

Never Bending, Never Yielding

We, the citizens of Kamaishi, have faced and overcome a great many trials in the past, including gigantic tsunamis and bombardment during the Second World War. Kamaishi suffered catastrophically in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, but with a spirit of never bending, never yielding to any adversity, we are engaged in the recovery and restoration of our city.

To protect future lives

2011.3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

Messages from Kamaishi

Kamaishi, Iwate

10 messages

for future generations from the people of Kamaishi

after the 2011.3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

Our town of Kamaishi is a beautiful one, surrounded by the magnificent natural beauty of the Sanriku region.
However, many lives were lost with the occurrence of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami,
and our way of life was utterly transformed.

We convey these 10 messages to prevent this tragedy from happening again and to protect future lives.

- 1 If you feel big or long tremors, drop everything and run for high ground.
- 2 Run, even if past tsunamis have never reached where you are before.
- 3 Even if you've run 100 times and a tsunami has failed to come 100 times, run the 101st time.
- 4 If you take the lead and run, you will encourage many others to take shelter, saving lives.
- 5 Nature is our adversary. No one knows when, how long, or how far a giant tsunami will come.
- 6 Trust your family members to look out for themselves; you can only protect your own life.
- 7 When an earthquake occurs, do not search or go back for family members, even if they are in a different location.
- 8 Never blame yourself if you are unable to protect the life of someone you love.
- 9 When calm returns and things go back to normal, you will realize that you are not alone and that you are supported by countless others.
- 10 Do what you can now to prevent anyone else from experiencing the same thing; continue to take shelter, prepare, and continue passing on your knowledge.



People in Kamaishi continue to enjoy an abundant life and the blessings of the sea

So We May Always Remember, and Pass Our Knowledge on to the Future

Overview of Kamaishi and the extent of the damage

The iron and fishing town of Kamaishi

The city of Kamaishi is located in almost the exact center of Sanriku Fukko National Park in southeastern Iwate Prefecture. Thanks to the ocean and geographic conditions, the city experiences mild temperatures throughout the year and is known for its beautiful and archetypical rias coastline. Kamaishi Port is the key port serving the Sanriku fishing grounds, an area where the Kurile Current and Japan Current intersect and one of the three most abundant fishing grounds on the planet. In addition to fishing, a vigorous aquaculture industry thrives in the port. Meanwhile, the construction of Japan's first Western-style blast furnace in the city in 1857 made it possible to continuously produce large quantities of iron. Thereafter, Kamaishi developed together with Japan's iron industry as the birthplace of the country's modern ironmaking industry (The Hashino Iron Mining and Smelting Site is registered as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining). Accordingly, Kamaishi developed as an iron and fishing town.

The Sanriku Coast – repeatedly under attack by tsunamis

While the sea brings many blessings, it has also caused much damage via tsunamis. The (estimated) magnitude 8.2 Sanriku Earthquake of 1896 in particular, caused the death of around 60% of the then town of Kamaishi due to the resulting tsunami. The magnitude 8.1 1933

Sanriku Earthquake caused little direct damage, but the accompanying tsunami resulted in the deaths of 164 people, with 240 missing. Great efforts were made to convey the terror of tsunamis to future generations in order



An illustration depicting the great tsunami of 1896

to prevent such tragedies from recurring, such as all manner of records and stone tsunami monuments erected all along the coast. In addition, a great variety of preparations were made in the event of future tsunamis, such as the construction of a breakwater at the entrance to Kamaishi Port, one of the world's deepest, in 2009.

Magnitude 9.0. The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

The magnitude 9.0 earthquake which occurred on March 11, 2011 caused a gigantic tsunami which once again brought staggering devastation to Kamaishi. Unlike the previous two giant tsunamis, this one grew high very suddenly in spite of the slowly rising sea level, attacking the town with such force it destroyed the port breakwater. Retaining its strength even after reaching land, the water combined with rubble to become a muddy sludge which assaulted the center of town. The flood reached as high as 32.87 meters in Kamaishi itself. Residents who witnessed the event say it looked like a giant black snake raising its head to strike, and that it was less like a wave than a wall. 888 bodies were found within the city and another 152 persons have been confirmed missing (as of March 11, 2017).



