

Activities of Japanese police in the Great East Japan Earthquake

Takahiko Yasuda
National Police Academy of Japan

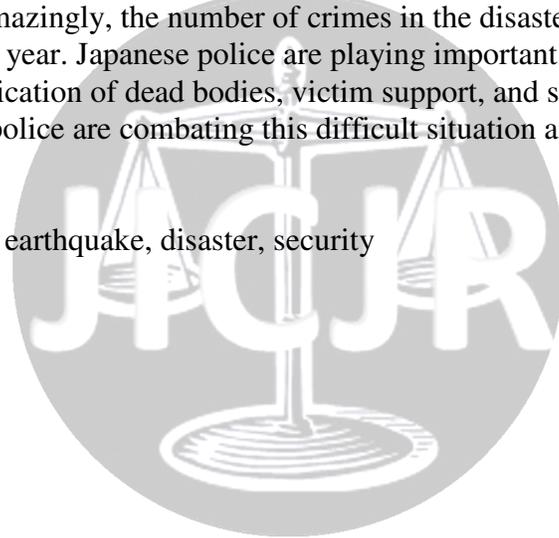
Yusuke Takayama
Police Policy Research Center

Katsuhiro Soma
Police Policy Research Center

Abstract

On March 11, 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami struck a wide area of East Japan and caused a nuclear catastrophe at the Fukushima No.1 Nuclear Power Plant. Despite this difficult situation, most Japanese people, including the victims, have been calm in enduring this disaster. Amazingly, the number of crimes in the disaster areas decreased compared to the previous year. Japanese police are playing important roles in crime prevention, rescue operations, identification of dead bodies, victim support, and so on. This paper will introduce how Japanese police are combating this difficult situation and discuss problems to be addressed.

Keywords: police, Japan, earthquake, disaster, security



1. STATE OF THE DAMAGE FROM THE DISASTER

At 2:46 p.m. on March 11, 2011, an earthquake of magnitude 9.0 and seismic intensity of 7 struck Japan, with the epicenter off the Sanriku coast,¹ as indicated in Figure 1 (Appendix). This disaster did not end with the earthquake; it caused massive tsunamis across the entire coast of East Japan and a serious nuclear crisis at the Fukushima No.1 Nuclear Power Plant. It was the largest earthquake in recorded history in Japan. It was of an unprecedented scale for an earthquake that struck a developed nation, and it was also of the largest scale globally. The Cabinet Office estimates the amount of damage to property, such as buildings, utility facilities, and social infrastructure, to be approximately 16,900 billion yen (\$190 billion).² According to insurance group Munich RE Japan, the damage due to the Great East Japan Earthquake accounts for about 55% of the damage caused by all disasters that occurred worldwide in 2011, even without the damage caused by the nuclear crisis in Fukushima.³ The details of the damage as of January 16, 2013, are as follows: 15,879 deaths, 2,700 missing people, 6,132 injured, 128,911 completely collapsed buildings, 268,882 partially collapsed buildings, and 4,200 damaged roads.⁴

Although a simple comparison cannot be made, if it is recalled that the number of deaths caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 was about 1,800, the enormity of the damage can be understood.⁵ Japan experienced another great earthquake in West Japan in January 1995, the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, which caused massive damage that included 6,434 deaths and 43,792 injured people.⁶

A major characteristic of the recent earthquake was the overwhelming damage caused by the large-scale tsunami. Among the causes of death found by postmortem examinations in the six months after the occurrence of the earthquake, drowning accounted for 91%.⁷ Also, 65% of deaths were among those age 60 or older,⁸ and it is understood that many older people failed to escape as the tsunami approached. There were 30 police officers killed while carrying out their duties. Most of them were swallowed by the tsunami while they were calling on residents for evacuation. In addition, 3 police stations and 42 police boxes and police substations became

¹ Cabinet Office of Japan. (2013). About the Great East Japan Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.kantei.go.jp/saigai/pdf/201303261700jisin.pdf>

² Cabinet Office of Japan. (2011). Estimation of the amount of damage in the Great East Japan Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.bousai.go.jp/oshirase/h23/110624-1kisyu.pdf>

³ Munich RE. (2012). Review of natural catastrophes in 2011: Earthquakes result in record loss year. Retrieved from http://www.munichre.com/en/media_relations/press_releases/2012/2012_01_04_press_release.aspx

⁴ National Police Agency of Japan. (2013). Damage and police responses in the Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/higaijokyo.pdf>

⁵ Department of Commerce, Service Assessment, Hurricane Katrina August 23 -31,2005

⁶ Fire and Disaster Management Agency of Japan. (2006). The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.fdma.go.jp/data/010604191452374961.pdf>

⁷ Sugaya, H. (2011). Legal/administrative inspection and identification in the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 74.

⁸ Sugaya, H. (2011). Legal/administrative inspection and identification in the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 75.

unusable⁹, while 71 police vehicles were damaged. As such, police facilities, vehicles, etc. were also severely damaged, which caused problems in police activities after the disaster.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE AND PUBLIC-ORDER MAINTENANCE ISSUES

The Great East Japan Earthquake has characteristics that make it completely different from the earthquakes Japan has experienced in the past, which has brought up new issues for police. The National Police Agency has presented the following three points¹⁰.

2.1. Prolongation of Restoration/Reconstruction of Disaster-Stricken Areas Due to Tsunami Damage

First is the prolongation of restoration or reconstruction of disaster-stricken areas due to tsunami damage. Across extensive areas along the Pacific Ocean in Eastern Japan, the damage from the tsunami was massive, including the destruction of entire towns. In addition, many people were swept away offshore, and it was extremely difficult to find missing people. Even when bodies were found, their residences were often far away, items for identification had been swept away, and many of their family members were also victims. Due to these factors, 131 bodies (0.8% of recovered bodies) have yet to be identified as of March 11, 2013.¹¹ This situation is delaying the transition from the emergency response phase immediately after the earthquake to the restoration/reconstruction phase. As a result, police have also been forced to engage in disaster-related activities for a long period.

