



日本女性会議2012仙台 特別プログラム 講演録
Japan Women's Conference in SENDAI 2012 Special Program

女性たちが語る3.11 ～これまでと今と

Women Talk about 3.11: The Past and the Present

東日本大震災から1年7ヶ月後の2012年10月。震災の傷跡がまだまだ生々しく残る仙台で、「日本女性会議2012仙台」が開催されました。「きめる うごく 東北（ここ）から」をテーマに、震災からの復興と女性のエンパワーメントについて議論を深めたこの会議では、全国から2,000人を超える参加者が集まりました。

この冊子は、会議の初日に行われた特別プログラム「女性たちが語る3.11 ～これまでと今と」の内容を収録したものです。宮城、岩手、福島で活動する女性たちが、被災地で実際にどのようなことが起き、それをどのように乗り越えていこうとしているのか、女性たちの困難や女性たちの持つ力に焦点を当てて語り合いました。

このたび、2015年3月の「第3回国連防災世界会議」の開催に合わせ、震災当時の女性たちの思いや経験を語り継ぎ、国内外に発信していくため、日本語に加えて英語訳を掲載しました。多くの皆様にこの冊子をご高覧、ご活用いただけますことを願っております。

最後に、この冊子の作成にあたり、英語翻訳に協力してくださったナンシー・ロスさんに、心より感謝申し上げます。

2015年3月
(公財) せんだい男女共同参画財団

In October 2012, one year and seven months after the Great East Japan Earthquake, the Japan Women's Conference 2012 was held in Sendai, where scars of the disaster are still fresh. Under the slogan, "Tohoku from Now into the Future: Decision-Making and Taking Action," the conference examined the recovery that has taken place and the empowerment of women. More than 2,000 people from all over Japan attended.

This booklet is a record of the special program held on the first day of the conference: "Women Talk about 3.11: The Past and the Present." Women engaged in various activities in Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima prefectures discussed what really happened in the disaster area and how they have tried to overcome those events, focusing on the difficulties women faced as well as their strength.

In conjunction with the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015, an English translation has been added in order to convey the feelings and experiences of women at the time of the disaster and to disseminate them to people at home and abroad. We hope you will find this booklet useful.

Finally, we would like to thank Nancy H. Ross from the bottom of our hearts for her cooperation with the English translation for a publication of this booklet.

March 2015
Sendai Gender Equal Opportunity Foundation

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女性たちが語る3.11 ~これまでと今と



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■朗読

あまりました Amarimashita

※所属・肩書は開催日当時のものです。

朗読

2011年3月11日 金曜日／あの日私は、遅い昼休みを終えて、そろそろ午後の仕事に戻ろうとしていた。あと3時間くらい働いて、家に帰って、ご飯を食べて、テレビを見て。そんなふうが続いていったはずの、私の日常…。

午後2時46分／三陸沖を震源とする、マグニチュード9.0の巨大地震が発生、宮城県栗原市で、震度7を記録。

午後2時49分／気象庁が、青森県から千葉県にかけての太平洋沿岸に大津波警報を発令。

午後3時／東北電力女川原発、東京電力福島第一原発など、計11基が自動停止。

午後3時18分から50分ごろ／宮古、釜石、大船渡、石巻、相馬で 最大波を観測。大船渡市で23.6メートルの記録も。

午後4時30分ごろ／雪が降り出し冷え込む。仙台市中心部は、停電で信号が消え、道路は車で帰宅しようとする人々で交通渋滞に。

電気、ガス、水道、地下鉄も止まった。携帯電話もつながらず、家族の無事を確かめることも、自分が無事だと伝えることも、できない。もどかしさと 言いようのない 孤独。

深夜、ラジオが伝える。若林区荒浜で200から300体の遺体を確認。いったい何を言ってるんだろう？何が起きているのかわからない、恐怖。一晩で100回以上起きたといわれる余震の中、ここだけが本州から切り離され、太平洋沖に流されていく、そんな錯覚に陥った。

一夜明けた翌日は氷点下。人の声がする。「全部のお宅には配達できる数がなくて、すみません」そう言いながら配られた、いつもとは違う薄い新聞を、近所の人と無言で見る。何が起きたのか、ようやく知る。ああ、私、ヒサイシャになったんだ。はっきりとそう感じた、3月12日、土曜日の朝。



第1部 これまでと今と

3.11から今まで一それぞれの時間

宗片 3月11日、私たちのまちに何が起こったのか。そうです。あの日から、私たちのまちは「被災地」になりました。そして私たちは「被災者」になりました。被災地に住む私たちでさえ、想像しえない数々の現実が、そこにはありました。皆さんにとって、あの3月11日はどのような時間だったのでしょうか？



皆さんこんにちは。この特別プログラムのコーディネーター、NPO法人イコールネット仙台の宗片です。この会場には、全国各地の多くの方々にご参加いただいております。皆様の中にも程度の差はあれ、この震災を経験された方はたくさんいらっしゃると思います。また、テレビの画面を通して、リアルタイムであの光景を目の当たりにした方もいらしたでしょう。それぞれの3月11日、そこから1年7ヶ月が過ぎました。

この1年7ヶ月、被災地で暮らす私たちには想像を超える時間でした。地面も揺れ、人の心も揺れました。時には気持ちが折れそうになることもありました。夢であってほしいという現実にも直面しました。しかし、全国の皆様にさまざまなご支援をいただき、励まされ、勇気づけられて、皆さんの温かいまなざしに支えられながらここまで来ることができました。この場をお借りして、心より感謝を申し上げたいと思います。ありがとうございます。

私たちは、この経験から学んだ数々のことを伝えていかなければなりません。この特別プログラムでは3月11日からのこれまでを振り返り、そして今、これからを語り合います。これから話す5人の方々には宮城、岩手、福島で支援活動にあたられました。ご自身が被災をされた方もいます。それぞれ3月11日からどのような時間を過ごしたのでしょうか。どのような活動をされ、そしてその時、女性たちはどんな状況にあり、それについて何を感じたのか。お一人お一人の場合をお話いただけます。どうぞ皆さんの時間と重ね合わせてお聞きいただければと思います。

宿泊客と地元住民、約350人の命の砦に

阿部 南三陸ホテル観洋女将の阿部でございます。3月11日14時46分、私自身は太平洋が一望できるロビーでお客様と打ち合わせをしておりました。通常よりも大きな揺れを感じ、そばにいらしたお客様を安全な避難場所に誘導し、その間、我々のスタッフもすみやかに同様の場所にお客様を誘導しました。その後外を眺めていると、青い美しい海が墨色に変化し、水位がぐんぐん上がる様子がありました。観洋は町外れの高台に位置しており、今回、町の中心部は8割も被災しましたが、その中心部を津波が襲っていく光景が否応なしに目に入ってきました。私たちは高台にいながらただ祈ることしかできませ



んでした。一刻も早く危険な地区の皆さんは避難してほしいと。そうしているうちに住民の方々が我々の施設を目指して避難して来ました。若い女性たちが2人、3人泣き始めると、どんどん泣き崩れてしまって。この方たちを力づけなくちゃ、私たちを頼って避難してきた人々を守らなくちゃと思いました。

大津波によって橋が流され、瓦礫で道が覆われてしまい、私どもの施設も孤立状態になってしまいました。お客様には「私たちが精一杯努めさせていただきます。ただ、このような緊急事態ですのでご理解いただきたい」とお願いいたしました。スタッフを集め、その時のミーティングから、「心を強く持って」というのが、何度も何度も話す言葉になりました。電気も水も止まってしまう、孤立状態ですから物が入ってこない、ある物でしのいでいくしかない。「まずはお客様、住民の方が最優先。皆には我慢してもらうことになるかもしれないが慌てないでほしい。おにぎりが全員分なければ半分ずつ配るので譲り合いの精神で頑張りましょう」と話しました。すぐに厨房の責任者には「まずは1週間の献立を立ててほしい」と頼みました。すぐそばの高台に、託児所を併設した女子寮があり、そこにお客様を避難誘導していたので、待たなしで毛布や布団を運び上げるなど、さまざまな対応をしました。当日は本当に、自分の家族や家がどうなっているのかわからないという状況の中、お客様のために、懸命に使命感を持って動いてくれるスタッフばかりだったことには感謝の気持ちでいっぱいです。

お客様を一旦お見送りできたのが17日の朝でした。ようやく我々のスタッフが家に帰ると、土台しかない、写真一枚落ちていなかった、と戻って来ました。そういう人たちには「ホテルが自分の家だと思って家族を連れて帰っておいで」と伝えました。お客様が帰られる一方で、関係者がホテルに住み始めることとなりました。

大切な人、自分たちが築き上げてきたものを一瞬にして失ってしまった人たちがたくさんいました。南三陸町の人たちが再会すると、これは被災地全体がそうだったと思いますが、「うちは1人亡くなっただけだからいい」とか、「遺体が見つかったからいい」とか、胸が引き裂かれるような思いでした。ただ、瓦礫の中を、大切な人を探し回る…まるで地獄絵図を見るような思いでした。

水のない4ヶ月を過ごす

ライフラインが戻らないということも深刻な問題でした。4日間水がないだけでも大変ですが、南三陸町では4ヶ月戻りませんでした。給水車がやっと入ってきた時に住民の方たちにお風呂をご案内し、とても喜んでいただきました。公の避難所でなくても、皆様が訪れてくださり、我々のような衣食住を提供する職業は、災害の時に役目があるなど感じ始めました。水さえあれば体育館のような避難所で生活している方ももう少し楽になるのではないかと思ったのですが、簡単なことではありませんでした。お願いをしても実際来る水は必要量の3分の1。お風呂は週2回、トイレはできるだけ仮設トイレを使ってくださいと言わざるを得なかったです。

町のありとあらゆる川で洗濯が始まりました。大変な



災害に遭遇し体的にも厳しい中で、お年寄りたちが川で洗濯する姿は見えていませんでした。せんだい男女共同参画財団が行った洗濯ボランティアには助けられました。川での洗濯や、コインランドリーに毎週40分車を走らせて洗濯代を使っている人たちは大変でしたから、仙台の女性の方たちに助けていただいたことは、ありがたい支援でした。

このことから、本当に女性の視点が必要だと思えます。今日もこれだけの素晴らしい、女性の感性が生かされた会議に参加して、私たちが失ったものは非常に大きかったです。ぜひ女性の力でもっと良いまちづくりができればいいと考えています。

復興を担う子どもたちの支援

被災地では多くのものを失い、取引先からの廃業の連絡も相次ぎました。立ち止まっていたのは沈み込んでしまふと思ひ、紙皿と紙コップで営業を再開しました。昨年は長い間避難所としての役目を担ってきましたが、人口の流出が深刻だったということもあり、できるだけ学生のいる家庭、経営者を中心にお世話をしたいと申し上げました。子どもたちが出て行ってしまうと、将来の復興の担い手がなくなってしまいます。失われた工場や会社が再開しないと、仕事を求めてよそのまちに出て行ってしまいます。お店が開かないと生活の利便性も戻りません。

さらに、若いお母さんたちから子どもの教育が心配だ、悔しい、残念だとの声がたくさん上がり、館内で寺子屋、そろばん教室、英会話のレッスンなどを始めました。これは避難所の役目を終えた今も継続しています。復旧復興のスピード感が感じられない今、子どもたちが学ぶことを諦めてしまったら大変です。

そしてお年を召した方々にはこの出来事は厳しすぎたな、とも思います。身体的にも精神的にも。復興を語る時に10年、30年構想などと言われて希望が持てるだろうか、自分の孫が少しでも成績が上がったとか、英語が話せるようになったという話のほうが生きる力になり、現実的な希望も感じていただけるのではないだろうか、と思って今も取り組んでいるところです。

翌日の朝日—強い希望を持って生き抜く決意

宗片 写真の中に朝日の情景がありました、震災直後のものと伺いましたが。

阿部 実は朝日の写真は3月12日の朝でございます。3月11日にあれほど荒れ狂った天候が、翌日には何事もなかったように、美しい存在感のある素晴らしい太陽が上がってまいりました。本当に私たち人間の無力さを思い知らされるような風景だったので、私たちもこの日の出のように強い希望を持って、生き抜いていかなければいけないと感じ、写真に残していました。

宗片 自然というのはすごいものだなあと改めて感じさせられます。私たちがボランティアとして、避難していた方たちの洗濯物をお預かりしたというご縁もございます。南三陸町は、大変風光明媚な、青く澄んだ海と自然豊かな漁業の町です。少しでも早くこの景色を取り戻したいと願っています。

地元紙記者として、直後から気仙沼で取材

丹野 皆さんこんにちは、河北新報石巻総局記者の丹野綾子と申します。私が勤める河北新報は、宮城県を本拠とし、東北6県に取材拠点を置く、東北のブロック紙で、発行部数は44万部です。今回の震災では、まさに私たちの新聞のお膝元が大きな被害を受けました。社員の中に亡くなった者はいないのですが、新聞を配ってくださっている販売店の方が何人か津波に流され、家族を亡くした記者、社員もおります。新聞を読んでくださっていた大勢の読者もお亡くなりになって、購読部数が3万部減りました。それは経営危機にも直結します。それでも地元紙だからこそ、徹底的に被災地の今を全国に伝えていこうと、震災直後から会社一丸となって、震災報道に取り組んできました。3月11日の地震で新聞を印刷するシステムが壊れてしまい、自社で新聞を出せないという状況でした。しかし、こんな時だからこそ絶対新聞を休むわけにはいかないと、新潟日報さんの力を借り、翌3月12日に新聞を届けることができました。この会議の会場でも展示していただいているので、ぜひご覧ください。記者、社員たちも被災者でしたが、それでも新聞を出せたことは私たちの誇りです。



私は仙台出身で入社11年目になります。今年の4月から石巻に転勤し、取材しています。その前は仙台北社と宮城県の最北端の港町、気仙沼市で勤務していました。石巻は仙台に次ぐ宮城県2番目の都市です。気仙沼はもうちょっと小さいのですが、いずれも港町で今回の震災で大変な津波被害を受けました。私は気仙沼に勤務経験があったということで3月11日の夜から車で4時間かけて気仙沼へ取材に向かいました。仙台にいる間は停電のため、沿岸部で何が起きているかわかりませんでした。かつて一緒に働いた気仙沼の事務の女性にメールをしたら「気仙沼では今、火事が起きている」と。その時は「津波が来ているはずなのに、なぜ火事が起きているのだろう」と思いましたが、後になって沿岸にあった重油タンクが波でさらわれ、大量に流出した重油に火が付き、火が波になり、街中が大火災になったことがわかりました。その女性のメールには「会社のビルには津波から逃れてきた人たちが100人近く避難している。会社の周りは火の海にのまれ爆発音がしている」と書かれていました。



いても立ってもいられなくなり、「とにかく行かなくちゃ」との思いで気仙沼に向かいました。

気仙沼に着くまでは、津波被害とはどんなものか全くわからなかったのですが、真っ暗な中、車を走らせていた際、目の前に突然、ボロボロになった車が現れました。気仙沼市役所の近くの、海から直線距離で300m離れている所で、ああここまで津波が来たんだ、と。車の後ろには板切れとか畳、家だったものがグチャグチャになって道路をふさいでいて。「津波ってこういうことなんだ」と、その時初めて実感しました。どの道路も通ることができず、会社に行くことができませんでした。夜が明けて見えたのは、本当に滅茶苦茶になった気仙沼のまちでした。建物という建物が壊れ、重油が混じったヘドロだらけで、吐き気のような臭いでした。その中に魚がたくさん落ちていて、津波で海から運ばれたのではなく、水産加工会社の冷凍庫が全て破壊され流れてきたのだと知って、ぞっとしました。

取材中に子どもの死に直面

とにかく取材しなくてはと思い、被害がひどいと通りがかりの人に聞いた、気仙沼の南の階上はしかみという所に行きました。そこで5歳の子どもの死に直面しました。海に向かって車を走らせたのですが、家がなぎ倒され、道路が塞がれ、進めなくなったので引き返そうとした時に、消防団のような格好をした男の人たちが3、4人現れ、オレンジ色の毛布にくるまれた長いものを持ちながら「避難所まで乗せて行ってくれ」と言われました。「後部座席を倒してくれ」と言われたので、わけもわからず言う通りにしたら、そのうちの男性1人が抱えて乗って、その時初めてそれが人間、子どもだとわかりました。「避難所に行って」ということはまだ大丈夫なのかなと思い、別の男性に「大丈夫なんですか？」と聞いたらこう（否定する仕草を）なさって。その子どもはすでに亡くなっていました。

一緒に乗った男性はたぶんお父さんだったと思うのですが、その子を抱いて、ずっと涙をこぼしながら「寒くないか」と声をかけていましたが、避難所に着いたとたん、中に駆け込んでいきました。体育館は、着の身着のまま津波から逃げてきた人々でごった返して、寒さと恐怖でがたがた震えていました。お父さんが、けが人やお年寄りを休ませるスペースに行き、私は付いて行ってそっと見ていました。そこで初めて毛布が外され、出てきたのは男の子か女の子か当時はわからない、眠っ

ているようなあどけない顔で。ずっと後で、近くに住んでいた5歳の男の子とわかりました。お医者さんが来て瞳孔を見て、亡くなっていることを伝えたと思うのですが、お父さんはずっとその子を抱きしめていました。そこにお姉ちゃんらしき小学校1年生くらいの女の子が、多分お父さんがいたからだと思いますが、ニコニコ笑って近づいて来ました。自分の兄弟が死んだことを理解していない様子で。お父さんは涙をボロボロこぼしながら遺体を見せないように女の子を後ろから抱きかかえて、どこかへ連れて行きました。

