

Christianity and Disaster Prevention

December 14th, 2019. Kwansei Gakuin University
Kobe International Christ Church
Pastor Yoshio Iwamura

Theme Scripture: Isaiah 58:12

“Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.” (New International Version)

<Introduction>

As a result of 9.11 terrorist attacks¹, a value as a Christian has changed. The view that I had been thought that I could change Japanese people through evangelism was completely destroyed. Until that time, every morning of rainy day, windy day and snowy day, I had been making a big voice to deliver evangelism on the street in front of JR Asagiri station. Since 1995 when the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred, I wanted commuters to come to our church, receive a baptism and become Christians. I think that I devoted my passion busily to do evangelism more than any other pastors of Christian churches in Japan². However, the 9.11 attacks made me realize a necessity to change myself. “‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near’”³. It was my personal conversion of Kairos⁴ that was shouting of “Repent (Greek word *Metanoia* <It means change the view point>) and believe the good news!”(Mark 1:15) At the moment when the religious attitude that I had been devoted myself was broken, a true conversion raised. Until then, I had been silent about social breaks and rather reproduced many of them. Therefore, my journey to the road toward complete die has begun.

(1) Broken Japan

a. “Ring of Fire”

In Japan, Vanuatu, and Indonesia, the repeated natural disasters took many human lives. Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia are called “Ring of Fire”⁵. Looking at the data, in the first 18 years of the 21st century (from January 2001 to March 2018), the number of death from the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, the Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu and Pal in Indonesia have been already exceed the total number of death in the 20th century⁶.

b. Japan’s tear

3 days after the March 11, 2011, the students of Kobe International Sustaining Organization started preparation. We entered Watanoha Ishinomaki City Miyagi Prefecture on March 21, and heard the cry of the broken areas. The word of a woman who lost her relatives, “I want to see them even they are ghosts”, made us to stop our thinking as a religious person. We encountered a reality that could not be healed by the simple comfort equipment from the decoration of the synagogue, the structure and the choir inside of the church of the cross.

¹ The September 11 attacks that destroyed World Trade Center and other facilities in US. Nealy 3,000 people dead. The New York Times. September 12. 2001.

² 1998. *Christian Newspaper*. February 1.

³ Greek word “ἤγγικεν *Eggiken* (Completion form of ἐγγίζω *Eggizw*)” is “became close”. It means that comes already so close. It is not “approaching closer”.

⁴ Greek word “*Kairos* (καῖρος)” originally from the verb “cut”. It is used for critical experiences such as birth and death, decisive encounter and social cataclysms. On the other hand, “*Kronos* (Χρόνος)” is a homogeneous and lasting concept of time. 2001. Takao, T. *Yorozunokotoni tokiariki*. The last lecture at Hosei University.

⁵ 2019. Iwamura, Y. *Kikinojidaikara satsushinnojidaie – Sono 3 Kaosukara kaifukuhe* -. April 14.

⁶ *ibid.* 2018. Nikkei Asian Review. Anthony Reid Australian National University website. April 4. “The 21st century has in its first decade already far exceeded the number of casualties from the whole 20th century”

It is written in the “Ishinomaki Kahoku” newspaper as follows. “90% of 21,000 people from tsunami with saying “*Tsunami tendenko* (the original motto from that area to be aware about tsunami)”. I heard that people escaped even they dipped their body in the cold sea water up to their waist under the snowing sky. The fangs of tsunami attacked and the houses that their first floor became empty are everywhere.”⁷

The response of the Christian Church was introspective way. As it is written, “They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. ‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14), to praise the “peace of the Lord” at services, reconstruction of churches, clergy houses and disaster affected believer’s houses. We put “They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious (Hebrew word קָלַל *qalal* <easily, slightly>)” as our priority to heal. For this, donations from not only from domestic but also all over the world were used. There were also visits to church members and seekers who could not come to church services. As this result, clerics started to visit the disaster affected sites⁸. In other words, the church has been working together to prayer meeting, give courage and support to maintain the peace of the church members. However, there is a view that altruistic efforts have begun a little by little following the event of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

c. Deviation with victims

In Ishinomaki City Miyagi Prefecture, as of the end of 2018, still 2,352 houses have problems of damage with *kamoi* (wood piece parts that passes the sliding doors of each room of Japanese houses) of their houses, therefore their *shoji* (sliding paper doors or partitions) and *fusuma* (paper-covered sliding doors and partitions) don’t function properly⁹. Most churches did not stand along with individual victims. It was rather than not moving, but it was because of influence of breathing air of a “normal temperature society”. It’s like a status of taking a relaxing bath. The values of “I more than the public”, “now more than future”, “reality more than expectation” (now, here, I) are spreading through the church¹⁰.