2.2. Difficulty in Resolving the Nuclear Incident

Second is the difficulty in resolving the nuclear incident. It is thought that it will take a considerable amount of time for the problematic situation at the Fukushima No.1 Nuclear Power Plant to come to an end. During this period, police must conduct checks on passersby in the hazard area (within 20 km of the power plant), provide support for residents' temporary entry, and engage in security activities around the power plant.¹² However, the police have no experience conducting such activities while protecting themselves from radiation, which presents many difficulties.

2.3. Collapse of Local Communities

⁹ National Police Agency of Japan. (2012). White paper on police, 20.

¹⁰ National Police Agency of Japan. (2013). Police responses in the Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/keisatsusoti/zentaiban.pdf>

¹¹ National Police Agency of Japan. (2013). Police responses in the Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/keisatsusoti/zentaiban.pdf>

¹² National Police Agency of Japan. (2011). White paper on police, 4.

The tsunami swept away entire cities and towns; some areas are off-limits due to the nuclear incident, and many disaster-stricken people who lost their homes and workplaces have been forced to spread out to various locations for evacuation. As a result, local communities, which have been essential in preventing crime, have collapsed. This leads to an absence of watchful eyes and the decline of normative consciousness. This situation creates concern for the deterioration of public safety from a long-term perspective.

3. POLICE ACTIVITIES

3.1. Formation

Police departments in the three disaster-stricken prefectures (Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima) in the Tohoku area, where the damage was concentrated, are all medium- or small-scale police organizations: about 9,000 police officers belonged to these departments at the time of the disaster (2,115 in Iwate, 3,683 in Miyagi, 3,241 in Fukushima). This formation was not sufficient to respond to this unprecedented earthquake. Based on the National Police Agency's instructions and requests from disaster-stricken areas, police units organized in respective prefectures, using the lessons learned from the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake of 1995, were dispatched from other prefectures' police departments to the affected areas less than half an hour after the earthquake. At one point, as many as 4,800 people, which accounts for approximately 2% of all police officers who belong to police departments in prefectures other than those in disaster-stricken areas, were dispatched to disaster-stricken areas as a special measure.¹³ Since February 1, 2012, there have been 750 police officers dispatched to the three disaster-stricken prefectures from police departments nationwide for periods of approximately 2 years to respond to this special situation.¹⁴ These officers engage in duties as employees of the police departments in the affected areas. A total of approximately one million police officers have been dispatched as of March, 2013.¹⁵

Japan's police system is basically a municipal police force, and individual criminal investigations and other activities are conducted by each prefecture's police departments. On the other hand, the regulations of the Police Act stipulate the following: That is, prefectural public safety commissions that manage respective prefectural police departments can request help from the National Police Agency or other prefectural police departments (Section 1, Article 60, Police Act). Also, according to this law, the Commissioner General of the National Police Agency shall direct and supervise prefectural police departments for certain administrative work. The administrative work includes matters regarding police management of cases related to a large-scale disaster that disturb the public mind and are related to national public security (Article 16, Section 2; Article 5, Section 2 (d)(i) of the Police Act). This system allows police officers from all over Japan to operate flexibly in the event of an emergency.

¹³ National Police Agency of Japan. (2011). White paper on police, 3

¹⁴ National Police Agency of Japan. (2013). Police responses in the Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/keisatsusoti/sono1.pdf>

¹⁵ National Police Agency of Japan. (2013). Police responses in the Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/keisatsusoti/sono1.pdf>

3.2. Main Activities in Disaster-Stricken Areas

3.2.1. Evacuation Guidance/Transport of People Having Difficulty Evacuating

In an especially dangerous situation, police officers can order people who are at risk to evacuate, order related people to take necessary measures, or take such measures themselves, according to the regulations in Article 4 of the Police Official Duties Execution Act. Also, the provision in Article 61 of the Basic Act on Disaster Control Measures stipulates that police officers can order eviction for evacuation as a proxy of a municipal mayor, when he or she cannot instruct it. From immediately after the occurrence of the earthquake, police officers engaged in evacuation guidance activities through collaboration with municipalities, such as having residents in areas at high risk for tsunami evacuate to higher ground. From the day after the earthquake, evacuation from the area near the Fukushima power plant was instructed sequentially by the national government. Accordingly, police officers guided residents for evacuation and transported those who could not evacuate on their own, such as elderly people in nursing homes, to evacuation centers and hospitals using police vehicles.¹⁶ Furthermore, because local communication networks were destroyed by the earthquake and tsunami, police radio was the only surviving line of communication, and it significantly contributed to conveyance of reliable information, including informing local governments of the prime minister's directions.¹⁷

On the other hand, some problems became clear. For example, police officers had to guide people who did not notice or ignored tsunami warnings and were heading toward the beach at the risk of their own lives. Also, police headquarters' instructions did not reach some people because police radios got mixed up, some officers did not carry radios, or for other reasons.¹⁸ In addition, it was confirmed as necessary to have information on the locations of people who require aid, evacuation routes, etc. in normal times in order to help residents evacuate.¹⁹

3.2.2. Rescue and Aid/Search

Police shall perform the duty of protecting citizens' lives, bodies, and assets, according to Article 2 of the Police Act. Also, police are authorized to enter others' properties, buildings, etc., as long as it is necessary to rescue disaster victims, according to Article 6 of the Police Official Duties Execution Act. Based on this, police have rescued and aided disaster victims and searched for missing people, collaborating with Self-Defense Forces and fire departments. Police officers rescued 3,750 victims.²⁰ Even in the hazard area, within 20 km of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, they engaged in search activities while working to prevent radiation exposure by wearing

¹⁶ National Police Agency of Japan. (2011). White paper on police, 4.

