

*This special issue is dedicated to documenting the IUC response to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of March 11, 2011.*

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear IUC Graduates, Friends, and Supporters,

On the night of March 10, a tweet flitted across my husband's computer screen, leading us to turn on the TV news and switch our browsers to live media outlets. Within minutes, the scale and magnitude of the earthquake in Tohoku became clear, and we were stunned into silence by the live image of the tsunami hitting the coast of Miyagi.

The rest of the night and the following morning were spent making phone calls and sending emails. Internet technology in Tokyo and Yohohama fared much better than the phone lines, and enabled us here in the U.S. to very quickly establish that no damage had been suffered at the IUC in Yokohama. Thanks to close and constant communications between Stanford and Yokohama, we established the safety of each one of our 55 students within 48 hours of the earthquake and reported to their loved ones at home.

That was just the beginning of a turbulent month in which the IUC would face a series of unprecedented challenges. I am pleased to report that the IUC was able to successfully navigate these challenges while at the same time forging a clear path to the future. This none-too-simple feat was achieved for a very simple reason: the IUC is stewarded by a group of people who are passionately dedicated to its mission.

Every member of the IUC team—teachers, staff, and administration—was on deck to steer this flagship of Japanese studies through the storm. Concerned graduate students at Stanford also stepped forward to bring their vital energies to the effort. The Freeman Spogli Institute of International Studies at Stanford offered invaluable support, as did a number of extremely capable personnel at Stanford and among our consortium schools.

The good will extended to the IUC by so many different parties throughout this difficult period has made it crystal clear that the IUC is deeply valued by all generations of the Japanese Studies community as a whole, and this has only strengthened our determination to establish a solid foundation for the future.

The IUC has emerged from the recent crisis an even stronger institution. Bonds between teachers, staff, and administration have deepened; new relationships have been forged with a wide range of people and institutions; and new capabilities were developed along the way that will surely contribute to future innovations.

The IUC will resume normal operations in Yokohama for the summer 2011 program as well as the 2011–12 ten-month program. We all look forward to continuing to provide students with the highest level of advanced Japanese language training available today, and to producing future leaders who will make critical contributions to the international understanding of Japan just like their IUC sempai have.

With heart-felt thanks for your ongoing support,  
*Indra Levy*

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## RESPONSE AT THE IUC

### FROM THE DESK OF THE RESIDENT DIRECTOR

**VIEWED IN THE PERSPECTIVE** of the communities in Tōhoku that were devastated by the great earthquake and tsunami and their residents, the IUC was extremely fortunate on March 11. None of our students, faculty, or staff was lost or injured. The Pacifico Yokohama building in which we have our suite of classrooms and offices shook frighteningly and some items in our storeroom and books on our shelves were thrown to the floor, but we suffered no significant material damage. The day was very near the end of our third quarter, and individual interviews had been scheduled. Many students had completed their interviews and had left the building by early afternoon; only twenty-two students were still present when the earthquake struck. They followed the lead of coolheaded faculty and staff in making their way downstairs from the fifth floor to a designated evacuation point on the first floor. After the building was determined to be structurally sound, eight students would end up spending the night in the Center, along with Student Coordinator Chieko Yoshida, Matsumoto-sensei, Kono-sensei, Otake-sensei, Kushida-sensei, Ohashi-sensei, and Kanayama-sensei. The transportation system was paralyzed and their residences were too far away to return to on foot.

In the remaining hours of March 11 and over the next day, communicating largely by email and occasionally (service was erratic) by telephone or mobile phone, Administrative Assistant Junko Tanaka and Yoshida-san were able to ascertain the safety and whereabouts of all students, and to report that to IUC Stanford.

#### IMPACT OF 3.11 ON THE IUC PROGRAM

So we were lucky. But we were far from unaffected. Disruptions of transportation and delivery of power, not to mention growing concern about the crisis at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Generating Plant, made it impossible to conduct the last week of third-quarter classes with any semblance of normality—many of us would not have been able to get to and from the Center in a timely manner to keep to a regular schedule—and we cancelled those classes. Initially we expected to reopen in Yokohama on April 4. Then, on March 17, came the U.S. Department of State Travel Warning on Japan, grounded on a highly risk-averse assessment of the se-

verity of the danger posed by Fukushima Dai-ichi. The Travel Warning was followed almost instantly by decisions of most U.S. universities to call on their students in Japan to return home or at least remove themselves a considerable distance to the west of Fukushima (farther west than Kanagawa Prefecture). Within a week twenty-two IUC students had left Japan and another twenty-three had temporarily moved westward, mostly to Kyoto and Osaka. Ten chose to sit tight in Kantō. Early on March 18 (Japan Time), in the face of great uncertainty about how the Fukushima situation would develop, the IUC Executive Committee determined that the most prudent course, in the interest of students' safety, was to suspend on-site instruction in Yokohama for the fourth quarter (April 4 to June 10), and to develop an alternative that would enable students to complete the program on time.

We at IUC Yokohama waited with bated breath for several days while the Executive Committee sought to arrange a U.S. location at which our students and teachers could regroup to go forward with the fourth quarter. On March 22 we learned that the logistical and legal obstacles were too many and too high to overcome in the very short period before a decision on the conduct of the fourth quarter program had to be made. Later that day, IUC Stanford introduced us to Cisco WebEx, software that allows multiple participants to see and hear each other while sharing documents, images, PowerPoint presentations, spreadsheets, audio and video files, and a whiteboard in real time.

#### ADAPTING TO NEW TECHNOLOGY

Simply truncating the program and abandoning fourth-quarter instruction was never contemplated. Immediately IUC Yokohama faculty shifted gears to focus exclusively on designing a distance-learning program, an alternative that we had already been discussing in case being physically in the same space as students proved impossible.

The challenge was how best to deliver high-quality, IUC-fourth-quarter-appropriate instruction—that is, instruction that emphasizes individual interests and is tailored to promote the continued progress of students whom we have come to know well over the first three

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quarters. The week after learning of WebEx, Yokohama instructors joined several training sessions in its use. As an observer of these sessions, I was pleased but not too surprised by the productive attitude our teachers all displayed, and by their quickness. I've praised their professionalism in earlier issues of this newsletter, and I want to praise it again. To make our distance-learning work, they had to integrate unfamiliar new technology into their daily teaching routine. Impressively, they did it, adapting to our extraordinary circumstances without resisting or complaining.

We determined that we could begin again on April 4. Ordinarily the core of the fourth-quarter program is individualized—for some students, it's project work in preparation for a final presentation, for others it's guided exploration of a topic or theme that will be developed into a final written report, and for others it's concentrated preparation for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. (Alternatives to project work were introduced in 2010.)

### EMPHASIZING INDIVIDUAL TUTORIALS

The full-time instructors speedily reached unanimity that the best results would be achieved by devoting the majority of available online time to individual tutorial instruction. WebEx works well for small conferences as well as for one-on-one teaching, and we used it for weekly "groupwork" in art history, cultural anthropology, history, literature, and politics and economics. This groupwork was a stand-in for our fourth-quarter elective courses. Scheduling of individual tutorials and groupwork meetings was a formidable job, with faculty on-site in Japan and students in all time zones of North America and also in Europe and Japan. Students and teachers together decided what the content and hours of their meetings would be, with equal faculty time allocated to everyone.

Unable to hold a graduation presentation conference, the instructors this year collected written manuscripts from the students as final *seikabutsu*. End-of-the-year interviews were conducted by WebEx, and end-of-the-year proficiency testing was managed electronically, as well. From where I sit, although I wouldn't argue that the distance-learning version of the IUC fourth quarter was every bit as effective as our normal program in Yokohama classrooms, it seems that students, faculty, and staff did astonishingly well in adjusting to unforeseen

circumstances. I hope we won't have to do it again, but there's no question that we have grown from the experience.