At that time, at the Christian Church in Ishinomaki City Miyagi Prefecture, it was said that the number of participants in Sunday service became more than double that before the earthquake¹¹. However, 8 years after now, I heard that the number became as same as before. Could the church hear the “cry out” of the victims? “Unexpected sudden bereavement due to natural disasters” and “bereavement that can be predicted to some extent due to illness” are fundamentally different¹². Sudden absurd death due to tsunami, does not allow time of farewell. Without receiving the time of “good bye” at the very last moment with beloved one, family time will be putted an end forcibly. Therefore, the family left behind was simply stunned by the sudden fact that was hardly accepted. You will flood your bed with tears every night because of pang of repentance that “I should have done it”, and unfocused anger, suffering and regret. Even now, people have traumatic feeling for the sound of the ocean waves. They cannot sleep¹³. They step inside the Christian Church and confess repeatedly about the gospel of the declaration as “the one who believed in Jesus was saved”, and have been confused. For the victims with just vain melody echoes inside of their empty heart, the sermons will not reach the core of the soul. People gradually tend to keep away from the gathering that they were used to attend by courtesy. This is because that “cry out to God” could not be healed by spending Sunday for the gospel that should be “healing”, repentance of sins, attendance of worship services and donation.

Why is “Rachel refusing”, that is written in “This is what the Lord says: ‘A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.’”? (Jeremiah 31:15)

Is it because many disaster affected people think that “I am not a real victim because there are many other

⁷ 2017. *Ishinomaki Kahoku*. October 9.

⁸ 2018. *The Christian Newspaper*. July 16.

⁹ 2018. *NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation)*. December 12.

¹⁰ 2019. *Seikatsushyano heisei 30nenshi. Detadeyomu kachikanno henka*. Hakuodo Institute of Life and Living. 66-67.

¹¹ 2011. *Sankei Shimbun*. May 2.

¹² 2012. Fujimori, T. Yamori, K. *Fukkoutoshienzo saigaishinrigaku; Daisaigaikara naniwo manabuka*. Fukumura Shuppan. 46.

¹³ 2018. Yoshikawa, J. *Quarterly journal "Shien"*. No.2. February 3. 2.

people who are more suffering than me”¹⁴? There are people who are trying to overcome their sorrow by themselves with pushing aside their emotional feeling, “No matter how hard it is, I will overcome this suffering by myself without making troubles to others”¹⁵. It is because the tendency of Japanese people who lack of “*Jyuen-Ryoku* = attitude to accept help / relationship”¹⁶?

As what I was before, the Christian Church has thought that evangelism can convert people. However, before changing Japanese people, Christians ourselves must be changed. Christians must realize the reason why the victims do not want to be “comforted” in the church.

(2) Conversion from escape theology to liberation theology

a. Christian Church that reproduces wounds of the affected areas

The Christian Church is satisfied with the gospel, support and the blessings of the spiritual heritage left by Christians. However, they are insensitive to the anger, sufferings and chagrin of the disaster affected people. They are too indifferent to the reality of the marginal village. Nowadays, the flow that encourage to increase the number of fellowship to the church, such as “I want useful information”, “I don’t want to hear hard stories” and “It is better to delete the scars of disasters when we proceed our reconstruction”, is occupying more of the part. Even if we gather for worship, the place is filled with ethea that fade the disaster event as to be “the history on the paper”. On the other hand, there are “chaplain”¹⁷ and the principle and activities of Kamazaki Chiristkyo Kyouyukai that “supports without evangelism purpose”¹⁸. Some churches are also working on Children’s cafeteria.

In the disaster affected area, although it is possible to recover, restore and reconstruct the materialistic situation, a dialogue to be with disaster affected victim’s PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), unattended death and listening volunteer is tend to be discontinuous. People do not hear the bitterness, frustration and spiritless of the victims, and they make light of taking time to hear the grief of crying to God. The relationship to establish trust each other by increasing the number of visits and talks to hear the cry of victims is needed. In other words, you will be asked to be close friends. It is necessary to examine carefully.

b. Choosing a poor person

The morning prayers in the Bible were written by people who knew that they didn’t have any power to do anything¹⁹. God is the existence that approach closely to the “poor”, “smallest” and weakest people. (Psalm 113:6) That is not because the sin of the poor are less, but “smallest people” have been excluded from the sinful world. In the economic dog-eat-dog world, there is a mechanism like an ant-lion hall, once you drop off from the system, you will never be able to drag yourself up.