目の前で起きているんだけど、ずっと見ていたんだけど、これって現実かな、こんなひどいことってあるのかな。あんな小さい子がこんなことになるなんて。現実が受け入れられない状況でした。それは私だけではなく、震災直後から取材に行った記者たちが同じような経験をしていました。あるカメラマンの先輩がヘリコプターで空撮していてビルの上を通ったら、ビルの屋上にいる人たちが救助のヘリだと思ってずっと手を振っていました。しかし、取材ヘリは救助をしたり食べ物を運んだりすることはできず、その人たちにファインダーを向けながら「俺は何をやっているんだろう、あの人たちを助けなければいけないんじゃないのか、新聞記者って何なのだろう」——もちろん取材をしてこの被災状況を伝えることが使命だとはわかっているんですが、「取材なんてしている場合なのか、今自分たちの地元がこんな状況になっているのに」という罪悪感を持ったと言っていました。私も同じような思いで取材していました。

女性たちの困難

ずっと気仙沼に通う中で会った女性たちは大変で、10日間顔を洗っていない、着替えていないなんて当たり前。私は3日間洗えないだけで息が詰まりそうだったのに皆さんはそんな状況の中「こんな時にわがまま言っていられないから」と笑っていました。それはわがままでも何でもありませんけれど。津波から逃げて来て、濡れたまま何日間も着替えられないという人がざらにいました。お年寄りや子どもたちのためにと皆さん行動されていました。着替える場所もなく、布団の中で着替えたり、つい立てなども全くない状況でした。

特に小さな子どもを連れてくるお母さんがかわいそうで。避難所に来てから子どもが夜泣きするようになって、周りに迷惑だからと、昼間子どもが寝ないようにほっぺを叩いて起こす、という姿もありました。お世話になっている親戚の家で、子どもがご飯のお代わりを我慢している、本当は食べさせたいのに、と泣いているお母さんもいました。

女の人には子どもや高齢者の介護など、弱い立場の人のお世話をすることが多く、それだけにご苦労が多いなど取材しながら思いました。

被災地が忘れられる風化

だんだん時間が経つにつれ被災地も落ち着いてきて、避難所から仮設住宅に移られています。自治体が、家を失くした人のための住宅を再建する防災集団移転事業を進めたり、水産加工会社や被災した企業が工場を建



て直したりと、少しずつ復興が進んでいます。でも今感じるのは、時間が経ち復興が進むにつれ、被災地のことが忘れられる、風化の問題が確実に起きているということです。仙台は中心に出れば震災などなかったかのような状況ですが、石巻や南三陸、気仙沼は、仙台とは被災の程度が全く違います。石巻に暮らして初めてわかったのですが、被災地は震災前の状況を取り戻すことが日々の闘い、日々そのために頑張っているような状況です。仮設住宅の暮らしひとつとっても、6帖、4帖の二間で3人が暮らしている。壁も薄いし、寒いし、家族で暮らせるプライベートな空間ではあっても、かつて住んでいた自宅とはほど遠いものです。1年入居期間は延長されましたが、3年で出なければいけない。国の防災集団移転事業などを活用しても、家を建てるのにはお金が必要で、高齢の方はどうしたらいいんだろうと言い、若い人も仕事が未だに不安定で、被災者は皆、将来に対して大きな不安をいただいています。国の復興予算も被災地とは関係のないことに使われたり、被災地に住んでいる人間からすると本当に怒りを覚えます。

復興を遅らせる風評被害

そして今被災地が本当に悩んでいるのは、原発事故の風評問題です。石巻は漁業が盛んなまちです。被災した漁業者は、他の地域の人から何とか古い船を分けてもらったり、借金して船を手に入れたり、やっとの思いで海に出て漁を再開したのに宮城、岩手、福島が魚が売れない。この3県の魚というだけで買わない。特に東京から西の量販店ではこの地域の水産物を買ってもらえない状況です。魚や水産加工物が売れないというのは、せっかく借金をして漁や工場を再開したのに、再建できないということです。

流通に乗る魚というのは魚市場でも、各水産会社でも毎日放射能検査を行っているのに、極端に怖がられています。もちろん原発事故というのは私たちが経験したことのない大変な災害ですし、内部被曝の問題は影響がわからないこともあります。しかし、この風評被害の問題には過剰なところもあり、復興を大きく遅らせているということを知ってもらい、被災地の状況を常に忘れないでほしいです。

宗片 丹野さんはまさに現場、最前線で被災者に接し、被災の事実を送り続けた記者の一人ということで、いかに過酷な取材活動、つらい時間であったか、おわかりいただけたのではないのでしょうか。

河北新報は地元紙で、私たちが親しんでいる新聞です。情報が寸断され、正確に伝わってこない不安と恐怖。その後新聞が配達されるまでの新聞社の時間が、どれだけ壮絶だったかは後に知るわけですが、3月12日に朝刊が届いたこと自体に私たちも驚きましたし、情報を届けてくれたことに、大変ありがたい思いがありました。

震災直後の女子短大

二瓶 皆さんこんにちは。福島市からまいりました二瓶と申します。3月11日の翌日、12日が桜の聖母短期大学の卒業式の予定でした。カトリックの短大ですのでその前の週は卒業週間として、社会に出す前にさまざまな行事をして、彼女たちの卒業を祝うという1週間でした。11日は神父様を迎えて卒業ミサを行い、その後、卒業式のリハーサルをしました。リハーサルの後、学生たちは写真を撮るためにホールに残っていましたが、私は隣の建物にある6階の研究室に戻ろうとしていました。5階まで来たところで、ロッカールームにいる学生たちの携帯が、初めて聞く音で一齐に鳴り出し、直後に揺れ、6分近く揺れが続きました。そこにいたのは1年生の学生たちで、パソコン室やいろいろな所から飛び出してきて私にしがみつきました。まるで幼稚園児のように泣き叫んでいる学生たちに「とにかく床に伏せなさい」と言い、親鳥がひな鳥を抱えるように学生たちを抱えていました。防火扉も開いてしまったり、消火ホースも壁から落ちてきたりと惨憺たる状況でした。私も「ここで死ぬんだな」と思いました。この学生たちを守ってここで死ぬんだと思った時、学生たちのお母さんのことを思いました。私自身も娘のことを思いました。その時、私は5階から1階に降りる勇気がありませんでしたが、防火扉の陰から「誰かいるのか、とにかく下まで一緒に降りよう」と声をかけてくれたアメリカ人の先生がいて、2人で学生たちを誘導し、キャンパス広場まで降りました。欧米の方たちは自分の生活を大切にするので、その先生も家族の心配や放射能の問題を考えあぐねた結果、震災後一度は福島に戻ったのですが、1年間だけ責任を果たして退職されました。昨日聖母短大に久しぶりに顔を出してくれ、「自分の退職した後、英語学科の学生たちをケアしてくれてありがとう」と言われました。私は「あの地震の時、声をかけてくれなかったら1階へ降りることができなかった、お互い様だね、ありがとう」と言いました。こんな支え合い方が3月11日以降、多かったなと思います。

私たちの短大は卒業式も中止にしました。3月11日の夜は皆帰れなかったのも、とにかく学生ホールでみんなで過ごそうということになりました。備蓄もありませんでしたのでカフェテリアに残っているお米を、食物栄養専攻の学生たちが先生に指導してもらっておにぎりを作り、一人一個ずつ食べました。その味のないおにぎりを食べながら非常に寂しい夜を過ごしました。余震が続き、予断を許せない状況だったので、一睡もしていません。学生たちは少しずつ眠るようになり、また保護者の方も、ガソリンもなくなり、高速道路も遮断され、渋滞もして大変な中を、次々お迎えに来ました。迎えがない学



生たちを乗せて行ってくださる保護者の方も多く、半分くらいには減りましたがそれでも120~130人の学生が朝まで残りました。宮城の津波の被災地域の学生は、家族と連絡も取れません。公的避難所じゃないと支援物資が届かないんだそうです。ですから短大に置くこともできない。修道院も考えましたがシスターたちの高齢化、備蓄もないということで、避難所になっていた、すぐ近くの福島市役所に、もう1人の男性教員とともにありったけの物資をかき集めて学生たちを送って行きました。翌日からはその学生たち、あるいは短大周辺の一人暮らしをしている学生たちのケアのため、とにかく歩き回っていました。

原発と福島で生きる人たち

私たち福島の間はあの揺れの中で、多くの人たちが報道の前から予測をしていました。「原発がどうなるだろうか」と。私は5年ほど地元のテレビ局の県議会番組のコメンテーターをしていたのですが、その中で何回あったかわかりません。東京電力のトラブル隠し、データ改ざん、それから原子炉にヒビが入っているのだがこの程度のヒビならば稼働しても大丈夫だ、というような基準設定。こういうものを「県議会が議決した」というニュースのたびに「でも、ヒビですよ〜」と、スポンサーの県議会を気にしつつ、ギリギリラインで、コメントしていたことを思い出します。しかし、これは多くの県民が自覚していたことです。

ですから子どものいる人たちは子どもを閉じ込め、若い人たちは外を歩かなかったと思います。報道があればなおさらだったと思います。よくいろいろな地域に福島のことを話しに行くと、心ないことも言われるんですね。「福島の人たちは何であんなに平気で生きていられるのか。放射能が怖くないのか」と。私も実家が東京なので「どうして帰って来ないのか」と言われています。しかし私は、学生が1人でもいればずっと福島で生き続けようという決意をしています。福島の人々は本当に放射能のことを勉強しています。そしてまた、原子力発電所をこのままにしておけないと思っています。原発作業員の中にもたくさんの地元の若者が働いているんです。直接お話も伺いましたが、彼らはこう言っていました。「親に内緒で3ヶ月だけ働く。もちろん生活再建という目標もあるけれど、こんなことを言うのは気恥ずかしいし、信じてもらえるかわからないけれど、一番の理由は早く原発を収束させたいと思っています。でも、自分の将来も心配だから3ヶ月に区切ります」と。こういう人たちが福島には生きています。全国からいらした皆さんには、福島で生きる人たちがさまざまだということも知っていただきたいなと思っています。

学生たちのボランティア活動

学生たちは学校が閉鎖になった後、自宅待機になっていました。桜の聖母短期大学限定のソーシャルネットワークサービスというのを作り、情報交換をしたり、励まし合ったりすることを始めました。その中で学生たちがいろいろなことを言い出しました。「早く学校に行きたい」「テレビやニュースで見ると津波でたくさんの方が命



や家を奪われている」「私たちは家族がいて家も残っている」、もちろん家族や家を失った学生もいましたが、多くの学生が「私たちはまだ恵まれている方かもしれない。何かしたい、このままでいるのは嫌だ」と声が高まり、ボランティアをすることになりました。学長が決断して自宅待機も解き、授業は5月からだけれど、来たい人は学校に来なさい、できるだけ活動を一緒にしましょう、となりました。

学生たちは避難所に行って体をほぐしてもらおうと、「がんばっぺ体操」という体操と歌を、自分たちで作りました。その他、避難所に行って肩たたきボランティアや足湯ボランティアなどを始めました。それは今でも続いています。他者の困難に敏感であることは、人間的成長です。

「フクシマ」と括れない、一人ひとりの困難と選択

もう一つ、福島は北海道、岩手に続いて日本で3番目に広い面積を持っています。1万4千平方キロメートル以上の面積です。そして、阿武隈高地と奥羽山脈に挟まれ、福島市のある中通り、会津地方、浜通りの三つの地域に分かれていて、これは明治政府が三つを合体するまでは別々の県だったわけで、気質も気候もそれぞれ違います。そして、原発による影響、地震津波の影響もそれぞれ違います。「フクシマ」と一言で括られ、いろいろなことが言われていますが、一人ひとりのドラマがあり、一人ひとりの困難があります。例えば浜通りの原発立地地域の方々は全国に散らばっています。ただ、多くの方たちが福島市や郡山市という福島の情報が得られ、仕事がありそうな場所に住んでいます。県内在住を選んでいます。学生に「私たちの隣人に避難している方たちがいらっしゃることを意識して毎日生きましょう」とよく言うんですが、学生たちはそのことを受け止めてくれます。また、原発立地地域の方たちは、もうふるさとに帰れないんじゃないか、あるいはどうしてもふるさとに帰りたい、さまざまな人々の多様な選択があります。でも、現在の福島は分断されています。避難した人を「逃げた」と言う心ない人たちもいます。避難、被災の状況は一人ひとり違います。放射能に対する感覚も一人ひとり違います。一人ひとりの選択があっていいと思います。その私たちが、ずーっとつながっていくこと、お互いを理解し合うことがすごく大切だと思います。「双葉八町村」といわれる原発立地地域の方たちも、いわき市に住みたい、飯館村や葛尾村の方たちは福島市に住みたいと、

いろいろな選択を皆さんがなさっています。これが浜通りから避難された皆さんと暮らす中通りの実態です。

中通りに住む私たちはというと、今朝の空間線量は0.49でした。先日、紅葉が見頃と新聞に載っていた阿武隈の山々の空間線量は0.09。安全ですから皆さん紅葉を見に来てください。0.09とキャンパスがある福島市の0.49を比べれば決して低いわけではありません。避難された方たちとともに私たちはこういう場所に生きています。低線量被曝が子どもたちの内部被曝にどのような影響を与えるのか、まだ誰も知りません。そのことを意識しながら子どもたちを連れての避難が続いています。私たちはもう、子どもたちが減っていくことは恐れていません。そしてまた、残った者には残った責任があると思っています。

もう一つご紹介したい話があります。福島大学の専門の研究者たちは本当に一生懸命、汚染マップ作りのために調査をしています。そして、セシウムの7割が1年経って減った、あと3割だと、5年が目安だと言っています。ですから小さな子どもがいて一旦避難している人たちは、5年を目安に生活設計すれば、戻ってきてふるさどで生きることもできるわけです。

こうした正確なデータを取りながら、私たちがどのような選択をして生きていけばいいのかを、お互いに考えていかなければならない。そして私は18から20歳の学生たちと暮らしながら、この学生たちのためにいざという時はどうしようか、あるいはこれからどうしたらいいのかということ、本当に毎日、誠実に、丁寧に考えていかなければならないと思っています。

宗片 私たちは福島の実態をどれだけ知っていたでしょうか。今、二瓶さんのお話を伺い、多様な人たちがいる、いろいろな選択がある、福島とは一括りではないのだということ、改めて考えさせられました。

子育て支援の現場から届ける生の声

伊藤 皆さんこんにちは、のびすく仙台の伊藤です。のびすく仙台は仙台市の市街地ど真ん中、仙台駅と仙台市役所の中間にある、子どものいる家庭を支援する施設です。広場があったり、一時預かりをしたり、情報提供をしたり。たくさんのお母さん、お父さん、子どもたち、毎日150人くらいが遊びに来ます。

3月11日の震災の日は日中大変混み合っていて、もしその時地震が起きていたらと思うとぞっとしますが、15時近くでしたので来館者も一段落つき、だいたい20人くらいの親子が遊んでいました。託児室では5人の子どもたちを預かっており、3人の職員で見っていました。宮城県は本当に地震が多い県で、私も22年前に転勤で来た時から「いつ大きな地震が来てもおかしくない土地だ」と聞いていましたので、私の願いは任事中、要するにお母さん、お父さんがたくさんいる時に地震が起こらなければいいな、ということだったのですが、今回真っ最中に地震に遭ってしまいました。大きな大きな揺れだったんですけれども、地震があったその7分間、お母さん、お父さんはパニックになりませんでした。しっかり子ども



を守りました。大人たちで子どもを真ん中に囲んで、子どもたちに覆い被さるようにして守りました。私は倒れてくるロッカーを押さえて踏ん張っていました。大きな音もしたので、子どもたちは泣き始めましたが、お母さんたちは本当に冷静に子どもたちを守り、7分間の揺れをしのぎました。揺れが収まった後に皆で外階段を使って、全員でベビーカーも持って、広瀬通という外の大きい通りに降りました。

その場での解散判断に反省も

市街地は地割れがしているわけでもビルが倒れているわけでもなく、目に見える被害というのがほとんどなかったのですが、本当は私たちが指定避難場所まで誘導しなければいけなかったのですが、お母さんたちから「一刻も早く家に帰りたい」という要望があり、「大丈夫ね」と皆で確認をし合って、そこで解散をしました。その後職員も徒歩で自宅へ帰りました。後で聞いた話ですが、お母さんたちの中には家にたどり着けず避難所で1泊2日過ごした人や、津波に向かって歩いて行って止められたという人もいましたので、そこで解散したのが良かったのかどうか反省しています。全く情報がなく、私たちが現場で判断するしかなかったのも、その時はお母さんたちの声に圧倒されて解散してしまった、という状況でした。

私たちの施設は仙台市の指定管理を受けている施設ですので、仙台市に「全員無事でした」と報告に行きました。再度施設に戻って来た時に、エレベーターに閉じ込められていた親子がいて、その救出に4時間かかりました。無事に救出をして、家にたどり着いたのが真夜中だったと思います。それまでは津波が来ているなど全く予想もつきませんでした。その夜は車の中で過ごしたのですが、そのカーラジオで若林区に津波が来ていると、200から300の遺体らしきものがあるらしいと、放送は聞いていましたが、「見間違いだろう」と信じていませんでした。翌朝の河北新報を読んで現実を知りました。その後近所の人たちに、食料がなくなるからとにかく並びなさいと言われたので、娘とコンビニに並びました。3時間並んで買ったのは小さなカップ麺1個でした。