### EXPLAINING TO LOCAL SUPPORTERS

One of the most delicate tasks we dealt with was reporting to local supporters that the IUC would not be conducting fourth quarter classes here. As we explained that we would instead be carrying on by means of a distance-learning program, we found it necessary to review key points of the organizational structure and historical background of the IUC, and to stress the need for consensus in decision-making by the IUC Executive Committee and Board of Advisors who represent IUC consortium member universities. All of our local benefactors expressed understanding and sympathy, after we clarified what we were doing. We learned, however, that it is not easy to make our actions readily transparent to all. The Board of Education of the City of Yokohama might be representative of those who wished to know more. Two board officials visited us in mid-May to ask us to elaborate on what we're doing. After describing our setup in more detail, we were able to show them a WebEx tutorial in progress. We believe they were impressed. Certainly they took away knowledge that we have continued a rigorous language-training program despite the fact that our students and teachers couldn't be together in the same room.

Always in the foreground, kept there by the lead stories in all the Japanese media day after day, are the crisis at Fukushima Dai-ichi and the destruction caused by the tsunami. Aware from the beginning that we are well outside the range that is classified as dangerous, many people in Yokohama and Tokyo nevertheless cannot put worries about radiation out of mind, and it is clear that it will take years to rebuild and deal with the economic consequences of this disaster. For many of us here, the mood is subdued, even though everywhere but in the Tōhoku services are operating as usual and amenities are as plentiful as before March 11. That the faculty and staff of the IUC maintain good spirit is a testimony to their institutional pride as well as to their admirable personal qualities. For this we can be very grateful.

*Jim Baxter*

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### INSIDER'S VIEW: FOURTH QUARTER SAVED BY CISCO WEBEX

**WHEN THE TRAVEL WARNING FOR JAPAN WAS ISSUED** on March 17th, it was suddenly clear that the IUC could not continue to hold classes at the Center in Yokohama. The IUC Stanford office, already rocked by the tragedies ongoing in the Tohoku area, transitioned into crisis-mode, with just three people putting in several hundred hours over a few weeks.

At the time, we didn't know when the Travel Warning would be lifted, and when we would be able to re-open the Center for classes. What we did know was that we had 55 students now scattered in 5 countries with a quarter to go and time limits on their funding. Some students' home institutions forbade them from returning to Japan, while other students were unable to return to the U.S. We also had a ticking clock: students from schools on the quarter system would have to re-enroll at their home institutions if a viable alternate course of study was not in place before the start of the quarter. Under these constraints, the travel warning was the crack of the start gun that launched our race to find a way for all IUC students to finish the program.

Plastered across the walls of the Stanford office were poster-sized notes for plans A, B, C . . . ; no detail went unconsidered, no contingency ignored. One option was temporarily relocating the program to a consortium school for the quarter. We received generous offers of assistance from a number of institutions and actively explored these options, but the timing and logistics proved impossible. Furthermore, student surveys showed that relocation precluded too many students from participating. Ultimately, it became clear that distance learning would be the only viable means for enabling all IUC students to complete the program on time.

A survey of distance learning options brought us to Cisco's WebEx, an online system for web conferences and webinars. After trial runs by the Stanford office staff and the Center faculty, we decided to move forward with WebEx. The WebEx system is surprisingly well-suited for small group classes. Up to 6 participants can view each other's live streaming video at the same time while also sharing the desktop or an application of one participant. This means that 6 people can virtually be in the same classroom, looking at each other as they engage in discussion, while all viewing a PDF or text file in which the teacher takes notes in real time.

*by Robin Sugiura*

*IUC Planning Coordinator*

*Ph.D. Candidate in Modern Japanese Literature, Stanford University*

The final quarter of the 10-month program strongly emphasizes individual project work and one-on-one tutorials, so it was much more adaptable to a distance program than other quarters. Through WebEx, we were able to offer 'Elective A' subject-specific Japanese courses in anthropology, history, literature, art history and politics/economics. In addition, teachers doubled the amount of time normally allotted for one-on-one tutorials—the foundation of individual project work in the 4th quarter—giving more individual attention to each student than usual. Course materials for Elective B courses were also made available for download by all current IUC students, so students could choose materials they were interested in and go over them with their tutorial teacher as desired. In these tutorials students and teachers connected via WebEx, sharing files in real time while engaging in one-on-one discussion.

The teachers immediately began adapting their methods and materials to the capabilities of the WebEx system. The decision to resume classes via WebEx was announced to students on March 24th, just seven days after the Travel Warning was issued, and classes resumed on April 4th, as scheduled. All IUC students could participate from wherever they happened to be, benefitting from direct interaction with IUC faculty and their classmates despite the unfortunate circumstances.

Any online program will have some glitches, but WebEx proved surprisingly convenient and easy, enabling all of the IUC class of 2010–11 to complete the program. None of our students had funding revoked, and only one student chose to drop out of the program for personal reasons. Naturally we would have preferred to continue to hold classes at the Center, but that wasn't a possibility.

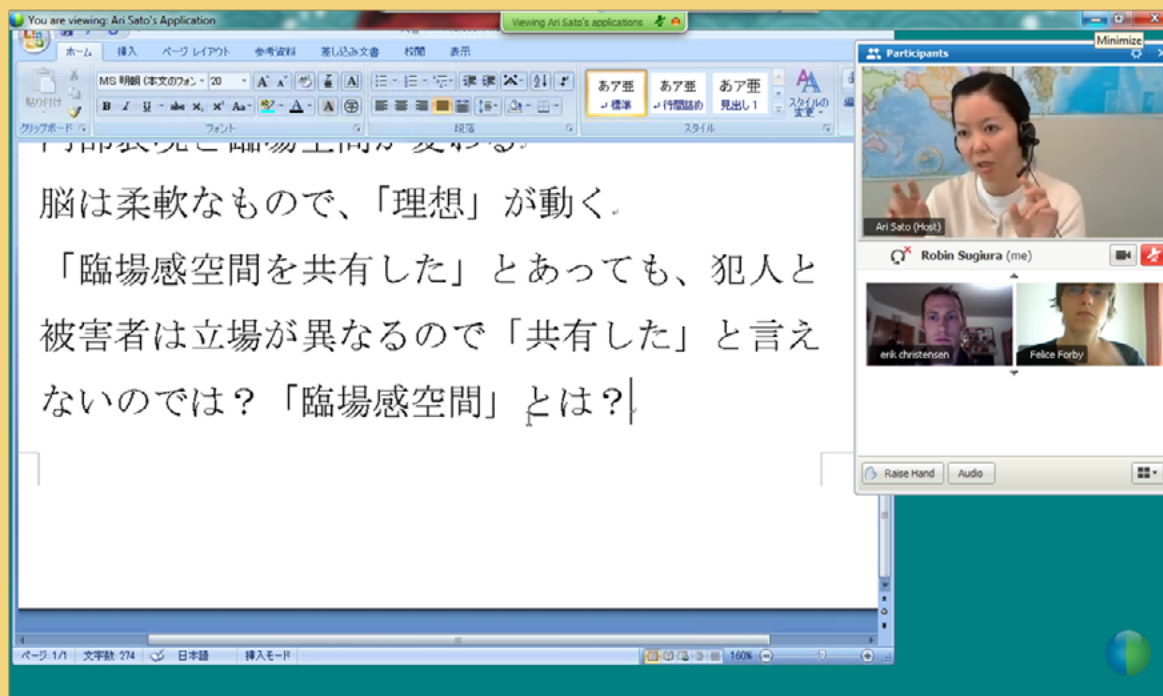
Given the circumstances, finishing the 4th quarter via WebEx offered the best alternate course of study for all of the IUC Class of 2010–11, whom we now welcome to the family of IUC alumni.



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### HOW WEBEX WORKS

Participants enter an online classroom by simply clicking on an emailed link that launches the WebEx program through their web browser. They connect to the audio stream with their computer's audio hardware through VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol—also used for video chat program Skype and Google's online phone system) or by calling a local toll-free number with a telephone. Participants then launch their video camera and join the group discussion. The teacher or presenter "shares" an application in their computer so everyone in the classroom is seeing the same file in real time.



