



HELLO OKAYA

Fall 2006 Issued October 15
Special Feature:
Disaster Preparedness

This Newsletter is distributed four times a year by the Okaya International Exchange Association, in order to provide local foreign residents with information necessary for daily life, as well as giving some insight into aspects of Japanese culture. If you have any suggestions for enquires regarding this newsletter, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Okaya International Exchange Association, Okaya City Hall 4th Floor, 8-1 Saiwai-cho, Okaya City 394-8510
TEL: (0266)24-3226 FAX: (0266)24-3227 E-mail: oiea@oiea.jp URL: www.oiea.jp

Disasters May Strike Japan Anywhere, Anytime



On July 19th this year as a result of several days of heavy rain, severe floods and mudslides struck Okaya City and other municipalities in the Suwa Region. In *Minato*, *Kawagishi* and *Uenohara*, the worst hit areas of Okaya City, many homes were destroyed and damaged, and eight citizens lost their lives. This is the worst disaster that Okaya City has seen in the seventy years since it was established.

Between July 19th, when the disaster struck, and the 24th, over 3800 citizens were forced to evacuate, and many spent sleepless nights in local schools, community centers and other facilities designated as evacuation shelters. With many major roads in and around the city having to be closed as they were covered in mud or had collapsed, the suspension of bus and JR train services, and the closure of the expressway, the traffic network that services the city was left in a state of paralysis, causing many people much inconvenience.

It is important for all citizens to take the time to think about how you can protect yourself and your family, not only in this type of landslide disaster, but in any kind of disaster. Make sure you are aware of the geographical hazards around your home and workplace, as well as confirm the location of your nearest designated evacuation shelter and evacuation route.

The City of Okaya has learnt many lessons from this disaster and is currently developing new policies and measures to increase citizens' disaster awareness, and is rethinking its crisis management strategies. The Okaya International Exchange Association, together with the City, is currently looking at various ways to ensure information on disasters and disaster prevention, reaches the foreign residents living in the city. Further details on these measures will be available in the near future.

☆Japanese Fall Traditions☆ ~One Point Japanese Culture~

In the past, fall in Japan was thought to be a time of calmness and loneliness, and was often featured as a theme in Japanese poetry (*Waka*). However, as fall is also the harvest season and is said to be the most pleasant of all seasons, many festivals and other events take place during this time of year. You will often hear people refer to 'fall eating (*shokuyoku no aki*)', 'fall sports (*spo-tsu no aki*)', 'fall reading (*dokusho no aki*)', and 'fall art (*geijutsu no aki*)', as this is the best season for such activities.

'Koromogae' 衣替え Seasonal Change of Clothes



While *koromogae* (the seasonal change of clothes) is not as common nowadays, it is a tradition that has continued since the Edo period. The 1st of June, marks the day where students and business workers change from their winter uniform into their summer one, and October 1st, marks the day they change back again.

As Japan has four distinct seasons, it is usual practice for people to dress accordingly. Although an increase in global warming has meant that this practice has started to die out, it is still common for people to shift around their summer and winter wardrobes. Have you changed over your wardrobe yet?

'Shichi Go San' 七五三 Seven-Five-Three Festival

The *Shichi-Go-San* Festival is a festival that celebrates the growth of children age seven, five and three. It is held on November 15th each year, where boys aged three and five, and girls aged three and seven, dress up in their best clothes, often a traditional kimono, and visit a Shinto shrine to offer prayers for their good health and growth.

Children are also given *Chitose-ame* (thousand year candy), a long-thing candy, colored red and white, which are said to bring good fortune and signify the parents' hopes that their child will live a long life.



'Koyo' 紅葉 Tinted Fall Leaves

During fall in Japan, the leaves of trees such as the ginkgo and maple turn brilliant colors. As summer turns into fall, the weather starts to cool down, the days get shorter, and the green leaves start to turn an array of brilliant reds and yellows. One of the essential elements necessary for beautiful fall leaves, is a vast difference in temperature between the days and nights.

The viewing of colored leaves is a popular activity, with many people flocking to popular tourist spots to admire their beauty.

Izuhaya Park in Osachi, is just one of the places in Okaya City where you can enjoy viewing beautiful fall leaves for yourself.





DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



① Dialing Emergency Services

★For Fire, Ambulance and Rescue Services Dial 119 Calmly-Clearly★



~When you call 119, you will hear the following. Be sure to stay calm and speak slowly.

⇒ This is the 119 Fire Department. *Ichi ichi kyu ban shoubousho desu.*

Fire or Ambulance? *Kaji desu ka? Kyukyusha desu ka?*

⇒ What is your address? Ward, block number, building number, room number?