Overview of the damage

Overview of the earthquake

Time of occurrence 2 : 46 pm, March 11, 2011 (Fri.)

Hypocenter Sea off Sanriku (130 km east-southeast of the Oshika Peninsula)

Scale Magnitude 9.0/Shindo 6-lower (in Kamaishi)

Damage to Kamaishi (information current as of March 11, 2017)

1) Human casualties

- Dead (Kamaishi residents): 1,063 (including 152 missing, 105 affiliated deaths)
- Evacuees (at maximum): 9,883; 633 evacuated inland (out of city)

2) Damage to homes

- Dwellings: 4,705 (of 16,182) were damaged or destroyed (29%)
(Completely destroyed: 2,957; mostly destroyed: 395; partially destroyed: 304; damaged: 1,049)

3) Industry

- All business locations: 1,382 (of 2,396) were flooded (57.7%)
- Fishing industry: 1,692 (of 1,734 fishing vessels) were damaged or destroyed (97.6%)



Rubble that remained after the tsunami (Unosumai/Ryoishi neighborhoods)

Events from the Disaster

We must never forget what happened in the devastated district of Unosumai.

The Unosumai District Disaster Control Center paid a heavy price

Why were so many lives lost?

The Kamaishi City Unosumai District Disaster Control Center, located near the coast in the northern part of the city, suffered particularly heavy casualties in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Opened just a year before the disaster, many local residents evacuated to the center on the day of the earthquake, where it is estimated that over 160 lost their lives.

Based on a flood prediction map released by Iwate Prefecture, it was believed the center would be safe from inundation. However, due to the

estimated extent of the great tsunami of 1896, the center was not designated as an evacuation point. Nevertheless, owing to the facility's official title as a "Disaster Control Center" and its use for local tsunami evacuation drills prior to the earthquake, some residents mistakenly believed that it was a tsunami evacuation site, and many local citizens sought refuge there on the day of the disaster.

After the disaster, the city established an investigation commission which compiled a report concluding that this tragedy could have been

averted. In order to prevent such a loss of life from occurring again, the city will cooperate with residents to implement initiatives aimed at improving awareness of crisis management among municipal personnel, strengthening the city's crisis management systems, and increasing disaster prevention awareness among residents.



The Unosumai District Disaster Control Center is in the center (Unosumai)



The Unosumai District Disaster Control Center illustrates in stark relief how existing disaster prevention measures failed to function as intended



A memorial service for the disaster center victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

The Disaster prevention training that saved the lives of many children

The Three Rules of Tsunami Evacuation

When the earthquake struck, classes had finished and many children across the city had already left school and returned home. The Kamaishi Higashi junior high school students, however, took initiative and evacuated, encouraging others to do the same, and a total of some 600 elementary school students, adults, and other local residents managed to run to high ground and escape the tsunami.

Prior to the disaster, Kamaishi City had implemented "survival education" focused around disaster prevention

training. Rather than causing the children to aimlessly fear natural disasters, it was the city's desire to further their understanding, and give them the knowledge and skills to survive. The city designed curriculums suited to the children's various developmental stages so that disaster prevention education could be implemented within existing classes.

This education included the "Three Rules of Tsunami Evacuation." Thanks to this repeated, practical training, local children were able

to decide for themselves to quickly evacuate and encouraged those around them to follow suit.