*Students engage in live discussion as teacher Ari Sato shares her text application and takes discussion notes in real time. These notes help students learn new vocabulary and grasp new concepts.*

### SERVING OUR STUDENTS

The IUC has always taken pride in catering to the very particular needs of our students. This year has been no exception. The distance learning program was developed by surveying all students on their curricular and logistical needs; course schedules were set in consultation with each participant. An emergency grant from the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford allowed the IUC to reimburse students for headsets, which minimize the effects of ambient noise on the Cisco WebEx system. Furthermore, literally hundreds of hours of human labor were dedicated to providing students with logistical support. The rapidly changing situation after March 11 left many students in need of assistance to deal with rental leases, utilities

and other service contracts, and disposal and shipping of personal belongings. Student Coordinator Chieko Yoshida was completely devoted to minimizing the costs and burden of stress experienced by students under these extraordinary circumstances. Under Yoshida-san's leadership, IUC Planning Coordinator Robin Sugiyama developed a thorough online survey to determine students' needs for logistical assistance on a wide variety of issues, ranging from rental leases to outstanding library books. Yoshida-san then spearheaded the effort to meet these needs, while Robin and IUC alumnus Gabriel Rodriguez ('09-10) provided remote back-up support from Stanford.

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### THE IUC CLASS OF 2010–11: RESILIENCE AND COMMITMENT

All IUC students demonstrate a staunch commitment to their personal and professional relationship with Japan just by participating in the rigorous 10-month program. What the class of 2010–11 has taught all of us is that this commitment—the very reason why the IUC exists—does not waver in the face of adversity. In spite of a truly extraordinary burden of stress—experiencing one of the largest earthquakes in recorded history, followed by repeated severe aftershocks, rolling blackouts, disruptions to transportation and telecommunications, the uncertainties of an ongoing nuclear disaster in Fukushima, and ensuing disruptions to their program of study—all but one of this year’s class of 55 completed the IUC program on June 10. These students have all overcome unimaginable circumstances, and despite the various distances involved and the increased demand on their personal discipline, their level of engagement with the IUC program remained as high as ever. The IUC class of 2010–11 created a vibrant community in Yokohama, and they have made every effort to maintain the close bonds they developed. Please join us in welcoming this very special group to the IUC alumni community. Email messages sent to [office@iucjapan.org](mailto:office@iucjapan.org) will be conveyed to the IUC class of 2010–11.

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### VOICES OF THE IUC CLASS OF 2010–11

ANNIKA LEE, IUC CLASS OF 2010–11



I planned to study for the highest level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) during the fourth quarter in order to solidify my grasp of formal expressions before entering the workforce. These plans, of course, derailed quite abruptly when the Tohoku Earthquake struck on the last day of the third quarter. I was still within walking distance of the Center when it struck, so I returned to the building with some of my classmates. The teachers and office staff were admirably quick in using what technology was still working and a network of student communication to confirm that everyone was unscathed and in a relatively safe area.

Through the evening, they kept us updated on the status of the trains, aftershocks, and tsunami warnings, made sure everyone had something to eat, and made sure no one went missing. When Japan Rail announced that none of their trains would resume running until at least the next day, the teachers also kept track of who needed a place to stay.

They bought snacks and took us to the nearest emergency shelter to claim a space on the concrete floor. Once the building that houses the Center itself was cleared after a preliminary safety check, they took us there for the night so we would have heating, running water, and easy news access.

Over the course of the next several weeks, the Center did an excellent job of making sure we were updated

as much as possible with all necessary information. Not only did they let us know immediately when they made schedule changes (canceling classes, etc.), but they also sent along updates and assurances regarding the nuclear situation and radiation levels in our area.

When it became obvious that the Center could no longer continue to run in the Yokohama area, the staff and administration both in Japan and the US worked hard to keep from canceling the last quarter entirely. Even as they discussed possibilities and logistics, they kept us updated on what might happen. While some of the news (such as resuming the program in the U.S.) did not come to pass, it did serve to let us know they were actively looking for a solution and allowed us to examine our options and scheduling.

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The Center finally settled on conducting classes online, emailing and uploading readings and assignments for easy access and arranging both discussion classes and one-on-one meetings online using WebEx, a Skype-like program for businesses. Except for the occasional technical difficulties with sound, the arrangement worked quite smoothly from the start. This also worked out for almost all of the students, as several had already returned to the US while others had scattered across Japan.

This format allowed for more freedom in terms of study materials, so I could add my own independent work to the Japanese Language Proficiency Test preparation. I also had more time to ask questions unrelated to the class itself, such as phrases or grammar patterns I encountered in everyday life. I spent the remainder of my time in Kyoto with a former host family to avoid the

Personally, the challenges of dealing with the post-earthquake upheaval and uncertainty exceeded anything I had experienced during my previous study abroad experiences. While my troubles certainly did not even begin to approach those of the people in the hardest hit areas of Japan, I still found myself under a certain amount of stress. I stayed awake at night listening to the glass of the windowpanes creak as they warped with each aftershock. I walked from store to store trying to find just one place that still had bread on the shelves. I watched my Yokohama host family try to keep up cheerful appearances in front of the younger children.

Before studying abroad the first few times, I certainly encountered the usual advice to help ease culture shock, but none of it had prepared me for the sudden uncertainty and instability that came in the wake of the

*Nothing had prepared me for the sudden uncertainty and instability that came in the wake of the disaster or the horrific news that bombarded me from every media outlet.*

aftershocks and rolling blackouts that still plagued the Kanto area. They provided Internet access for classes as well as moral and practical support.

For all its advantages, our digitized fourth quarter did have its drawbacks. With all of the scheduling conflicts, it was impossible to hold class every day, and while they gave us work and projects to fill our time and reinforce what we covered in our meetings, I did miss the daily interaction. Even surrounded by other foreign students, I still used almost only Japanese to converse on a wide variety of topics using different levels of respect (a complex and integral component of the language). This semester felt much more limited in scope. While I still used a fair amount of Japanese on a daily basis with my host family, the topics were limited to matters of daily life, and there was no need for particularly honorific speech patterns.

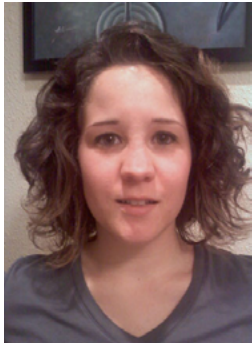
The Center, however, impressively already has plans to conduct its summer session as originally planned, so the emergency arrangements and their disadvantages will affect only my class.

disaster or the horrific news that bombarded me from every media outlet. I learned to appreciate things I took for granted before, like non-radioactive water and constant access to electricity. I am also very thankful for the support I received both in Japan and from the US.

Even with all the post-quake chaos, I did receive an offer for full-time employment at Rakuten, an Internet service company based in Tokyo but with branches all over the world. As I will be working at the main office, I will still have daily opportunities to use my Japanese in a variety of situations as well as international chances for my career. Given that my time at the Center prepared me for and helped me successfully through the experience of job-hunting in Japan, I would say it was a very effective program both for my language skills and my understanding of new areas of Japanese culture. The simultaneous practical application of these skills and the environment of immersion both at school and home also helped to reinforce what I had learned, making for a very beneficial time abroad.

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### ERICA BROWN, IUC CLASS OF 2010-11



My apartment building was condemned after the earthquake when the three buildings of my C-shaped apartment complex shook apart. I only took essentials with me to the hotel, leaving all of my things at my old apartment until I could find a new one. As far as I know, my building was the only in the area that

suffered damage, and though the shaking wasn't strong enough to knock over my TV or microwave, the staff was not certain that the building would ever be repaired.

It was surprisingly difficult to decide whether to leave Japan. Money was a large factor, plus my job search possibilities and the interviews I had scheduled, and finding a new apartment. Not many students were leaving and the U.S. Embassy had not yet sent out a travel warning. The hardest decision was evaluating the risk of the nuclear plant situation, which made my family extremely nervous. It doesn't seem like a difficult decision now, but when you're living in an area with hundreds of thousands of people who are in the same situation and are not leaving, the possibility of something disastrous happening seems less likely.