待たれていた開館

地震の翌々日の13日、歩いてのびすく仙台の様子を見に行きました。施設の中はもちろん全部の棚が倒れ、書類が散乱していました。他に2名の職員が来ていたので片付けをし、開館できる状態にしました。のびすくはガスが1ヶ月半止まりましたが、電気、水道は止まりませんでした。仙台市に連絡したところ「すぐに開館してください」ということでした。歩いて来られる職員が私を入れて3人しかいないので、「この非常事態に開館ですか」とお話ししましたら、「やれるところからやり始めるのが復興なんですよ」と当時の課長さんに言われ、地震の4日後の15日に開館しました。来る人もいないだろうと思っていたのですが、2組の親子が遊びに来ました。1組は街に買い出しに来ていた親子でした。3～4時間寒い中長い列に並んで、遊ぶところもなく子どもは飽き飽きし、のびすくを見たら聞いていたので遊びに来たと。もう1組はお母さんが赤ちゃんを抱っこして来たんです



けれども、震災から夫が会社から帰って来ない、転勤で仙台に来たばかりで自分には誰も知り合いがない、この赤ちゃんと一緒にマンションに居るのは耐えられないと言うんですね、怖くて。「今日は一日中、街をさまよっていた、のびすくだったら人がいると思って来ました」と言って少し休んで帰られました。

開館したもののガスが通っていないので暖房が入らず、3月11日から真冬に戻ったかのような寒さで、絨毯や毛布を敷いたりして寒さをしのいでいたんですけど、あまりに寒いので、開館はしましたが積極的に告知はしなかったんです。電話の対応などをしていて、全国から支援物資を送りたいという声や、逆に子ども服はありませんかという問い合わせもありました。

3月19日が正式開館と決まり、NHKのテロップに流れ、その日は93人来館者がいました。みんな待っていたようです。怖くて地震後ずうっと親から離れないという子どもが多く、「のびすくに来て、初めて子どもから手を離してくれました」とか、子どもが震災から笑わなくなっていたのが「初めて笑顔を見ました」と、お母さんたちが涙を流しながら喜んでいました。翌日は100名を超える方が来館して、それからずっと広場を運営してきました。

お母さんたちの心のケア

最初、お母さんたちは自分から離れなくなった、笑わなくなった子どものことが心配で必死でした。そういう様子を見ていて「お母さんたち頑張っているなあ、あんまり頑張りすぎないといいな」と思っていたんですけど、その頑張りすぎたお母さんたちが、どんどん変化していくんです。6月くらいになったら、広場にいるお母さんたちがどうもイライラしているんですよ。子どものことを叱り始めると止まらなくなったり、お父さんも普段なら見逃すようなことで子どもを叱りつけたり、他人の子どもでも見境なく叱ったり。何か様子がおかしくなってきたと感じられ、お母さんたちをケアしなくては、と思いました。

そこで週1回、託児付きのサロンを始めました。1回7、8組集まっていたけど、その中では何を話してもいいですよと言いました。すると「私は津波には遭っていない。もっと大きな被害に遭ったお母さんたちのことを思うと、つらいとか大変だとかは言うてはいけなくて我慢してきた」「被災した夫の両親や親戚が自分の家に集まったことで嫁の役割も加わり、自分の家なのに自分の居場所がなく、つらくてしょうがない。夫にたまには家族だけ

で出かけたと言っても、こんな時に何を言っているんだと怒られる。私はわがままを言っているんですかね？」「トイレやお風呂で泣いたりしているんですけど、つらいって言えない。初めてここでつらいと言うことができました」「夫の転勤で知り合いもいない土地に来て、何もわからない中で本当に不安だったけど、津波被害を受けた人たちのことを考えるとつらいとは言えない」など、本当にお母さんたちの心の声が聞こえてきて。それを出すことでお母さんたちも少しずつ平常を取り戻していったように思います。

子育てファミリーのための地震防災ハンドブック

そのような声をまとめたものを作りたいと200人のお母さんたちからアンケートをとり、『大切な人を守るために今できること』という子育てファミリーのための地震防災ハンドブックを、6月から準備して2011年9月に発行しました。これを一番喜んでくれたのは、震災以後に仙台に来たお母さんたちでした。「本当に仙台に来るのは嫌だった。何でこの時期に仙台に？と思いましたが、このハンドブックがあって安心しました」という声が聞こえてきました。「自分たちの体験を次の世代、子どもたちにちゃんと伝えたい」というたくさんのお母さんたちの声で、この冊子はできました。

のびすくを開館しながら、津波被害などに遭った地域も支援したいと思っていたので、ガソリンが手に入った1ヶ月後に東松島市に向かいました。東松島の子育て支援センターに行ったところ、職員から「ここでは子どもを亡くしたお母さんがたくさんいます。子どもの支援はたくさん来ているのに、子どもを亡くしたお母さんに支援が入っていない。何とかお母さんたちを支援したいんです」と言われました。その声に応え、現在、東松島で女性のために、ヨガやアロマをしながら、その後におしゃべりをするサロンを毎月開いています。

宗片 のびすく仙台は、仙台の公共施設で震災後最も早くオープンしたところの一つだと思います。公共施設が数多く被災をした中で、お母さんたちがどんなに孤立して、不安を抱えていたかと。そんなお母さんたちに対してのびすく仙台はきめ細かく支援をしてきました。



特定非営利活動法人せんだいファミリーサポート・ネットワーク
『子育てファミリーのための地震防災ハンドブック
大切な人を守るために今できること』

岩手の支援活動から見たこと

石井 こんにちは、兵庫県西宮市からやってきましたNPO法人さくらネットの石井布紀子と申します。私は阪神・淡路大震災の時の全壊被災者の一人で、30分家具に埋まり、3時間近隣の命の助け合いに関わり、3日目以降は外から来るボランティアや専門職の方と被災地をつなぐという役目をしていました。2日間で拝見したご遺体は約900名でして、眠れずに過ごした3年間の後、講演の最中にフラッシュバックを起し、直後2日間の記憶を失いました。少し身軽になりましたので、それ以降、大規模災害が起こると被災地へ行く、というのが私の仕事になりました。阪神大震災の前は発達障害や不登校の子どもたちの支援を行っていました。



3月11日は、2007年の中越沖地震の被災地復興の会議に参加して、そのまま被災地入りの依頼を受け、ユニクロで服を買い込み、福島県内を2日間、その後岩手県に向かい、昨年は1年の70%を岩手県で過ごしました。

今日は「直接死」と「関連死」という観点から、女性の困難と力について、岩手の方たちとの出会いの中で知り得たことをお話したいと思います。

災害直後の生存権に男女差はあるか

直接死は今回約2万人、関連死は約2千人。年代別では男女ともに70代以上の方の死亡割合が非常に高いです。阪神・淡路大震災の時には明らかに女性の割合が高いんです。今回200名が性別判定不可能となっているようですが、ずっと水害を追いかけた私は一つの法則を知って、なぜか地震ではなく、水害になると男性の死亡率が上がっています。今回岩手県宮古市のある地域で聞くと、60数名亡くなっているのですが、3名を除いてほとんどの方は一度高台に上がってから戻った方で、最初から逃げられなかった3名は高齢の女性だったそうです。地域でお約束があり、「声をかけても返事がない、鍵がかかっている家に住んでいる者は申し訳ないが置いて行く」というのがルールで、明らかに家にいたであろうその3名の高齢女性は、お約束通り置いて行かれたそうで、地域の方は一番最初に入ってきた自衛隊に、その3人の女性を家の近所で見つけてほしいと依頼したそうです。お葬式は皆で避難所で行ったと聞きました。

まだ分析不足ですが、災害直後の直接死の現場で一番大変な時に、「生存権」に男女の差はないという論調もよく聞くんだけれども、「守りたくても守られない命」の中には「高齢の女性」という大きなカテゴリーがやはりあります。

命を救った女性専門職の力

これらの命の可能性とともに、たくさんの命をどうやって守るかという時に、みなさんは「釜石の奇跡」という話をお聞きになったことがあるでしょうか。釜石小学校、釜石東中学校、ともに校長先生が女性です。徹底し

た教育理念のもとに学校経営をやってこられた結果、小中学生は地域の命も守り、自らの命も守りました。当時、中学2年生だった女の子は私に「私たちが奇跡と言わないで、私たちの地域ではたくさんの人が亡くなったんです」と言いました。「でも、亡くなった人のことを受け止めていることも含めて奇跡だから、重たいかもしれないけれど、自分たちの力だと受け止めてね」と伝えましたが、女の子たちは涙を流していました。

保育所も、ほとんどの保育所で女性の園長先生が中心になって避難活動を牽引されたそうです。当時保育所に出てきていた子どもたちの死亡者はゼロだと言われています。女性の専門職たちの力が、多くの命を救っていることを、岩手の被災の現場で知りました。

私の役目は災害ボランティアセンターを沿岸部に早く作り、外の支援の力を少しでも中につなぐというものでした。知り合いがいなかったので現地で被災している方たちにその役目を「一緒にやってください」と言うつらい仕事で、まずは実情を知らなければいけませんでした。その中で、女性の専門職の方たちが日常から丁寧に地域で紡いでいる力が、全体の人数としては少しだったとしても、この「生存権」を守ることに関しては一つひとつの地域にとって大きな力になっていたことを知らされました。

沿岸部では災害前から、どんどん病院や医師の数が減らされ、安い賃金で雇用されていた看護師さんが重圧を受けながら医療行為をしていたことがわかってきました。DMAT（災害派遣医療チーム）というのがあるんですが、これは阪神・淡路大震災の教訓で作られているため、倒壊家屋から外科的な対応で命を救うプロです。ところが津波の被災地に行くたくさんの地域が流され、即死されている方が多いのです。トリアージというのは黒がもうダメな方、赤が緊急、急ぐ方、黄、緑が次の段階なのですが、今回は黒がとてとても多く、赤がすごく少なかったそうです。その後、低体温、感染、肺炎などが急ピッチで増えていって、たくさんの方が関連死となりました。ここを支えなければいけなかった地域の医療は、震災前からどんどん厳しい環境の中に追い込まれていました。そして、外からまずやって来たのは、外科的なプロの方が中心だった。本当は内科医と内科が得意な看護師がたくさん必要な状況だったそうです。

その中で数多くのご遺体と向き合われた岩手の専門職の中に『おもかげ復元師』という本を書かれた笹原留似子さんという方がいました。納棺師の立場からご遺体を少しでもいい状態にし、遺族の方たちの悲しみに寄り添おうとしていたことも知らされました。

たくさんの婦人科医の女性たちが、すごい重圧の中で毎日毎日の食事作りに追われていたことも知りました。ある避難所では婦人科医の女性が食事作りをボイコットしたんですね。あまりに人数が多くて大変で、毎日毎日、朝昼晩の食事作りをその方がやりなさいという状況がずっとお休みをしたら、なんとその日1日、その避難所は食事がなかったんだそうです。どれだけの負担の中で取り組まれていたか。ここに行政のお弁当が届いていないことに対して、災害救助法に基づくさまざまな支援を見続けてきた私は憤りを感じました。避難所運営委員会と

いうものが作られていた割には女性の立場は非常に弱いもので、言われたままに食事作りに押し込められていたという現実もあったようでした。

衣料品などはすべてがMサイズからという物資支援の中で、NPOの女性たちが動き出しまして、女性たちに多様なサイズやライフスタイルに合わせた物資の提供などをされている現実も知りました。命と暮らしは直結していて、早く暮らしを取り戻すことが、関連死を減らす原点になっていったようです。またたくさんの福祉の現場で、暖房も電気もない中、女性の専門職たちがどんどん低体温が悪化していく被災者たちを守り抜いていった現実がありました。

市民が市民を支える活動にもお金が必要

1週間も経つとやっと外部の力が投入されるようになりました。阪神・淡路大震災がボランティア元年であったならば、東日本大震災では市民の活動にお金を投じるという文化がやっと形になってきたようです。市民の寄付というのはほとんど義援金になる。これはこれで必要なことですが、市民が市民を支える活動にもお金が必要で、これらを選択して寄付できるようになっていったことが東日本大震災の大きな成果だと思います。総額何十億、何兆という金額になるであろうお金が、現地や外から入る市民の活動に託されるように変化していったという気がしています。

そんな活動の中で振り返ってお聞きすると、助産師さんたちがNPOを作り、妊産婦さんたちを支えようとされていたり、子育てのNPOの方たちが、なくなった児童館の代わりに屋外から活動を始めていたり。いろいろな取り組みが、できるだけ早く元の生活に戻すようにしながら、ケアを進めようと動いていたようでした。

災害対応はまだまだ男性中心

これらを側面的にどう支援するのか、というのが私の当時の役目だったのですが、残念ですが災害対応はまだまだ全体としては男性中心に動いていまして、女性は従

属的に動く癖があります。私もそうです。女のNPOが県庁に入っていくと「いやあ〜、何だ？このおねえちゃんは」ぐらいで。そんな顔でしか見られないんですね。うちのNPOの理事には「僕は、男性で大学の研究者だからいつもいい顔だけはして迎えてもらえる。時々僕も使って」と言われたりしています。

県庁の会議に行った時にすごくびっくりしたのは、「とにかく全部の避難所に更衣室を作ってください」と申し上げたら、1時間ほどして、真面目な顔をして、「ちょうどビニールが大量にある、これを全ての避難所の真ん中に置いて更衣室を作ればいいだろう」っておっしゃったんです。「何のための更衣室やねん！」とは我慢して言わなかったんですけども、当時いち早く更衣室を作ったある避難所では、そのガラス窓にカーテンがなかったそうです。これでは体育館の真ん中にテントがあるのと同じです。そこの女性に聞くと「本当はカーテンをしたいんだけど言えない」と。まだまだ従属的な立場からしか提言ができない女性たちは、自分たちで何とかつなげて、力を発揮するしかない状況でした。

宗片 阪神・淡路から17年になりますか。混乱状態の現地に、被災経験をされ、事例をお持ちの方たちがたくさん来て、さまざまな支援をして下さったことは本当にありがたかったと思います。

現実に突き動かされた1年7ヶ月

宗片 これまでをお話いただきましたが、共通していることはどのような地域、被災のかたちであれ、お一人お一人を突き動かす現実がそれぞれにあった、ということですね。

阿部さんは慣れ親しんだご自分の町の津波被災、伊藤さんは不安を抱える子育て中のお母さんたち、丹野さんは最前線で取材してきた被災者たちの姿、二瓶さんは原発事故という途方もない現実、石井さんはご自分が体験された阪神・淡路大震災とこの震災との重なり。皆様目の通して被災地の女性の状況も浮かび上がってきました。

第2部 今、これから

朗読

石巻市 30代の女性／預けていた保育所が津波に遭って移転し、遠くなったため、働けなくなりました。仕事があれば少しでも先行きに明かりが灯ると思うけど、保育所が。内職仕事のような作業所でもあればなあ。元気になりたい。

仙台市青葉区 30代の女性／子育て中の仲間と一緒に始めた支援の活動をやっていくうちに、必死で生きたいと思うようになりました。自分は支援する側にもされる側にもなることができるんだあって。自分たちが生活再建への意欲を持つことが大事だなと思います。あと、けんかが多い夫婦なので必ず仲直りしてから送り出すことにしています。けんか別れはしたくないですからね。

仙台市若林区 60代の女性／現実じゃなければいいのって何度も思ったけど、これは現実。知り合いが10人亡くなり、つらいです。ほんとにつらい毎日。土地や不動産じゃないんです。そこに暮らしていた自分を取り戻したいんです。

仙台市宮城野区 50代の女性／駅周辺だけ見ると道路も片付き、日常生活が戻っているように見えるかもしれませんが、更地とか閉じた店とかも増えて、復興が感じられない。季節が変わるごとに衣服、生活用品を一から買いそろえる生活をしています。とりあえず心、体の健康、これしかない。何がなくても自分自身がここにいること、これだけで良しとできる自分に感心して、自分をほめてあげたい気分です。

宗片 日常を取り戻すため、女性たちは懸命に明日へ続く道を探っているのかもしれませんが。復興に向けた動きは進んでいます、一方でそれぞれの生活を完全に取り戻すのはいつになるのだろうという気持ちにも襲われます。これから被災地はどう変化し、女性たちはどのように生活を取り戻していくのでしょうか。

女性の状況を一つのキーワードにして、これからに向けて、気がかりなこともあるでしょうし、一方で希望を見出せるような現実もご紹介いただきながら、ご自由にお話しいただきたいと思います。

福島若き女性に気がかり

二瓶 やっぱり何といっても今気がかりなのは、福島の若い女性たちへの差別が生まれるのではないかとことです。18歳未満の子どもたちと、小さい子どもを持っているお母さんたちへの支援はたくさんあります。でも「忘れられた世代」と私が呼んでいるのですが、結婚するかどうかは別として一つのカテゴリーとして言う「未婚の女性たち」、明日妊娠するかもしれない女性たちに対する支援は全くありません。いろいろなNPOやグループもできています。私たちの健康をどのように守っていくのか、私たちは福島に住み続けて大丈夫なのか、そういう女性たちと、うちの学生も含めて関わりながら、チェルノブイリで学んできたことが生かせるかなと思っています。

