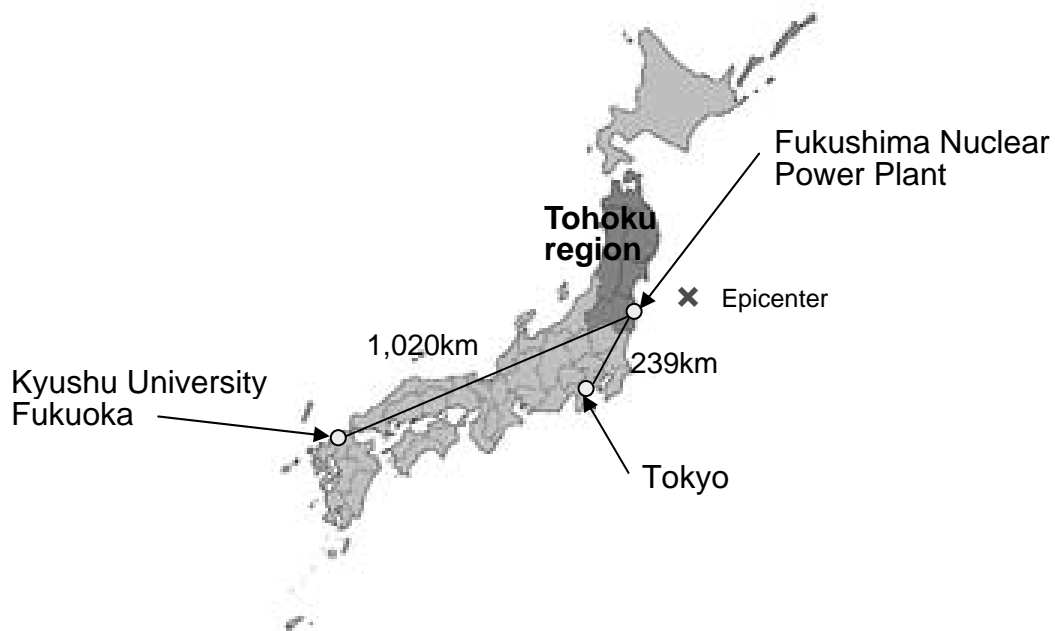


Q&A

Safety Issues in Fukuoka in the Aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake

The tragic earthquake and tsunami in northern Japan's Tohoku region—in addition to the subsequent problems at the nuclear reactors in Fukushima—have understandably caused our students, program applicants, and their families to be greatly concerned about the health and well-being of individuals who study in Japan. However, due to a number of misunderstandings, we thought it best to do what we could to reassure everyone that we are doing all that is in our power to maintain the safety of our students as well as the broader University community. What follows is a Q&A to address some of the questions most frequently asked by our students.



Q1: What is the current status of Fukuoka?

A massive earthquake of magnitude 9.0 occurred March 11th, off the coast of the Tohoku region, causing heavy casualties (as of May 29, 15,269 are confirmed dead; 8,526 are still missing; and 102,501 remain in evacuation sites) and severe damage in the Tohoku and Kanto areas. Due to our distance from the hardest hit area, however, no damage was done to Fukuoka where Kyushu University is located. There was no earthquake felt here, and the tsunami only raised our local water level by a few centimeters. In essence, Fukuoka has been unaffected *physically* by the

earthquake and the subsequent disasters, although of course the *indirect effects* (such as the emotional concern we feel for our friends and colleagues to the north) are certainly significant. For example, our road and rail infrastructure is left unaffected; Fukuoka is not experiencing any blackouts or power shortages (as in the Tokyo area); and food remains on the supermarket shelves (no lines or rationing like there is in the north).

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

Q2: Is there a danger to Fukuoka from the Fukushima nuclear plant radiation?