The situation seemed to deteriorate day by day. First the trains, then news of the tsunami. After that the Fukushima Nuclear Plant cooling failure, followed by the rolling blackouts to conserve power. Then packaged food shortages began to trickle into Yokohama, followed by gasoline shortages. Coming from the U.S., this made me start to think about the ramifications of being on a small island in terms of supplies and transportation within and out of the country.

My flight was exactly one week after the earthquake. I was happy to be returning to the US, especially after a rather strong aftershock at the airport 20 minutes before my flight. But I was also disappointed. When I left, I had every intention of returning to Japan. I was looking for a job and had several interviews lined up. I had found a new apartment that I loved and had been looking forward to the sakura blooming. Leaving Japan abruptly left me feeling like I'd left things undone. Economically I can't justify returning to Japan, but I'm happy to be back with family.

### MARIKO TROYER, IUC CLASS OF 2010-11

To the Class of 2010-11:

I have always thought it was the hardest thing to say good-bye. No one ever wants a good thing to end and "good-bye" is the acknowledgment that things will never be the same again.

But after the experience of the past couple of months I now realize that though good-bye is hard, not being able to say good-bye is the hardest. We all scattered so quickly after the March 11th earthquake and thought we would be back at Pacifico on April 4th to exchange our *hisashiburi's* and forget *eigo kinshi*. But it was never to be. We would never again look for announcements on the white board, unload all of our *ichi-en* coins on the printer, or take yet another umbrella from the Center when it would start raining. I know it looked like I was living with my extended family in a 1K apartment from the collection of umbrellas in my *genkan*.

I was able to stay in Yokohama a week after IUC Japan's suspension of classes at the Center and the unilateral decision of my home university to recall all students in Japan back to Seattle. The empty, *setsuden*-half-lit seats at the Center were a painful reminder of all the people I would not see again, and of the missing experiences from my Japan adventure. No *hanami*. No final *happyōkai* or *sotsugyōshiki*. Not even a final *nomikai karaoke* bash. It all came too suddenly. "I can't leave!" I thought to myself as I walked out of the Center for the last time and prepared to throw my life into a couple of hastily prepared suitcases bound for the U.S.

We all joined IUC knowing it was a very temporary arrangement, but in September we could not have known just how temporary. As I write this, I am trying to imagine we are in our *sōbetsukai*, toasting to what was and what lies ahead. But even in saying good-bye and knowing that we will likely not see the whole of the Class of 2011 together again, I know also that good-bye does not forget the past: it celebrates. At the risk of outdoing even *umeshū* for sugar-content, I have to say that though we will never be able to recreate this IUC life, it is the singularity of our experience that means we will never forget what we had in the Center, in the *senseis*, and in each other. Good-bye and good luck.





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### JOSHUA BATTIS, IUC CLASS OF 2010-11

I knew everything was going to be fine on April 1st. I knew this because the bread was back. Not the fancy baguettes, the curry-infused fried doughnuts, or the meron-pan which most respectable supermarkets will produce on the spot for the discerning shopper. I'm referring to the pre-packaged snow-white bread, the trusty (and in my view trustworthy) shoku-pan. When half your diet consists of ham and cheese, buttered toast, or the classic PB&J, uniformly-sliced squares of dough are integral to daily life. After weeks of enduring a steady diet of such exotic edibles as "pasta," and "fruit," the return of the bread was welcome. Others were concerned about the lack of bottled water, or the noticeably barren instant noodle aisle, but for me bread was both harbinger of doom and messenger of hope.

While we're discussing dates, my March 11th was not very traumatic. Subsequent conversation revealed that some students spent that first night at the IUC, or nervously whittled away the hours in an izakaya before admitting that the trains were staying offline and walking the 2 (or 3 or 4) miles home. I was at the local city office when the earth began expressing its displeasure,



putting my seven months of rigorous Japanese training to good use, promptly walked the wrong way for an hour before realizing my mistake. Three hours after committing myself to hoofing it, I arrived at my apartment, swapped my jeans for pajama pants, and made some curry. The cell phones were still not working and I did not have reliable Internet at the time, so it was only when I decided to turn on the TV that I realized the

scale of the disaster and the gravity of the situation. On a personal level though, the earthquake had translated into three hours of unexpected exercise, cancelled dinner plans, and a few flashbacks to Northridge.

In the days that followed, I was confronted by the same question facing all foreigners (as well as some Japanese) at the time: "Should I stay or should I go?" I believe that debate has been covered a fair amount in the media. However, behind this question lay another, equally worrisome query: "Who do I trust?"

That question loomed larger each day. Emails from the IUC continued to expand in scope, much in the way the evacuation area around the plant appeared and then swelled. School will be held as scheduled on Monday. School on Monday has been cancelled. School for

*I was confronted by the question facing all foreigners at the time: "Should I stay or should I go?" Behind this lay another, equally worrisome query: "Who do I trust?"*

attempting to perform my civic duties by registering a change of address. The building shook, and continued to shake, but not violently. It was scary, but not dangerous. Nothing fell. Everyone walked out of the building, bewildered but orderly. I struck up a conversation with a British man and discussed the pleasures and perils of snowboarding. We eventually went back inside to finish our paperwork and reclaim our Alien Registration cards. Another day, another bureaucratic hurdle cleared.

Mission accomplished, I waited at the station for half an hour in the vain hope that the trains would start running again. Eventually I decided to walk home, and

the entire week has been cancelled. The program has been put on indefinite hold. Leave the Kanto. Leave the country.

The Japanese government said there was no cause for alarm except for the immediate area around Fukushima. The English media began running stories skeptical of the Japanese government and Tepco's credibility. The State Department issued a travel alert and began offering flights out of the country to select personnel. The French government told everyone to leave. My university offered evacuation assistance. My family asked and then told me to come home. My friend in Hawaii still wanted to visit as planned; his

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family thought this was crazy. Friends in California began stocking up on iodine and voicing concern for their own health on Facebook. Foreign friends in Tokyo and Yokohama laughed when they heard these stories, but the term “foreign friends in Tokyo and Yokohama” referred to an increasingly select crowd.

My gut told me “dangerous” did not describe all of Japan, or even Yokohama. However, my gut also told me it wanted bread, and there wasn’t any around.

Few things comfort more than routine; few things unsettle more than the involuntarily loss of routine. This is especially true when one isn’t aware of the routine until it’s gone. I was never more ill at ease than when staring at the empty bread corner of the supermarket. I searched three different supermarkets and three different convenience stores to no avail. No water. No bread. And try as I might, the tap at home still didn’t dispense bread slices. Teach a man to fish, and he is supposed to eat for a lifetime. Take all of the fish out of the stream, and he is reduced to eating proverbs.

But back to the issue of trust. Immediately after the quake, “What are you following?” ranked up there with “What were you doing when the quake hit” and “Are you going home?” as a popular topic of conversation. American news sources. Japanese television. British newspapers. Blogs. Online records of radiation readings. Relatives in the know. The U.S. State Department. Everyone’s old preferences for this network or that organization remained, but the confidence usually reinforcing them was wavering. I myself am a veteran of numerous armchair debates about which news outlet to trust, which to ingest with generous amount of salt, and which to rib over a few drinks about the state of the world. Here, though, at a time when journalists

were reporting on events directly impacting my health and safety, the whole process of critically reading the media felt pretty arbitrary. I simultaneously felt hopelessly dependent on the news and hopelessly uninformed.

So, who do you trust, your favorite news site or your mother? The government or yourself? Your self-assured friend who’s staying or your self-assured friend who already left?

In the end, I trusted the bread. Especially the return of the bread. That said, I’m not actually sure when it returned. I mentioned April 1st before, but that’s actually when I returned. To my local supermarket. Ten days before I had weighed my options, juggled a few headlines around in my head, and decided to appease my family and that part of my inner monologue pleading for caution and set out for the Kansai area. The day before my doughy reunion I had gone through a similar process of sifting through narratives and made the decision to return to Yokohama. I like to think both of these decisions were rational, though as I type this I’m still not sure who I should have listened to the most attentively. However, I do know that I was only comfortable with my decision once I saw a bread aisle made whole again in the supermarket across the street from my apartment. My stomach finally settled, and then rumbled cheerfully—if such a thing is possible—as a gentle reminder of why I was there.