私がチェルノブイリで学んできたことは、チェルノブイリでの事故と福島での事故は違う、疑わしいところはあるが、5年間情報が隠されていたソビエト政権下と日本は違うということ。あるいはストロンチウム、セシウム以外のアメリカンなどの拡散は少なかったとか。いろいろな違いを見出しながら、私たちがしばしば突きつけられるいわゆる「チェルノブイリの子どもたち」の写真的子どもたちだけでなく、元気な子どもたちも生きているということを踏まえながら、低線量被曝の問題に向き合っていく。若い女性だけではなく、男性にもリスクがありますから。

チェルノブイリでは、産まないという選択をした人、産むのを避けた人たちがいるか聞きました。私のその問いに対して、大きな研究所や病院では「甲状腺がん以外に科学的根拠、因果関係なし」と、かなり冷たく拒絶されました。でも女性の医師たちは、「データは取ってはいないが、産まなかった人、産もうとしなかった人は多いです」と正直におっしゃってくださいました。こうしたネットワークを通して、私は学生たちがしっかりとリスクコントロールできるような、放射能防護教育も含めて、情報と教育が鍵だと思います。これを学生たちに正確に伝えていきます。そして、私たちの実践を語り続けます。それは、福島に生きる私たちの役割です。力強く生きれば、必ず希望が見出せます。

千年に一度の災害から学ぶ

阿部 私本当に心配なのが風評被害です。我が身に置き換えて、というのが非常に大事ではないかと思っています。福島の友達と話していても二瓶先生がおっしゃったような話題が出がちです。この災害に遭遇して、よその地域

の方たちにもこの出来事から多くを学んでいただきたいと思っています。「津波でんでんこ」といわれた話をもって広まってほしい。いったん高台に避難したが戻ったために犠牲になったという方が多くいました。やはり自分の命は自分で守るという考え方も、その時突然できることではなくて、日頃の親の教育、学校の教育で、常に心がけていないと有事の時に力を発揮できないと思います。

今被災地においても些細な会話が傷つくケースが聞かれます。学校関係の方たちも、子どもの命を守るために積極的に被災地に来て学ぶべきではないかと思いますが、なかなかそれが感じられませんでした。なぜかというPTAの一部の猛反対があるからと言われていました。被災地に来られた学校の方に聞いてみると、3回もPTAへの説明会を開いてやっと来たとか、反対を受けているので現地から説得に来てくれ、などといった話が聞かれます。この千年に一度の災害は千年に一度の学びの機会でもございますので、人々を思いやる気持ちを育てることもおのずとできると思います。自然災害が起きるたびに、風評被害で非常に困るケースが多く発生します。こういうことを改めるためにも必要でないかと。やはり現地に直接行って、聞いて、見て、それぞれに感じ取っていただいて、ということが大切ではないかなと感じています。

福島のお母さんの支援をして

伊藤 つい先日福島のお母さんたちのサロンを開いたのですが、そのお母さんの話では子どもを産まないという選択をしているという話や、婚約が破談になってしまった話など、いろいろな差別が出てきています。仙台にも福島から乳幼児の親子が2千人くらい来ていますが、一番多く受け入れているのは山形です。山形では支援活動も盛んで、福島から避難してきたお母さんの中には、そこに住む選択をする人もいれば、やっぱり福島に帰りたいたいと思いつけている人もいます。原発の問題から発生しましたが、それが家族の問題に発展していて、帰る帰らないという話を、夫と真剣にできないという方もいます。夫と自分の考えが違うので、その話をするとけんかになる。話ができて、先延ばし、先延ばしにしていると。でも、いつかは話さなくてはいけない、それを話す時に家族が崩壊するかもしれないという心配をしながら生活しています。仙台に来て差別を受けるという話も聞こえてきます。かなり敏感になっているお母さんたちなので、いろいろな思いを持ちながら子育てをしているのだなとわかります。

子どもを亡くした親の喪失感

それと『大切な人を守るために』という本を出したのですが、女性は大切な人を守るために本当に力を発揮するんですね。今回もそのためにお母さんたちは頑張ったのですが、大切な人を守りきれなかったお母さんたちの喪失感がすごく大きいんですよ。1年7ヶ月経ったのですが、今になって、心療内科に通うとか、薬を飲まないといけなとか、表面化してきています。あるお母さんが、「亡くなった子どもに会えない」と言うんです。何で？と聞くと「私は子どもに対して嘘をついた。子どもに会ったら、お母さん嘘つきって言われる。何かあったら絶

対お母さんがあなたを守るからね、って言って育てたのに、守りきれなかったから」と言いました。大切な人を守りきれなかったお母さんの喪失感、まだまだこれから、長く続いていくのかなと感じました。

宗片 1年7ヶ月経過したので、少しは回復したのではと思う方もいらっしゃると思いますが、ますます深刻になっているケースもあります。そのあたりも私たちはしっかりと見つめていかなければいけないと思います。

被災者に寄り添うこと

丹野 石巻も気仙沼も、家族を亡くした方、お子さんを亡くした方がたくさんいます。家族を亡くすことに差はないのですが、小さいお子さんを亡くした親御さんの悲しみというのは経験した人間でなければ、きっと完全にはわからないのだろうなというぐらい、皆さん今も傷を抱えていて、時間が経ったからだいぶ楽になったでしょ、というものではありません。特に津波での亡くなり方というのは非常に厳しいものがありました。田んぼの中に、子どもの遺体が見つかる。救助が来ないから自分たちが掘り起こして泥だらけの顔を拭いた、顔はきれいだったけれど口の中が砂でびっしり埋まっていたとか、我が子のそういう状況を見て、お父さんお母さんは自分を責めるし、それが学校や保育所でのことだったりする状況もありまして、管理する側とのトラブル、訴訟にもなっていく中で、二重三重に傷ついていく。「いつまで死んだ子どものことを言っているんだ」「気持ちはわかるけど、もう1年半経っているんだよ」と言われる。そういう中で子どもを失ったことに加えてさらに、周りの目に傷ついていく方たちの取材をしていて、じゃあ自分がそういう人たちに寄り添っているかと考えることがあります。

この「寄り添う」という言い方が、うちの新聞でも使われるのですが、被災者に寄り添い続けるというのも難しいなと思います。お父さんお母さんたちは、とてもナーバスになっていて、そういう方々に少しでも役立つようにとは思って記事を書いているのですが、逆に「あなたの記事のあそこの部分で、すごく私たちは傷ついた。あなたは何もわかっていない」と面と向かって言われることが何度かあって。良かれと思って、すごく気をつけながら書いているつもりなんですけど、それで傷つけてしまう、傷が深まってしまうことがあります。私自身もそう言われるとつらいし、時には怒りを覚えてしまう。だけど、それだけ大変な状況にある人たちの言葉に怒りを覚える自分っていうのは新聞記者として、人間としていいのかなというジレンマもあるんですね。そういった葛藤の中で、「寄り添う」という言葉はきれいだけれども、実際に寄り添い続けるっていうのは、すごくしんどいことでもあるなとも思っています。だけど、その人たちが悪いのかといえば全然そうではなくて。精神的に厳しい状況になっている方々が、被災地にはまだまだたくさんいます。普段元気に見えても心の中に傷を抱えて、夜、亡くなった子どもや家族のことを思って仮設住宅の中で一人泣いているという人がいっぱいいる、そのことをぜひ忘れないでほしいと思います。

女性たちが力を発揮するために一仕組みと共感

宗片 女性たちは数々の困難を抱えました。避難所の中で、仮設住宅の中で、女性たちは困難を抱えました。しかし女性たちは守られるだけの存在ではありません。きっとさまざまな力を持っています。

石井 女性たちのさまざまな力を拝見しましたが、全体的にそれらが仕組みに生かされなかったり、従属的な立場のままで行われていることが多いなど痛感しました。

ある68歳の女性の方がグループホームを経営しておりまして、震災直後に8人の高齢者の方をバンに乗せて高台まで駆け上がったんです。ところが彼女に対する第一声が、その車に乗れなかった方のご家族の「あんたは年寄り見捨てて逃げてきたのか！」だったらしくて。1年以上経っても、その第一声が共感的でなかったことが責任感も含めてぐさぐさと胸に突き刺さっていて、助けた8人の家族から泣いて抱きかかえられて感謝されたことも消し飛ばすような経験になってしまっているんですね。しかも、社会福祉法人が国庫補助で建てた建物は国が再建してくれるのですが、グループホームの建物はその対象にならないこともあるんです。なので、女性たちの力は仕組みの中で評価され、きちっと生業として立ち上げられるようなものにはなっていない現状があるような気がします。

外から支援している私としては、全ての女性たちが、自分なりに考えて選択していこうとすることに対して、共感の気持ちを忘れないようにしたいなと思います。例えば今、皆さんお隣に座っている方と笑顔でにっこり笑い合っただけませんか。それぞれに震災に関係なくとも1年7ヶ月いろいろあってこの場所に来てくださっていると思うんですね。「元気で来てくれてありがとう」って感じで、ちょっと横の方とにっこりしてみてもらっていいですか？（会場で笑い合う）

これだけで会場の温度は変わるんですね。社会の仕組みはこのようになっていないので、このあたりに留意してどうやって外から共感の気持ちを持って、社会の仕組みと一人ひとりの力をつなげる手伝いができるのか。そういう意味では、今回の復興予算の付き方も厳しい。そして、共感的ではなく、他人事のように批判的に、被災地の人がポーンと切り捨てられたかと感じるような、心ない、しかしあまり悪気のない言動。これは学習によって変化するのではないのかなと思います。

宗片 女性たちに力はあるんです。ただそれを発揮でき



る仕組みとか連帯ですね、女性たちが女性を支えていくという関係性も必要だと思います。

女性の力で「場作り」を

阿部 私どものホテルが避難所になった時に、少しでも居心地良く、一瞬でも悲しみや苦しみを忘れられたらと考へまして、コンサート、お芝居、手芸教室、絵本の読み聞かせ等、さまざまなイベントを開きました。いずれ避難所から仮設住宅に移り住むとあらかじめ決まっています、仮設住宅に行ったらどのように時間を過ごせばいいのか、というのが頭にあつたと思います。編み物やミシンがけ、布草履を作ったり、というイベントの時には多くの方が積極的に参加してくださいました。今もそれぞれの仮設の集会所で、皆さんにもお配りしたような手しごと品が作られています。こういった手作業に集まることによってコミュニケーションを図れたり、一人でぼつんといたら、ただ悲しいことを思い出すような時も、仲間と一緒にいることで、朗らかに会話できたりするのかな、と。しかし、男性は女性に比べてそういった行動が少ないので、そこが非常に心配でもあります。女性はコミュニケーションの取り方や、そういう場作りが上手です。そういった面でも女性の力を意識して、地域や家庭でみんなを照らさなければいけないのだと思います。

被災者の頑張りや強さに勇気をもらう

石井 この1年7ヶ月の河北新報の記事の中で「これは知ってもらいたい！」という、女性記者が選ぶNO.1レポートをぜひお願いしたいです。

丹野 たくさんありすぎて、今どれをというのはいにくいのですが、自分が書いた記事で二つお伝えしたいものがあります。

一つは気仙沼市に大島という離島がありますが、そこに住むおばあちゃんの話です。震災から1ヶ月くらい経って、いわゆる本土の避難所では1日3回食べられるようになった頃でも、離島なので物資が来ず、水道も海底のパイプラインが寸断されている状況でした。食料は船で自衛隊が運んで来るだけだったので、本当に少ない状態でした。1日1回の配給からちょうど帰って来た、リヤカーを引いたおばあちゃんに話を聞いたら、家族5人でアルファ米とサンドイッチとトマトが1個ずつ、キュウリ2本、あと今日初めて牛乳200cc、お菓子少々で、戦前以下だと怒っていました。どこから来たのと聞かれ、仙台と答えると「わざわざありがとね、これ持っていきなさい」と、「ない、ない」と言っていた食べ物をよこそうとするので、「取材に来て、食べ物がないという人からもらって帰るわけにはいきません」と断っていたら怒り出して、「いいからもらっていきなさい！」と無理矢理持たされました。今回の津波被災地は漁村的なところが多く、「行ったら手ぶらで帰さない」みたいな、特に女の人はずごくそういう意識が強くて、しょっちゅう煮物をもらったりしてたんですけど。被災地の方々は「自分たちはもらってばかりだ」と、そのことに申し訳なさを感じていて、「少しでも」という思いで物をくださる。そのことを記事に書きました。人間って強いなあ、と。「貧すれば鈍する」とか「衣食足りて礼節知る」という言葉

がありますが、被災者のおばあさんたちには、自分が空腹でも人に親切にすることができるという強さがある、私自身すごく感動させられました。

もう一つは気仙沼の親子、4代のお父さんと10歳の息子さんの話です。その方は奥さんと子ども2人、義理の両親と妹、その妹の娘、7人を一気に亡くしました。皆一緒に逃げようとしたところを車ごと流されてしまい、学校にいた息子だけが助かったのです。取材に行つて、申し訳ないなと思ひながら話を聞いていたのですが、お父さんに「自分を悲劇のヒーローのように書くのはやめてほしい」と言われました。「家族を亡くしては、車が1台だけで暮らしては悲しみは比較できないんだから。自分も確かにたくさんのものを失ったけど、かわいそうだとは言われたくない。今必死で頑張っている。自分が前を向くしかない」と、震災から1ヶ月経たないうちに牛乳の販売店を再開したそうです。残酷な質問かなと思つたんですけど、息子さんに「お母さんいなくてつらくない？」と聞いたら、「つらくない。お父さんが頑張ってるから俺も頑張る」って。「もし今お母さんに会えたら何て言いたい？」と聞いたら「もう大丈夫。二人で頑張ってるから心配しないでって言いたい」と、お互いにお互いを気遣っていました。平気なわけではないです、すごく無理をしています。本当に苦しい中を二人三脚で頑張っている親子をぜひ知ってほしいと思つて記事に書かせてもらいました。

記者には、感動する話を皆さんにお伝えしたい、との思いがあるのですが、実は自分たちが一番感動しているというか。そうやって被災者の頑張りや強さからもらう勇気がすごくあつて、それを新聞を通して伝えていたらなと思つています。つらい、しんどいことも多いんですけど、一方で被災者に励まされて、また頑張ろう、伝えていこう、ということの繰り返しです。

最後に—これからどう生きていくか

宗片 3月11日から、これまでと今をお話いただきました。でも私たちはこれからも生きていかなければいけません。最後に、それぞれご自分の「これから」を、一言ずつお願いいたします。

被災地で女性の雇用を生み出す支援

石井 この1年7ヶ月で残念だったことの一つに、ある女性のご遺体の左手の薬指が切られていた、指輪を盗むために、ということがありました。女性が受ける暴力の質も変わって、組織的な暴力も増えているんだなと実感しました。その一方で、震災から直接死を減らすのは、日常で築く身近な信頼関係だと、18年間思い続けてきたのですが、今回確信しました。さらに必要だと思つたのは専門性です。地域活動であれ、NPOの活動であれ、仕事であれ、日常で築いてこられた専門性はたくさんの命や暮らしを取り戻し、救っていく大きな原動力になったと思つています。被災に関わらない人が築いている専門性も、次の被災やいろいろな社会的な出来事を乗り越えていくための大きな力になるし、女性がそれらの力を生

かしていく際に、やはり仕事といいますが、^{なりわい}生業といえますか、専門性から声を上げていくような社会を作れるように、これから被災地の中でたくさんの女性の雇用を生み出す支援をしながら、見つめていきたいと思っています。

逆境に強い女の子たちを、良き有権者として育てる

二瓶 私の話の前に二つお願いがあります。一つは私の地元の民友新聞に長く勤めていた、今はフリージャーナリストの藍原寛子さんが、今日の朝日新聞に「震災後、人がどう変わったか」という記事を書きました、読んでみてください。もう一点、女性の活躍ということで、飯館村で農産物を加工して作っていたメンバーが、今仮設住宅に暮らしながら「かあちゃんのカプロジェクト」というのを作り、全国から安全な野菜を取り寄せて、漬け物などを作って売っています。ネット販売もしています。皆さんもぜひ応援してあげてください。

私の「これから」ですが、教育の専門職として、良き有権者を育てようと思っています。自分たちのことを自分たちで決められるように、自分の身の安全や生存権を守っていけるような、リスクコントロールができる女性を育てていって、意思決定の場、さまざまな専門的な場所に若い女性たちをどんどん送り込めるように教育していきたいし、彼女たちと豊かな学びの時間を共有したいと思っています。

私たちは地元学の「福島学」を「福島復興学」と変えて、学長がリーダーシップをとり南相馬に行きました。南相馬はちょうど放射能の汚染のレベルで、小高、鹿島、原町に分断されました。市民たちはいろいろな確執を抱えていて、乗り越えられないものもあるんです。小高には今年の4月16日まで入れませんでした。ですから家が壊れても、家族が津波で流されても1年以上どうすることもできなかった。その方たちのお話を聞きながら、学生たちが私たちにも何かできるかもしれないと考えたのが「移動文化祭」です。「笑顔」を届けたいと9月16日にみんなでバス2台を仕立てて、南相馬の道の駅に行って、移動文化祭をしました。すぐそばには仮設住宅があります。たくさんの人が来てくださって「こんなに一日中笑ったのは震災後初めてだった」と言ってくれました。それを聞いて学生たちもまた、喜んでいました。こんな感じで学生たちは学んだことを実行できるようになります。小さい短大ではありますが、これをきっかけに学生たちは本当に成長しています。こういう人材をたくさん育てていきたい。特に女子短大であるということは、今や希少価値があり、まだまだメリットもありますから、こういう逆境に強い女の子たちを良き有権者として育てていきたいと思っています。何か学生たちが皆様と触れ合う機会がありましたら、応援してやってください、よろしくをお願いします。

