The University of Canterbury provided office space, research funding, and the expertise necessary to upload research material on UC QuakeStudies, the research component of a digital archive about the Canterbury earthquakes, their impact, and the rebuilding of the city and the region.

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Lawrence E. Marceau is senior lecturer in Japanese at the University of Auckland. A scholar of Japan's early modern (Edo/Tokugawa Period) literature and culture, he is the author of *Takebe Ayatari: A Bunjin Bohemian in Early Modern Japan* (2004). He recently contributed a chapter, "Bunjin (Literati) and Early Yomihon: Nankaku, Nankai, Buson, Gennai, Teishō, Ayatari, and Akinari" in Shirane, Suzuki, and Lurie, *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature* (2016). He is in residence over calendar year 2018 at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken), preparing an annotated translation and introduction with full-colour images of a seventeenth-century illustrated handscroll of *Aesop's Fables.*

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Evangelicals in the Post-socialist Mongolia (*Ekkyō suru shūkyō, Mongoru no fukuinha*; 2015), *Disaster Damage to Intangible Folk Cultural Assets: Ethnography of Coastal Societies in Miyagi Prefecture Affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake* (*Mukei minzoku bunkazai ga hisai suru to iu koto*; co-editor with H. Takakura, 2014).

Christopher Thomson is head of the Digital Humanities programme at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and a co-director of the College of Arts Digital Lab. His research interests lie at the intersection of literary studies and digital humanities, particularly on the way digital media technologies shape and are shaped by cultural practices. He has recently co-published a database and website project entitled Kōmako: A bibliography of writing by Māori in English, and an analysis of digital media responses to the Canterbury earthquakes. His other research interests include adaptations of literature in digital media, posthumanism in literature, and the application of text mining as a research method in the humanities.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Susan Bouterey and Lawrence E. Marceau

This volume of nine chapters originated from the disasters that occurred in New Zealand and Japan in 2010 and 2011, respectively. On 4 September 2010, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake,[1] centred around 40 km west of the city of Christchurch, struck the Canterbury region of New Zealand's South Island, causing two injuries, but no deaths in spite of the extensive damage to buildings and other structures. Nearly six months later, on 22 February 2011, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit Christchurch City and its surrounds. This quake, while smaller in magnitude than the September 2010 event, resulted in 185 deaths, hundreds of injuries and the destruction of a major portion of the central district of what is New Zealand's second largest city. This was due, in part, to the epicentre's location beneath the city, the extreme shallowness of the quake and the intensity of ground movement, or 'peak ground acceleration' (PGA). Three weeks later, on 11 March 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake occurred off the

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coast of north-eastern Japan, triggering a massive series of tsunamis that together with the earthquake killed nearly 20,000 people, injured 6000, and fully or partially destroyed around 400,000 buildings, including homes. The tsunami that struck the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant caused the meltdown of three of the four reactors there, and resulted in the long-term evacuation of the population living in the vicinity of the plant. Altogether, 340,000 people were displaced and many lost their businesses and livelihoods as a result of this 'triple disaster.'

These disasters have attracted scholarly interest from a range of disciplines and generated gatherings of experts from around the globe to reflect on the events and share their research. In the context of this collection, three major workshops were held, one each in Auckland and Christchurch, New Zealand, and one in Tokyo, Japan. The Auckland workshop was titled '*Sainan*: Discourses of Disaster in Japanese Media over Time' and was held at the University of Auckland on 1 November 2014. It was sponsored by the Faculty of Arts and supported by the New Zealand Asia Institute. Participants from universities in Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea shared the results of their research into the discourses surrounding Japanese disasters, past and present, and how various narratives of disaster have been constructed over time to shape our understanding of what has occurred and what significance these events might hold for us as we move into the future. In contrast, the Christchurch workshop, held at the University of Canterbury on 30–31 October 2014, primarily focused on the recent disasters in Japan and New Zealand, that is, the Christchurch and Canterbury earthquake sequence of 2010 and 2011, respectively, and the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, and their ramifications, as is evident from the title for the workshop 'Tōhoku/Christchurch: Reflections on the Socio-cultural Impacts of the Quakes.' The Christchurch workshop was sponsored by the Japan Society for Promotion of Science (JSPS) and the Handa Fellowship for International Studies, and co-hosted by Japanese Studies in the Department of Global, Cultural and Language Studies, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and by the Centre for Northeast Asian Studies, Tōhoku University, Japan. Participants were from universities in Japan and New Zealand. Finally, the Tokyo workshop was hosted by the Centre for Northeast Asian Studies, Tōhoku University, on 24–25 October 2015, and was titled 'Reviewing Humanities and Social Sciences Projects after Natural Disasters and Exploring the Role of Researchers.'[2] This workshop had a broader agenda with participants from universities in China,

Indonesia, Japan and New Zealand sharing research on natural disasters in their respective countries and reflecting on the contributions that experts in the humanities and social sciences can make following a disaster.

All of the chapters in this collection, with the exception of Patrick Cadwell's chapter on the 'Flyjin' phenomenon, came out of those workshops on disasters, and they reflect some of the diverse interests, approaches and disciplines represented at the workshops.

How disasters are conceptualized and the meanings we ascribe to them differ from one region and cultural, social and political space to the next (Mauch and Pfister 2009, 9), and are shaped by our past experiences of disaster. Over time, those experiences lead to the accumulation of a body of knowledge which, according to Endfield et al. (2009, 305), conditions not only how any given society conceptualizes disasters and their associated risks but also that society's ability to anticipate the impacts of future disasters and forge effective responses. It is our contention, and an important driving force behind our producing this volume of studies, that exposure to other cultures' perceptions and experiences of disasters, to their accumulated 'disaster knowledge' (Endfield et al. 2009), can expand globally our collective body of knowledge and thus understanding of disasters, of their risks and potential social and cultural impacts.