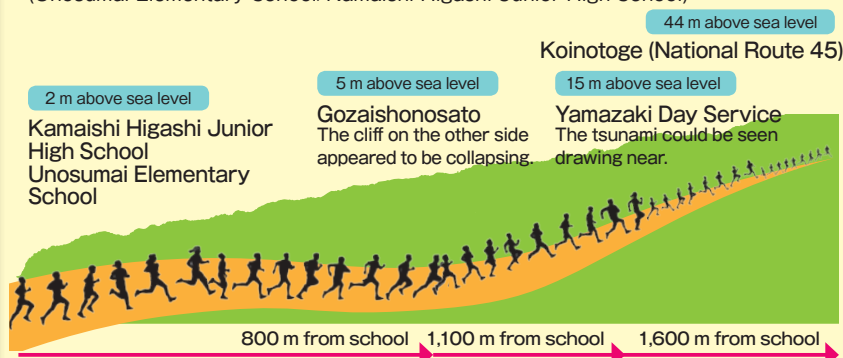


Students from Unosumai Elementary School and Kamaishi Higashi Junior High School evacuating to high ground (Unosumai) – Provided by Yukio Takamura



As the established evacuation site was dangerous, elementary and junior high school students evacuated to higher ground (Unosumai) – Provided by Fumio Urayama

Evacuation measures taken by teachers and students
(Unosumai Elementary School/Kamaishi Higashi Junior High School)



The Three Rules of Tsunami Evacuation

- 1 Do not stick to assumptions**
Hazard maps predicting the extent of tsunami flooding are only estimations.
- 2 Do your best in the situation you are in**
In order to protect your own life, do the best that you can do at that time.
- 3 Take initiative and evacuate**
Evacuate first and foremost, no matter what those around you are doing.

“Inochi tendenko : Let Each Look Out for Themselves” – Wisdom for Living With Natural Disasters

What profound thoughts are encapsulated in this wisdom from our ancestors?

“Inochi tendenko,” a motto for escaping from tsunamis

In the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, the importance of evacuating to high ground immediately was recognized anew, and the phrase “tsunami tendenko” came to prominence. “Tendenko” is a word from the local dialect which means “each” or “individually.” On the coast of Kamaishi, people say, “inochi tendenko” – “let each look out for themselves.” Some may think it is a harsh teaching, but it is not a self-centered directive meaning that one should protect one’s own life at the cost of others. In fact, it is a phrase which encapsulates much wisdom from our ancestors.

The most basic meaning is “protect your own life yourself”

At its most basic, “inochi tendenko” is a teaching of self-reliance that means “protect your own life yourself.” In order to protect oneself from the terrible destructive power of a tsunami, the only option is to run to high ground as soon as possible, individually and on your own. The application of this teaching during the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami saved many lives. The children of Kamaishi put “inochi tendenko” into practice and saved themselves.

Encourage others to evacuate by evacuating yourself

“Inochi tendenko” is a wise teaching that tells us to run, but also encourages others to run as well. This was reaffirmed during the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Many of those who hesitated to evacuate at first saw the elementary and junior high school students running for high ground and immediately began to follow. Elementary students who had already returned home alone after a day of school also made the decision to immediately run for safety, and their actions encouraged those around them to evacuate as well.

Trust each other and run for safety individually

Some may believe that they could not engage in “inochi tendenko” if they did not know whether their family members were safe. That is a natural feeling. The fact that many children, parents, and other family members were able to implement “inochi tendenko” and run to safety was the result of disaster prevention training.

Before the disaster occurred, much effort was put into providing children with disaster prevention training while at the same time conveying to parents and guardians the message that parents must trust their children and evacuate on their own. Thanks to this, children trusted parents and parents trusted children, implementing “inochi tendenko” and escaping the tsunami. Parents and children, schools and guardians, employers and employees... “Inochi tendenko” only works when there is trust.

Words to support the survivors

Many lost their lives due to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Even after all this time, many of those who lost loved ones are still suffering feelings of loss and guilt. “If only I hadn’t let go of her hand...” “Why did I survive?” For these people, the phrase “inochi tendenko” can also be considered words of comfort to support those who survived the disaster in their lives going forward. In other words, because of the necessity of “inochi tendenko,” there was nothing more they could have done. Some have even taken these words as a message from those who lost their lives.

