

English translation



The Story of Ukedo Elementary School-Mt. Ohira and Beyond
Friday, March 11, 2011 This is a story of a day at Ukedo Elementary School in
Namie Town, Fukushima Prefecture. Illustrated by Noriyuki Enokida



Our town, Ukedo, is a small town located in a rich natural environment, surrounded by the sea and mountains, including Mt. Ohira. The town's people greet each other and live peacefully together.



In March the students will say goodbye to the sixth graders and get ready to meet new first graders.

The gymnasium is beautifully decorated for the graduation ceremony, after which, the fifth graders will be the oldest, and the first graders await "little brothers and sisters" to come to school.

Everyone anxiously was looking forward to the new school life.

As the fifth period class was about to end, the school building began to shake, making large noises.

"EARTHQUAKE!"



みんな いっせいに
机の下にもぐりました。

けれど、ゆれは あまりにも大きく
ぼくらは 机ごと はげしく
ゆさぶられました。

「はやく 校庭に 出なさい！」

先生の声で ぼくらは 校庭へかけ出しました。
うわばきのままの子もいました。

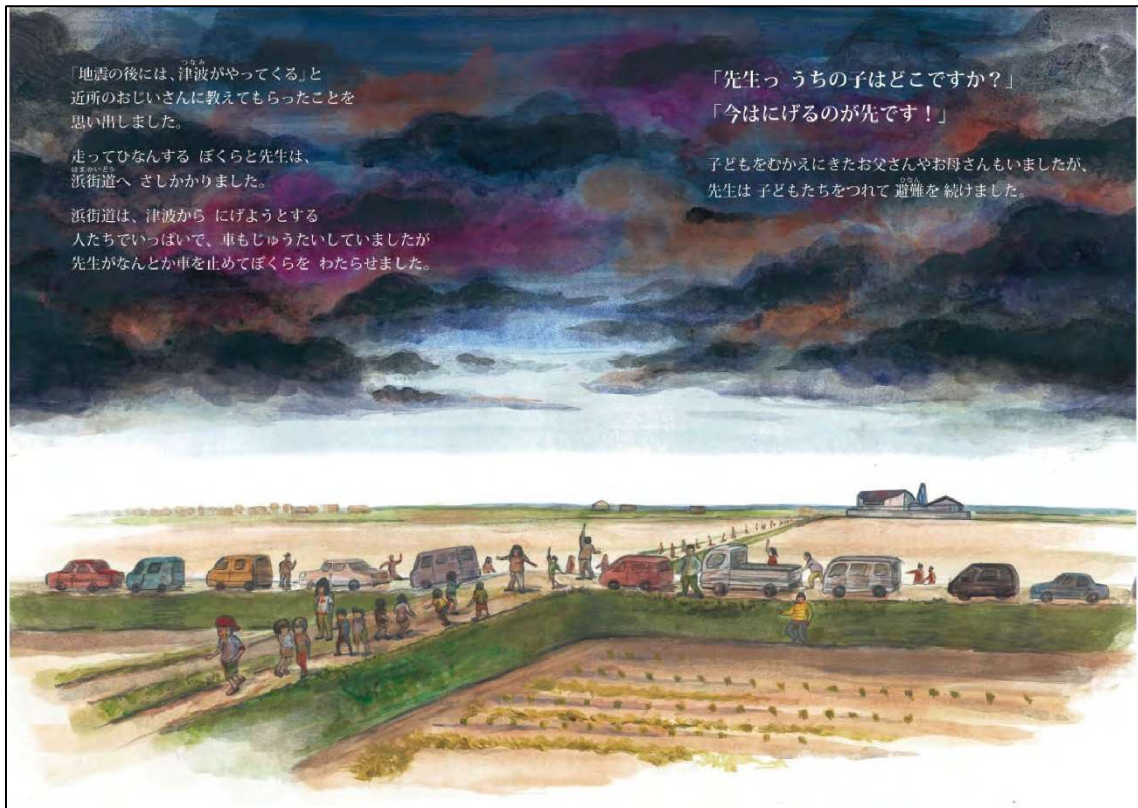
校長先生は すぐさま、

「とにかく 高いところへ！」

「大平山へ！」

と ぼくらに向かって大声で言いました。

Everyone quickly took cover under their desks for protection.
However, the shakes were so strong that everyone tumbled around.
"Hurry to the schoolyard!" the teachers directed us.
"Find a safer place!"
"Go to Mt. Ohira!"
The principal loudly directed the students.