What the first church chose was that the people who were crowded out from the sliding society, as “Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to

¹⁴ 2011. Mikami, N. *Higashinihondaishinsainiokeru kokoronokeachimu. Katsudounokeikenkara. Keanohituyouseito henkennitsuite*. Muroran General Hospital Magazine. Vo.36. 46.

¹⁵ 2011. Takagi, K. *Kanashindeii daisaigaito gurifukea*. NHK Publishing. 58-59.

¹⁶ 2018. *The Christian Newspaper*. July 21.

¹⁷ It is a Japanese-style chaplain that is a model after European and American chaplain, and they are a religious person who provides mental care in public spaces in Japan without aiming for missionary work or evangelism. *Japanese Association for Religious Studies*.

2013. Taniyama, Y. *Possibilities and Tasks for Chaplain Activities in Japan, as Seen from the Disaster Area (Religious Care in the Public Sphere: Possibilities of Chaplain Activities in Japan, Panels, Research Reports, THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST ANNUAL CONVENTION)*. 829-830.

¹⁸ Mr. Honda Tesuro says, “Belonging to any religion, whether Christian or Jewish, does not guarantee salvation. (snip) To live the gospel is not the important thing. (snip) There is no need to do any kind of solicitation or evangelism like a prostration such as ‘You will never be saved unless you join in our religion’. For those who want to push through with no religious faith, that’s perfectly fine. What the most important is keeping an evangelical point of view and a realistic work that unites the pain and hope of those who are the smallest.”

2015. Shirahase, T. *The Homeless and the Social Role of Religion*. Kansei Gakuin Daigaku Kenkyu Sousho. Nakanishiya. 153-154.

¹⁹ 2019. Katongole, E. Rice, C. *Reconciling All Things*. The Board of Publications The United Church of Christ in Japan. 118.

be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?” (James 2:5) Typhoon No.15 attacked Chiba Prefecture and other places just a moment after the event of a record-breaking deluge (August 27, 2019) that occurred in Saga Prefecture. From Kobe, we needed to stay near the “scar” of Mera Minamibousou Chiba Prefecture. Two of the five people who participated in the 7th Chiba Disaster Volunteer were crowded out from the system and became “people living on the street”. We become familiar with people through every week food distribution at Kobe East Park (next to the Kobe City Hall) since April 2014. Food distribution has been started by participants of Tohoku volunteers²⁰. They have been excluded from a society because they do not hold a house, does not work for a company, does not have a resident card and they are not eligible to be a payment target for welfare.

Those who have been doing management of our organization have been ridiculed and they were said from other people that “The street dwellers are lazy. They are useless like once you become a beggar for 3 days, you cannot help doing it”. Those street people who become familiar with us did volunteer activities such as moving rubbles, muds and changing tatami mats at Koyaura and Ichihara Kure City Hiroshima Prefecture and Mabi Town Kurashiki City Okayama Prefecture through our Western Japan Heavy Rain Relief Volunteer. They were the first to take the initiative in serving to do severe and heavy work to the very last moment with sweating, and to see their act, I was made to “repent (Greek word μετανοέω *metanoo*)” my prejudice, just like some presidents of company also experience²¹. They say that general Christian churches are gorgeous and have a high threshold, have many rules and are uncomfortable. There is a reality of decorated architecture, art and music that excite the elite consciousness of wealthy people.

c. A church that doesn't stay close to a tear

It is a “peace” for people who lost their family, work and friends in the disaster affected area if they can successfully respond to “disaster prevention”? There are five districts in Mera area with about 200 houses. Area chief of Kandamachi Shimada Masao (76 years old) was sighing about the residents of his district on last week, December 9. It was because even after just three months since the occurrence of Typhoon No.15, there is suspicion on the government's disaster victim certificate. They are angry about the unclear criteria between “half collapse” and “partially destroyed”. There was no response about the revision of the criteria from the government office and also how much support fund will be provided by the Disaster Relief Act is unclear. There are three “complete collapse” houses in the area. According to a law that was acknowledged 28 years ago, if the case is assessed as “complete collapse”, relief fund is determined 3 million yen. However, the two-storied house of Ms. Kotani Toshie (77 years old), who is providing the space for us, become a single story house because its 2nd floor was blown off, and her house is certified as “complete collapse” case. But, since she is single living, relief fund become 1.5 million yen.