At this time, students in Fukuoka are not in danger from radioactive contamination. Fukuoka is essentially on the opposite end of Japan, as well as some 634 direct miles [1,020km] southwest of Fukushima where the damaged nuclear power plant is located. Moreover, with respect to wind patterns, Japan experiences the mid-latitude Westerlies this time of year, and *it is highly unlikely that air-borne radiation leaked from reactors will reach Fukuoka at health-threatening levels.*

According to MEXT (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology), levels of radiation in the Fukuoka area are essentially the same as what they were prior to the earthquake (as of May 30, 2011). MEXT's data also indicate that as of May 30, 2011, tap water remains uncontaminated in the area around Kyushu University. The sources of water supply are different than the Kanto region, so future contamination should not be a problem either. See the following site for MEXT's daily monitoring of radiation levels in Fukuoka:

<http://www.mext.go.jp.cache.yimg.jp/english/>

We also monitor environmental radioactivity levels in three of our five campuses everyday, and as of May 30, they remain within the normal range. For further details, please see:

<http://www.kyushu-u.ac.jp/english/university/radi.php>

For the meaning of the numerical values used in the above data, please check:

http://www.nirs.go.jp/ENG/data/pdf/i3_e.pdf

Most of the vegetables and dairy products distributed in Fukuoka are locally grown in the Kyushu region. Besides, the Japanese Government has imposed March 21 an indefinite ban on food products from the quake zone by invoking the Food Sanitation Act. Since then, Tohoku- and Kanto-produced vegetables, milks, and related products

have not made their way into Fukuoka. Radiation levels of those products, tap water, etc., are being closely watched by public authorities. *Should they be found to show radiation levels higher than safety levels laid down by public authorities, they will immediately be banned from distribution.*

The IAEA and WHO websites also provide up-to-date information on the current situation of the nuclear crisis in Fukushima:

<http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/tsunamiupdate01.html>

<http://www.who.int/hac/crises/jpn/en/index.html>

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

Q3: Are the students safe from earthquakes at Kyushu University?

According to the Japan Meteorological Agency, Japan is highly earthquake-prone. Thousands, of varying strength, location, and timing, occur annually throughout the country. A rare, major earthquake of 7.0 magnitude—the first of that size in some 300 years—struck Fukuoka in early 2005, causing much damage to property though fortunately little loss of life. Because seismic activity remains a constant possibility for most areas, including Fukuoka, constant vigilance and readiness to react quickly are indispensable.

On monitoring, and distributing information on, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic activities in Japan as a whole, please see:

http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/en/Activities/brochure_earthquake_and_tsunami.pdf

<http://www.jma.go.jp:80/jma/en/Activities/earthquake.html>

Fukuoka City sits atop the active “Kego” fault, which means earthquakes can occur at any time, with the potential to do more or less damage. However, *the likelihood of our students being involved in a catastrophic quake similar to that which struck the Tokyo and Tohoku region in the near future is statistically very low.* The reason is that the Kanto plain (the region around Tokyo) sits on the border of three different tectonic plates, leading to far more quake activity than what we experience in Kyushu.

The following is a set of images of the tectonic plates and their relationships from a study from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism:

http://cais.gsi.go.jp/Virtual_GSI/Tectonics/Niigata_Kobe/niigata_kobe.html

You can obtain weekly updates on seismic activities in Japan as a whole from the Japan Meteorological Agency:

http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/en/2011_Earthquake.html

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

Q4: What of dangers from Tsunami?

Fukuoka and Kyushu University are located on the coast, so there is a risk of damage from a tsunami, and for that reason, we should keep up-to-date on information issued by the Japan Meteorological Agency:

<http://www.jma.go.jp/en/warn/index.html>

We will also have to be aware of the fact that a large scale earthquake (often referred to as the Nankai earthquake) has been predicted to occur near the Shikoku island, and any off-the-coast undersea earthquake in that area is likely to cause tsunami, which could reach as far as Kyushu.

Having said that, however, the danger of a tsunami is far lower here than it is in the north because of the comparatively lower likelihood of an earthquake in Kyushu. You should also remember that the likelihood of tsunami is said to be lower on the Japan Sea side than on the Pacific Ocean side. From that perspective, too, there is a lower risk of tsunami damage in Fukuoka, which is located on the Japan sea side.