I remembered that an old neighbor had told us, "a tsunami follows an earthquake."

Running, the students and teachers reached the coastal road, Hamakaidō [Hama Route].

People and cars crowded the road.

But the teachers managed to get the students across.

"Where is my child?"

"We must evacuate first!"

Parents came to pick up their children, but the teachers continued their evacuation with all the students.



While the earthquake occurred over and over again, we continued to run. Some children went ahead of the teachers, while others walked behind in exhaustion.

The leading group of teachers and children arrived at the foot of Mt. Ohira. However, they couldn't find the path to climb the mountain.

We had to evacuate to a higher place fast.

All was felt at a loss, not knowing where to go.

Then, "this is the way up!" shouted a fourth grader called Ryūta.

"We can climb up the mountain using this trail! I've been here during baseball practice."

The teachers had never taken that trail before, but they could not waste any time hesitating.

Everyone began to climb Mt. Ohira using the trail Ryūta had discovered.



Hiroki, who was on a wheelchair, were evacuating with everybody else.
It was especially difficult for Hiroki, but he never complained.
The trail gradually turned into a muddy path.
"You've done great! From here, come with me," one of the teachers said.
The teacher carried Hiroki on his back.



ゴゴゴゴゴオオ...

山にのぼっているさいちゅう、海の方から ぶきみな音が聞こえてきました。

先生たちは、子どもたちに声をかけ、なんとか不安をまぎらわせようとします。

そして、ついに大平山の ちょうじょうに つきました。子どもの数をかぞえると、全員無事でした。

しばらくして、町や小学校のことが気になったので 数人の先生が様子を見るためにもどりました。

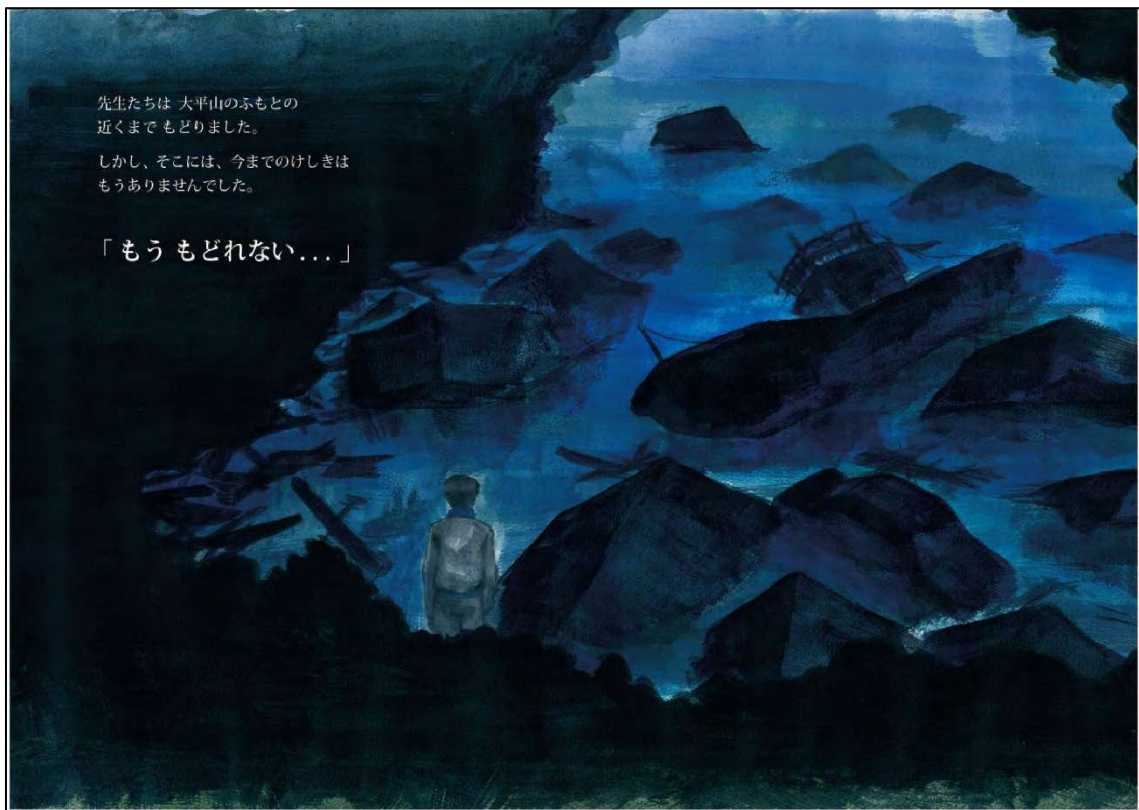
A strange rumbling sound came from the direction of the sea, while everyone was climbing the mountain.