Knowledge can be grounded in actual experience, but it is also contained in, and conveyed to, future generations via official records, written and oral narratives, memorials, artefacts, ceremonies and various other forms. René Favier and Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset (2009) point to the major role, for example, that written records and the memorialization of past disasters have played in the acquisition of knowledge necessary to live with recurring risks in France. It is also from this awareness of the value of documenting past experiences—so well illustrated by our contributors—that we have gathered together in this volume, to share with others across the globe, nine studies written from a variety of different disciplinary perspectives and capturing a diverse range of experiences of, and responses to, past crises and disasters in Japan and New Zealand, with particular emphasis on the catastrophes that occurred in New Zealand and Japan in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

Neither Japan nor New Zealand has been immune from disasters in the past, given their geographic locations as island nations on the Pacific Rim's so-called Ring of Fire. In Chap. 2, Lawrence E. Marceau examines a series of disasters that occurred in the early autumn of 1742, known by the reign-era name Kanpō (1741–1744). As Marceau points out, the 'Kanpō

Floods and Storm Surges' were the worst floods to hit the metropolis of Edo (present-day Tokyo) over the course of the entire Edo or Tokugawa Period (1603–1867). Instead of providing a macro analysis of the events, which would have been conjectural to a degree given the limited nature of data gathering available to the Tokugawa authorities at the time, Marceau focuses on personal accounts written by a noted author of the time, Takebe Ayatari (1719–1774). Not only do these accounts provide detail on the types of damage that occurred in Ayatari's immediate vicinity, but they also reflect his interpretation of the possible causes of the events, and his own experience of moving to higher ground almost against his will, not knowing that the lowlands would be flooded that night. Ayatari's attention to detail makes for compelling reading. In addition, the fact that he repeats his account many years later, giving it a revised interpretation, leads readers to understand that the actual disastrous events are in the final analysis not as important as how those events are remembered.

The most profound disasters to date in human history are arguably the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Horrendous in nature, these bombings ushered in the 'nuclear age,' and have continued to serve as potent symbols of the potential annihilation of humankind through massive nuclear exchanges. In Chap. 3, Yuko Shibata examines the writings of Hayashi Kyōko (1930–2017), especially those related to her experience as a *hibakusha* or atomic bombing victim. Shibata explores Hayashi's works within the context of the intellectual currents of the day, and from the perspective of how one can write about the unimaginable without making the images so horrific that readers will be repelled. For Shibata, Hayashi maintains a personal connection in her fiction, whether the scene is Shanghai during the Japanese invasion of China, Nagasaki in 1945 or a military base in Japan during the subsequent US occupation (1945–1952). Shibata shows that, by placing her alter ego in her narratives, Hayashi is able to tell relevant stories, while at the same time maintaining her reader's interest.

Many small towns and villages along the northeastern coastline of Japan were washed away or declared disaster zones unfit for habitation after the 'triple disaster' of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear reactor meltdown at the time of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. Many of these communities not only sustained damage to physical assets such as buildings and infrastructure as a result of the disaster but they also suffered severe, sometimes irreparable, damage to and loss of their 'intangible cultural assets' such as festivals and folk performing arts. Due, in part, to recognition

already established in Japan that they could play a role in the revival of flagging regional economies (Takakura and Yamaguchi 2018), these folk assets garnered considerable attention post earthquake, and central and local governments included support for them in their disaster recovery programmes. It was against such a background that researchers at the Northeast Asian Studies Centre at Tōhoku University embarked on an extensive investigation into earthquake and tsunami damage to folk cultural assets in their home prefecture, Miyagi. Katsuhiko Takizawa introduces the reader to some of the case studies from the investigation in Chap. 4 and discusses some of the challenges he and fellow researchers faced when attempting to measure the degree of damage to, and recovery of, cultural assets that are essentially 'intangible' and for which, in many cases, there were no earlier written records. The case studies serve to highlight the importance of these cultural assets to local communities and the social ramifications, therefore, of their loss; as one of the respondents to a survey noted, festivals "bear the life and spirit of the community." While the Japanese media have often been quick, as a result, to herald the revival of local festivals as symbolic of community and cultural recovery, Takizawa argues for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the reconstruction of local communities post disaster and the revival of their traditional festivals and folk performing arts.

The 'triple disasters' that struck eastern Japan in March 2011 impacted not only the Japanese population but also the foreign populations residing in the affected regions. Chapter 5 analyses one aspect of the post-3.11 changes in society reflected in the term 'Flyjin,' referring to discourses related to perceptions of foreigners leaving the country in the aftermath of the disasters. Based on interviews with twenty-eight foreign residents of Japan representing twelve nationalities, Patrick Cadwell explores the increased challenges the disasters generated for the interviewees as they interacted with Japanese in the affected areas. A common thread identified in the interviews related to perceptions of fatalistic stoicism on the part of the Japanese when confronted with a disaster. Such resignation to the current situation was not shared by many of the interviewees who tended to feel excluded by the majority population when they reacted in ways not shared by the rest of the community. The Flyjin phenomenon highlighted a sense that the term reflected an actual event, that is, the relocation of non-Japanese outside the affected areas, but the fact that the term singled out foreigners to the exclusion of Japanese who also relocated distorted the true situation, in which some non-Japanese left temporarily, just as