Rationality is nice, but it is not always comforting. Irrationality is often dangerous, but can make for a soothing companion. At the time, the bread was much more comforting than any attempts to sort out the news. Maybe for that reason, it was also more trustworthy.



*Left: Yokohama storefront damage*

*Right: Energy-saving measures: station escalators out-of-service (photos courtesy of Erica Brown)*



## IUC ALUMNI RESPOND TO 3.11

The events of 3.11 and their ongoing aftermath have touched the lives of every person with a connection to Japan. IUC alumni all share this connection, and have been very active in responding to this unprecedented crisis for Japan. Here we highlight the responses of IUC alumni to this tragedy, including expert commentary and professional journalism, contributions in the field of health care, and activities promoted by associations and groups led by IUC alumni.

Please continue to send us reports on your own responses to 3.11. We are currently in the planning stages of producing a book on the first 50 years of IUC history, which will include a major feature on IUC alumni responses to the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster of 2011.

### IUC COMMENTATORS – scholars and experts on Japan who have publicly commented on 3.11

#### DANIEL OKIMOTO ('62-63)

Prof. Okimoto was a guest on the “Japan Earthquake Update” episode of Forum, a public radio current affairs discussion program, on March 14th. Okimoto spoke on the possible economic impact, and the possible benefits of political reconciliation and steady economic growth.

Listen → <http://www.kqed.org/a/forum/R201103140900>

Okimoto also spoke at “The Nuclear Crisis in Japan,” a symposium at Stanford University on March 21st. He gave an optimistic perspective on the economy and a new strategy for recovery and steady growth.

Watch/listen → <http://cisac.stanford.edu/events/6615>

#### GERALD CURTIS ('64-65)

On March 22, Prof. Curtis participated in a panel on “The Economic, Health and Political Consequences of Japan’s Earthquake” at the Center on Japanese Economy and Business at Columbia University. Curtis addressed media coverage of the disaster; the need for political leadership to skillfully manage relations between the government and private sector; Japan’s importance to the world economy; the U.S.-Japan relationship; and the opportunity to mobilize the Japanese people and foreign investment in the reconstruction effort.

Watch → [http://www4.gsb.columbia.edu/cjeb/events/view/738115/The+Economic,+Health,+and+Political+Consequences+of+Japan%27s+Earthquake?&layout=cbs\\_print&top.region=main](http://www4.gsb.columbia.edu/cjeb/events/view/738115/The+Economic,+Health,+and+Political+Consequences+of+Japan%27s+Earthquake?&layout=cbs_print&top.region=main)

Curtis also published a commentary in the Asahi Shinbun, “政治よ大胆に迅速に—永田町の政争現地とずれ,” which describes the conditions of tsunami victims; the danger of mishandling reconstruction planning; and offers policy recommendations for the Japanese government.

See “Gerald Curtis’ Tohoku Notes, May 2011” on page 15 for special coverage of Prof. Curtis’ experiences in affected areas.

#### BRETT DE BARY ('65-66)

Prof. de Bary was a panelist in the “Disaster in Japan: Recovery from the Earthquake” Japan Studies faculty panel at Cornell University on April 27th. De Bary discussed the emotional impact of the disaster on those viewing from afar, and introduced an article by Prof. Mima Tatsuya of Kyoto University on dealing with risk and the dangers of using war rhetoric to describe the disaster.

Watch → <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29Da4aOoUco>

#### DONALD HATA ('65-66)

Prof. Hata gave a public lecture on May 4th at California State University Dominguez Hills entitled, “Understanding Japan in the Wake of the Tsunami-Earthquake-Nuclear Crisis,” in which he discussed the influence of Japan’s geography on the evolution of Japanese culture and society from ancient to modern times.

#### SUSAN PHARR ('70-71)

On March 21st, Prof. Pharr moderated the Harvard University panel, “Crisis in Japan: The Way Forward,” in which Japanese government officials spoke on the consequences of the earthquake and tsunami (see *Reischauer Institute below for link*).

#### MIRIAM LEVERING ('72-73)

Prof. Levering contributed a commentary, “Buddhist Responses to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan,” on the website of The Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies. Levering works through various Buddhist ideas related to understanding the tragedies in Tohoku.

Read → <http://www.society-buddhist-christian-studies.org/newsandviews.html>

## IUC ALUMNI RESPONSE

### ANDREW GORDON ('73-74)

Prof. Gordon convened the Harvard University panel "Crisis in Japan: The Way Forward" moderated by Pharr, in which he emphasized the short-term need for practical assistance and long-term importance of preserving a historical record of ongoing events (*see Reischauer Institute below for details and links*).

Gordon also authored the April 11th commentary, "'Our Severest Crisis since World War II': the Earthquake and Tsunami 2011," in which he recasts 'beyond imagination' as being "beyond the willingness of people with power and influence to face the consequences of imagining those possibilities," calling for greater accountability and more responsible planning in the future.

Read → <http://blog.oup.com/2011/04/japan-quake/>

Gordon also published commentary in the *Shūkan Asahi* entitled "「想定外」と向き合い「ポスト工業化」のあり方を探れ," in which he discusses the American over-reaction, the rhetoric of the 'unimaginable', and the need for fundamental thinking about how to become a new nation.

### KENT CALDER ('74-75)

Dr. Calder authored a CNN Global Public Square commentary entitled, "Crisis will strengthen Japan-U.S. relations," in which he discusses U.S. and Japan leadership, military involvement in the disaster and the potential for improved relations between the two countries.

Read → <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/23/crisis-will-strengthen-japan-u-s-relations/>

Calder also moderated the "Japan's Earthquake and Tsunami: Dimensions of the Disaster and Future Prospects" forum at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies on April 5th, featuring Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki and Hironori Kawauchi of the World Bank, among others.

Watch → [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnR\\_HZTWVHM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnR_HZTWVHM)

### DENNIS YASUTOMO ('75-76)

Prof. Yasutomo spoke in the March 28th Smith College roundtable, "Japan After the Quake," along with two fellow IUC alumni, panelist Marnie Anderson and moderator Kimberly Kono. Yasutomo gave an overview of the roles of the "main players" in contemporary Japanese politics in light of the crisis: the Prime Minister, the bureaucracy, big business, the Self Defense Force, the U.S. military, and international and domestic NGOs.

Watch → <http://dew.smith.edu/video/japan-after-quake>

Yasutomo also contributed a commentary in East Asia Forum: Economics, Politics and Public Policy in East Asia and the Pacific website entitled, "Fukushima and Japan's comprehensive security: déjà vu?" In this commentary Yasutomo discusses the likely re-emergence of an updated 'comprehensive national security' doctrine, built on the strengthened U.S.-Japan relationship, including resource diplomacy, civil-military diplomacy, and a new political approach to crisis management.

Read → <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/03/29/fukushima-and-japan-s-comprehensive-security-deja-vu/>

### JEFFREY HANES ('76-77)

Prof. Hanes moderated the April 26th University of Oregon roundtable discussion, "Tragedy in Tohoku: A Roundtable Discussion of the Japanese Earthquake/Tsunami Disaster and its Aftermath." He opened with an overview of the facts. He then read his translation of a letter from Miyamoto Keiji, an environmental economist, on the impact of the disaster on the Japanese people, as well as a letter from Okabe Takamichi, the Consul General of Japan in Portland.

Watch → <http://media.uoregon.edu/channel/2011/04/26/tragedy-in-tohoku-a-roundtable-discussion-of-the-japanese-earthquaketsunami-disaster-and-its-aftermath/>

### RICHARD SAMUELS ('77-78)

Prof. Samuels moderated the panel "Japan's Nuclear Crisis" at MIT on March 16th. Samuels offered a comprehensive introduction to the energy industry in Japan from the prewar era to contemporary times.

