

Don't waste our lives



So as not to repeat tragedy again

Hiyori Kindergarten volunteers of the bereaved
Think of children's safety

Five kindergarteners, aged 4 to 6, lost their lives. Their lives were too short. They were caught in a tsunami and fire after they were driven on a kindergarten bus despite the massive tsunami alert on March 11, 2011.

Nobody expected that they would actually be riding on a bus at that time.

We describe here what happened to our children when they were under the care of their school, a school that should have been a safe place for them, and from which they should have been rescued. We desire that our society become one in which the safety of children is paramount.



When the earthquake occurred, they were in a kindergarten which stood on the middle of a hill. It seemed that the place was the safest in the area. The kindergarten thought they should send children home to their parents as quickly as possible. However sending children to their parents did not mean putting them in dangerous situation. They should not have gone from a higher to a lower place.

We, the bereaved, wish that the kindergarten had followed their ordinary procedures. We wish that the teachers had calmed and guarded the children, and evacuated them in time to avoid the disaster.

We, the bereaved, think that the reason for the accident was poor planning on the part of the kindergarten.

As parents, we have no choice but to entrust kindergarten teachers with our children's lives. The children had to follow their teachers. Their lives should not have been lost because of the poor judgment of an adult.

We, the bereaved, do not make unreasonable demands. We do not expect teachers to help children in the midst of a tsunami or fire, but to act before it. Please, please – We ask those who work in education to put children’s lives first in your planning.

We found our children’s bodies injured in ways beyond our imagination.

Fire attacked our children after the tsunami at the disaster site. They were found completely burned to black, and their lower bodies had disappeared. Their arms below their elbows had also disappeared. Their bodies had transformed completely. We could not hug them. We, their parents, did not know the actual reasons for their death. We learned from neighbors that they had heard children’s voices until midnight of that day. Even now we hope that our children did not experience great pain from the fire.

Many children became victims of this earthquake and tsunami. We would like to ask teachers to think again how to guard children from harm during such disasters.



East Japan Great Earthquake and Tsunami on March 11, 2011

2:46 PM The earthquake was magnitude 9, the largest in recorded Japanese history. Intensity of the earthquake: 7 in Kurihara city, Miyagi Prefecture; less than 6 in Ishinomaki, Mitagi. It lasted 90 seconds.