Jusho wa? Nani machi? Nanchoume? Nanban? Nango?

⇒ Are there any buildings etc. nearby which serve as a landmark?

Chikaku ni mokuhyo ni naru tatemono nado ga arimasu ka?

⇒ What's happened? *Dou Shimashita Ka?*

What's on fire? *Nani ga moete imasu ka?*

⇒ Please give me your name and telephone number.

Anata no onamae to soshira no denwa bango wo oshiete kudasai!

⇒ Have someone go outside when you hear the siren.

Sairen no oto ga kikoemashitara donata ga annai ni dete kudasai



※So that you don't panic when speaking with emergency services, it is a good idea to write out your name, address, names of any nearby landmarks or buildings in hiragana or romaji, and place it near the telephone.

~PLEASE NOTE!~

What can you do to prevent a fire?

- Do not throw your cigarette butts away carelessly.
- Do not smoke in bed.
- Make sure children do not play with fire.
- The number of arson cases is increasing. Make sure you don't keep things that can easily catch fire around your home.
- Be sure not to plug too many electrical appliances into the same socket, as this is dangerous.
- Turn off the heater when filling it up with kerosene, and do not leave the area.
- Carry out regular inspections of those appliances that use fire. Make sure you don't leave cloths or other things that burn easily nearby, and that if something should fall it will not fall in to the fire.

~When dialing 119 from your cellular phone, just dial as you normally would. You will be connected to the emergency services headquarters, and it will take some time before you are transferred to your local fire department. Be sure to wait patiently and not to hang up! When you are asked the name of your nearest building or intersection, make sure you answer calmly and clearly. It is important to know the names of the places you normally go.



~Anyone Can Put Out a Small Fire~

Of course it is always best to try and prevent a fire. However, if a fire does break out, make sure you put it out immediately. It is important to ensure you have water, sand or a fire extinguisher on hand.

Okaya City General Affairs Department Crisis Management Room

Tel 0266-23-4811

FAX 0266-24-0889

Okaya City Home Page:
www.city.okaya.nagano.jp

Okaya City Disaster Information Email Services

You can receive information on local fires, weather, disaster, and crime via email. (Japanese Only)

To register a computer email address:

<http://www.city.okaya.nagano.jp/mail/regist/pc/>

To register a cellular phone email address:

<http://www.city.okaya.nagano.jp/mail/regist/ce/>

② DANGERS OF NATURAL DISASTERS



☆ **LANDSLIDE DISASTER!** *Doshasekiryu*
Nagano Prefecture is blessed with plentiful nature.
However...

☆ **Landslides** *Gakekuzure* ☆ A phenomenon which occurs when loose ground suddenly collapses following an earthquake or water building up after heavy rain.

It is not uncommon for the ground to collapse even after only a little rain, often occurring suddenly without any prior warning. Those people living nearby a cliff, are often unable to get out in time, and their homes are likely to suffer some kind of damage.

☆ **Mudslides** *Dosekiryu* ☆ A mudslide is when mud, which has accumulated on a mountain slope or valley mixed with a lot of rain, suddenly slides down the mountain, following torrential rain or rain over several days. Large rocks and wood accumulate at the head of the landslide, peaking like a small mountain. Moving with great momentum, a mudslide is very powerful and usually destroys homes, fields and anything else in its way.

☆ **FLOODS !!** *Suigai*

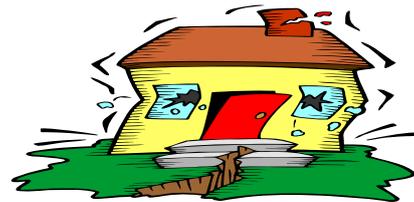
During a typhoon or torrential rain, there is a danger of flooding in low-lying areas beside rivers or around lakes. It is easy for water to build up on low-lying areas, plateaus or other flat ground, with damage resulting from poor drainage.

☆ **EARTHQUAKE** *Jishin*

⇒ Japan is a country prone to earthquakes, and you never know when or where one will strike. However, if one does occur, it is important to take the appropriate measures to ensure your own safety.

Make sure you are mentally and physically prepared!

When an earthquake strikes...



● **First, ensure your own safety**

- Stay calm and seek safety... If you feel the an earthquake, hide under a sturdy desk or table.
- Secure an exit... When you feel an earthquake, open a door straight away, to ensure an escape route after the earthquake is over.
- Do not rush outside... Usually a strong earthquake will subside within a minute or so. Seek shelter in the room you are in and stay there until it's over.
- At a station or department store... Do not rush immediately for the nearest exit. Stay calm and follow the station attendant's instructions.