Watch → <http://mitworld.mit.edu/video/892>

Samuels also co-authored, with Robert Madsen, a commentary in Foreign Policy entitled, "Japan's Black Swan," which focuses on the immediate and long term repercussions of the Japanese catastrophe on the Japanese government, the Japanese economy, the global economy, U.S.-Japan relations and the Self Defense Forces.

Read → [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/03/15/japans\\_black\\_swan](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/03/15/japans_black_swan)

### MICHAEL BIRT ('79-80)

Dr. Birt authored a commentary, "Another Tsunami Warning: Caring for Japan's Elderly," for the National Bureau of Asian Research in which he discusses the elderly as the group most impacted by the tsunami and calls for the immediate adoption of better measures to care for this demographic.

Read → <http://www.nbr.org/downloads/pdfs/CHA/NBR-JapanAging>

## IUC ALUMNI RESPONSE

### MICHAEL AUSLIN ('95-96)

Dr. Auslin has published numerous commentaries in the Wall Street Journal, Wall Street Journal Asia and the National Review since 3.11 on the challenges facing Japan, including the potential for the Japanese people to lose faith in their political system, the need for stimulus measures for recovery, dealing with the simultaneous economic challenges, and the need for a political generation change and unified, innovative leadership.

Read → <http://www.aei.org/scholar/127>

### IAN MILLER ('97-98)

In an Op-Ed for the New York Times (March 19), "Bitter Legacy, Injured Coast," Prof. Miller weaves historical narrative, personal memoir of the Sanriku Coast and pointed analysis of the role of technology.

Read → <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/20/opinion/20miller.html>

### MARNIE ANDERSON ('99-00)

Prof. Anderson participated in the Smith College roundtable, "Japan After the Quake," on March 28th, with two fellow IUC alumni, panelist Dennis Yasutomo and moderator Kimberly Kono. Anderson offered a history of earthquakes in Japan and an historical overview of anti-nuclear movements in Japan (*see Dennis Yasutomo above for link*).

### AARON MILLER ('06-07)

Prof. Miller published an Op-Ed in the Stanford Daily entitled "How you can help Japan, and why you should," which recommends a number of organizations to which monetary donations will have the greatest impact, and discusses how we can continue to contribute effectively as the Japanese needs for assistance change over time.

Read → <http://www.stanforddaily.com/2011/03/28/op-ed-how-you-can-help-japan-and-why-you-should/>

**IUC JOURNALISTS** – these IUC alumni reported on 3.11 and its aftermath in their capacities as journalists.

### LISA TWARONITE ('91-92)

As Tokyo Bureau Chief for MarketWatch, Ms. Twaronite has been reporting and commenting extensively on the fiscal impact of the earthquake. Topics she has covered include: the changing state of TEPCO and its outlook for investors; the evolving reactions of other major Japanese corporations; trends in international investment, both into and out of Japan; movement of the yen and the causes for those shifts; the role and actions of the Central Bank of Japan; the Japanese government's response to the disaster; the attitudes of the Japanese people as consumers and constituents; and potential long-term effects on Japan's market and economy.

Read → <http://www.marketwatch.com/>

### DAVID CYRANOSKI ('96-97)

Mr. Cyranoski, Asian-Pacific Correspondent for Nature Japan K.K., has reported on the scientific and social aspects of the disaster in Nature. His articles cover: the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear reactor; problems with the technologies used to predict and protect Japan from earthquakes and tsunamis; Japan's unsettled energy policy, plans to reduce energy demand, and the success of Japanese universities in cutting energy consumption; and the challenges of cleaning up the Fukushima Dai-ichi site.

Read → <http://www.nature.com/news/author/David%20Cyranoski/index.html> (available to those with access to Nature)

### JAY ALABASTER ('04-05)

As a reporter for The Associated Press, Mr. Alabaster has been writing from the quake-affected areas of Japan. His articles on Tohoku explore: conditions in evacuation shelters and medical facilities; efforts to salvage photographs and personal mementos from the rubble; efforts to lift the spirits of disaster victims; and the resilience of local residents as they pursue a return to "normal" life.

Read → <http://ap-1004112.newsvine.com/>

### JAMES TOPHAM ('06-07)

Mr. Topham, Reuters Commodities and Energy Correspondent, has been covering the economic impact of the earthquake on various industries in Japan, including projected tourism setbacks, adverse effects on the auto and electronics industries due to supply chain and production disruptions, the relative success of convenience stores and other general goods retailers, the potential benefits to companies and industries involved in cleanup and reconstruction, conditions at TEPCo and the evolving situation of the power industry.

Read → <http://www.reuters.com/search?blob=james+topham>

## IUC ALUMNI RESPONSE

### IUC HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

#### DR. MICHAEL FETTERS ('83-84)

Dr. Fetters, Director of the University of Michigan's Japanese Family Health Program, has been working with Shizuoka Prefecture since 2009 to establish the Shizuoka Family Medicine Program, a family medicine residency training program. According to Dr. Fetters, the health care system in Japan funnels specialists into offices where the majority of their work is in general care, and many doctors do not hold family medicine in high regard. In March, two of his Japanese colleagues from the SFM program visited the

disaster zone in Tohoku. They found that while many people needed ordinary medical care, many of the volunteer doctors on hand were specialists who did not know how to treat such patients. The Japanese Family Health Program spearheaded by Fetters has thus contributed to meeting the primary care needs of patients in Tohoku, where the importance of training more Japanese doctors in family medicine became particularly clear.

Read → <http://www.uofmhealth.org/News/japan-family-medicine-0412>

### ORGANIZATIONS LED BY IUC ALUMNI

#### AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE JAPAN

The following IUC alumni have been active leaders in the American Chamber of Commerce Japan (ACCJ): Laurence Bates ('84-85), Vice President of ACCJ Tokyo; Aaron Held ('98-99), former External Affairs Manager; Tad Johnson ('89-90), Governor of ACCJ Tokyo; and Patricia Robinson ('89-90), Chairman of the ACCJ's Human Resource Management Committee.

The ACCJ has been actively engaged in volunteering and fundraising for relief efforts. For example, Prof. Robinson organized an "ACCJ Tohoku Relief Program" that allowed ACCJ members to travel to Ishinomaki in Miyagi-ken and work as volunteers from June 2nd through June 5th under the guidance of the non-governmental organization Peace Boat Japan. This program was so successful that a second trip is scheduled for July.

As of mid-June, the ACCJ membership has contributed over Y46 million (about \$570,000) in donations to organizations helping earthquake victims, including some small towns struck hard by the earthquake and an organization that provides entrepreneurial training to victims who need help getting their small businesses back on their feet.

The ACCJ website: <http://www.accj.or.jp/>

#### EDWIN O. REISCHAUER INSTITUTE OF JAPANESE STUDIES

A large number of IUC alumni are directly involved with the Reischauer Institute: Andrew Gordon is its current Director and preceding him, Susan Pharr acted as Director. Harvard faculty associated with the Reischauer Institute include IUC alumni Ted Bestor ('74-75), Mary C. Brinton ('77-78),

Melissa McCormick ('90-91), Ian Miller ('97-98), and Karen Thornber ('00-01), as well as current Reischauer Institute Postdoc Robert Goree ('99-00). With so much IUC talent involved, it is no surprise that the Reischauer Institute has been a font of 3.11 support activities.

The Reischauer Institute co-sponsors Harvard for Japan, which has raised approximately \$160,000 through various events over the last three months; organized relief assistance efforts, including sending volunteer medical professionals to Tohoku; and presented a multidisciplinary symposium "Japan Disaster Response and Future Assessment" moderated by Andrew Gordon. The Reischauer Institute also co-sponsored the "Crisis in Japan: This Way Forward" symposium convened by Andrew Gordon and moderated by Susan Pharr.