¹⁷ Inagaki, Y. (2011). An overview of police countermeasures for the accident at Fukushima nuclear power plants. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 49–50

¹⁸ Shigehisa, M. (2011). An overview of police countermeasures for 2011 Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake and its resulting tsunami. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 14.

¹⁹ Inagaki, Y. (2011). An overview of police countermeasures for the accident at Fukushima nuclear power plants. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 61

²⁰ Shigehisa, M. (2011). An overview of police countermeasures for 2011 Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake and its resulting tsunami. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 16.

radiation dosimeters and radioactive dust prevention gear, and they found and recovered over 350 bodies by June 20, 2011.²¹

3.2.3. Postmortem/Body Identification

When police find a body, they shall examine the body to determine the cause of death and its identity when it is clear that the death was not caused by a crime (Article 4 of the Dead Body Handling Regulations). When it is suspected that the death was caused by a crime, the body shall be handed over to the bereaved family after a preliminary postmortem is performed with attendance by a doctor (Article 229 of the Code of Criminal Procedure; Article 5 and 6 of the Postmortem Regulations). In the three disaster-stricken prefectures, a postmortem of every body was performed with the support of, at the maximum, about 500 coroners and other staff members from police departments nationwide. As water supply disruption and blackouts occurred, mud covering the bodies was carefully removed with the limited water available, and detailed examination had to be conducted under minimal lighting. As such, postmortem procedures were carried out in an inadequate environment. Although establishing identity is extremely difficult, every conceivable effort is being made, such as presenting victims' clothes and physical characteristics on a website, collecting DNA samples from bodies, obtaining donated blood from the Japanese Red Cross Society, and using a parentage testing method based on DNA type.²²

3.2.4. Support for Disaster Victims

Aiming to address the various issues that occur as a result of a long-term refugee lifestyle, and to secure disaster victims' security and safety, police officers, who are primarily female, visit evacuation centers to provide consultation to victims. In addition, mobile police boxes were established for visiting evacuation centers, and temporary service counters were installed to receive reports of lost property and claims, and to reissue driver's licenses. As such, efforts were made to reduce the burden on disaster victims.

3.2.5. Watch/Patrol Activities

Aiming to prevent various crimes that might be committed by those seeking to take advantage of the disaster, patrols were strengthened through the help of uniformed police officers and patrol cars from various prefectures' police departments. Investigators were also dispatched from all over Japan with the aim of strengthening control over various crimes.²³ In addition, to defuse groundless rumors that would raise disaster victims' anxiety, police actively provided accurate information on crime occurrence and crime prevention at evacuation centers and other places, and also advised Internet providers to call users' attention to the fallacy of vicious rumors on the Internet and to delete such information based on the terms of usage.

²¹ National Police Agency of Japan. (2011). White paper on police, 9.

²² Sugaya, H. (2011). Legal/administrative inspection and identification in the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 75–78.

²³ National Police Agency of Japan. (2011). White paper on police, 16.

Furthermore, because huge amounts of cash or other valuables were stored at financial institutions, stores, ATMs, etc. that were closed due to the earthquake, concerned parties were requested to recover cash and other valuables as soon as possible and to reinforce independent crime-prevention measures. In relation to this, a huge number of safes were washed away by the tsunami, of which over 5,000 were returned to the police. These safes have been opened to find the owners, and as of October 2011 approximately 2,583 million yen (\$29 million), which accounts for 98% of the total amount of cash (approximately 2,645 million yen or \$30 million) in the safes, has been returned to the owners.²⁴

4. SECURITY IN DISASTER-STRICKEN AREAS

It is commonly recognized that public order deteriorates and crime significantly increases after a big disaster,²⁵ but this phenomenon does not necessarily apply to Japan in recent years. As indicated in Table 1 (Appendix), the number of penal code offenses recognized during the year from March 2011, when the earthquake occurred, to February 2012 in the three disaster-stricken prefectures significantly decreased overall. Judging by type of crime, the number of crimes significantly decreased at a higher rate than the national average in every type of crime except burglary.²⁶ This tendency remained the same three months and six months after the earthquake. The only crime with an increase is burglary. Assessed by prefecture,²⁷ the number of burglary cases is decreasing in Iwate and Miyagi, while in Fukushima, where a hazard area was established due to the Fukushima nuclear power incident, the rate is 24.4% higher compared with the same period in the previous year, indicating a particular tendency. A more detailed analysis shows,²⁸ as in Table 2 (Appendix), an increase of recognized penal code offenses by 373 cases (+44.5%) compared with the same period in the previous year; the number of thefts increased by 437 cases (+44.5%); and the number of burglaries increased by 844 cases (+530.8%) at the three police stations (Futaba, Minamisoma, and Tamura) that have jurisdiction over the hazard area. This is considered to be mainly because private houses and shops in the hazard area became unattended; thieves from outside areas, and especially professional thieves, considered it a good opportunity for theft and burglarized houses and shops. In this way, crime is decreasing at a higher rate than the national average in the disaster-stricken areas, except for certain unique areas. As for public safety in the disaster areas, the rarity of looting has been a point of praise from foreign countries.²⁹ In reality, however, some looting did of course take place. Just after the earthquake, people were observed to have taken food that washed out of factories and to have stolen electric appliances from the second floors of submerged houses. Moreover, other problems in public safety have occurred. For example, there have been about 50 confirmed cases in which cash was stolen from ATMs installed in convenience stores and financial institutions, amounting

²⁴ Takai, Y. (2011). Reservation of safety and security in the stricken area of the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 124.

²⁵ Saito, T. (2002). Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and crime problems. *Keiho Zasshi*, 1, 17.