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

Q5: Have there been any adverse effects on research and education at Kyushu University?

Our faculty members and students are proceeding with their research and studies as usual. The Spring Semester will begin on time as scheduled. We have also offered our help and support to universities and other research institutions located near the disaster sites. We have, however, decided to postpone a series of events planned for the celebration of the University's 100th year anniversary out of concern for the suffering of people in the hard-hit areas.

(Last updated March 31, 2011)

Q6: Should I change my plans to study at Kyushu University?

The western part of Japan, including Fukuoka, which remains unaffected by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, is as safe (or risky) as any other country in the

world. But the views of your country, friends, and, of course, parents do matter. We would like you to discuss this important question with all individuals whose advice you value in order to make the best choice possible in the light of all available information. It may help you to know that while a small number of international students have elected to return home until the crisis is resolved, most by a wide margin have decided to stay, and the large majority of new students are still choosing to come to Kyushu at this time.

Please note that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) will make a special provision as follows for MEXT scholars who have been forced temporarily to leave Japan as they had studied in the disaster areas or as their home government had so instructed them. Full-time MEXT scholars may continue to receive scholarship until graduation (within the time frame designated by their programs), and part-time MEXT scholars may continue to receive scholarship after the pre-fixed termination date for the lengths of time they were absent from Japan.

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

Q7: What is Kyushu University doing to ensure the safety of its students and staff members?

We at Kyushu University—from top university officials and scientists to the general faculty and staff of each academic and administrative unit—are watching and listening vigilantly for any crisis-related developments to come, whether positive or negative, that may bear on student safety and well-being, and will react accordingly in your best interests.

So that everyone may follow what is happening, we have launched a special webpage, linked to from the University homepage, that is devoted to publishing our policies and recommendations regarding Japan's national crisis, and to disseminating accurate information with respect to the current situation and, in particular, conditions in the Kyushu region.

<http://www.kyushu-u.ac.jp/english/university/TEq.php>

We have also held on April 18, 2011 a public seminar, open to the entire University international community, on seismic and nuclear safety (entitled “Keeping Kyudai’s International Community Safe: How the Tohoku Crisis Affects Us”), with lectures by our internationally renowned experts on nuclear power and earthquake.

Overseeing and coordinating University efforts related to the 9.0-strength quake and tsunami aftermath is a crisis response team comprised of all University division heads under the leadership of an Executive Vice President. The team is monitoring, assessing, and making safety and academic policy decisions for the entire University community.

Moreover, we have been, and remain, in close and regular contact with the City of Fukuoka government, as a general preparedness strategy for the purpose of coordinated management of natural disasters and other crises: For the activities of the Fukuoka City Disaster Prevention Crisis Management Division, please see:

<http://bousai.city.fukuoka.lg.jp/en/index.html>

We would also like you to know that all buildings on our campuses have undergone seismic reinforcement, so that they should be able to resist a massive quake of magnitude 8.0 to 9.0.

Please be assured that you are in good hands.

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

Q8: What exactly shall I do in the event of a massive earthquake and tsunami?

We have prepared an emergency manual, which is available for download from our website. While, at the moment, only the Japanese version is available, we plan to publish the English version in the near future.

<http://www.kyushu-u.ac.jp/Qdai-only/administration/document/manual.pdf>

Laid out in the manual are comprehensive measures for a range of emergencies. Here are some excerpts from the manual:

- When a massive earthquake strikes while you are on campus, you must first
 - take cover to ensure your own safety;
 - secure the exit; and
 - turn off the gas, all computers, and other electronic devices.
- Then follow the instructions of the teaching/ administrative staff and take refuge in a temporary evacuation site such as sports field and tennis court. (The list of on-campus evacuation sites is given on Page 7 of the emergency manual. For the

location of evacuation sites around the university's international house and dormitories, we will urge you to take another look at the documents given to you when you checked in.)