The plan says that 595,000 yen will be paid for “half collapse” and “partially destroyed”. That money will not be paid to the disaster affected victims, but it will be paid to the contractor who repaired the roof and house. Therefore, in the end, the victims themselves will not receive a yen. Husband and wife, Kanda Hiroshi & Yoshie, who live in Ryushima Kyonan Ttown, get indignant at this reality. Their neighborhood also just don't know what to deal with their anger about that their houses were not properly assessed and it was certified as “partially destroyed”, even their houses were obviously large scale “complete collapse”. Regarding the “disaster relief money”, 10,000 yen to the “complete collapse” and 5,000 yen to the “half collapse” will be paid to the victims. Through the media, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide announced with confidence that they designated the disaster as an “extremely severe disaster”²². Although the roof, ceiling and wall are damaged, a repairman is not possible with 5,000 yen. They are just compelled to accept it. Even in the Mera Kanda area alone, 5 people went out somewhere in 3 months. They must have been moved somewhere. The cold wind of separation with a childhood friend leaving without a good-bye greeting, who has been fellowshipping for many years, are

²⁰ cf. <http://kisokobe.sub.jp/article/%E7%82%8A%E3%81%8D%E5%87%BA%E3%81%97/6737/>

²¹ “Metanoia (22 times in the New Testament)”, means 180 degree shift from the stereotypes of custom, tradition and common sense, rather than “repenting of sin”. In Hebrew, it is “שׁוּבָה *shuwb*” and it appears 1,075 times in the Old Testament.
<http://kicc.sub.jp/2013/10/29/%E6%AD%BB%E3%81%AB%E3%81%A4%E3%81%84%E3%81%A6%E3%81%A9%E3%81%86%E8%80%83%E3%81%88%E3%82%8B%E3%81%8B/>

²² 2019. *The Nihon Keizai Shinbun*. October 10

blowing. The typical strong sense of villager's friendship that is uncommon in the city, are likely to be separated by natural disasters. Therefore, Kobe International Sustaining Organization holds a meeting with lawyers that follow with the wishes of the residents. When considering disaster prevention, the active work of private volunteers started in Saga and Chiba Prefecture are desired from now on. Although we cannot ignore fire fighters, fire brigades and the Japan Self-Defense Forces, but in fact, “*Shien* (Sustainable Relationship)” from the local residents is the base of the work to rescue lives from disasters.

(3) Disaster prevention

a. Volcano

The word by a Japanese physicist Terada Torahiko [1878-1935], “*Tensaiha wasuretakekoroni yattekuru* (=Great natural disaster comes to us when we forget the last one)” is very famous. However, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic activities since entering the 21st century have characterized as “Dead Capital Japan”. Especially in Kobe, it has been attacked by natural disasters without having time to forget the last one. Japanese people seem to live next to disasters. Kobe’s disaster history can be said as a microcosm of natural disasters in the Japanese archipelago. Kobe, which is often hit by disasters, seems to be affected by the Rokko Mountains.

On December 22, 2018, at around 9:27 pm (December 22, 11:27 pm Japan time), Krakatoa, which is located between the islands of Java and Sumatra in the middle province of Indonesian, was exploded and a sector collapse had occurred. A tsunami occurred in the Sunda Strait and more than 200 people were dead or missing. During the 2nd Indonesia volunteer (January 7-13, 2019), I had opportunities to discuss about natural disasters with Indonesian Secretary General Jenderal Cipta Karya and also Dr. Maryoko Hadi who has an experience to give a lecture at Tokyo University, for 2 hours²³. At that time, they were also worrying about the volcanic explosion in Japan.

Kobe University Professor Tatsumi Yoshiyuki [1954-] is giving a warning that a volcanic explosion would ruin entire Japan and it will be “Lost Japan”²⁴. Volcanic explosions are more serious disasters than Nankai Megathrust Earthquakes, Earthquake centered directly under the capital and typhoons. Looking at the natural disasters that occurred frequently in 2019, it seems that God has been rested after completing his work of creation. It would be like the clock entered to take a rest and quiet, after winding a spring of the clock and ticking a time.