2:49 PM Massive tsunami alert was issued

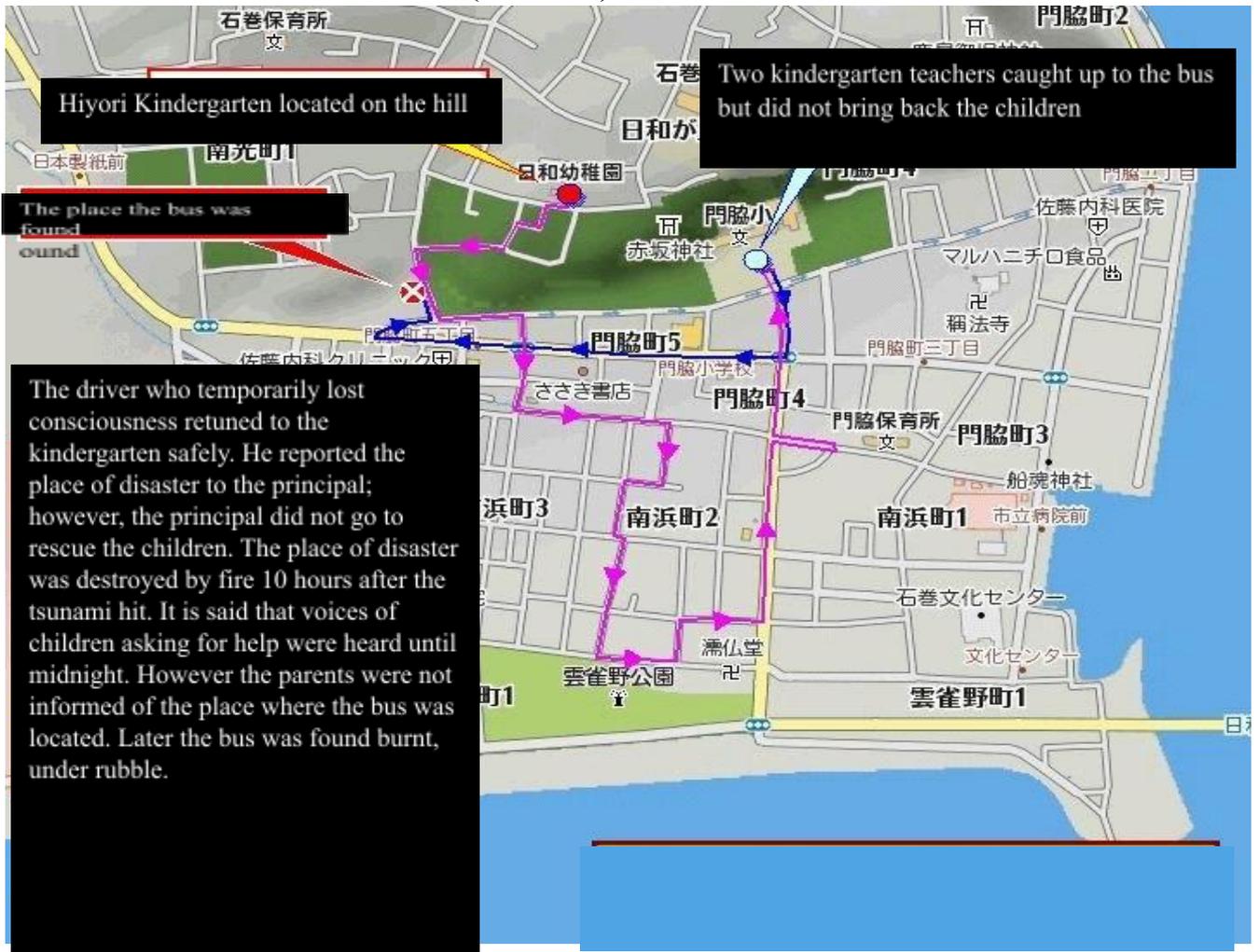
Tsunami; max. 40m(131.2 feet) high in Ofunato city, Iwate prefecture,
max. 8.6m(28.2 feet) high in Ishinomaki, Miyagi

Water went onto land to 6 km (3.7 miles) from the sea

Casualties; as of December, 2016

Japan total	Dead; 15,894	Missing; 2,561
Miyagi Prefecture	Dead; 9,541	Missing; 1,124
Ishinomaki City	Dead; 3,055	Missing; 425

Hiyori Kindergarten in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, is located on the side of Hiyori Hill, 56m (183.7 feet) above sea level.





Harune



Airi



Asuka

The children had many hopes and dreams, such as riding a bicycle without training wheels, shouldering a school knapsack, becoming a kindergarten teacher, or being like their mom. They were supposed to experience many things and to experience wonderful lives with their friends. We, their parents, have to live while hiding dreams and hopes for our children which can never be realized. We would like to ask everyone to reexamine how disaster defense should be handled. Our beloved children ask for this in exchange for their lives. We strongly desire that our society become one which guards the lives of children before other considerations, and that all children can go to kindergarten and school safely and without fear. Such a tragedy should never happen again. We very much hope that others will not need to experience the deep sadness that has affected our lives.



We would like to ask for donations to our group: Hiyori Kindergarten Volunteers of the Bereaved.

We will use the donations for travel expenses and printing for telling our story and presenting lectures to promote the safety of children.

Bank: Sendai Bank

Account name: Hiyori youchien izoku Yuushinokai

Branch: Nakazato Branch

Account Number: Checking 0023504