The teachers made an effort to chat with the children to reassure them.

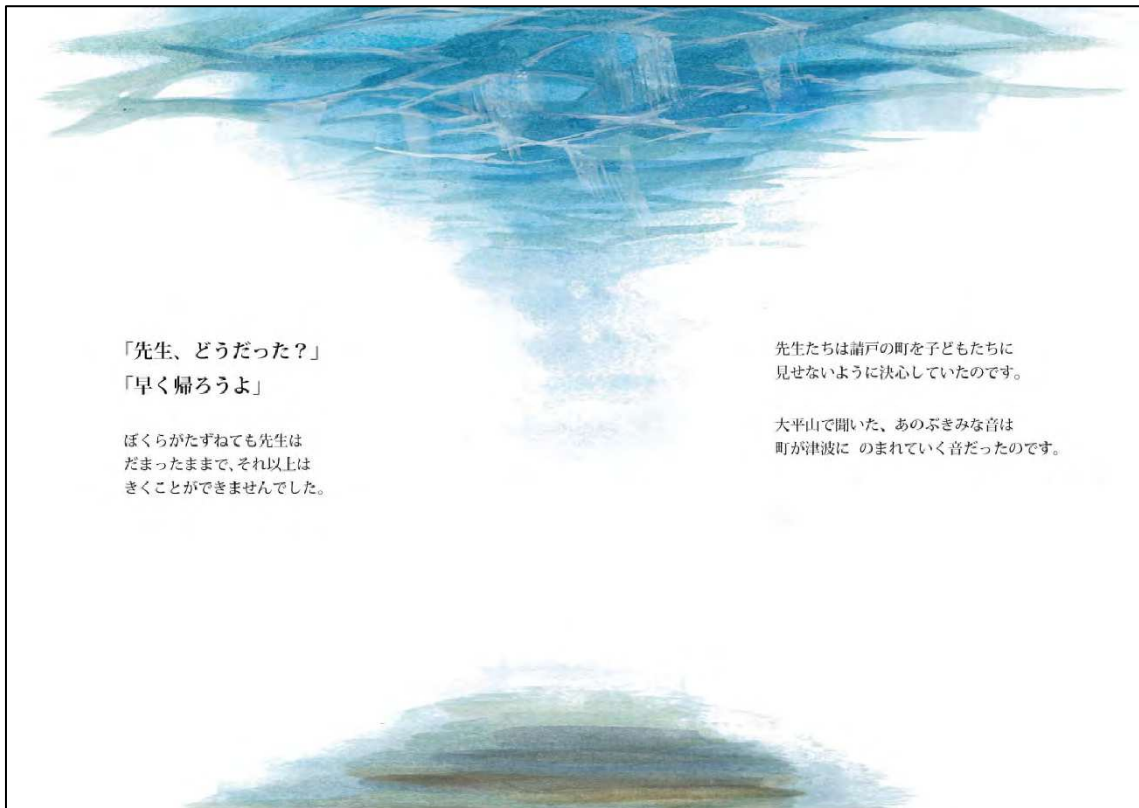
Finally, the students and teachers reached the top of Mt. Ohira.