The Lingering question

“Inochi tendenko” is not an all-powerful solution. There remains the question of what to do for people who cannot evacuate by themselves. In the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, there were many who lost their lives attempting to save others who could not evacuate by themselves. There are those who say that “inochi tendenko” is a cruel teaching because it has no solution to this problem. It is an issue which we survivors must consider going forward.



A stone monument erected after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami
It states, “Drop everything and run, higher and higher. Run, tendenko. Save yourself.”

To save lives 100 or 1,000 years from now: Conveying the Wisdom of "Protecting Oneself" to the Next Generation



Takenori Noda
Mayor of Kamaishi

There are limits to what passing on these lessons alone can do

Those of us who experienced the unprecedented disaster of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami must pass on the lessons learned in order to prevent such a tragedy from occurring again.

This is no easy task. Our ancestors who lived through the Sanriku Earthquakes of 1896 and 1933 sought to leave behind the lessons they learned through stone monuments and records, but by the time of the 2011 Disaster, their teachings had already begun to fade. When we heard the alarm, we thought to ourselves that it wouldn't be a large tsunami. Never mind a giant tsunami said to occur only once every hundred or thousand years, like the one which occurred during the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

There are limits to what passing on these lessons alone can do. This is because, in one sense, it is only natural that the feelings experienced immediately after a disaster will fade with the passing of generations.

We must continue to put evacuation training and preparations into practice

So, what can we do? In 2016, we created our Collection of Lessons and Collection of Testimonies and Records as a means of considering this question, and as a result we came to the belief that it is not only important to pass on the lessons learned, but also that it is essential that we continually put them into practice.

For example, we must practice over and over again the lesson of running to high ground the moment there is any shaking. I believe that doing so will make such actions common sense for the next generation and deeply instill them into our lives. This isn't just limited to how to evacuate. I am talking about all of the actions, preparations, and standards described in our Collection of Teachings, such as parents trusting their children and not risking their lives to find them at their school; every person looking out for themselves and avoiding being caught up in common knowledge, personal experience, and assumptions. I want to convey these lessons to the next generation, and the generation after that by continually putting them into practice.



Creating new mechanisms to protect ourselves from tsunamis

Meanwhile, in addition to implementing certain practices and preparations for disasters, it is also necessary that we think about how to create various means of protecting ourselves from tsunamis.

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, we have been moving forward with disaster prevention measures in the affected area, such as seawalls. Such measures have the potential to reduce the damage caused by tsunamis. However, without opportunities to make use of the knowledge we have gained, it may once again fade with the passage of time.

"Jinya Asobi", the encampment events for children which have been held in Kamaishi since ancient times, are one such mechanism. In these events, held on Children's Day, local people spend a fun day building encampments on high ground. Through the enjoyment of these events year after year, we can maintain evacuation routes and help train people on how to survive after evacuating, without them even being consciously aware of any disaster prevention intent. Since the earthquake, these such mechanisms are being created throughout Kamaishi.



Jinya Asobi
People build encampments on high ground and compete to create the showiest one. The events aid in evacuation route maintenance and training on how to survive after evacuating.



The Idaten Competition
An event which promotes quick evacuation to high ground. Started after the earthquake, the event helps participants learn the locations of evacuation sites and evacuation routes.

Aiming to create a culture of disaster awareness

It is my hope that, by implementing evacuation practices and preparations, establishing various training mechanisms, and taking a variety of measures, we can live abundant lives together with nature, while facing the threats it poses, and avoid needless fear of the sea. We are engaged in community development aimed at creating a culture of disaster awareness and a town that is able to withstand disasters in every sense.



Rugby World Cup 2019™
Let's make the events in Kamaishi, Iwate, a success

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