支援者も支えてほしい

伊藤 震災後、全国の女性の方から寄付をしていただきました。この寄付は子どもとお母さんのために使ってほしいと、あなたたちのNPOに託しますと。そのお金を今私たちは東松島、気仙沼、石巻、陸前高田、それと福島

から避難してきたお母さんたちの支援に使っています。私たちが一人でできることは本当に少ないんですよ。自分でやっていて、何にも変わってない状況を見ながら、自分の無力さを感じながら、でもやめるわけにもいなくて頑張っているんですけれども。被災地の人たち一人ひとり、一つのNPOは、小さい力ですが本当に一生懸命頑張っています。私たちは、本当は被災地の人たちは被災地の人たちで支援し合う構図ができればいい、と考えていて、仙台から出向いてそれを支えています。ですので、全国からいらした皆様には、支援をしているその私たちを支えていただけたらな、と思います。私たち頑張っていますので。

のびすくに来ているお母さんたちが、小さい子どもを持っていて何もできない、でも、何かしたいと思って、『私にもできる復興支援』という冊子を作ったんです。これは、この商品を買えば何円の寄付がどこに入る、どうせ買うならこっちの商品を買ってくださいというデータを集めたものです。一つ一つ、地道に地道に。復興まで5年10年と長く続くと思いますので、まずは東北を忘れないで、そして思い出した時に少し行動をしていただければな、と思います。

被災地を、女性たちのパワーを伝え続ける

丹野 これから私がやるべきことはただ一つ。頑張っている方々、被災地に支援が届くよう、被災地が震災前より良くなるまで、被災地の状況を発信し、伝え続けていくことにほかなりません。被災地は大変は大変なのですが、それだけではない、悲劇だけじゃない、逆に励まされる話もいっぱいあります。特に女の人は本当に元気です。もちろんまだ立ち直れていない方もいる一方で、仮設住宅に行っても、まず集会所から聞こえてくるのはおばちゃんたちの笑い声。女の人のそういう元気、パワーが世の中を明るくあつたかくしていく、そういうことを精一杯伝えていきたいと思っています。これからも被災地のことを忘れることなく、注目し続けてください。

皆様、どうぞ被災地にいらしてください

阿部 最大級の災害で、問題があっても平時のような判断しかしてもらえないとか、解決が難しかったり、また次に難しさが発生したりと…。ただそれを解決できたのは、さまざまな人とのつながりやご縁があったからでした。

今、企業ボランティアも被災地に来て助けていただいているんですが、ある男性が中学1年の娘さんを一緒にお連れになったことがあったんですね。そのお嬢さんが「自分が今までつまらないことでわがままを言ったり、ささいなことで悩んできたことは間違っていた。これからは改めなくちゃ」と話されたそうです。ですから被災地は学生であっても、大人であっても学びがある地域だということを申し上げたいと思いますし、やはり1年7ヶ月を振り返っても、誰かと交流してきた人や交流の機会が多かった人は元気になったな、と。外からの方たちに応援され、励まされて今日を迎えられた気がしてなりません。ですから交流人口がもっと増加することが被災地を救うと知っていただきたいです。今、小さな南三陸

町で100社が廃業し、100社が再開未定という状況です。本当に気軽な気持ちでガソリンを入れていただくだけでも、ちょっとお土産を買っていただくだけでも救われる人がいることをお知りいただきたいと思います。

私も日々、試されているな、と思いながら今日を迎えました。これからもっともっと強くなり、乗り越えていかなければと思っています。3月11日以降の状況だからこそ、今までにない、人のご縁があり、助けられ、感謝すべき場面がたくさんありました。本当にこの後の人生は、強がりではなく充実したものになっていく、私たちの気持ち次第で、いいまちが作り上げられる、とも感じています。

どうぞ皆様気軽に被災地にお出かけいただけますよう、心よりお待ち申し上げます。

女性たちの力を信じたい

宗片 5人の方々のお話、いかがでしたでしょうか。(会場拍手) 被災地の現実を通して語られた、一言一言でし

た。皆さんの胸にも深く響いたものと思います。

今、女性たちが持つ力をさらに発揮できるように仕組み、元気を広く伝えていく必要性が語られました。しかし、今回の震災で、女性たちが数々の困難を抱えたことは間違いありません。これを繰り返さないために何が必要なのか、私たちは考えなければいけません。被災地で女性たちが抱えた困難は、災害が起きたことで生じたことではない、日常の中で女性たちが置かれてきた状況の延長線上にあるものだと思います。これを明日の分科会でぜひ深めていただきたいと思います。今日ここで答えは出しません。

最後に、被災地で暮らす女性たちは大変魅力的です。その土地に根を張り、強く生きています。女性たちの力を信じたいと思います。今日は5人の魅力的な女性たちをご紹介します。明日からも、そうした素敵女性たちとの出会いがたくさんあることを期待して、どうぞこの会議をお過ごしください。ありがとうございました。

参加者から寄せられたメッセージ

特別プログラム終了後、参加者から寄せられた感想や被災地へのメッセージを、会場に掲示しました。メッセージをお寄せくださった方々は約750人。その中からほんの一部を紹介します。



- ◆一人一人の言葉が、とても重く感じられました。
- ◆それぞれに3.11を受け止め、頑張ってきた貴重なお話に心打られました。女性の力、協力し合う態度をこれからも大切に、学んだことを自分の地域で生かします。
- ◆新聞やテレビでは報道されない、女性たちの置かれている厳しい状況は、涙なしでは聞けませんでした。パネリストに感謝したい。この話を忘れることなく、地元に戻ったら語り伝えます。女性の力は強い！
- ◆女性の持っている力を、今後の世の中に生きさなければならぬと感じました。変だ、やりにくいと感じていることは、私たちの力で変えられるんだ、と。ここで会った多くの頑張る女性たちに共感し、支援することが、まず私にできること。そして、復興につながると心から思います。
- ◆1年7ヶ月経った今でも、被災地に学ぶこと、考えることがたくさんあると知りました。日本各地で、今後何か少しでも変化を起こしていかなければと思いました。
- ◆女性も男性も関係ないなどと、勝手に思っていました、女性だからこそできること、私にもできること等を自分なりに考え、行動したいと思いました。
- ◆私の周りでは、もうほとんど震災のことは話題にならないし、目をそむけている人が多いと思います。同じ日本の現在進行形の人々の現実を聞いて、「現実なんだ」と改めて自分に言い聞かせました。
- ◆「千年に一度の大災害は、千年に一度の学びとなる」私たちにできることを必ずやります。
- ◆厳しい、つらい体験の中で、次への一步を踏み出し始めて活動されていることがわかりました。家族を亡くされた痛みはなかなか消えないと思いますが、それでも支え合いながら生きていこうとする強さも感じました。被災地の皆さんのこと、忘れません。



Japan Women's Conference in SENDAI 2012

Special Program

Women Talk about 3.11: The Past and the Present

Women Talk about 3.11: The Past and the Present



■Moderator

MUNAKATA Emiko

Representative Director, NPO Equalnet Sendai

■Panelists

ABE Noriko

Owner, Minami Sanriku Hotel Kanyo

ISHII Fukiko

Representative Director, NPO Sakura Net

ITO Chisako

Director, Sendai City Community Child-Rearing Center "Nobisuku Sendai"

TANNO Ayako

Reporter, Ishinomaki Bureau, Kahoku Shimpo Publishing Co.

NIHEI Yumiko

Associate Professor, Sakura no Seibo Junior College

■Recitation

Amarimashita

*Titles and affiliations are at the time of the conference.

Recitation

Friday, March 11, 2011

I had taken a late lunch that day and was just about to get back to work. In another three hours I would have gone home, had dinner, watched TV... That's how my day should have gone.

2:46 p.m.

A massive 9.0 magnitude earthquake centered off the Sanriku coast hits, registering 7 on the 7-point Japanese intensity scale in Kurihara, Miyagi Prefecture.

2:49 p.m.

The Meteorological Agency issues a tsunami warning for the Pacific coast from Aomori Prefecture to Chiba Prefecture.

3 p.m.

Eleven nuclear reactors shut down automatically, including those at Tohoku Electric's Onagawa Nuclear Power Plant and Tokyo Electric's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.

Between 3:18 p.m. and 3:50 p.m.

The highest tsunami heights are recorded at Miyako, Kamaishi, Ofunato, Ishinomaki and Soma, including 23.6 meters at Ofunato.

4:30 p.m.

It begins to snow and the weather grows cold. The power is out and traffic signals in downtown Sendai are not operating. There is heavy traffic as people try to get home.

Electricity, gas and water are cut off, and subway trains have stopped running. Cell phones don't work, and I can't find out whether my family is safe or let them know that I'm OK. I feel frustrated and indescribably lonely.

Late night

A radio news report says 200 to 300 bodies have been found in the Arahama district of Wakabayashi Ward. "What are they talking about?" I wonder.

I'm scared and don't understand what's happening. More than 100 aftershocks occur during the night. I imagine this part of Honshu breaking off and being swept out to sea.

The next morning the temperature is below freezing. I hear someone say, "I'm sorry, but I don't have enough copies for every house." A neighbor and I watch in silence as a skimpy newspaper is delivered. I finally learn what has happened.

On the morning of Saturday, March 12, I realized I was a disaster victim.



Part 1: The past and the present

From March 11 until the present: five women's experiences

Munakata: On March 11 our city became a disaster area, and we became disaster victims. We have had to face a great many situations that were unimaginable, even for those of us living here in the disaster area. What was March 11 like for you?



Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Emiko Munakata of Equalnet Sendai, moderator for this panel discussion. Many people from throughout Japan are here today, and many of you experienced the disaster, to a greater or lesser extent. Others may have watched it unfold on television. Nineteen months have passed since then.

For those of us living in the disaster area, these nineteen months have been an unimaginable time. The earth was shaken; people were shaken. At times we felt ready to give up. We have faced situations that we wished were merely a dream. But we have been heartened and encouraged by the assistance we have received from people all over Japan. With your kind support we have come this far. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude. Thank you.

We must convey to others the many things we have learned from this experience. During this panel discussion we will look back at what has happened since March 11 and talk about the present and the future. Our five panelists were involved in support activities in Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima prefectures. Some of them are themselves victims of the disaster. Each of them will talk about her experiences on March 11, the activities she has been engaged in, the situations women were in then, and how they felt about that. Please consider your own experiences while listening to their accounts.

A stronghold for 350 guests and local residents

Abe: I'm Noriko Abe, owner of the Minami Sanriku Hotel Kanyo. At 2:46 p.m. on March 11, I was talking with guests in the lobby of the hotel, which has a view of the Pacific Ocean. I felt shaking that was stronger than usual, so I led the guests to a safe location. Meanwhile employees quickly directed other guests to the same location. Then, as I looked outside, the beautiful, blue sea turned black, and I



could see the water rapidly rising.

Our hotel is on a hill on the outskirts of town. Eighty percent of the downtown area was destroyed, and I watched helplessly as the tsunami hit. From our vantage point atop the hill, there was nothing we could do but pray that the people in endangered areas would flee to safety as soon as possible. Meanwhile local residents arrived, seeking refuge at our hotel. Two or three young women started to cry, and then one after another people collapsed in tears. I felt we had to do something to reassure and care for those people who had fled to the hotel, counting on us for help.

The bridge was washed out by the tsunami, and the roads were covered in debris, so our hotel was cut off. I told our guests that we would do everything we could for them but said it was a crisis and asked for their understanding. I gathered the hotel staff, and from that meeting on I repeatedly told them to "be strong." We had no electricity or water, and because we were isolated we couldn't get any supplies. So we just had to make do with what we had on hand. I told my staff, "Our guests and local residents take priority. You may have to do without, but I want you to stay calm."

I told them that if we didn't have enough rice balls for everyone, we'd give each person half, that we'd all have to make concessions and to hang in there. I went to the kitchen and asked the chef to come up with a menu for one week. On the next hill over, there was a women's dormitory with a day-care center. I had directed some guests there, so we immediately began taking blankets and futons over there and doing things for them. I am filled with gratitude to my employees, who did everything they could for our guests that day without knowing what had happened to their families or homes.

We were able to see our guests off on the morning of March 17, and my employees were finally able to go home. Some of them returned to the hotel having found that nothing was left of their homes but the foundation, not even one photograph. I told them to think of the hotel as their home and to bring their families there. So just as our guests left, employees started living at the hotel.

Many people lost loved ones and everything they'd built up in the blink of an eye. I think this is true of the entire disaster area, but when people from Minami Sanriku would get together, we'd say things like, "I only lost one family member, so I can't complain" or "I'm just glad her body was found." It was heart-rending. But seeing people looking for their loved ones amid the debris was like seeing a scene from hell.

Four months without water

Being without utilities was a serious problem. Having no water for four days is bad enough, but in Minami Sanriku there was no water for four months. When the water trucks finally started coming, I brought residents to our baths and they were so happy. Even though it wasn't an official evacuation center, people came to our hotel, and I began to realize that our vocation of providing food and shelter fulfilled a role during a disaster. I felt that people living in shelters such as gymnasiums as well would have had it a little easier if they had just had water, but it wasn't a simple matter. Even if I asked for water, the amount I actually got was only one third of what was needed. I had to tell people to limit themselves to two baths a week and to use the portable toilets as much as possible.

People began washing their clothes in the rivers in town. I couldn't bear to watch elderly people who had met with terrible disaster washing their clothes in the river under those physically demanding conditions. They were assisted by volunteers who do washing services from the Sendai Gender Equal Opportunity Foundation. It was hard for people who had to wash their clothes in the river or travel 40 minutes by car to a coin-operated laundry every week, so the assistance of the women from Sendai was a blessing.

From this experience as well, I really feel a woman's point of view is essential. We have lost so much, but participating in this wonderful conference that takes advantage of the sensibilities of women today, I really hope we can create a better community through the efforts of women.



Support for children who will take on the task of rebuilding

Many of our suppliers suffered tremendous losses in the disaster area and told us they were going out of business. I felt we'd go under if we didn't move forward, so we reopened using paper

plates and cups. Last year we served as an evacuation center for a long time, but partly because population outflow was a serious problem, I said that insofar as possible I would like to focus on helping families with students and business people. If children leave, there will be no one to rebuild the community. If the plants and companies that were lost are not reopened, people will leave to look for work elsewhere. If stores don't open, the town will remain an inconvenient place to live.

A lot of young mothers told me they were worried, frustrated or distressed about their children's education. So we set up a small private school in the hotel and started offering abacus classes and English conversation lessons. This is still going on, even though the hotel is no longer being used as an evacuation center. Recovery seems to be proceeding very slowly, and if children give up on learning it will be a big problem.

The disaster was terribly hard on the elderly, both physically and mentally. I wondered if they could have hope when we talk about reconstruction in terms of 10 years or 30 years. I felt that if their grandchildren's grades improved a bit or if they learned to speak English it would inspire the elderly to keep going and they might feel a real sense of hope, so I'm still running the school.

The next day's rising sun: determination to get through with hope

Munakata: One of your photos shows the rising sun. I heard it was taken just after the disaster.

Abe: As a matter of fact, that photo of the rising sun was taken on March 12. The weather was so stormy on March 11, but the next morning the big, beautiful sun came up, just as if nothing had happened. That scene reminded me of how truly powerless we human beings are, and I felt that we have to have hope and carry on just like the sunrise. That's why I took that photo.

Munakata: I'm reminded of just how powerful nature really is. As volunteers, we too took in laundry for evacuees. Minami Sanriku is a scenic fishing town blessed with a clear blue sea and bountiful nature. I hope its beauty can be restored as soon as possible.

Reporting in Kesenuma just after the disaster

Tanno: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ayako Tanno. I'm a reporter with the Ishinomaki bureau of the Kahoku



Shimpo. The paper is based in Miyagi Prefecture and covers all six prefectures of the Tohoku region. It has a circulation of about 440,000. The disaster caused tremendous destruction on our turf. No employees were killed, but several people who worked for our delivery agents were swept away in the tsunami, and some reporters and other employees lost family members. Many of our readers were also killed, and subscriptions dropped by 30,000, leading to financial difficulties.

But because we are the local newspaper, we were all determined to provide thorough coverage of the disaster to the entire nation. The newspaper's printing system was damaged by the earthquake, and we couldn't print the paper in house. But at a time like that, it is essential to get the paper out, and with the help of the Niigata Nippo, we were able to deliver a paper to our readers on March 12. A copy of that paper is on display at this conference venue, so please have a look at it. Our reporters and employees were disaster victims too, and we are proud that we were able to put out a paper.

I'm originally from Sendai, and I've been working for the paper for 10 years. In April of this year I was transferred to Ishinomaki and cover that area. Before that, I worked at the paper's Sendai headquarters and in Kesenuma at the northern end of Miyagi Prefecture. Ishinomaki is the second biggest city in Miyagi Prefecture after Sendai. Kesenuma is a little smaller, but both of them are port cities, and they suffered tremendous damage from the tsunami. Because I had worked in Kesenuma, on the evening of March 11 I drove four hours to cover the situation there.