The teacher counted the number of the children, to find out all of them were saved.

After a while, we started to worry about our home and school, so several teachers went back to see what had happened.



The teachers returned to near the foot of Mt. Ohira.
They witnessed a completely different scenery.
"There is no way of return..."



"What's going on?"

"Let's go back now," the students said, but the teachers remained silent.

The teachers had made up their minds not to show the children the devastated area.

The strange rambling sound we had heard on the way was the sound of the town being swallowed by the tsunami.

町の人が避難している役場に向かうことになり
ぼくらは山の反対側へ きました。
そこには、地震でひびわれた道路がありました。
先生は助けを呼びに、先に役場へ走って行きました。
それから どのくらい待ったでしょう。
あたりはどんどん暗くなっていきます。
雪が ちらついてきました。
みんな 寒さときょうふに たえていました。
もう限界でした。



We decided to go to the evacuation center next to town hall where many people in the town were getting together.

We walked down to the other side of the mountain.

On our way, there was a road that had been damaged by the earthquake.

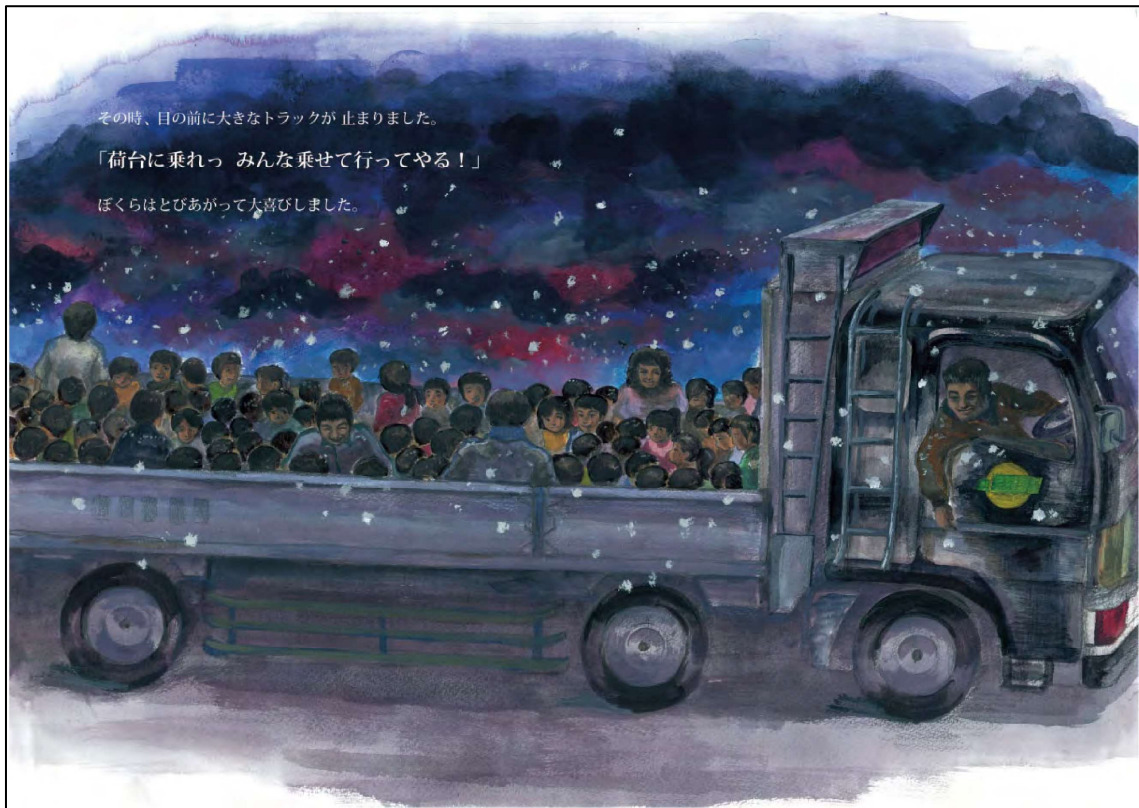
A teacher went ahead to the town hall to call for help.