“Restore” from “Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me” comes from Hebrew word “בָּרָא *bara*” (Psalm 51:12) It is the same Hebrew word “*bara*” as “created” in “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”²⁵. Therefore, the God’s work of creation is still on the way to completion. It is not “*Creatio ex nihilo* (Latin word, creation from nothingness)” that create the “thing” from “nothing”, but it is “*Creatio secunda*”, the work of creation that is still on the way to the new heaven and earth.

b. Orderly design

The nature world is realized by the hands of Almighty God. In Japan, we love “*花鳥風月(Ka-cho-fu-getsu*. Flower-Bird-Wind-Moon. The beauties of nature)” and enjoy the seasonal flora and fauna, the mountains and natural productions. To enjoy seeing rare varieties of alpine plants and butterflies flying in the mountains, and experiencing hot spring baths that promote physical health, we use highways, mountain tunnels and huge rest areas. We have been making the nature world to obey to us for human comfort,

²³ Iwamura, Y. *The 2nd Indonesia Volunteer Report*.

²⁴ 1993. Arai, F. *Kazanbai Koukogaku*. Kokon Shoin. 1.

²⁵ Creation (Latin, *Creatio ex nihilo*) is the act of producing “thing” from “nothing”. According to a book of Plato [427 – 347 BC] “*Theaetetus*”, it is different from the creation (Latin, *Creatio secunda*) of the world by Demiurge, but it was the material which was eternally existing. (cf. 1998. Wolters, M.A. *Creation regained*. Seibu chyuukaibunshyo iinkai. Translated by Miyazaki Tetsuya. 35)

convenience and efficiency. Once God caused the Great Flood by seeing a land was filled with violence. In the oracle given immediately after the flood, God has commanded to eat after exsanguinate blood. In other words, since “blood is life”, he limited unnecessary killing animals²⁶. Because we pursued too much corporate profits over natural resources, Ashio copper mine pollution incident occurred. House of Representatives Tanaka Shōzō [1841-1913] also proclaimed. “*Kusakihajinjinzouniarazu. Zenzenjinrikinohatarakino koreichibuniarawaru ketsukanari. Torikemonomushisakanakaiyamakawakusaki bontenchikanno doubutsuha nanihitotutoshitewarenioshiezarunareba koreminawagaryoshinari. Amen.* (Plants are not made by humans for humans. It is a partly result of the work of the Almighty God. Birds, animals, insects, fishes, shells, mountains, rivers, grasses, trees, and every flora and fauna between heaven and earth teach us. They are the great teacher. Amen)”²⁷. He considered nature such as plants and trees as a teacher rather than the thing that human domain it.

On September 6, 2018, I heard that an earthquake occurred in Atsuma Town Hokkaido when I was in Beirut Lebanon. It was unimaginable that the *Ainu mosir* (the quiet earth of human beings), that lives in green way will be damaged by earthquakes. I was attacked by a tragic thought, “This is the end of Japan”. Immediately after returning from Beirut, I was worried about the damages of the Ainu villages, so I headed to New Chitose Airport from Itami Airport on September 9 (Sunday), 2018.

On September 11, 2018, we drove in the blackout from Atsumi Town through The Hidaka Expressway about 45minutes to reach Biratori-chō. At there, there is Nibutani. The showcases at the Kayano Shigeru Nibutani Ainu Museum were broken, and the first floor of the museum was scattered and collapsed glass pieces were covered all over the floor²⁸.

In the document of 1965, it is recorded that there were 466 families with 2,313 Ainu people were living in Biratori-chō. Probably the area was where the most Ainu people live in Hokkaido. It is transmitted by word of mouth through *Kamuy Yukar* (Ainu Spirits Singing) that the place is the sacred place where the god of wisdom *Ae-oyna-kamuy* has descended. Recent museum director is the second son of Kayano Shigeru, Kayano Shiro. He inherits *Yukar* (Ainu sagas that form a long rich tradition of oral literature) and *Uepeker* (Ainu folktales, and form part of the Ainu's oral literature).

“Ainu” means “human” in the Ainu language. In the Ainu society, the word “Ainu” is used only for the people who are really good in many ways.

