

March 16, 2011

To All International Friends in the Publishing Community:

First of all, I would like to thank you all for deeply-appreciated message of condolence and sympathy to us since the disaster took place on Friday, March 11. According the Meteorological Agency, the earthquake which hit northern part of Honshu Island was magnitude of 9.0 that was the strongest in the Japanese history.

The earthquake itself destroyed many of the houses and not anti-quake old buildings in the area, but even worse was the tsunami over 10 meters high which attacked the shore of Sendai and neighboring cities and towns. The tsunami came into the land as deep as 4km from the shore and it wiped away houses, cars, boats and even airplanes at Sendai Airport.

In Tokyo, we were certainly shaken by the quake wave which lasted for about 5 minutes. Fortunately there was no damage to the building and the large glass window did not break. Immediately after the earthquake, all the public transportations were stopped and all airports were closed for inspection of facilities. Some trains and subway lines did not operate until around 10PM on Friday, some of them have stopped until Saturday morning. Many employees walked back home and some left the building late evening after recovery of the train services.

As a result of the earthquake, some of the nuclear power plants in Fukushima which is approximately 250km north of Tokyo were damaged and some radiation leaks are reported since 15th March. The government advises the people living within around 20 kilometers of the plants to leave their town. The radiation level is still acceptable and not harmful for the humans except in the neighborhood area of the plants.

The power plant damages also resulted in shortage of electric power in Tokyo area. At the moment, the electricity supply is not sufficient in Kanto area including Tokyo, so the power company cut the electricity for a few hours by rotation in Kanto area. The public transportations are reducing their train services to about 50-70% of normal level.

The business is almost normal at Japan Book Publishers Association and most of publishers in Tokyo. However it is certain that this Tohoku Kanto Big Earth Quake have caused serious damage in the publishing industry. Firstly, some paper-manufacturing companies in Tohoku area, which produce about 40% of

publication paper, have suffered grave damage, so publishing paper is going to be in short supply. Secondly, due to the fuel shortage, the distributors have decided to deliver books and magazines to each books shops all over the country every second day, which is every day on a normal basis. It must have a direct impact on the distribution of books and magazines. This serious distribution problem has occurred for the first time since the Second World War. It will take a long time to re-establish the afflicted area and to resolve the fuel shortage. Thirdly, some book shops off the shore of Tohoku Area have suffered serious damage from a Tsunami. Other many books shops not just in the Tohoku area have also have suffered severe damage whose books have fallen and gotten wet with a running sprinkler. Fourthly, some of land routes in Tohoku area were cut off. And we can not assume anything about when the distribution in Tohoku area will be restored.

By now, Japan received rescue forces from U.S.A. including Japan based U.S. Armed Forces, England, France, Korea, China, Russia, Germany, Switzerland, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, just to name a few. In addition, we have proposals from more than 100 countries and areas to support the rescue operations. I would like to thank you all for supporting us. I strongly feel that we are not alone and we are extremely lucky to have many friends like you in the international publishing community. We can do very little under the situation, but if there is something we and you can do from the international publishers, I will certainly let you know. .

We are OK at least for the time being. However, in the affected areas, there are a number of bookshops, schools, authors, readers and customers. I simply wish the disaster will not be repeated and the situation will become better day by day.

Thank you once again for your messages and thinking of us in Japan.

With my kind and sincere regards,

Masahiro Oga
President, Japan Book Publishers Association