As we waited, it got darker and darker.

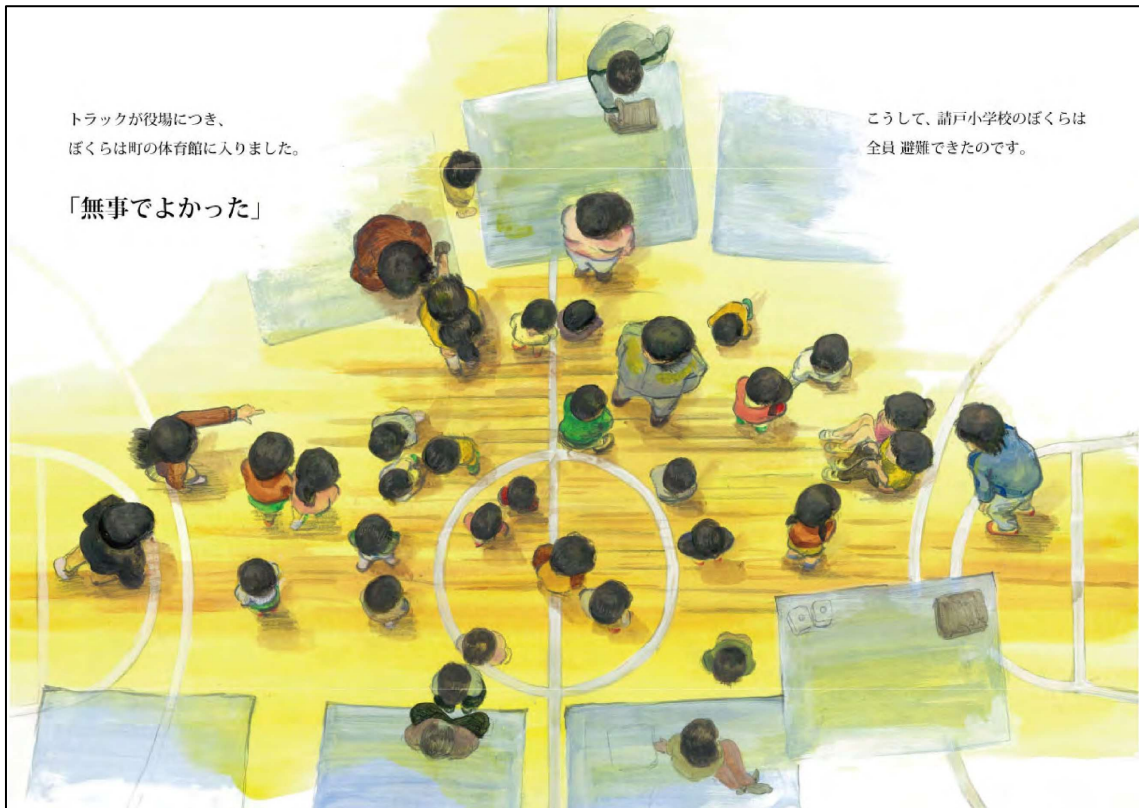
The snow started to fall.

We endured the coldness and fear, encouraging each other.

We could not bear it any longer.



At that moment, a large truck stopped in front of us.
"Get on the back of the truck! I'll take you all!"
We jumped up with joy.