The Ainu people were forced to stop their lives as a hunting people in their living world of forests and rivers, and they were made to live by “farming”. After the war, the government took a lead and planted cedar and cypress for the purpose of making money. Imported timbers became cheaper, so the mountain was left untreated. Pruning and maintenance of the forest were stopped; therefore *satoyama* (undeveloped woodland near populated areas) had been disappeared. Deciduous forests are necessary to prevent landslides and disaster prevention²⁹. We have developed the large scale of forest for farming and have been

²⁶ “But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.” (Genesis 9:4) The fact that humans have been given nature as its living food means that humans have been entrusted with the concept of Stewardship to protect animal from extinction at the same time. In order not to kill indiscriminately, the norm of “blood = life”, that is, “blood” as the thing God eat, he permitted a slaughter act in the manner of the way that animals die without suffering.

²⁷ 2013. Iwamura, Y. *Resurrection of Rice Field, Mountain, and Bay*. Summer Workshop of Japan Association of Religion and Ethics. Asuka Institute of Kansai University Ueda Memorial Hall; 1979. *Tanaka Shōzō Zenshyu Dai Ikan*. Tanaka Shōzō Zenshyu hensankai. Iwanami Shoten. 330. 341.

²⁸ Iwamura, Y. *Technology supremacy brings about natural disasters- the 1st Hokkaido Earthquake Volunteer-*. The meaning of Ainu word “*Niputay*” originally come from “the place where trees grow”. There are many Ainu names at places at northern region from Tohoku area. Particularly, according to the Office of Ainu Measures Promotion of Hokkaido Government, about 80% of the names of municipalities in Hokkaido originally come from the Ainu language. Researching the reasons why kanji (Japanese Chinese character) of places in Hokkaido is difficult to read, it seems that there were places where already named by an indigenous Ainu, so later Japanese Government applied kanji to match the sound and meaning of Ainu language.

Kayano Shigeru [1926 – 2006], the father of Kayano Shiro who I met, collected Ainu folk equipment for about 50 years since the 1950's, and also he actively devoted on recording Ainu language. His son, Shiro is the director / curator of “the Kayano Shigeru Nibutani Ainu Museum”.

²⁹ 2013. Iwamura, Y. *Resurrection of Rice Field, Mountain, and Bay*. Japan Association of Religion and Ethics. Asuka Institute of Kansai University Ueda Memorial Hall.

<http://kicc.sub.jp/2013/08/23/%E3%80%8C%E7%94%B0%E3%83%BB%E5%B1%B1%E3%83%BB%E6%B9%BE%E3%81%AE%E5%BE%A9%E6%B4%BB%E3%80%8D/>

cutting it for pasturage. Today, we must know that human desire was actually the greatest destruction of nature³⁰.

c. Discharge from dam

For disaster prevention, it is necessary to shift to an antidam policy. From September 9 to 14, 2018, among 160 families, 4 people were dead by the earthquake in Horonai area. Ms Tatsunami Toshiko (80 years old) who had been opening a tofu shop before the earthquake occurred, told me about the fear of the earthquake. Last time visit, there was no road to the Atuma Dam from Tomisato area, where is about 2 km ahead Horonai area. There are five dams in Atuma Town³¹. Those are under the control of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), not by the town. It is the same situation as Hakimasue Asakura City Fukuoka Prefecture³². Even researchers have not been able to analyze the cause of the huge landslide collapse that had occurred in several places in Atsuma area. If there is a scholar who denies that the large-scale construction at underground of 30 km to build dams has triggered an epicenter, I do like to ask about the safety myth of such a fake. Horonai area was the most severely affected area after the Yoshino area. They became an isolated island on land.

MLIT must immediately have provided the budget for reconstruction to the disaster affected people in Atsuma Twon, instead of constructing a new dam. On July 5, 2017, the tragedy of Hakimasue Asakura City Fukuoka Prefecture occurred due to the dam - break of sand control dam. Due to the discharge from Shin-Nariwagawa Dam, which supplies industrial water to Mizushima Coastal Industrial Zone in Krashiki City, a 6-meter water flood hit Mabi Town on July 6, 2018. Water flood hit Atsumagawa area [Atsuma Town, Abira-chō, Mukawa-chō] on September 6, 2018, due to the discharge from Atsuma Dam, which supplies industrial water to the Japan’s biggest, Tomakomai Industrial district. Kobe International Sustaining Organization has often pointed out that sand control dam breaks, discharges from dams and poor riverbank protections are the causes of natural disasters. I am deeply impressed now by the fact that the word of dam discharge finally become to be taken up by newspaper editorials this year. About the great casualties that were brought by the typhoon No.19 in Iwaki City Fukushima Prefecture, the media quickly raised a problem with dam discharges³³.