● **Prevention of Fires**

- Be sure to turn off any heat sources such as gas burners, heaters, and cigarettes the moment you feel an earthquake. Turn off the stopcock of gas appliances, and unplug electrical appliances. When evacuating after an earthquake is over, make sure to switch off the circuit breaker.
- If a fire has started, put it out quickly using water or a fire extinguisher. Shout 'KAJI (fire),' to notify your neighbors and get their assistance.

● **Stay away from narrow streets, walled streets, cliffs and riverbanks**

- Watch out for falling objects... Don't stand under the eaves of homes or buildings as roof tiles, bricks, glass or concrete may fall on you. Stay away from cliffs and river banks because the ground there may have loosened, making a landslide possible.

● **Evacuation Procedure**

- Evacuate on foot wearing a helmet or hat, and carrying only your emergency kit in a backpack. Don't carry anything in your hands and make sure you take only the essential personal items.
- Stay away from the bottoms of mountains and cliffs... In mountainous or steep areas, there is a danger of mountains collapsing or landslides occurring, so be sure not to waste any time evacuating.

● **Join Forces for rescue and relief efforts**

- Be sure to help the elderly, disabled or injured. If you find a person pinned under a collapsed structure or a fallen object, join forces with other community members for rescue activities.

● If an earthquake strikes when driving a car . . .

- Immediately pull over to the left side of the road and turn off your engine to make way for fire engines and ambulances. Be sure not to park your car on or under a bridge. Evacuate on foot, leaving the key in the car, and make sure you follow the instructions of the police. Also, listen for news on your car radio.

③ Remember !

When mudslides or floods are predicted or have occurred due to heavy rain or earthquakes, your local municipal office will issue warnings in the following three stages.

「HINAN JUMBI (Evacuation Preparation Advisory)」 → 「HINAN KANKOKU (Evacuation Warning)」 → 「HINAN SHIJI (Evacuation Directive)」

⇒ An 「**Evacuation Preparation Advisory**」 is issued when it is determined that chances of a disaster are high, based on river water levels and weather. This advisory gives citizens a chance to prepare for evacuation.

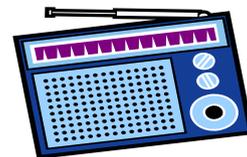
⇒ An 「**Evacuation Warning**」 is issued to local residents when there is a threat of potential disaster in the area. It is recommended that you evacuate or prepare to evacuate.

⇒ An 「**Evacuation Directive**」 is more serious than an 'Evacuation Warning' and is the same as an 'Evacuation Order.' If an 'Evacuation Directive' is issued, it is imperative you evacuate immediately!

④ Obtaining Accurate Information

In times of disaster, it is easy to be misled by inaccurate information. Be sure that information you receive is accurate and correct.

- ☆ Follow the news on the TV (your local TV Station), Okaya City Home Page, radio etc.
- ☆ Follow instructions given by municipal offices, and fire and police departments.
- ☆ Don't use the telephone unnecessarily. Calling the fire department, etc. to seek news on the disaster status can affect their activities.



⑤ Prepare Yourself for a Disaster

Make Everyday a
Disaster Drill

It is important for you and your family to think about what you can do now to prepare yourselves for an earthquake, fire, flood or other such disaster before one actually occurs. Ensuring your family's safety, ensuring you have sufficient food, are just some of these things. Be sure to ask your landlord or neighbor where the evacuation exit in the building you are living in is, where the fire extinguisher is, as well as about nearby landmarks and the location of the nearest designated evacuation shelter.

※ Participate in Disaster Prevention Drills ! ※

In Japan, September 1st, is Disaster Prevention Day, with disaster prevention drills being held in most areas on or around this day. Be sure to make an effort to actively participate in the drills held in your community. It is also a good idea to know where your local fire station is.

※ Hold Family Meetings ※

Before an emergency occurs it is important to confirm with other family members such things as 'whether or not all furniture is secure,' and 'where the places and routes are to evacuate.' Also put your emergency kit in an easy to reach place. Be sure to decide a place to meet in time of disaster, and way for others to confirm your whereabouts and safety.

⇒ **Emergency Kit**... Make sure you prepare minimum personal effects that you can use when you have to evacuate in an emergency.



Your Emergency Kit should include:

*personal seal bankbook cash first aid kit flashlight batteries gloves lighter candles
can opener helmet socks clothes blanket water baby's bottle
food (Enough for three days) writing instruments*