²⁶ National Police Agency of Japan. (2012). Great East Japan Earthquake: Damage and police responses. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/keisatsusoti/zentaiban.pdf>

²⁷ National Police Agency of Japan. (2012). Criminal situation in 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/toukei/seianki/h23hanzaizyousei.pdf>

²⁸ National Police Agency of Japan. (2012). Criminal situation in 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/toukei/seianki/h23hanzaizyousei.pdf>

²⁹ New York Times "Sympathy for Japan, and Admiration" Nicholas Kristof (Mar 11, 2011)

to about 700 million yen (\$8 million) in losses.³⁰ Also, there have been many crimes in which people took advantage of the good intentions and vulnerabilities of other people, such as fraud on the pretext of relief and condolence money, and heinous rip-off businesses taking advantage of people's anxiety related to the nuclear crisis, across the entire nation, including the disaster-stricken areas. There were 105 cases reported as of the end of August 2012, with the monetary amount of damages totaling approximately 127 million yen (\$1.4 million).

Furthermore, a major problem in public safety after a disaster is groundless rumors. In the recent disaster, rumors that could increase disaster victims' anxiety, such as "an armed foreign group assaulted an evacuation center," and "looting and sexual crimes are rampant," were spread through email, Twitter, or by word of mouth.³¹ Even outside the disaster-stricken areas, groundless rumors that could promote mass panic spread. Examples include that tap water was dangerous due to radioactive contamination, and that people shouldn't be exposed to rain because harmful substances caught up in clouds were falling with the rain due to an explosion at an oil complex. This issue is becoming more serious today as communication networks are well-developed.

Although problems do exist, as described above, it is recognized that the majority of Japanese citizens have calmly and patiently endured the disaster, and only a small number of people have committed crimes. Some people try to explain this with the routine activity theory. Hosho Tanaka, The former Secretariat Commissioner of the Director-General of the National Police Agency, explained the reasons for the decrease in crime as follows. The assets that could be stolen were washed away by the tsunami, and it also became difficult for potential perpetrators to go to crime sites or escape from the sites. In addition, the means to commit crimes, such as telephones and cars, became limited due to blackouts and shortages of fuel.³² On the other hand, his analysis was that the reason for the increase in burglaries is the absence of supervision and the loss of function of security equipment. Some people consider that the decrease in crime was mostly the result of communities' anticrime activities. According to Hideyo Matsubara, who studies the crime that occurred in the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake in 1995, objects that can be targeted for crime in disaster-stricken areas are in a defenseless state, official social control has collapsed, and the inflow of outside people means more potential criminals; and as a result, an increase in crime is expected. However, crime actually decreased, mostly because the sense of solidarity among disaster victims was strengthened and they had sufficient basic goods.³³ Specifically, he asserts that unofficial supervision, or in other words, communities' anticrime activities, contributed to the restriction of crime. These explanations have a degree of persuasiveness. Compared with other countries, however, the reason why riots and looting rarely occur in Japan has not been fully explained. Observation of actual cases of riots and looting indicates the following structure: a class of people feels unfairly treated socially, but their frustration is suppressed in everyday life. However, when an earthquake or other disaster occurs, their frustration explodes, which leads them to commit crimes by taking

³⁰ National Police Agency of Japan. (2012). Criminal situation in 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/toukei/seianki/h23hanzaizyousei.pdf>

³¹ Takai, Y. (2011). Reservation of safety and security in the stricken area of the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 118 -119.

³² Tanaka, N. (2011). Think about the damage in the disaster from the perspective of crime prevention. *Keisatsu Koron*, 10, 4-8.

³³ Matsubara, H. (2002). Disasters and crimes: Crime situation and characteristics after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. *Keiho Zasshi*, 1, 42-56.

advantage of the weakened social controls. In Japan, however, there may not be this kind of social class, or it is thought that there are not many people in such a class, which is considered to be one reason that riots and looting are rare in this country, as Nicholas Kristof of the New York Times pointed out.³⁴ More specifically, poverty is actually expanding, in Japan as well as elsewhere. The relative poverty rate in 2008 is 14.9%, which puts Japan's rank at 27th among the 30 OECD countries.³⁵ According to research conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2012, approximately 92% of people in Japan evaluated their living standard as belonging to the middle class,³⁶ which indicates that the majority of Japanese people do not have a sense of being treated unfairly enough to engage in riots and looting. Furthermore, in terms of a national trait, Japanese people tend to unconsciously take actions that are expected of them or considered desirable by others in a particular situation. This is also considered to be why they do not engage in looting, but rather wait in lines and share things in an orderly manner. Especially in the Tohoku district, located in the northeastern part of Japan, where the damage was devastating, primary industry is active, traditional culture remains strong, and individualism is weak compared with the big cities. These factors are also considered to contribute to the orderly behavior.

In the event of a great disaster, however, it is difficult to obtain accurate statistics on crime, and there are a considerable number of undetected or unreported crimes. As such, some might criticize that the data indicated above are not very reliable. Of course, it is undeniable that there are hidden crimes. On the other hand, because patrols by police and residents' associations were continually conducted from an early stage in the disaster-stricken areas, the number is unlikely to be very high. In Japan, when someone picks up something that isn't his or her property, it must always be taken to the police; otherwise that person will be penalized. In 2011, of the reported loss of cash of approximately 49.8 billion yen(\$ 560 million), the cash citizens picked up and turned in to police was approximately 18.9 billion yen(\$ 212 million), out of which 13.9 billion yen(\$ 156 million) was returned to its owners.³⁷ Simple calculation indicates that approximately 28% of lost cash was returned to its owners. Such social norms seem to function to a certain degree even in the event of a disaster. In fact, safes that contain large amounts of cash (approx. 2.6 billion yen(\$ 29 million) in total) have been taken to police after the earthquake.³⁸

5. FUTURE ISSUES

Three major future issues can be pointed out. The first issue is to protect public order in the hazard area that was established due to the Fukushima nuclear incident. For conducting activities involving radiation exposure, police must bear huge costs, such as for personnel, equipment and materials, time, exposure risk, and so on. Meanwhile, burglary is increasing in the

³⁴ New York Times "Sympathy for Japan, and Admiration" Nicholas Kristof(Mar 11,2011)

³⁵ OECD. (2008). Growing unequal? Income distribution and poverty in OECD. Retrieved from [http://www.mzv.sk/App/wcm/media.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_CBD2FABFAB495B52C1257648003959F2_SK/\\$File/Growing%20Unequal.pdf](http://www.mzv.sk/App/wcm/media.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_CBD2FABFAB495B52C1257648003959F2_SK/$File/Growing%20Unequal.pdf)

³⁶ Cabinet Office of Japan. (2012). Opinion poll on national life. Retrieved from <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/h24/h24-life/index.html>

³⁷ National Police Agency of Japan. (2012). White paper on police, 93.