At Togagawa River in Kobe City, renovation construction has been carried out every year from 1939[Showa 14] to 1959[Showa 34], except 1952 and 1953³⁴.

都賀川支流仙谷川
 仙谷堰堤 { $L=76.0\ m$
 $H=18.0\ m$
 昭和 29年 4月着工、同31年 8月竣工



Constructed in Augst 1956

都賀川支流六甲川
 山脇堰堤 { $L=66.0\ m$
 $H=20.5\ m$
 昭和 31年 6月着工、同35年12月竣工



Constructed in December 1960

Since the Flood Disaster in the Hanshin area (July 3 -5, 1938 [Showa 13]), sediment control dams had been constructed constantly at the upper area of Togagawa River.

³⁰ 2013. Hirabayashi, T. *Shizennomondaito seiten*. Research Center for Christianity and Culture, Kwansai Gakuin University. 160.

³¹ Iwamura, Y. *Technology supremacy brings about natural disasters- the 1st Hokkaido Earthquake Volunteer-*. <http://kisokobe.sub.jp/article/12559/> 2018. *The Christian Newspaper*. October 1.

³² Iwamura, Y. Kyushu Masue Volunteer Report. <http://kisokobe.sub.jp/article/10343/>

³³ <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2414801938627900&set=pcb.2414802411961186&type=3&th eater>

³⁴ 1966. *Hyogono sabo*. Hyogo Prefecture Public Works Section Sabo Division.18.

A concrete sediment control dam is the set with cutting forests and river conservancy works. Both sides and bottom of the river are covered by concrete. In a composition that a three-sided revetment accelerates the speed of water flow, so that “flash flood” occurs. On the other hand, “land dike” made of stone masonry, not concrete, it has an ability to reduce the flow speed, even after the inside of the embankment is filled with sand and stones. Therefore, it is possible to prevent the straight attack by debris flow to the downstream area³⁵.

According to the Flood Disaster in the Hanshin area in 1938, it is recorded that 933 deaths, and 696,000 people, which was 72% of population of Kobe City, were affected. In 2008, a total of 26 people were washed away and 5 people were dead by flash flood at Togagawa River, which originally from Mount Rokkō. Until that time, Togagawa River had been giving local residents a safety myth as a “disaster prevention communication river”.

Humans must be more humble in front of the marvels of nature.

<Conclusion>

Talking through local people while we are doing our volunteer activities, we got a feeling of the fact that natural calamities are not actually a natural disasters but it can be determined as a man-made disasters. Hiroshima Prefecture had planned to prevent the flow by sediment control dam before the event of debris flow occurred in Koyaura area Saka-chō. They assumed in advance a landslide scale of about 55,000 cubic meters, and it was more than six times the amount of sediment volume of about 9,000 cubic meters. The amount of sediment runoff due to heavy rain is unknown, but the sediment control dam broke down, and caused 15 deaths and one missing in the same area³⁶.

When we consider about “disaster prevention, there are three issues. First is taking care of the forests, that is restore *satoyama* and prevent debris flow. Second is a breakaway from dam dependence. And third is secure of food safety³⁷. As it is written in theme scripture, “Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings”, the mission of “Repairer of Broken Walls” is making harmony with nature, it means, to be with in reconciliation. Volunteer members do not need to become a subsidiary organization to the Social Welfare Council (Volunteer Center). If you be at under the supervision of them, you cannot think about the reality, cause or repair of broken Japan. Rather, it is important to set up private volunteers, search for disaster affected victims, and spend a long time to listen cry of the people.

If you don't stay in a broken marginal villages, have the same breathing and have no talk to become more than friend with them, you won't be able to connect to recover, restore and reconstruct the miserable reality that has been driven by depopulation, aging and declining birthrate. Let's head to the tear for our brothers and sisters.

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³⁵ 1969. Rokkousan o kiru. Takao, K. The Mainichi Newspapers Kobe Brunch. 185.

³⁶ 2018. Mainichi Shimbun. August 10.

³⁷ 2019. *Quarterly journal "Shien"*. No.29. Kobe International Sustaining Organization. November 10. 4.