"Japan Disaster Response and Future Assessment" video:

Watch → <http://ims.fas.harvard.edu/video/japandisaster20110422.html>

"Crisis in Japan: The Way Forward" video:

Watch → [http://ims.fas.harvard.edu/video/crisis\\_japan.html](http://ims.fas.harvard.edu/video/crisis_japan.html)

The Reischauer Institute also launched the Digital Archive of Japan's 2011 Disasters, which aims "to preserve the Internet records of the event—such as Twitter feeds, web pages, and social media observations—that might otherwise disappear." IUC alumni Ted Bestor, Andrew Gordon and Susan Pharr are supervising the project along with their colleague, Helen Hardacre. The archive will be made available for long-term analysis and reference, contributing to our understanding of these tragic events for years to come. Submissions of material may be sent to [daishinsai-archive@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:daishinsai-archive@fas.harvard.edu).

Digital Archive of Japan's 2011 Disasters website: <http://www.jdarchive.org/>

The Reischauer Institute's website: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~rijs/>

## IUC ALUMNI RESPONSE

### SPECIAL FEATURE: GERALD CURTIS' TOHOKU NOTES, MAY 2011

*In early May, IUC alumnus Gerald L. Curtis ('64–65, Burgess Professor of Political Science, Columbia University) visited the disaster-stricken region of Tohoku with a camera crew from TV Asahi. He conducted more than 15 hours of interviews in Iwate and Miyagi during his stay. These interviews were condensed for a special report that was broadcast on Hodo Station (報道ステーション) on Friday, May 20, with Prof. Curtis as guest commentator. The broadcast can be viewed on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJb95gPX08o>. A major goal of Prof. Curtis' visit was to hear directly from those affected by the earthquake about their present circumstances, their needs, and especially what they think the Japanese government can do to give them a sense of hope.*

*Our thanks to Prof. Curtis for allowing us to publish excerpts from the notes he took during his visit.*

IT IS MIDNIGHT. I just got back to the hotel at Hanamaki in Iwate prefecture. I spent over two hours today talking with people in the emergency shelter, hinanjo, at Wataricho. Wonderful, brave people who are so worried about the future. They have nothing. One woman told me that all she owns now are the clothes she is wearing and the cell-phone she had with her when she fled the tsunami. But she smiles and says she will be okay. Everyone tries to be brave and positive but the longer I talked with them the more they revealed how scared they are about the future. Their homes are gone, all that is left is the concrete foundation. The land has sunk 70 centimeters or more so they cannot rebuild there even if they want to. And in any case they don't have the money to rebuild and they don't have jobs.

I was taken to the evacuation center by a local town assemblyman. There were three men sitting together, one was 70, another 80 and the third 43. The assemblyman asked the 70-year-old man to talk to me but

he said that he didn't want to. Then he relented and reluctantly agreed after the assemblyman, who comes from the same village, asked him to do him a favor and just answer a question or two. I sat down on the floor right next to the man and tried to get him to start talking. At first all I got were short, guarded replies. But before long he couldn't stop talking, telling me how scared he is about what he is going to do, how angry he is that the government was not giving him any sense of what it was ready to do to help. He has no house, no job, the hothouses in which he grew strawberries are gone, and he has no hope. And then the 43-year-old man who, like many people in this village, made his living growing strawberries, started talking

about how hopeless he feels. He doesn't want to leave the village, which is the only place he has known. He wants to work and has no prospect of finding work doing what he loves to do, which is raising strawberries. An elderly woman told me with a chuckle that she got divorced when she was 37, raised her children by



about how hopeless he feels. He doesn't want to leave the village, which is the only place he has known. He wants to work and has no prospect of finding work doing what he loves to do, which is raising strawberries. An elderly woman told me with a chuckle that she got divorced when she was 37, raised her children by

## IUC ALUMNI RESPONSE

herself, and made a living growing strawberries, so she will survive this tsunami disaster too. But then as we talked she admitted that she was so anxious and worried about the future. She is 80 years old she said and she wants to work until she is 100, but she is stuck in the hinanjo and has nothing to do, and she is worried that just sitting around day after day worrying about what is going to happen is going to kill her. Another 80-year-old woman said that she doesn't want to leave the hinanjo if it means moving to temporary housing where she is separated from her friends in the village she has lived in all her life and if she has to rely on her son to drive her to the doctors who take care of her. She wants the government to resettle all the people

from the same village in the same temporary housing. She said, and others said the same thing, that they would prefer to stay in the hinanjo with their friends and neighbors until they can all be resettled together rather than be separated and move into temporary housing right away.

I drove up from Watari cho in Miyagi to Hanamaki in Iwate this evening, a two and a half hour drive after a long, emotionally draining day and went to dinner at a local restaurant and drank lots of sake. I feel so sad for the victims of the tsunami and the uncertain future that those who survived face, so inspired by their courage, and so angry at the politicians in Tokyo who are doing nothing to give these people a sense of hope.





## IUC ALUMNI RESPONSE

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### VOICES OF IUC ALUMNI

#### TIMOTHY BARRY, IUC CLASS OF 2003–04

I was on the underground when the earthquake occurred. Hoping it was not “the big one,” I quietly followed the driver’s instruction to remain seated. We had no idea what was happening outside until the driver told us there was a large earthquake in the Kanto region. Eventually the train heaved forwards to the next station, Kasumigaseki, and I headed up to the surface where many offices had evacuated to Hibiya park. I was not far from my office’s evacuation site, near the Palace Hotel, so I decided to walk there and register. Finding my colleagues proved to be quite difficult (lesson 1: ensure the helmets issued to your staff are more distinctive than the usual white color).

As the afternoon passed, some collected in the front of TV screens to watch the tsunami come ashore, some decided to start the weekend early in the bars, and others queued up to use the public telephone. A stranger brought me a drink and lent me his Blackberry to send a note to my wife and parents. By six o’clock the underground areas around Tokyo station were filled with stranded workers on blue sheets settling down for the evening. People staying in their offices for night were queuing at convenience stores for instant noodles. The main streets were full of office workers, and all the hotels were full, their foyers overflowing with people drinking coffee (lesson 2: companies have contingency arrangements with hotels which take up all empty rooms). The main streets were gridlocked with families who had driven into town to pick up loved ones. One IUC alum, Bruce Kikunaga, tells me he made the mistake of accepting a lift from his office in Marunouchi to



Hiro’o, which took an astonishing three hours.

In the crowds I tripped and fell, badly injuring my knees. One hour later I could limp no further than the Ritz Carlton in an unusually quiet Roppongi. The doorman beckoned me to their foyer on the 40th floor (I was reluctant to go, but apparently the Midtown building is one of the safest places in an earthquake). They called my wife, who had no electricity and, in a throwback to the past, had spent the evening listening to the radio. I was showed to a couple of sofas where several others were waiting. We were given the use of an I-pad, all the water we wanted and later blankets and sheets. I spent several hours exchanging e-mails with friends and family (lesson 3: ask people to reply to your e-mails, so you know whether they have received them).

The following week was the most worrisome. We did not know how serious the radiation threat was; we had to secure food, radio, torches, etc.—I found batteries in the toy department of Mitsukoshi—and to consider at what point we would leave. Different embassies issued different guidance, but the British reassuringly told me their staff were following the advice on their website and had chartered a plane for any who wanted to leave—free for genuine refugees, at a commercial price for anybody else. These served as subtle hints that, although many considered leaving, and despite the aftershocks, the threat to Tokyo was not that serious, and nothing in comparison to the hardships in the north. I feared getting caught in a late rush to leave, but ultimately for us the decision to stay or go was very simple: my wife’s family member was about to undergo chemotherapy, so we were not going anywhere unless we really had to.

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#### PAMELA RUNESTAD, IUC CLASS OF 2009–10

*Ms. Runestad was on a highway bus just outside of Shinjuku when the quake occurred.*

**March 15, 2011**

Stunned, I turned my eyes from my silent, terse fellow passengers and fixed my eyes on the scenes we passed outside. As I looked at the people on the other side of the glass, I realized: Shinjuku had stopped.

To understand the significance of this, consider that Shinjuku Station is used by over 3 million people a day, making it one of the world’s busiest stations. In Tokyo in

general, people tend to move quickly and purposefully in and around stations, down sidewalks, and across streets. If you don’t know where you are going, it is easy to be swept away in the crowd. I’d never seen so many people, whose movements would usually appear so fluid, be so still.