³⁸ Takai, Y. (2011). Reservation of safety and security in the stricken area of the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 124.

hazard area, and infringement of citizens' assets is continuing. How to maintain public order in such unique circumstances requires further study.

The second issue is to restore local communities. The former Commissioner General of the National Police Agency, Takaharu Ando, presented reconstruction of local communities as one of the priority tasks in response to this earthquake, based on the idea that maintenance of public order is the foundation for restoration and reconstruction.³⁹ In order to smoothly and effectively implement crime investigation and crime prevention activities, the existence of communities is essential. Due to the earthquake, local communities were swept away by the tsunami and collapsed. Police must provide support by supplying information, renting equipment and materials, conducting joint patrols, etc., for local independent anticrime activities. It has been pointed out that local anticrime activities also strengthen connections among local residents and energize and revitalize the entire region.⁴⁰ Police should also contribute to community reconstruction.

The third issue is how to respond to a Tokyo metropolitan inland earthquake or another large tremor, an event that is predicted to occur in the near future. For example, the research team at the Earthquake Research Institute of the University of Tokyo announced the estimate that a Tokyo metropolitan inland earthquake will occur with a probability of approximately 20% to 60% within five years from today.⁴¹ Also, the Japanese government's Earthquake Research Committee predicts that an earthquake will occur in a major city such as Nagoya, Shizuoka, or the Tokai region (along the main artery connecting Tokyo and Osaka) within 30 years, with a probability of 88%.⁴² Minimization of damage in response to such a great disaster is the task of the entire government, and police also need to urgently review the disaster plan based on the lessons learned from the last earthquake.

6. CONCLUSION

The Great East Japan Earthquake is an unprecedented great disaster that has caused extremely costly, extensive, and enormous damage, and restoration and recovery efforts will need to continue over a long period. In the disaster-stricken areas where community networks are not functioning sufficiently, police are required to engage in multifaceted, difficult, and long-term activities to secure residents' safety and sense of security. As members of the community, police are always with residents and will never leave the area, no matter what happens. It is the police, deeply rooted in the community, that immediately respond to emergencies such as a great disaster, and police have a role to play in each process of initial response, restoration, and recovery. The responsibility of the police is extremely great.

On the other hand, Japan, located in the Pacific Rim earthquake belt, is one of the countries with the most frequent earthquakes. While aftershocks from this great earthquake

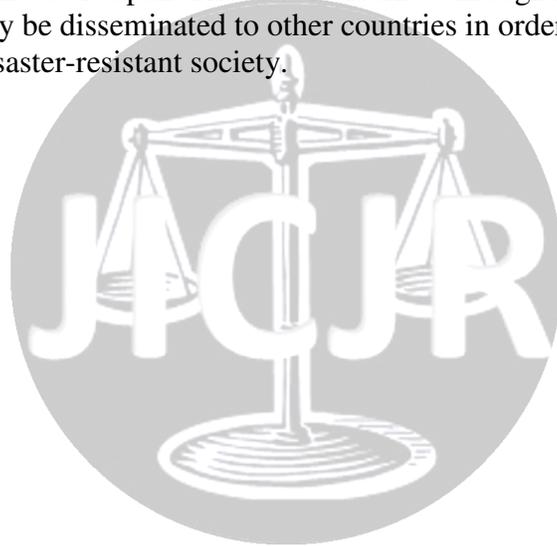
³⁹ Ando, T. (2011). Police countermeasures for the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 3.

⁴⁰ Tamura, M. (2011). Workshop on criminal policies, vol. 2: Crime prevention. *Jurist*, 1431, 133–134.

⁴¹ *Yomiuri Shimbun*. (2012). February 16.

⁴² Headquarters for Earthquake Research Promotion, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan. Summary: Long-term evaluation of subduction-zone earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.jishin.go.jp/main/choukihyoka/kaikou.htm>

continue, the possibility of subsequent earthquakes has been pointed out: a Tokai earthquake, a Tonankai/Nankai earthquake, and a large-scale earthquake that directly strikes the Tokyo metropolitan area, where Japan's central functions are concentrated. It is almost impossible to accurately predict when and where these earthquakes will occur. In addition, the state of damage will vary significantly depending on the earthquake's energy, the season, the time of day, the place of occurrence, and so on. There are many issues to address, such as handling people who have difficulty returning home from work, traffic jams, etc., in the urban area, which became clear as new issues after the Great East Japan Earthquake. Furthermore, being located in the temperate monsoon zone, Japan suffers damage from wind and flooding with heavy rainfall due to seasonal rain fronts, typhoons, heavy snow, etc., almost every year. Also, this country faces the threat of various natural disasters that include volcanic eruptions, tornadoes, high gales, and extreme high tides, and we don't know when and what kinds of disaster will occur in the future. Police have to appropriately respond to any of these disasters no matter when they happen, and police need to continue their efforts to minimize human and economic damage caused by future earthquakes. On the other hand, it is possible for other countries to learn lessons related to disasters from the experiences of Japan. The lessons learned through reviewing the recent great earthquake should actively be disseminated to other countries in order to contribute to the construction of a more disaster-resistant society.