- If you are outside the campus, please contact your supervisor and inform your whereabouts etc. If you receive e-mails from the university, please make sure to reply promptly so that we will know that you are safe.
- In order to ensure the safety of our students, we may temporarily close the university. In such case, we urge you to check our website and your e-mail for any updates.

(Last updated may 31, 2011)

Q9: Where can I get more information about radiation and/or food and water safety in Japan?

Here are some useful website sources of information regarding radioactivity and food and water safety (Source: Embassy of the United States in Japan)

- (1) National Institute of Radiation Science (NIRS):

<http://www.nirs.go.jp/ENG/index.html>

Includes a series of "Basic facts regarding radiation exposure resulting from the nuclear plant accident caused by the Tohoku area earthquake." Highly recommended.

- (2) Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation, and Tourism (MLIT):

<http://www.mlit.go.jp/en/index.html>

The English-language website includes a page on the 9.0-magnitude temblor with sections on measurement of radiation levels around the Metropolitan Airports, and around the Ports of Tokyo, Yokohama, Kawasaki and Chiba, as well as transportation-related policies and information.

- (3) Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW):

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/index.html>

The English-language website, under "topics," has a listing for "Food Safety Information" that includes two notices regarding Japanese policy and regulations on the handling of food possibly contaminated by radioactive substances.

If you have not done so already, we also suggest that you register with your embassies so that you would be able to receive up-to-date information via e-mail.

(Last updated April 14, 2011)

Q10: Are there any flight restrictions to Japan?

There are no restrictions on air travel to or from Japan at the present time. On behalf of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) confirmed March 19, 2011 that there are no restrictions to normal air transport operations at Japan's major airports, including both Haneda and Narita (both in Tokyo). For more and the latest information, please see:

<http://www.iata.org/pressroom/pr/pages/2011-03-18-02.aspx>

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

Q11: Am I allowed to go to the Kanto and Tohoku regions for holidays or on business?

We do not impose any restrictions on travel to the Kanto and Tohoku regions. However, you will be asked to be mindful of your own safety as aftershocks happen frequently, and their infrastructures still need repair. Should you decide to visit those affected areas, be sure to inform your supervisor and the Student Section of your School of the "travel date," "accommodation info," and "emergency contact number."

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

Q12: I would like to extend a helping hand to the victims of the disaster. Whom should I contact?

In disaster areas, aftershocks still occur, and their infrastructures remain to be rebuilt. Even to this date, moreover, these areas are still struggling to build a system to accept volunteer workers. For that reason, unplanned actions, however good in intention, could not only precipitate secondary damages but also cause delay in reconstruction works. So, please collect as much accurate information as possible on the current situation before you decide to take action. Should you decide to take part in a volunteer activity in a crisis-affected area, please inform your supervisor and the Student Section of your admitting School.

The Fukuoka International Association website gives detailed information about how to donate relief money, relief supply, blood for sick and injured persons, and how to register for volunteer activities.

Fukuoka International Association:

<http://www.rainbowfia.or.jp/news/fukuokacity-japan-earthquake.html>

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

Q13: What can I do in preparation for a possible major earthquake?

- Prepare an emergency contacts list at an institution of which you are a member and carry it on you.
- Check the emergency exits in, or evacuation sites near, the building you would be in.
- Place safety equipment on bookshelf etc., against overturning.
- Do not place heavy or fragile items on top of the shelves.
- Tidy up the wiring cords on the floor.
- Do not leave obstructive items in the corridors.
- Check the location for gas valve, etc.
- Have an emergency survival kit ready (at office/home).
- Check the emergency notification system.

Useful multilingual sources of information about how to protect yourself in the event of an earthquake can also be found here:

Fukuoka Fire Prevention Bureau :

http://119.city.fukuoka.lg.jp/app/html/14multilang/m_01.html

“Japan Earthquake: How to protect yourself”

<http://nip0.wordpress.com/>

(Last updated May 31, 2011)

NB: The present Q&A will be expanded and revised as more information becomes available.