Groups formed on the sidewalks, people holding on to one another. People gazed up at buildings in shock and disbelief. Dazed office workers stared into their phones, clicking away at the buttons, looking online to see what was happening to them.

## IUC ALUMNI RESPONSE

*After returning to Nagano . . .*

As I drove around with a friend, we remarked on how it was such a beautiful day. It was sunny, warm and clear and we could easily make out the snow-capped Northern Alps. We stopped for lunch and watched the news in the restaurant, which reminded us that up north, people are lost, dying, grieving. It is supposed to get cold and snow in Sendai this week. My friend remarked that it was like living in a whole other country—that looking out the window in Nagano, we would never be able to tell that such a terrible thing had happened, and is still happening. But people are very aware of the trauma that is happening up north and the long-term consequences of the quake in general.

What we see happening in Sendai and other hard-hit areas is only part of the Japanese Earthquake 2011 story. The images we see only represent a portion of Japan and the experiences of the Japanese population. But the rest of the population, those who have the luxury of distance and time to think, is contemplating these issues and thus experiencing a different type of trauma than the victims of the tsunamis and the radioactive leaks: it's part survivor's guilt, part apprehension for the future, and part frustration at the difference between their experience of the quake (or even complete lack thereof) and what they see on television. How do you balance doing what you need to do for yourself and helping the tsunami victims? It's much harder to decide this when the bulk of a nation is experiencing trauma in some form.

### March 16, 2011

I really wish I knew how dangerous the situation really is. On one hand, the Japanese government doesn't want people to panic and the local media keeps repeating that current radiation levels (where?!) are not hazardous to health. On the other, the non-Japanese media seem to feed on the idea of impending doom. Most recently, the Japanese government via a bulletin on NHK World English actually asked foreign governments to calm down, to "accurately convey information provided by Japanese authorities concerning the plant." In this squabble, each party has a vested interests; digging out helpful information is a tedious and disheartening.

Should I stay or should I go?

This is the question rattling around in the minds of expats—and perhaps some Japanese with the means and the desire go somewhere else. Social network sites are abuzz with people discussing whether or not to leave Tokyo or



whether or not to leave Japan altogether. The spectrum of opinions ranges from "we're completely safe" to "we're going to die of radiation sickness"—and I find myself oscillating back and forth on that very spectrum.

### March 31, 2011 *After returning to the U.S. . . .*

Coming back to the U.S., I felt like I had entered a completely different world—with a different concept of time and different priorities.

You know how time seems to pass at a different speed when someone passes away? Like life is happening around you, but you're not really in it? After experiencing the loss of a loved one, little stuff—things like buying clothes, deciding what food to serve at a family gathering, and he-said-she-said squabbles seem so trivial and pointless. They are dwarfed by feelings of loss—but remain important, even central, to people who didn't know the deceased or was not close to them. Time, life marches on without you. This is sort of how I've felt since coming home. I have tried to enjoy being around family and friends, going to familiar places, and partaking of foods I just can't get in Japan. But I noticed that again, my experience was different than that of those around me. I haven't been entirely comfortable being home. I feel really out of synch with what is happening around me.

This is the first time I've been so acutely aware that I've left a collective consciousness behind. I'm usually more focused on the re-integration part. But this time, I feel like I'm supposed to be part of what is happening in Japan and suddenly, I'm not. Reading emails and blogs by Japanese friends, and checking the NHK website for Japanese news feels different now that I am not in Japan—much in the way that reading about news in the U.S. feels distant when I'm not here.

At first I was mad at myself for feeling the disconnect so acutely. I also felt (and still feel) guilty about being upset, knowing that my own feelings of shock are small potatoes compared to those who continue to experience quakes, tsunami warnings, and radiation scares. But being angry at myself or feeling guilty was not going to improve my ability to work—in fact, it was probably hindering my ability to think clearly. I decided to let myself keep thinking about the disasters, to channel that energy and try to find ways to help.

March 15th: <http://trianglejapan.wordpress.com/2011/03/15/inside-looking-out-a-perspective-on-the-japanese-earthquake/>

March 16th: <http://trianglejapan.wordpress.com/2011/03/16/inside-looking-out-part-two/>

March 21st: <http://trianglejapan.wordpress.com/2011/03/21/inside-looking-out-part-three/>

March 31st: <http://trianglejapan.wordpress.com/2011/04/12/upon-returning-home-by-pamela-runestad/>

## CLOSING REMARKS

A MESSAGE TO THE IUC COMMUNITY FROM GERALD L. CURTIS (IUC '64–65)  
IUC/2013 ADVISORY COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR  
BURGESS PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



Those of us who have had the benefit of an IUC education know how valuable it is, but I think the recent catastrophe in Japan further underscores the importance of training Americans to have high level Japanese language skills and deep knowledge of the country. American media coverage of the Tohoku disaster would have been more accurate and less sensational if the reporters understood what they were hearing and the knowledge to interpret what they were seeing—or if they had made an effort to recruit IUC graduates to help them! And Americans would have gotten more objective analyses of how the Japanese media has covered this story if they actually could understand what the reporters were saying. NHK in particular demonstrated an admirable professionalism. Its reporters and commentators avoided the sensationalism and the high-pitched overly excited tone that was so common in American television coverage. If you understood what they were saying, you had to be impressed with their knowledge and objectivity and their efforts to give the public as complete a picture of the situation as they could. The idea that the media somehow conspired with the government to suppress information is totally without foundation.

This of course is only one small illustration of the value of advanced Japanese language training. Whether in journalism, law, business, government service or academia, we need to have Americans who have had advanced Japanese language training and deep cultural knowledge. Japan is going through a difficult time but it will recover from the Tohoku disaster and will continue to be one of the most important countries in the world. There is more of a need than ever for the very special kind of expertise produced by the IUC.

## GIFTS

*Please consider becoming an active partner in the IUC/2013 capital campaign. Your contribution will allow the Center to continue its outstanding legacy of service to the advanced Japanese language needs of our community.*

The IUC is included in the Stanford University 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization status. Contributions to the IUC are tax-deductible to the full extent allowable by law. Please make checks payable to the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies and mail to:

Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies  
Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies  
Encina Hall, Room E009  
Stanford University  
Stanford, CA 94305 USA

OR

Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies  
Friends of the IUC  
PMB # 476  
555 Bryant Street  
Palo Alto, CA 94301 USA

**Credit Card:** Donations to the IUC may be made through the Stanford University gift website. Please go to <http://giving.stanford.edu/giving/home?indexredir=r> and click on "Make a Gift Now." Select "Other" on the pull-down menus for gift designation, and enter "Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies" in the space for "Special Instructions." Your entire donation will be directed to the IUC, which is administered by Stanford University.

Please note that your gift to the IUC will be acknowledged by Stanford University with a receipt for a donation to the "Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission FFE Endowment."

This is the official accounting designation for a fund at Stanford University that is dedicated to the sole use of the IUC. Please be assured that 100% of your gift has been received by the IUC. Your gift will also be proudly acknowledged in the IUC newsletter and on our website; if you wish to remain anonymous or prefer not to have the amount of your gift disclosed, please let us know by sending an email to Stacey Campbell at [stacey.campbell@stanford.edu](mailto:stacey.campbell@stanford.edu).

## CALL FOR ARTICLES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

As part of our efforts to document and celebrate the illustrious history of the IUC and its graduates, we are in the planning stages of a special book dedicated to the history of the Center. If you have any photographs or stories that you would like to share from your time at the IUC, please contact Stacey Campbell at [stacey.campbell@stanford.edu](mailto:stacey.campbell@stanford.edu).

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The Spring issue of the IUC Newsletter was originally dedicated to a retrospective of the early days of the Stanford Center in Tokyo, as well as a tribute to the late Takagi Kiyoko-sensei, former IUC Associate Director and teacher extraordinaire. These special features will be covered in the Fall issue.

In addition, all donations received during 2011 will be acknowledged in the Fall issue.

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