APPENDIX

Figure 1

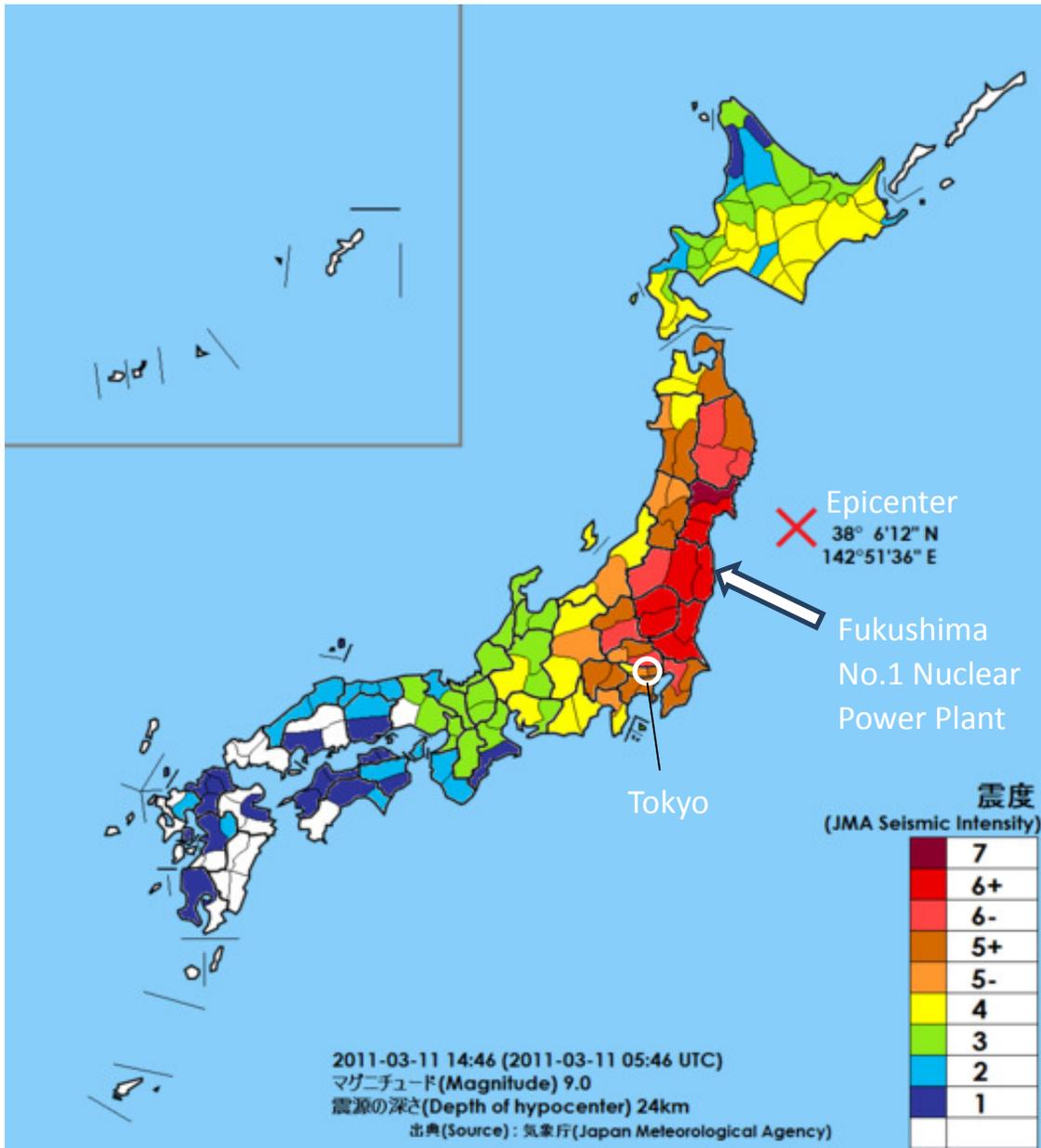


Table 1: Penal Code Offences in Disaster Area (Mar 2011– Feb 2012)

	Disaster Area (3 Prefectures)			Nation-wide		
	Report to Police	Net Change from 2010	Net Percentage Change (%)	Report to Police	Net Change from 2010	Net Percentage Change (%)
Penal Code Offences (Total)	42,100	-9,205	-17.9%	1,468,379	-101,671	-6.5%
Larceny Offences	31,893	-6,591	-17.1%	1,122,413	-78,748	-6.6%
Burglary	5,729	39	0.7%	124,481	-9,334	-7.0%
Non-Burglary	16,173	-4,181	-20.5%	572,830	-34,827	-5.7%
Vehicle Theft	9,991	-2,449	-19.7%	425,102	-34,587	-7.5%
Felony Offences	187	-58	-23.7%	6,986	-485	-6.5%
Robbery	67	-25	-27.2%	3,711	-219	-5.6%
Intellectual Offences	1,149	-756	-39.7%	40,283	-3,060	-7.1%
Other	6,693	-1,566	-19.0%	225,360	-18,600	-7.6%

* Felony Offences: Homicide, Robbery, Arson, Rape

Table 2: Penal Code Offences in the Hazard Area (Mar 2011– Feb 2012)

	Futaba Police St.		Minami-soma Police St.		Tamura Police St.		Total	
	Report to Police	Net Percentage Change (%)	Report to Police	Net Percentage Change (%)	Report to Police	Net Percentage Change (%)	Report to Police	Net Percentage Change (%)
Penal Code Offences (Total)	1,031	174.2%	450	-23.5%	189	-43.2%	1,670	28.8%
Larceny Offences	936	231.9%	345	-25.2%	139	-42.1%	1,420	44.5%
Burglary	827	1587.8%	157	141.5%	19	-57.8%	1,003	530.8%

Related Laws and Regulations

The following laws are quoted in their entirety:

The Police Act

(Responsibilities and Duties of Police)

Article 2: 1. Responsibilities and duties of the police are to protect the life, physical body, and property of an individual, and take charge of prevention, suppression, and investigation of crimes, as well as apprehension of suspects, traffic control, and other affairs concerning the maintenance of public safety and order.