The truck driver took us to the town hall, and we entered the gymnasium.
"Glad to be safe."
This is how all of us at Ukedo Elementary School successfully evacuated.

長い長い3月11日が終わりました。

地震があれば 津波という 災害あきが起こること

大平山というにげる場所があること

請戸の子どもたちは、請戸の町についてよく知っていました。

だから、いざとなった時に

とっさのはんだんができたのかもしれない。

地震や その他の 災害は

いつ あなたのもとに ふりかかるのか わかりません。

あなたにとっての大平山はどこですか。

March 11, a very long day, came to an end.

There are disasters, such as a tsunami, after an earthquake.

There are also places of refuge, like Mt. Ohira.

The children at Ukedo knew well of their surroundings.

This may explain why they were able to quickly decide to evacuate.

You never know when you will experience an earthquake or some other disaster.

Where is your Mt. Ohira, your safe place?

Events after the earthquake

Time	Number of minutes from earthquake	Information regarding the earthquake	General evacuation	Actions of the principal and vice principal	Actions of the teachers	Actions of the children
2:46 pm	0	A magnitude (Mw) 9.0 earthquake causes violent and lengthy shakes.	The earthquake hits and people take cover under desks for protection. The earthquake continues, and preparation for evacuation begins.			Children take cover under desks for protection and try to avoid falling things.
2:51 pm	5		The school's campus broadcast announces, "ensure the safety of the children," "evacuate to the schoolyard," and "evacuate to Mt. Ōhira." Neighbors rush in to warn "Run for it, because a tsunami is coming."	Instructs evacuation.	Teachers gather in the schoolyard.	Children gather in the schoolyard. Without any belongings, such as bags, children move quickly and quietly.
2:54 pm	8		Evacuation to Mt. Ōhira begins.	Ensures safety measures and deals with parents/guardians.	Teachers instruct the students to make a line according to their grade and rush to evacuate.	Children line up according to their grade with teachers between each grade. Everyone runs.
2:55 pm	9	Futaba Town's community wireless system announces tsunami warnings.				
3:15 pm	29		After reaching the foot of Mt. Ōhira, they begins to climb the mountain.	The principal drives his car to Mt. Ōhira.	Following a fourth grader's guide, climbing Mt. Ōhira begins.	A fourth-grade boy points out a trail that he had discovered during baseball practice. He tells the leading teacher.
3:25 pm	39	Less than 10 minutes left until the tsunami arrives.		The vice principal checks the buildings and is the last to evacuate the school by car.		All children begin to climb Mt. Ōhira, helping each other.
3:38 pm	52	The tsunami hits Ukedo Elementary School. A few minutes later, the tsunami reaches Mt. Ōhira.			Around this time, the teachers hear the strange rambling sound.	
4:00 pm	74	The Ukedo area is completely destroyed.	Student roll is called at the top of Mt. Ōhira, and the safety of all the students is confirmed.	The vice principal encounters the teachers who came down from Mt. Ōhira.	Four teachers climb down to check what have happened to the town. The teachers decide not to show the disaster to the children.	Deep in the mountain's forest, the children do not see the tsunami swallowing the all over the town.
4:30 pm	104	Snow falls.	Moving from Mt. Ōhira to Route 6.		For the children who could no longer walk, a teacher goes to the town hall to get help.	Most of the children are physically exhausted.
4:40 pm	114		A large truck from a logistic company in Iwaki City takes all the people to the gymnasium (Sunshine Namie) next to the town hall.	Driving around in search of everyone, the principal encounters everyone being transported on the truck.		Everyone clusters up to ride in the back of a truck.
5:00 pm	134	In Namie Town, approximately 180 persons die.	At the town gymnasium (Sunshine Namie), the students reunite with their parents/guardians.	The principal confirms the safety of all students.		
The following day and after		Due to the accident at Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant, evacuation from the town is ordered. Evacuation, which continues on to the present, begins.				