The power was out in Sendai, so I didn't know what had happened along the coast. I texted a former coworker at the Kesenuma bureau, and she replied that there was a fire there. I knew a tsunami must have hit, so I wondered why a fire had broken out. Later I learned that the oil tanks along the coast had been washed away by the tsunami. A lot of oil had been spilled and then caught on fire, and a huge fire had swept through the town. In her message to me, the woman said nearly 100 people had taken refuge from the tsunami in their office building and that the surrounding area was engulfed in a sea of fire and she could hear the sounds of explosions. I was restless and felt I had to go there, so I set off for Kesenuma.

Until I got there I had no idea what sort of damage the tsunami had caused, but while I was driving in the pitch dark I suddenly saw battered cars up ahead. It was near Kesenuma City Hall, about 300 meters from the coast. Then I realized the tsunami had come that far inland. Behind the cars



were scraps of wood, tatami mats and other parts of houses that were all jumbled together and blocking the road. That's when I first realized the kind of destruction a tsunami caused. All the roads were impassable, and I couldn't get to the office. When the sun came up, I could see that the tsunami had wreaked havoc on Kesenuma. Buildings had been destroyed, and the town was covered in sludge mixed with oil. The smell made me feel sick. A lot of fish had been left behind amid the rubble. I was shocked when I learned they hadn't been brought there from the sea by the tsunami but that all of the freezers at the fish processing plants had been smashed and the fish inside had been swept inland.

Confronting the death of a child while reporting

Anyway, I felt I had to report on what was going on. I heard from a passerby that the destruction was terrible in the Hashikami area on the south side of town, so I headed there. That's when I was confronted with the death of a 5-year-old child. I was driving toward the sea. Houses had been knocked down and were blocking the road. I couldn't get through, so I started to turn around. Just then three or four men who seemed to be firefighters appeared. They were carrying something long wrapped in an orange blanket. They asked for a ride to the evacuation center. They wanted me to put the back seat down, so I just did what they said without knowing the reason. While I was doing that one of the men got in holding the bundle. That's when I realized it was a person, a child. Since they had asked me to take them to the evacuation center, I thought the child must be OK, but when I asked another man about that he just did this [gesture meaning "no"]. The child was already dead.

I think the man who got into the car with the body was the child's father. He cradled his child's body and, through tears kept asking, "Are you cold?" When we got to the evacuation center he immediately ran inside. The gymnasium was

crowded with people who had fled the tsunami with just the clothes on their backs. They were shivering from the cold and fear. The father went to the area that had been set up for the injured and the elderly to rest. I followed him and quietly watched. He removed the blanket. At the time I didn't know whether it was a boy or a girl, but the child had an innocent face, as if it were asleep. Much later I found out it was a 5-year-old boy who lived nearby. A doctor came, looked at the boy's pupils and must have said the boy was dead, but the father just kept holding him. Then a girl of about 6, who seemed to be the boy's sister, came over with a big smile on her face, I suppose because she was happy to see her father. She didn't seem to understand that her brother was dead. Shedding big tears, the father picked the girl up from behind so she wouldn't see her brother's body and took her away somewhere.

This happened right in front of me. I was watching the whole thing, but I kept thinking, "Is this real? Can something so terrible have happened to that little child?" I just couldn't accept reality. It wasn't just me; other reporters who covered the disaster right after it happened had similar experiences. One of our photographers was taking photographs from a helicopter, and when they flew over an office building the people on the roof thought they were a rescue helicopter and kept waving. But a news helicopter can't conduct rescues or bring food, and as the photographer aimed his camera at those people he wondered, "What am I doing? Don't we have to help those people? What does it mean to be a reporter?" Of course, he knew his mission was to cover the disaster and let people know what was happening, but he said he felt guilty and wondered whether it was right for them to be out reporting when their hometown was in such a state. I had the same feeling as I covered the disaster.

Difficulties faced by women

The women I met during the time I was commuting to Kesenuma were having a hard time. It was nothing for them to go for 10 days without washing their faces or changing their clothes. After three days without being able to wash, I could hardly stand it, but those women just smiled and said, "We can't be selfish at a time like this," even though it's not selfish at all. There were quite a few people who had fled the tsunami and who couldn't change out of their wet clothes for several days. Everyone helped the elderly and little children. There was no place to change clothes, so people changed in their futons. There were no partitions or

anything like that.

I felt especially sorry for the women with small children. After they came to the shelter, their children would cry in the middle of the night. They worried about disturbing people, so some of them would slap their children to keep them awake during the day. The mothers of some children who were staying in the homes of relatives would cry when there wasn't enough food for their children who wanted seconds to have them.

In many cases women were taking care of children and the elderly and others who were vulnerable, and I felt it must have been taxing simply on account of that.

Tendency for disaster area to be forgotten

As time passed, things settled down in the disaster area, and people have moved from evacuation centers to temporary housing. Local governments have promoted group relocation for disaster mitigation and have rebuilt the homes of people who lost theirs. Fish processors and businesses that were destroyed in the disaster have also been rebuilt, so reconstruction is gradually proceeding. But I feel that as time passes and reconstruction proceeds, the disaster area is being forgotten, and this is a real problem. If you go to downtown Sendai it's as if the earthquake never happened. The extent of the damage in Ishinomaki, Minami Sanriku and Kesenuma is completely different.

Living in Ishinomaki, I realized that restoring the disaster area to the way it was before the disaster is a daily struggle, and the people are working hard toward that goal every day. In temporary housing, three people are living in two rooms of six and four mats. The walls are thin and it's cold. And even if they have a private space for their family, it's far different from the homes they were living in before. The time limit on living there has been extended one year, but they will have to



move out after three years. Even if they make use of the government's group relocation program, it will cost money to rebuild their homes. Elderly people wonder what they should do, and the young people don't have steady jobs. All the disaster victims are worried about their futures. Some of the government's budget for reconstruction has been spent on things unrelated to the disaster, which really makes the people in the disaster area angry.

Reconstruction delayed by harmful rumors

What the people in the disaster area are really worried about now is the harmful rumors connected with the accident at the nuclear power plant. Ishinomaki is a fishing town. The fishermen who lost their boats were given old boats from people in other areas or took out loans to get boats and were finally able to go back to sea, but fish from Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima don't sell. It's only the fish from these three prefectures that people won't buy. People in Tokyo and areas west of there in particular won't buy any seafood from these areas that is sold in retail stores. Even though people took out loans and resumed fishing and reopened the plants, if their fish and processed seafood don't sell, the community can't be rebuilt.

The fish that goes to market is checked for radioactivity every day at the fish markets and processing plants, but people are extremely afraid to buy it. Of course, the accident at the nuclear power plant is a terrible disaster, unlike anything we've ever experienced, and not everything is known about the effects of internal exposure to radiation. But I'd like people to know that these rumors are excessive in some ways and this problem is greatly delaying recovery. I want people to keep the conditions in the disaster area in mind.

Munakata: We have heard about the demanding reporting work Ms. Tanno did and the painful time she had as a reporter who came in contact with disaster victims on the scene and filed reports on the disaster.

The Kahoku Shimpo is our local paper and one many of us have been reading for years. Afterwards we learned what a struggle it was to put out the paper, while fragmentary or inaccurate information caused us uncertainty and fear. We were surprised that a paper was even delivered on the morning of March 12 and were very grateful to get some information.

A women's junior college just after the earthquake

Nihei: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Yumiko Nihei from Fukushima City. The graduation ceremony at Sakura no Seibo Junior College was scheduled to be held on March 12, the day after the disaster.



It's a Catholic school, and various events had been held during the week before graduation to celebrate before sending the students out into the world. On March 11 a priest came to the school to conduct a graduation mass. After that there was a rehearsal for the graduation ceremony. The students stayed behind in the auditorium after the rehearsal to take pictures, but I headed back to the study room on the sixth floor of the building next door. When I got to the fifth floor, the cell phones of the students in the locker room all started making a sound I'd never heard before. Just after that the shaking began and went on for almost six minutes.

The students there were freshmen. They came running out of the computer lab and other rooms and were clinging to me. They were wailing like kindergartners. I told them to hit the floor, and then I put my arms around them like a mother hen would embrace her chicks. The fire doors opened, and the fire hoses fell from the wall. It was a ghastly situation. I thought I was going to die right there protecting those students. Then I thought of their mothers and of my own daughter. I didn't have the courage to go down to the first floor, but from beyond the fire door an American teacher called out, "Is anyone there? Let's all go downstairs." So the two of us led the students downstairs and out into the quad.

Westerners place importance on their personal lives, so out of concern for his family and after considering the radiation issue, that teacher never came back to Fukushima, but he fulfilled his responsibilities for one year before quitting. Yesterday he came back to the school for the first time in quite a while, and thanked me for looking after the English students after he left. I told him that if he hadn't called out to me at the time of the earthquake I couldn't have gone down to the first floor, and thanked him. There was a lot of this kind of mutual support from March 11 on.

Our graduation ceremony was canceled. No one could go home on March 11, so we all spent the night in the commons. We hadn't stockpiled any provisions. So, under the direction of their teachers, the students in the dietitian course made rice balls with the rice that was left in the cafeteria, and we

each ate one. I passed a very lonesome night eating that tasteless rice ball. There were a lot of aftershocks, and the situation was unpredictable, so I didn't sleep at all. The students gradually went to sleep. The supply of gasoline had run out, the expressway was impassable and traffic was heavy, but one after another parents came to get their daughters. A lot of parents gave rides to students whose parents hadn't come for them, so about half of the students had left, but there were still 120 or 130 there in the morning.

Students from the area in Miyagi Prefecture that had been hit by the tsunami couldn't contact their families. The school was not an official evacuation center, and supplies weren't delivered, so we couldn't let the students stay there. We thought about taking them to the convent, but the nuns are elderly and they had no provisions either. So another male teacher and I gathered up as many supplies as we could and took the students to nearby Fukushima City Hall, which was an evacuation center. Starting the next day I walked around to check on those students and other students who lived alone in the area.

The nuclear power plant and people living in Fukushima

Long before there was any news coverage about it, amid the shaking of the earthquake those of us in Fukushima were wondering what would happen to the nuclear power plant. For about five years I worked as a commentator on a local TV program covering the prefectural assembly. I don't know how many times this happened, but there were instances in which the Tokyo Electric Power Company covered up problems at the plant or falsified data. And they set their standards low. So, for example, if there was a crack in a reactor, they'd say it was no problem to operate with a crack that size. Every time we reported that the prefectural assembly had approved things like that I'd offer commentary, pointing out that it was a crack and say as much as I could, bearing in mind that the prefectural assembly sponsored the program. But I think a lot of prefectural residents were aware of what was going on.

So the people who had children kept them indoors, and young people didn't go outside. There was even more of this once the news reports began. I go to various areas to talk about Fukushima, and whenever I do people say insensitive things like, "How come the people of Fukushima think nothing of living like that? Aren't you afraid of the radiation?" My parents live in Tokyo, and they've asked me why I don't come back there. But I

resolved to stay in Fukushima as long as there was even one student at our college.

Most people in Fukushima have read quite a lot about radiation and feel the nuclear power plants shouldn't be left as they are. A lot of local young people are working at the plant. I spoke with some of them, and they said they were just going to work there for three months without telling their parents. They were doing it partly to put their lives back together. They also said it was embarrassing and people might not believe them, but that their main reason for working there was to get the situation at the plant under control as soon as possible. But they were also worried about their futures, so they only wanted to work there for three months. Those are the kind of people who live in Fukushima. I'd like those of you here today, who have come from all over Japan, to know that there are all kinds of people living in Fukushima.

Students' volunteer work

After the school was closed, the students just had to wait for classes to resume. We created our own social networking service for the college only and started sharing information and encouraging each other. Students started saying things like, "I want to go back to school as soon as possible" and "I saw on TV news that a lot of people have lost their lives and their homes in the tsunami" and "We still have our family and our home." Of course, some students lost family members or their homes, but many of them began saying they felt they were lucky and that they felt frustrated about being unable to do anything. So we decided to start volunteering. The president ended the furlough, and classes resumed in May. The students were told to come to school if they wanted to and we would do as much volunteering as we could.

Students went to evacuation centers and they created their own calisthenics routine to music. They also started going to evacuation centers and giving volunteer shoulder massages and foot baths.



That is still going on. Seeing the difficulties others are having, you grow as a person.

Everyone's hardships, choices can't be lumped together under "Fukushima"

Another thing I'd like to mention is that Fukushima is the third largest prefecture in Japan after Hokkaido and Iwate. It has an area of more than 14,000 square kilometers. It is divided into three districts: Nakadori, between the Abukuma Plateau and the Ou Mountains, which is where the City of Fukushima is; Aizu, and Hamadori. Until the Meiji government merged these three districts [in the late 19th century], they were separate prefectures, and their cultures and climates differ. They were each affected differently by the accident at the nuclear power plant, the earthquake and tsunami. People lump everyone together under the label "Fukushima," but everyone has their own story and hardships. For example, the people of Hamadori, where the nuclear power plant is located, are now scattered throughout the country. But many of them can get information from the City of Fukushima and Koriyama and are living wherever there seem to be job opportunities. They have chosen to stay in Fukushima Prefecture.

We often remind our students that there are evacuees among their neighbors, and they understand that. Some of the people who lived near the nuclear power plant are resigned to never returning home, while others are determined to go back. People have choices. But Fukushima today is fragmented. Some insensitive people say the evacuees "fled." In terms of evacuation and the harm they suffered, each person's situation is different. Each person's feelings about radiation differ also. Each person has to have a choice. I think it is really important that we stay connected and understand each other. Some people from Futaba, where the nuclear power plant is located, want to live in Iwaki. Others from Iitate and Katsurao want to live in Fukushima City. They have made their own decisions. That's the situation in Nakadori, where people from the Hamadori region evacuated to and are now living.

As for those of us living in the Nakadori area, the absorbed radiation dose rate in air was 0.49 [microsieverts] this morning. The other day the newspaper ran a photo of the fall colors in the Abukuma Mountains, which are at their peak. The rate there was 0.09. It's safe, so please come to see the fall colors. Compared to 0.09, the dose of 0.49 in Fukushima City, where our campus is located, is fairly high. That's where those who evacuated and

the rest of us are living. No one knows what effect exposure to low doses of radiation will have on children's internal exposure. Knowing this, evacuees continue to live in the area with their children. We're not afraid of a decline in the number of children. And I believe that those of us who have chosen to remain in the area have roles to fulfill.

There's one more thing I'd like to mention. Researchers at Fukushima University have worked very hard to conduct surveys and produce maps of the contamination. They have said that the amount of cesium had declined by 70 percent after one year and that the remaining 30 percent should be gone within five years. So those who have evacuated the area with their small children should be able to return after five years.

While collecting this kind of accurate data, we must consider what kinds of choices we will make about how we want to live our lives. And while spending my days with 18- to 20-year-old college students, I must carefully consider every day what we must do for them in the event of an emergency and what we should do from here on out.

Munakata: How much did we really know about the situation in Fukushima? Hearing Ms. Nihei's talk, I think we were all reminded that there are all sorts of people in Fukushima and they have various choices and that we can't lump everyone in Fukushima together.

The firsthand experiences of one providing child-rearing support

Ito: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Chisako Ito of the Sendai City Community Child-Rearing Center "Nobisuku Sendai." Our facility is located right in the center of downtown Sendai between Sendai Station and city hall. We provide support to families with children. We have play areas, and we offer day care and provide information. About 150 mothers, fathers and children come to play at our facility every day.



We were very crowded earlier in the day on March 11, the day of the disaster. It scares me to think what might have happened had the earthquake occurred then. But because it took place at almost 3 o'clock, many of the visitors had left and there were only about 20 parents and children playing there. There were five children in the nursery and three employees were taking care of them. Earthquakes are common in Miyagi Prefecture, and ever since I came here 22 years ago I've heard that a major earthquake could occur at

any time. So I always hoped that if an earthquake occurred while I was at work it wouldn't be when there were a lot of mothers and fathers there. But this time the earthquake took place right during work hours.

The shaking was really, really violent, but during the 7 minutes that it lasted none of the mothers or fathers panicked. They just protected their children by putting them in the middle and gathering around them or by covering them with their bodies. I was holding up lockers that were about to fall over. There was a tremendous noise, so the children began to cry, but the mothers were very calm and just protected their children, and rode out the 7 minutes of shaking. After the shaking stopped, we all went down to Hirose Avenue via the exterior stairway, taking strollers with us.

Regret over decision to part ways

No cracks had opened up in the ground downtown, and no buildings had collapsed. There was almost no visible damage. Although we should have taken them to the designated evacuation center, the mothers said they wanted to go home as soon as possible. We all agreed that that would be all right and parted ways. After that the employees walked home too. I heard later that some of the mothers didn't make it home and spent the night in a shelter and that others had gone in the direction of the tsunami and had been stopped. So I wondered if it had really been right to part ways when we did. We had no information and could only make a decision on the spot. We were heavily influenced by the mothers' desire and ended up going our separate ways.

Our facility is managed under a contract with the City of Sendai, so I went to city hall to report that everyone was safe. When I went back to our facility I found a parent and child had been trapped in the elevator. It took four hours to get them out. After their rescue I went home, and by the time I got there it was the middle of the night. Until then, I hadn't imagined that a tsunami had hit. I spent the night in my car. I heard a report on my car radio that a tsunami had hit Wakabayashi Ward and that what seemed to be 200 to 300 bodies had been found. I thought it must have been a mistake. I didn't believe it. The next morning I read the *Kahoku Shimpō* and found out what had happened. After that, one of my neighbors told me that supplies of food would run out, so my daughter and I got in line at a local convenience store. After standing in line for three hours, all we were able to get was one container of instant noodles.