2. Activities of the police shall be strictly limited to the extent provided for in the preceding paragraph, and in performing their duties, they shall make it their principle to be impartial, nonpartisan, unprejudiced, and fair, and their authorities shall never be abused in any way, such as to interfere with the rights and liberties of an individual guaranteed in the Constitution of Japan.

(Duties and Authority)

Article 5: 1. The National Public Safety Commission shall take charge of the protection of rights and freedom of an individual and the maintenance of public safety and order through operating police organizations relating to the public safety of the nation, administering the affairs concerning police education, police communication, information technology analysis, criminal

identification, criminal statistics, and police equipment, as well as coordinating the affairs concerning police administration.

2. In order to perform the duties provided for in the preceding paragraph, the National Public Safety Commission shall supervise the National Police Agency with respect to the following affairs:

- (a) Matters concerning the planning and research of institutions relating to the police;
- (b) Matters concerning the national budget relating to the police;
- (c) Matters concerning the policy evaluation of national police;
- (d) Matters concerning the police operations relating to the affairs affecting national public safety, among the following:
 - (i) Matters concerning a large-scale disaster that may cause general unrest;

(Commissioner General)

Article 16: 1. The Commissioner General of the National Police Agency shall be the head of the National Police Agency, and he shall be appointed and dismissed by the National Public Safety Commission with the approval of the Prime Minister.

2. The Commissioner General of the National Police Agency (hereinafter referred to as “the Commissioner General”) shall, subject to the supervision of the National Public Safety Commission, control the affairs of the National Police Agency, appoint and dismiss the personnel under his command, and control and supervise the performance of their duties, as well as direct and supervise the Prefectural Police concerning the functions of the National Police Agency.

(Request for Assistance)

Article 60: 1. The Prefectural Public Safety Commission may request the National Police Agency or other Prefectural Police for assistance.

2. In case a Prefectural Public Safety Commission wishes to make a request to other Prefectural Police for assistance in accordance with the provision of the preceding paragraph, it must inform the National Police Agency beforehand (an ex post facto notification in an unavoidable case) of the necessary matters.

3. The police officers of the National Police Agency or the Prefectural Police dispatched in compliance with the request for assistance provided for in paragraph 1 may exercise their authorities under the supervision of the Prefectural Public Safety Commission concerned within the jurisdictional area of the Prefectural Police supervised by the Prefectural Public Safety Commission who made the request for assistance.

The Police Official Duties Execution Act

(Measures for Refuge, etc.)

Article 4: 1. In case of a dangerous situation, such as a natural calamity, incident, destruction of a structure, traffic accident, explosion of a dangerous item, appearance of a mad dog or runaway horse, excessive congestion of people, or the like, which is likely to endanger the lives or physical bodies of people or cause serious damage to their properties, a police officer may give the necessary warning to the person or persons who happen to be at the scene, the keeper of the goods and other persons concerned; and in case of extreme urgency, he may keep back the person from the impending danger or make such persons take refuge within the limits of necessity for escaping from the impending danger, or order the persons who happen to be at the

scene, keeper of the subject thing, and any other persons concerned to take the measures generally considered necessary for the prevention of danger, or take such measures himself.

2. With regard to the action taken by the police officer under the provision of the preceding paragraph, it shall be necessary for him to report the effort to the Public Safety Commission concerned through due channels. In such cases, the Public Safety Commission shall take proper action in order to ask other public services for their cooperation that are deemed necessary for the subsequent actions.

(Entry)

Article 6: 1. In case any dangerous situation provided for in the preceding two articles has occurred, and any lives, physical bodies, or property of the people are in jeopardy, a police officer, if he deems it inevitably necessary in order to prevent the danger, hold the spread of damage in check, or give relief to sufferers, may enter any person's land, building, vessel, or vehicle, within the limits reasonably judged necessary.

2. The manager or proprietor, or any person in any corresponding position, of a place of performance, hotel, restaurant, railway station, or any other place whereto a crowd of people access, cannot, without good reason, deny a police officer to enter his or her premises during its business hours if he or she is demanded the entry by the police officer for the purpose of preventing a crime or a danger imperiling any lives, physical bodies, or properties of the people.

3. In making entry under the provisions of the preceding two paragraphs, a police officer shall not interfere arbitrarily with the lawful operation of the business of the person concerned.

4. In making entry under the provision of either paragraph 1 or paragraph 2, a police officer, if requested, shall tell the manager or proprietor, or the person in any corresponding position, the reason for his entry, and moreover show such person his certificate of identification.

Article 61 of the Disaster Measures Basic Act (Instruction on Evacuation by Police Officers or Other Officers)

In the situation of Section 1 of the previous article, when a municipal mayor recognizes that he or she cannot instruct eviction for evacuation as regulated in the same section, or when a municipal mayor requests it, a police officer or coast guard officer can instruct eviction for evacuation to residents, visitors, and others in the region from which evacuation is recognized necessary. The regulation in Section 2 of the previous article shall be applied to this situation. (The rest is omitted.)

Code of Criminal Procedure

Article 229. When a person who died an unnatural death or the body of a person who is suspected to have died an unnatural death has been found, a public prosecutor of a district or local public prosecutor's office, which has jurisdiction over the place where the body was found, shall perform a postmortem inspection.

2. A public prosecutor may have a public prosecutor's assistant officer or a judicial police officer execute the disposition set forth in the preceding paragraph.

