

Email Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama City (66) May 11th, 2016 Issue

【Kumamoto earthquake in 2016 brought serious damage.】

Hello, I'm Mr. Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

The big earthquakes that occurred in Kumamoto prefecture on April 14th and again on the 16th caused serious damage throughout Kumamoto and Oita prefectures. Both earthquakes registered 7 on the Japanese seismic scale at Mashikimachi twice. It is the first time ever such a thing has happened at the same place.

Furthermore, the aftershocks have happened so often till now and there are many people who are forced to live in hardship.

I have many memories of Kumamoto prefecture. I spent three years there when I was a section chief. The daily news reporting the people of circumstances of the stricken area and a mail from my friend of those days said, "I am safe...and now, I truly understand the sufferings which everyone in Tohoku experienced in the previous earthquake. Everybody will work hard and cooperate together." The remark indicated the earthquake victims' hardship of losing daily lives which made me a feeling a lump in my throat.

Once again, I pray for the souls who departed by the earthquakes. I would like to express my sympathy to everyone who has been affected by these earthquakes.

It has been about a month since the earthquake occurrence. Recently, emergency fire response team, disaster medical assistance team (DMAT), polices, the self-defense

forces, and other related organizations such as municipal staff members, volunteers and others from all prefectures gathered in the disaster area. Rescue operations have been conducting by united those people together.

Okayama city sent about 530 staff members to Kumamoto city which is another government designated city like Okayama. Through this support activity, I felt that the action plan decided in advance by 20 government designated cities is functioning really well.

Concretely, a lead city (this time Hiroshima city) took charge of allotment of support activities to each city. It made smooth rescue operations and effective assistance to disaster area possible. Thus, I realized again that those advance preparations for unpredictable natural disaster are the most important than above all.

When I visited Luoyang in China and Bucheon in South Korea, our international friendship cities recently, I received expression of sympathy and contributions from the local people. I felt that people around the world offer their assistance and worry about the faraway stricken area.

Furthermore, we received many contributions from local citizens, enterprises, and organizations in Okayama. I felt that many people in different countries and areas became united in spirit for the disaster area. I felt very happy about it. Okayama city wishes restoration of disaster areas as soon as possible and is going to support as much as possible.

Okayama city will take this earthquake disaster as a lesson and we will ensure that disaster prevention is perfectly prepared. I hope that everyone will take measures to

protect themselves daily from unpredictable natural disasters such as prevention from falling of furniture, etc. For example, to make furniture not to fall during sleeping is very important and that is something you can do instantly to protect yourself and your family's lives. Once more please reflect your daily life and have at least minimum preparations.