Long-awaited reopening

On March 13, two days after the earthquake, I walked to our facility to see what kind of state it was in. Of course, all the shelves had toppled over, and there were papers scattered all over. Two other employees were there, so we cleaned up so we could reopen. The gas was off there for six weeks, but neither the electricity nor the water was cut off. We contacted the city, and they told us to reopen right away. I was one of only three workers who could get to work on foot, and when I questioned whether we should open amid that state of emergency, the manager said, "Recovery means starting by doing what you can." So we reopened on March 15, four days after the earthquake.

I didn't think anyone would come, but two mothers brought their children to play. One was a mother and child who had come into town to go shopping. They had stood in line in the cold for three or four hours, and the child got antsy, so when the mother saw that our center was open she brought her child there to play. The other mother came carrying a baby. Her husband hadn't come home from work since the earthquake. She had just moved to Sendai and didn't know anyone and said she was afraid to be alone in their apartment with just her baby. She said she had walked around town all day, and then it occurred to her that someone might be at our center, so she had come there. She took a short break there and then left.

Although we reopened, there was no gas, so we had no heat. And from March 11 it was as cold as midwinter. We put rugs and blankets on the floor to make it more comfortable, but it was so cold that we didn't make much effort to tell people that we'd reopened. We got phone calls from all over the country from people wanting to send us supplies. Meanwhile other people called asking if we had any children's clothes.

It was decided that we'd officially reopen on March 19. A ticker ran on NHK, so 93 people came that day. It seemed like they'd all been waiting for us to reopen. A lot of the children were frightened



and had stuck close to their mothers ever since the earthquake. So some mothers shed tears of joy when they came to the center, saying it was the first time their kids had let go of them or smiled since the earthquake. The next day more than 100 people came, and from then on we stayed open.

Psychological support for mothers

At first the mothers were terribly worried about their kids, who wouldn't let go of them or wouldn't smile. Seeing that, I felt the mothers were trying so hard – too hard really. But after that, those mothers changed rapidly. Around June the mothers in the play areas seemed irritable. They scolded their children relentlessly. Fathers too started scolding their kids for things they would have overlooked before. They scolded other people's kids as well. It seemed odd, and I felt we needed to provide some kind of support for the mothers.

So we started weekly meetings for the mothers, and we provided day care. We got seven or eight mothers together at each meeting and told them they could talk about anything they liked. They started describing their inner feelings. One said, "I'm not a tsunami victim, and when I think about the mothers who are, I don't feel I can say I'm having a hard time. So I've kept those feelings to myself." Another said, "My husband's parents and other relatives who are disaster victims are staying at our house, and I have to look after them. It's my house, but I don't feel at home there. It's terribly difficult. When I tell my husband I'd like to go out with just our family now and then, he gets angry and asks how I can say such a thing at a time like this. Is that selfish?" Another mother said, "I cry in the toilet and in the bath, but I don't feel I can say I have it bad. This is the first time I've been able to say so." Another woman said, "I moved here on account of my husband's job. I don't know a soul and don't know anything about the area. So I was really worried, but when I think about the tsunami victims I can't complain." Being able to vent their feelings like that, the mothers gradually seemed to get back to normal.

Earthquake preparedness handbook for families with children

I wanted to compile a booklet with those kinds of comments, so I surveyed 200 mothers. In June 2011 I started preparing an earthquake preparedness handbook for families with children, and it was published in September. The people who appreciated it the most were the mothers who came



"Earthquake Preparedness Handbook for Families with Children"

to Sendai after the earthquake. Some of them said they hadn't wanted to come to Sendai at a time like that but that they felt reassured after reading the handbook. We were able to prepare this booklet by making use of the comments of many mothers who said they wanted to convey their experiences to the next generation and to their children.

Our center had reopened, but I felt I wanted to provide support for areas that were affected by the tsunami also. So a month later, when I was able to get some gasoline, I headed for Higashi Matsushima. When I went to the child care support center there, one of the employees said, "There are a lot of mothers here who lost children. We've received a lot of support for children but nothing for the mothers who lost their children. I want to do something for them." In response, we are giving yoga and aromatherapy classes for women in Higashi Matsushima, and we also hold monthly support group meetings.

Munakata: "Nobisuku Sendai" is a public facility and was one of the first to reopen after the disaster. Many public facilities were damaged in the disaster, and many mothers were feeling alone and worried, but "Nobisuku Sendai" offered them carefully considered support.

Observations after participating in the relief effort in Iwate

Ishii: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Fukiko Ishii of the Sakura Net, a non-profit organization in the city of Nishinomiya in Hyogo Prefecture. My home was completely destroyed in the Kobe quake. I was buried under furniture for 30 minutes, and spent three hours helping to rescue neighbors. From the



third day after the quake, I was a contact person for volunteers and experts who came to Kobe from outside the area.

Over the course of two days I saw about 900 dead bodies. I couldn't sleep for three years. After that I had a flashback while giving a lecture and had no recollection of what happened the next two days. I have more time now, so since then my job has been to go to areas where there has been a major disaster. Before the Kobe quake I provided support for children with developmental disabilities and truants.

On March 11 I was at a meeting about rebuilding the area affected by the 2007 earthquake in Niigata Prefecture. I was asked to go to the disaster area right away, so I went out and bought some clothes and set off. After two days in Fukushima Prefecture, I headed for Iwate Prefecture. I spent 70 percent of last year there.

Today I'd like to talk about the hardships experienced by women and their strength from the perspective of directly caused deaths and indirectly caused deaths, based on things I learned through my encounters with people in Iwate.

Is there a difference men's and women's right to life just after a disaster?

In this case, approximately 20,000 deaths have been directly attributed to the disaster, and another 2,000 are believed to have been caused indirectly. By age, the ratio of deaths among both men and women 70 or older was extremely high. In the 1995 Kobe earthquake, the number of women who died was clearly higher. In this disaster the genders of 200 victims could not be determined, but after spending a lot of time looking into the damage caused by floods, I learned one "law": For some reason, when it comes to flooding – not earthquakes – the fatality rate for men is higher.

When I asked about this in one area of the city of Miyako in Iwate Prefecture, I was told that more than 60 people had died. All but three of them had gone to higher ground and then returned. The three people who were unable to escape were elderly women. In that community they have an agreement that if they call out to the person and there is no reply and if the door to the home is locked, they will leave the person behind. The three women, who clearly must have been at home, were left behind based on this agreement. Local residents asked the first members of the Self-Defense Forces who came to the town to look for the bodies of those three women in the vicinity of their homes. Their funerals were held at the evacuation center.

This has not been thoroughly studied yet, but

you often hear that there is no difference in the right of men or women to live during the most difficult times immediately after the disaster when people are dying as a direct result. But elderly women comprise a majority of those "lives that can't be saved even if we want to."

Professional women who saved lives

With regard to these possibilities of life and how to save as many lives as possible, I suppose you have all heard the story of the "miracle of Kamaishi." [In the city of Kamaishi, 99.8 percent of the schoolchildren survived the tsunami.] The principals of both Kamaishi Elementary School and Kamaishi Higashi Junior High School are women. They have administered their schools based on a sound educational philosophy. As a result, the elementary and junior high school students saved their own lives and the lives of people in their community. A girl who was in the second year of junior high school at the time of the disaster said to me, "Don't refer to us a 'miracle.' Many people in our community died." I said to her, "But it was still a miracle, even though people died. So, although it may be hard, think of it as something you were able to do yourselves." But when I said that to her, she and several other girls just wept.

As for day care centers, at most of them the female directors led everyone to safe ground. It is said that no children who were at day care centers at the time of the disaster died. In the disaster area in Iwate I learned that many lives were saved through the efforts of professional women.

My role was to set up a volunteer center along the coast in the disaster area as soon as possible and help outside assistance get through. I didn't know anyone in the area, so I had the painful task of asking local disaster victims to work with me. First I had to learn the situation there. While doing so I was told that, in terms of protecting the right to survive, the ability that professional women have carefully developed in the community was of great importance to each neighborhood, though it may have benefited only a few people out of the overall number.

Even before the disaster, the number of hospitals and doctors in the coastal area had been rapidly declining, and the nurses, who were paid low wages, were providing medical treatment under a lot of pressure. There is a disaster medical assistance team, but it was established based on the lessons learned in the Kobe quake. So the members are experts at saving lives by treating the injuries of people who have been trapped under houses that have collapsed. But when they went to the area that

had been hit by the tsunami, many neighborhoods had been completely swept away, and many people had died instantly. In triage, black is used to indicate those who are dead or can't be saved, and red is for those who are in urgent need of care. Red is followed by yellow and green. In this disaster, there was a lot of black and very little red. Later, instances of hypothermia, infectious disease and hepatitis rapidly increased, and many deaths were caused indirectly. The medical services that should have supported these communities had faced increasingly difficult conditions since before the disaster. And the people who first arrived on the scene from out of the area were mainly surgical professionals when, in fact, what was needed was a lot of internists and nurses who specialized in internal medicine.

One of the professionals in Iwate who dealt with a lot of the bodies of victims was Ruiko Sasahara, author of the book "Omokage Fukugenshi". I was told that in her role as a mortician she tried to make the bodies look as good as she could and to offer support to the grieving family members.

I also learned that many female gynecologists prepared meals every day under tremendous pressure. At one evacuation center a gynecologist refused to prepare meals. There were so many people, and it was really a tough job. She was told to prepare three meals a day every day, day after day. It was hard work, and when she finally took a break, no meals were served at the shelter that day. Think of the pressure she must have been working under. Having seen various relief efforts carried out in accordance with the Disaster Relief Act, I was really angry that boxed lunches provided by the government were not being delivered to that shelter. Although a committee had been formed to run the shelter, women were in a very weak position, and apparently they were pressed into preparing meals.

All of the clothing among the relief supplies was size medium. I learned that women from an NPO took action and provided different kinds of clothing in different sizes. One's life and one's day-to-day life are directly linked, and rebuilding day-to-day life is the basis for reducing the number of indirectly caused deaths. In many welfare facilities, there was no heat or electricity, and women in specialized fields were able to save the lives of victims whose body temperatures were rapidly dropping.

Citizens' efforts in support of each other require money

After a week we finally started getting help from outside the area. The Kobe quake marked the start of volunteering in Japan, but after the Tohoku

quake a culture of putting money into citizens' efforts was created. Donations by citizens consist primarily of relief money that is distributed directly to victims. That is necessary, but donations are also needed for citizens' efforts in support of each other, and I think one of the positive outcomes of the Tohoku quake was that people now have the choice to make that sort of donation. It seems to me that a change has taken place, and trillions of yen has been provided for work by citizens' groups from both the local community and other areas.

Thinking back, among those sorts of programs that I heard about are the creation of an NPO by midwives to provide support for pregnant women and nursing mothers, and an NPO that supports families with children that started operating outdoors after its children's center was destroyed. Various programs provided care while helping people get back to their normal lives as soon as possible.

Disaster response still male-dominated

My role at the time was figuring out how to provide indirect support to these programs, but unfortunately the overall disaster response is still predominantly carried out by men. Women have a habit of assuming a subordinate role. I'm the same way. When a women's NPO works with [predominantly male] prefectural employees, they're like, "What's with these women?" That's the only way they look at them. One of the directors of our NPO says, "I'm a man and a researcher at a university, so they always welcome me outwardly. So let me do something for you now and then."

I went to a meeting at the prefectural office and said, "Please put changing rooms in all the evacuation centers." I was shocked at the reply that came about an hour later. The person said with a straight face, "We have a lot of camping tents. We can just set them up in the middle of each evacuation center for changing rooms." I wanted to say, "What good would changing rooms like that be!" But I held my tongue. Anyway, at the evacuation centers that first set up changing rooms, there were no curtains on the windows. That's no different from setting up tents in the middle of the gymnasium. When I talked to the women there, they said, "We really want curtains, but we can't ask for them." These women who can only make suggestions from a subordinate position have to get together and assert themselves.

Munakata: Seventeen years have passed since the Kobe quake. Many people who had experienced the chaos in the aftermath of the quake came to the

Tohoku area with examples of things that had happened there and offered various types of support, and we are truly grateful.

Motivated by the reality of the disaster for nineteen months

Munakata: There are themes running through the accounts we have heard so far that are common to each area and each type of damage and suffering, and each one of our speakers was motivated to take

action by a different reality.

Ms. Abe witnessed the destruction the tsunami caused in her beloved hometown. Ms. Ito witnessed anxious mothers with small children. Ms. Tanno witnessed the situations of disaster victims while reporting on the scene. Ms. Nihei saw the enormity of the accident at the nuclear power plant. Ms. Ishii was reminded of her experiences in the Kobe earthquake. Seen through their eyes, a picture of the situation of women in the disaster area has emerged.

Part 2: The future

Recitation

Ishinomaki, woman in her 30s

My children's day care center was hit by the tsunami and relocated much farther away, so I couldn't keep working. If I had a job I'd have a little hope for a bright future, but there's the problem of the day care center. Or even if there were someplace I could work part-time just to make a little money. I want to get back on my feet.

Sendai, woman in her 30s

While involved in a relief effort that other mothers and I started, I began to feel I wanted to live life full out. I realized I could end up on the giving or the receiving end of relief. It's important for us to be motivated to rebuild our lives. My husband and I often quarrel, but now I always make sure to make up with him before sending him off to work because you never know what might happen.

Sendai, woman in her 60s

I kept hoping it wasn't real, but it is. Ten of my acquaintances were killed, and it is very hard. Every day is hard. It's not a matter of land or property. I want to get back to being the person I was when I was living in Wakabayashi Ward.

Sendai, woman in her 50s

If you just look at the vicinity of the station, the roads have been cleared and you may think people have resumed their everyday lives, but there are more and more vacant lots and shuttered shops, and it doesn't seem to me like the community is recovering. At the start of each new season, I have to buy all new clothes and sundries. For now I'm just focused on staying healthy, mentally and physically. I'm impressed with myself for still being here despite having nothing and for being satisfied with very little. I feel like patting myself on the back.

Munakata: Women are trying hard to find ways to move forward so they can resume their everyday lives. Reconstruction efforts are proceeding. Meanwhile women are wondering when their lives will get back to normal. How will the disaster area change and how will women put their lives back together?

I'm sure they have concerns as well, but I'd like to ask the members of the panel to tell us about situations that offer hope for the future, focusing on the circumstances of women.

Young women of Fukushima are a concern

Nihei: What I'm most concerned about now is that

there will be discrimination against the young women of Fukushima. There's a lot of support for children under 18 and mothers with small children. Then there's what I call "the forgotten generation." Regardless of whether or not they'll marry, they can be categorized as unmarried women. There's no support whatsoever for young women who may get pregnant tomorrow. NPOs and other groups have been formed. Young women are wondering how to safeguard their health and whether it's OK for them to continue living in Fukushima. In my involvement with those women, including our students, I felt that what I learned in Chernobyl could be put to use.

What I learned in Chernobyl is that the accidents there and in Fukushima both have

suspicious elements, but Japan is not like the Soviet regime, under which information was covered up for five years. And there was little release of elements other than strontium and cesium, such as americium. I found various differences, and I realized there are healthy children in addition to those in the photos of the “children of Chernobyl” that we so often see. And, with that in mind, we need to address the problem of exposure to low levels of radiation, because there are risks not only for young women but for men as well.

In Chernobyl I asked whether there were women who had had abortions or who had avoided getting pregnant. I was coldly rebuffed when I asked this at large research institutes and hospitals and was told there was no scientific basis or causal relationship for anything other than thyroid cancer. But women doctors told me quite frankly that, although they hadn't collected any data, a lot of women had had abortions or decided not to have children. I think information and education, including on radiation protection, through this kind of network are essential to enable students to manage the risks they face. And we have to keep telling people about what we've done. That is the role of those of us living in Fukushima. If we are strong, we can find hope.

Learning from a once-in-a-millennium disaster

Abe: I'm really worried about the harmful effects of rumors. I think it's very important to put yourself in the other person's shoes. When I talk with friends in Fukushima, subjects like those raised by Ms. Nihei tend to come up. There's a lot that I'd like people from outside the area to learn from this disaster. I'd like “tsunami tendenko” [the notion that individuals should not stay to help others but flee and save themselves] to become even better known. A lot of people who had fled to higher ground were killed because they went back. The idea that you have to save your own life – it's not something you can do all of a sudden. If you haven't been taught to do that by your parents or in school and don't always have that in the back of your mind, you won't be able to function effectively in an emergency.

You hear about people in the disaster area getting their feelings hurt by trivial conversations. I think school officials should come to the disaster area and learn what they can do to save the lives of children, but I didn't get the feeling they were interested in doing that. Apparently, that's because some parent-teacher association members are strongly opposed. When I asked school officials who have come to the disaster area about that, some said

they had only been able to come after holding three briefing sessions for the PTA. Others said they faced opposition and wanted people from the disaster to come back to their areas to convince others.

This once-in-a-millennium disaster is also a once-in-a-millennium opportunity to learn, and we can help people develop a sense of consideration for others. Whenever a natural disaster occurs, harmful rumors cause a lot of trouble for many people. We need to learn from this so that doesn't happen again. I think it's important for people to go to the disaster area, talk to people, look around and get a sense of what happened there.

Support for mothers in Fukushima

Ito: Just the other day we had a meeting for mothers in Fukushima. According to them, there is a lot of discrimination. Some women have decided not to have children, and engagements have been broken off. About 2,000 mothers with babies or small children have relocated to Sendai from Fukushima, but the greatest number of them are in Yamagata. There is a lot of support available in Yamagata, and some of the mothers who went there from Fukushima have decided to stay, while others still hope to go back to Fukushima someday.