Article 5 of the Postmortem Regulations (Performance of a Postmortem Inspection on Behalf of Coroners)

When a postmortem inspection is performed on the body of a person who died an unnatural death, according to the regulation in Section 2 of Article 229 of the Code of Criminal Procedure,

the inspection shall be done with attendance by a doctor, and the result shall be promptly reported to a public prosecutor. Also, a postmortem report shall be prepared and sent with the photographs or other materials to the prosecutor.

Article 6 of the Postmortem Regulations (Points of a Postmortem Inspection)

1. In a postmortem inspection, the items presented in each of the following numbers shall be investigated in great detail.

- (1) Name, age, address, and gender of the person who died an unnatural death
- (2) Position, posture, wound, and other characteristics of the body of the person who died an unnatural death
- (3) Clothes, belongings, and things left behind
- (4) Surrounding geography, things, and situation
- (5) Estimated date and time, and place of death
- (6) Cause of death (especially regarding whether it was caused by a criminal act)
- (7) A deadly weapon and other objects suspected to have been used for the criminal act
- (8) As for the body suspected of suicide, cause and method of the suicide, presence or absence of an accomplice, helper, etc., and the authenticity of a will, if any
- (9) When death by poisoning is suspected, symptoms, type of poison, and how poisoning occurred

2. When necessary in the investigation mentioned in the previous section, the attending doctor's opinion shall be obtained, and family members, relatives, neighbors, the person who discovered the body, and other related people shall be interviewed regarding the necessary items. Pictures shall be taken and records shall be made regarding the physiognomy, body shape, characteristic parts of the body, clothes, and other characteristic personal belongings. Fingerprints shall also be taken.

Article 4 of Dead Body Handling Rules (Measures by Chief of Police)

After receiving the report based on the previous article, the chief of police shall promptly report it to the police commissioner (Superintendent General or the prefectural police commissioner). Then, when it is clear that the death was not caused by a crime, he or she shall examine the dead body and investigate the cause of death, its identity, etc., and make a dead body examination record (Form No. 1, stated elsewhere) or have a subordinate police officer make the record. (The rest is omitted.)

REFERENCES

- Cabinet Office of Japan. (2013). About the Great East Japan Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.kantei.go.jp/saigai/pdf/201303261700jisin.pdf>
- Ando, T. (2011). Police countermeasures for the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 3–4.
- Cabinet Office of Japan. (2011). Estimation of the amount of damage in the Great East Japan Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.bousai.go.jp/oshirase/h23/110624-1kisya.pdf>
- Cabinet Office of Japan. (2012). Opinion poll on national life. Retrieved from <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/h24/h24-life/index.html>
- Fire and Disaster Management Agency of Japan. (2006). The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.fdma.go.jp/data/010604191452374961.pdf>

- Headquarters for Earthquake Research Promotion, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan. Summary: Long-term evaluation of subduction-zone earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.jishin.go.jp/main/choukihyoka/kaikou.htm>
- Inagaki, Y. (2011). An overview of police countermeasures for the accident at Fukushima nuclear power plants. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 49–61.
- Kristof, N. (2011). Sympathy for Japan, and admiration. *New York Times*, March 11. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Matsubara, H. (2002). Disasters and crimes: Crime situation and characteristics after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. *Keiho Zasshi*, 1, 42–56.
- Munich RE. (2012). Review of natural catastrophes in 2011: Earthquakes result in record loss year. Retrieved from http://www.munichre.com/en/media_relations/press_releases/2012/2012_01_04_press_release.aspx
- National Police Agency of Japan. (2011). White paper on police, 3–9.
- National Police Agency of Japan. (2012). White paper on police, 93.
- National Police Agency of Japan. (2012). Criminal situation in 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/toukei/seianki/h23hanzaizyousei.pdf>
- National Police Agency of Japan. (2012). Great East Japan Earthquake: Damage and police responses. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/keisatsusoti/zentaiban.pdf>
- National Police Agency of Japan. (2013). Damage and police responses in the Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/higaijokyo.pdf>
- National Police Agency of Japan. (2013). Police responses in the Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/keisatsusoti/zentaiban.pdf>
- National Police Agency of Japan. (2013). Police responses in the Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake. Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/keisatsusoti/sono1.pdf>
- OECD. (2008). Growing unequal? Income distribution and poverty in OECD. Retrieved from [http://www.mzv.sk/App/wcm/media.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_CBD2FABFAB495B52C1257648003959F2_SK/\\$File/Growing%20Unequal.pdf](http://www.mzv.sk/App/wcm/media.nsf/vw_ByID/ID_CBD2FABFAB495B52C1257648003959F2_SK/$File/Growing%20Unequal.pdf)
- Ogiue, C. (2011). Inspection of groundless rumors in Great East Japan Earthquake. Tokyo: Kobunsha, 30–49, 70–72.
- Saito, T. (2002). Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and crime problems. *Keiho Zasshi*, 1, 17.
- Shigehisa, M. (2011). An overview of police countermeasures for 2011 Tohoku District–Off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake and its resulting tsunami. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 14–16.
- Sugaya, H. (2011). Legal/administrative inspection and identification in the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 74–78.
- Takai, Y. (2011). Reservation of safety and security in the stricken area of the Great East Japan Earthquake. *The Journal of Police Science*, 12, 118–124.
- Tamura, M. (2011). Workshop on criminal policies, vol. 2: Crime prevention. *Jurist*, 1431, 133–134.
- Tanaka, N. (2011). Think about the damage in the disaster from the perspective of crime prevention. *Keisatsu Koron*, 10, 4–8.

Yomiuri Shimbun. (2012). February 16.

National Police Agency of Japan. (2007). LAWS AND ORDERS RELEVANT TO POLICE ISSUES(Edited by Police Policy Research Center) Retrieved from <http://www.npa.go.jp/english/seisaku7/hourei1-4.pdf>