This situation arose because of the nuclear power plant problem, but it has become a family issue. Some women say they can't have a serious conversation with their husbands about whether or not they will return to Fukushima. Their husbands feel differently, so whenever they talk about it they end up arguing. They can't discuss it, so they keep putting it off. But eventually they'll have to talk about it, and they're worried that their families may fall apart at that point. You hear about families who come to Sendai and experience discrimination here also. You can tell that the mothers are really sensitive and have all sorts of things on their minds as they raise their kids.

Sense of loss felt by parents who lost children

We put out an earthquake preparedness handbook for families with children. Women really show their ability when it comes to looking out for their families. In this disaster as well, women tried hard to do that, but the mothers who couldn't save family members feel a tremendous sense of loss. Even now, 19 months after the disaster, this is emerging, and mothers are being treated for psychosomatic disorders or have to take medication. One mother said to me, “I'll never be able to face

my child who died.” When I asked why, she said, “I lied to her. If I were to see her [in heaven], she'd call me a liar. I always said, 'I will protect you no matter what happens.' But I couldn't save her.” I had the feeling that the mothers who couldn't save their family members will have this sense of loss for a long, long time.

Munakata: I imagine some people feel that because 19 months have passed people have recovered somewhat, but in some cases they are getting worse. We need to take a look at this issue.

Being there for the victims

Tanno: Many people in Ishinomaki and Kesenuma lost children or other family members. There's no difference between people who lost other family members. But for those who have never experienced it, the grief of losing a small child can't really be understood. The pain you experienced may have eased over time, but it's not like that for those parents. In particular, having someone die in the tsunami was extremely difficult.

Some people found their children's bodies in rice fields. Rescue workers weren't coming, so parents dug up the bodies of their children themselves and wiped off their muddy faces. Then their faces were clean, but their mouths were full of sand. Fathers and mothers who saw their children like that blamed themselves. In some cases this happened at schools or day care centers, and there was trouble with the administration or lawsuits were filed, which only increased the pain of the families. They were told things like, “How long are you going to keep talking about your dead child?” Or “I understand how you feel, but it's been a year and a half.” While reporting on people like that, who, on top of losing their children, were being hurt by people around them, I sometimes wondered if I was “being there” for them.

Our newspaper also refers to “being there” for the victims, but I think it's hard to keep being there for them. Fathers and mothers become very touchy. I've written articles I hoped would help them, but on several occasions I've had people say things to me like, “We were really hurt by that part of your article. You don't understand at all.” I had good intentions and was really careful when writing my articles, but I still hurt people or made their pain worse.

And it's painful for me to be told things like that. Sometimes it makes me angry. But then I found myself wondering whether it was OK for me as a newspaper reporter and as a person to be angry about what was said to me by people in such

difficult situations. Amid that struggle, “being there” for the victims sounds nice, but in reality continuing to be there for the victims is very tiring. It's not that they're bad people. There are still a lot of people in the disaster area who are having difficulty emotionally. They may look fine, but they are in pain. Many people in temporary housing weep alone at night for their lost children or other family members. I would like people to remember that.

System to allow women to make use of their abilities and sympathy

Munakata: Women faced many difficulties. In evacuation centers and in temporary housing they faced difficulties. But women are not just to be protected. They have various strengths.

Ishii: I saw the strengths women have, but overall I became acutely aware that women's strengths were not being put to use within the system and that in many situations women were still in a subordinate position.

Immediately after the earthquake, a 68-year-old woman who ran a group home put eight elderly people in a van and raced to higher ground. But the first thing she heard was criticism from a family member of someone who wasn't able to get a ride in the van, who said, “So, you just abandoned the old people and fled!” More than a year after the disaster, the fact that the first thing someone said to her was unsympathetic was very painful for her, and she felt guilty. The families of the eight people she saved hugged her tearfully, filled with gratitude, but it is as if all that had been wiped away.

Buildings erected by a social welfare service corporation with a government subsidy will be rebuilt by the government, but in some cases group homes are not covered. So, it seems to me that the efforts of women are not recognized within the system and aren't regular jobs that can serve as a way to make a living.

As a person who is providing support from the outside, I feel I must keep in mind that every



woman is trying to make the right decision for herself. For example, I'd like each of you to just smile at the people on either side of you now. Even if you weren't affected by the disaster directly, all of you are here today because of things that have happened over the last 19 months. So, as if to thank each other for coming, could you just smile at the people next to you? (Audience members smile at each other.)

Just by doing that the feeling in the auditorium changes, doesn't it? Society doesn't work like this. So how can we be mindful of this and help to connect the structure of society with the strengths of each individual while being sympathetic as outsiders? In that sense, drawing up the reconstruction budget will be difficult. And then there's this well-meaning but unsympathetic and unfeeling behavior toward the victims that is critical of them, as if what happened to them is somebody else's problem, as if they've been discarded. I think this will change through education.

Munakata: Women have strengths, but we need solidarity and a system that will allow them to put their strengths to use. We need connections that will allow women to support each other.

“Creating opportunities” with the strengths of women

Abe: When our hotel became an evacuation center, I wanted to do whatever I could to make people more comfortable and to help them forget their sadness and suffering, however briefly. So we held various events such as concerts, plays, handicraft classes and story times for children. Everyone was set to move into temporary housing eventually, and I had in mind how they would spend their time once they went there. A lot of people participated when we held workshops for knitting, sewing and making cloth sandals.

Even now in the assembly halls at temporary housing people are making handicrafts like the ones we passed out to all of you today. I felt that by getting together to work with their hands like this, people could communicate with each other. Instead of recalling sad things all alone, by being with others they could have pleasant conversations. But men are less likely than women to do things like this, and that is very worrisome. Women are good at communicating and at creating opportunities like that. From that standpoint as well, I think we have to put those skills of women to use to brighten our communities and homes.

Encouraged by the perseverance and strength of the disaster victims

Ishii: I'd like to ask the reporter from the Kahoku Shimpo to talk about the article from among those she's written over the last 19 months that best conveyed what she wants people to know.

Tanno: There are so many it's hard to choose, but I'd like to tell about two articles I wrote.

There's an island called Oshima that's part of the city of Kesenuma. This is a story about an elderly woman living there. About a month after the earthquake, when people in evacuation centers on the mainland were finally getting three meals a day, no supplies were getting to the island, and the undersea water line had ruptured. The only food they had was what members of the Self-Defense Forces brought to them by boat, which was really very little. I interviewed this elderly woman, who had just returned from getting her daily ration, pulling a trailer. She told me that their family of five got instant rice, sandwiches, one tomato per person and two cucumbers. She said that day they'd gotten 200 cc of milk and a few sweets for the first time. She was angry because it was less than what she'd had before the war.

She asked me where I was from, and I said Sendai. Then she thanked me for coming and tried to give me some of the little food she'd received. I told her I'd come to report on the situation there and I couldn't take food from people who had none. Then she got angry and said, “Come on, just take it!” And she forced it on me. A lot of the area affected by the tsunami was fishing villages, and many people, especially women, felt strongly that people who came there shouldn't be sent home empty-handed, and I was very often given cooked food. The people in the disaster area were always on the receiving end, and they felt guilty about that. So they wanted to give people a little something. I wrote an article about that – about how strong people are. There's a saying that “poverty dulls the wits.” Another one is, “Well fed, well bred.” But the elderly women in the disaster area had the strength to be kind to others even when they were hungry. I was tremendously moved by that.

The other story is about a father in his 40s and his 10-year-old son in Kesenuma. The man lost seven family members in the disaster: his wife, two of his children, his mother- and father-in-law, his sister-in-law and her daughter. They were trying to flee when their car was swept away. Only his son, who was at school, survived. I went to interview the father, feeling bad about it as I listened to his story. He said to me, “I don't want you to write about me

like I'm the hero of some tragedy. Whether people lost their families or are living out of their cars, grief can't be compared. I did lose a lot, but I don't want people saying they feel sorry for me. I'm working as hard as I can now. All I can do is look to the future." He had reopened his milk delivery store less than one month after the disaster.

I thought it might be a cruel thing to ask, but I said to the boy, "Isn't life hard without your mother?" He said, "No, it isn't. Dad is hanging in there, so I will too." Then I asked him, "If you could see your mother now, what would you like to say to her?" He said, "I'd like to tell her that we're OK now. We're hanging in there, so don't worry." The two of them were mindful of each other's feelings. There's no way they could have been unaffected by what had happened. They were pushing themselves really hard. I wanted people to know about the two of them, who were propping each other up during a really difficult time, so I wrote an article about them.

Reporters want to tell these moving stories, but in fact we may be the ones who are the most moved. I was tremendously encouraged by the perseverance and strength of the disaster victims, and I wanted to convey that through the paper. Reporting is often painful and tiring, but then you are inspired by the disaster victims to keep going and tell their stories. It's like a cycle that repeats itself.

In conclusion: How should we live our lives from here on out?

Munakata: Each of our panelists has talked about the time from the disaster until the present. But we must go on living. In conclusion, I'd like to ask each of them to say a few words about the future.

Support for the creation of jobs for women in the disaster area

Ishii: One unfortunate thing that happened in the past 19 months was that the ring finger on the left hand of a woman's body was cut off so that her ring could be stolen. I realized that the nature of the violence that women are subjected to had changed and that systematic violence had increased. At the same time, for the past 18 years I'd felt that we had to build relationships of trust in everyday life in order to reduce the number of directly caused deaths in a disaster, and after this disaster I became convinced of that.

Another thing I felt was necessary was expertise. Whether through community activities, NPO activities or work, expertise that had been

developed in the course of day-to-day activities was a major driving force for saving many lives and for resuming everyday life. Expertise developed by people who were not involved in the disaster will also be of tremendous assistance in overcoming another disaster and various social problems. When women put their abilities to use in their work or occupations in order to create a society in which women can speak out based on their expertise, we need to observe how society changes while providing support to create lots of jobs for women in the disaster area.

Develop women who are good at overcoming adversity as good citizens

Nihei: Before I speak on this topic, I have two requests. The first is that you read an article in today's Asahi Shimbun that was written by Hiroko Aihara. She worked for the Fukushima Minyu Shimbun for many years and is now a freelance journalist. Her article is titled "How have people changed since the disaster?" The second request is that you support the efforts of the Kachan no Chikara project. The members used to process agricultural products in Iitate. Now they're living in temporary housing. They send away for safe vegetables from all over the country, pickle them and sell them through their website. Please lend them your support.

As for my future, as a professional educator I want to foster good citizens. I want to foster women who can make their own decisions, take care of themselves and control the risks they face. I want to educate more and more women who will be involved in decision-making and who will be active in various professional arenas and share an enriched learning experience with them.

We changed our "Fukushima studies" to "Fukushima recovery studies." The president of the college took the lead, and we went to Minami Soma. Minami Soma was divided into Odaka, Kashima and Haramachi based on the levels of radiation in each area. There was all kinds of discord among the local citizens, and some matters couldn't be resolved. Odaka was off limits until April 16 of this year, so even if their homes had been damaged or family members had been swept away by the tsunami, the residents couldn't do anything for more than a year.

Listening to their stories, the students wondered if there wasn't something they could do and came up with the idea of a "traveling cultural festival." They wanted to bring smiles to people's faces, so we chartered two buses, went to the government-designated rest area in Minami Soma on September

16 and held a cultural festival there. There's temporary housing right next to the rest area. Many people came to the festival, and some of them said they hadn't smiled all day like that since the disaster.

When they heard that, the students were so pleased. This is how students become able to put what they've learned to use. Our school is just a small junior college, but in this way the students really matured. I want to develop lots of young women like this. In particular, the fact that our school is a women's junior college gives it a certain value as a rarity, and it still has plenty of advantages. So I want to make good citizens out of these young women who have been strong in a time of adversity. If you have an opportunity to meet some of our students, please lend them your support.

Need for support for those providing support

Ito: After the disaster, our NPO received donations from women all over Japan who said they wanted us to use it for children and mothers. Now we're using that money to provide support for mothers in Higashi Matsushima, Kesenuma, Ishinomaki, Rikuzen Takata and for mothers who have moved here from Fukushima. There's really very little we can do as individuals. When I see a situation that hasn't changed after I've done something, I hang in there, even though I feel powerless, because I can't just quit. There is very little one small NPO can do for the people in the disaster area, but we're working as hard as we can. We'd really like to see a system under which the people in the disaster area can support each other, so we head out from Sendai and assist them in that effort. So I hope that all of you here today, who have come from all over Japan, can support us in our efforts, because we're working hard.

The mothers who come to our facility have little children, so they can't do much. But they wanted to do something, so they put together a booklet outlining what people could do to help the recovery effort. They gathered information on products for which a portion of the proceeds from their sale goes to charity and recommended that people buy those products. Things are being done step by step. I think recovery will take a long time – maybe five or ten years. So, first of all, please don't forget the Tohoku area. And when you think of it, take some small action.

Continue to convey the situation in the disaster area and the power of women

Tanno: There's only one thing that I have to do

from now on, and that is to continue to write about the situation in the disaster area so that support reaches the disaster area and the people who are hanging in there until it is better than it was before the disaster. Of course, things in the disaster area are hard, but that's not all. It's not all tragedy. On the contrary, there are a lot of inspiring stories. The women, in particular, are really full of energy. Of course, a lot of people still haven't gotten back on their feet yet. But when you go to the temporary housing, what you hear from the assembly halls is the sound of women's laughter. That energy and power that women have makes the world a brighter, warmer place. That's the kind of thing I'm determined to get across. Please don't forget about the disaster area and continue to take note of what is going on there.

Please come to the disaster area.

Abe: In this tremendous disaster, when there were problems, people could only be asked to make decisions just as they would ordinarily. Solutions are hard to find, and then another difficult problem comes up. But these problems could be solved because there were connections and ties between people.

Volunteers from businesses have come to the disaster area to help out. One man brought his daughter, who is in the first year of junior high school. I heard she said, "I've always behaved selfishly about little things and worried over little things, but that was wrong. I have to change my ways."

So, the disaster area is a place where both students and adults can learn. Looking back over the past 19 months, it seems that the people who have interacted with others or who have had a lot of opportunities to interact with others are the ones who have bounced back. I feel strongly that we've come this far because we've had support and encouragement from people outside the disaster area. So I'd like people to know that the more people who interact with others, the better it is for the disaster area. In the small town of Minami Sanriku, 100 companies have gone out of business and another 100 don't know when they will be able to resume operations. I'd like you to know that just by putting gas in your car or buying a souvenir from the area you can help people.

I feel I've been put to the test every day since the disaster. I feel I have to be much, much stronger and get through this. Many times I've felt that precisely because of the circumstances since the disaster, I have connections with people I'd never

had before and have been helped by them, and I should be thankful. I feel like my life from here on out will be really fulfilling and we'll be able to put together a good community-building effort, making use of all the emotions we've experienced.

I also hope all of you will feel free to visit the disaster area.

I believe in the strength of women.

Munakata: How did you enjoy the remarks of our five panelists? (Applause) Each of them talked about the reality in the disaster area, and I'm sure you were very moved by their stories.

We have heard now about the need for a framework that will allow women to make use of their abilities and the need to let more people know about their energetic efforts. But there is no doubt

that women have faced many hardships as a result of this disaster. We must consider what is needed to ensure that the same thing doesn't happen when the next disaster occurs. The hardships that women faced in the disaster area did not arise simply because a disaster occurred but were a reflection of the position women occupy in everyday life. I'd like you to discuss this in greater depth in tomorrow's breakout sessions. We won't come up with the answers here today.

In closing, the women living in the disaster area have great personal appeal. They have put down roots in their hometowns and thrived. I believe in the strength of women. Today I have introduced five women with personal appeal. I hope you'll come back tomorrow, when you'll have the opportunity to hear from more outstanding women. Thank you.

Comments from Audience Members

At the conclusion of the special program, comments from participants and their messages to the disaster victims were posted at the conference venue. About 750 people wrote messages. The following is a small sample.



- ◆ I felt the weight of each person's comments.
- ◆ I was moved by the valuable accounts of each person's experience of the disaster and their toughness. I would like to continue to place importance on the abilities of women and their spirit of cooperation and put what I have learned here to use in my own community.
- ◆ I could not listen to these stories of women in difficult situations, which had not been reported in the newspaper or on television, without weeping. I would like to express my gratitude to the panelists. I want to remember their stories and tell them to the people in my community. Women are strong!
- ◆ I felt that we must make use of the energy that women possess in society and that things that seem strange or hard to do can be changed through our efforts. I empathized with the many women I met here who are working hard and realized that providing support is something I can do. And I sincerely believe that will lead to the rebuilding of the community.
- ◆ I realized that even now, 19 months after the disaster, there are many things I can learn from the disaster area and many things to think about. I felt some kind of change, however small, must be initiated all over Japan.
- ◆ I just assumed that it didn't matter whether you were a man or a woman, but I would like to think about what I, as a woman, can do and then take action.
- ◆ The people around me don't talk about the disaster much at all. I think a lot of people just don't want to think about it. Hearing about the situations of others here in Japan, I reminded myself, "This is real."
- ◆ "A once-in-a-millennium disaster offers once-in-a-millennium lessons." We will do what we can.
- ◆ I found that these women have begun to take a step forward while facing difficult, painful experiences. I'm sure the pain of losing family members will linger, but I sensed their determination to go on living nevertheless, lending each other support. I will never forget those in the disaster area.



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