

Monday,  
June 20  
(Day 102)

### Water desalinization begins! Toilets are usable again.

By now we were well aware of the difficulties of life without fresh water. Thanks to the generosity of Kurita Water Industries, The Nippon Foundation, and Tokura Industries, a desalinization system was put in operation on this day. On June 20, Kurita Water Industries had toilets on the South Building's 5th and 6th floors usable. On June 27, The Nippon Foundation and Tokura Industries made improvements resulting in the full usability of toilets and sinks throughout the hotel. Twice-weekly baths became a reality, along with air conditioning! The return of flush toilets immediately resolved the problems of unpleasant smells and flies around the temporary facilities, as well as concerns about the spread of infectious disease. Life was back to normal.



Saturday, July 2  
Water restored  
Day 114

Sunday,  
July 24  
(Day 136)

### 2nd floor main bath, outdoor baths reopen

The tsunami badly damaged the hotel's main bath on the 2nd floor. Four months afterward, its repair complete, it was refilled with water from the Minamisanriku hot springs.



Residents threw a surprise party for the hotel's staff in recognition of their assistance throughout the previous months.



### We complete our responsibilities as a designated secondary shelter

Residents using the hotel as a secondary shelter moved to temporary housing.

Wednesday,  
August 31  
(Day 174)

### "Kanyo-Gururin Bus" connects hotel with temporary housing

Six months after the disaster, evacuees began leaving the hotel for their temporary homes. While no longer a secondary shelter, we still wanted residents to feel comfortable about visiting and staying with us. We made this possible by starting the "Kanyo-Gururin Bus," a free service linking the hotel with temporary housing. Local residents were also welcomed to get-togethers in our hall for tea, snacks and conversation. Older Minamisanriku residents could enjoy free bathing days



Thursday,  
September 1  
(Day 175)

### Events

Over two years, more than 600 events have given comfort and inspiration to evacuees.

Made possible through supporters from Japan and abroad, these events raised the spirits of evacuees, hotel staff and volunteers alike.

- Massage
- Makeup
- Haircuts
- Live music
- and more...



### Messages from the Hotel Kanyo family

Sharing our thoughts on disaster prevention and mitigation, and our own experience with natural disaster, so that others benefit in the future.



#### Let us be grateful for our friends and neighbors while building a better regional community

A once-in-a-millennium disaster can be a once-in-a-millennium chance to learn. Your visit with us will inspire us as we continue to rebuild our community. Valuing old relationships and welcoming new ones, we will work together to offer the best our town can give.



#### Memories of this disaster must not be allowed to fade

It was with the help of many supporters that we made it as far as we have, and we shall never forget their generosity. As long as there are people to listen and shed tears for those who lost their lives, I shall continue to tell our stories.



#### Generous support = healthy, active kids

We prepared a disaster prevention manual in order that others might benefit from our experience. The quake prevented us from spending as much time with the children as we would have liked, so today we make each moment with them count.

Hitomi Onodera, Mika Miura Childcare staff, Childcare Center "Marine Pal"



#### Let nothing go to waste

The months after the disaster were a headlong rush to restore some sort of normality to our lives. All we could do was focus on living day to day. Today we manage inventories even more carefully than before the quake, so that neither food nor water goes to waste.

Hiroyuki Haga Sous-chef, Minamisanriku Hotel Kanyo

Our thanks to all those who have lent us their support and encouragement.

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With the collaboration of Development Bank of Japan Inc.

# Recollections of the months after March 11



At 2:46 p.m. on March 11, 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake struck the Tohoku region. These are the recollections of the staff of the Minami Sanriku Hotel Kanyo, our neighbors, and volunteers since that time. We hope that this record of our experiences will contribute to future measures for disaster prevention and mitigation.

Minamisanriku before the disaster



July 2011



### Minamisanriku: Before and after

	Population	Households
February 2011	17,666	5,362
March 2013 (of whom, residents of temporary housing)	15,066 (5,783)	4,831 (1,892)
June 2015 (of whom, residents of temporary housing)	13,990 (4,001)	4,642 (1,619)

Minamisanriku disaster damage  
Dead / 620  
Missing / 212  
Damaged buildings / 3,321  
(80% of structures in the town center, and 62% of all, were swept away.)

### Information — The key things to get across

### The internet: Through daily blogs we informed the whole country of the latest developments, even in the first hours after the quake.



The hotel kept daily blogs and a Twitter account prior to the disaster. When signals were cut off by the quake, we worked with our web producer to ensure uninterrupted reporting. Today you can check our blog, Twitter (@kanyo11), or Facebook for the latest information.

Details are on our website: <http://www.mkanyo.jp>

### Guided bus tours to quake-damaged areas

In February 2012, we began guided bus tours to give interested visitors a first-hand look at the disaster's impact. Hotel staff, many of whom lost their own homes to the tsunami, explain the various sites. As of March 2013, more than 30,000 guests had taken the tour, learning much more than would be possible on their own.



# A look at our progress since the Great East Japan Earthquake

A total of 350 guests, staff, and local residents were in the hotel when the earthquake struck. As a designated secondary shelter, the hotel became a community for 600 people from the area. This is an outline of their efforts.

Friday, March 11, 2011, 2:46 p.m.

**M9.0 earthquake!**

## Minamisanriku experiences tremors of almost 6 in intensity. A 20-meter tsunami washes over the town.

The quake was followed immediately by a loss of power and water. Staff took the guests to our hillside childcare center, "Marine Pal," as evacuees began arriving in whatever clothes they had on their backs. Damage inside was slight; products in the hotel shop remained on their shelves.



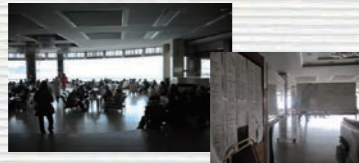
Ebb tide, 3 hours after the quake

A snow-covered Shizugawa-cho, seen from the hotel at 5 p.m. on March 11. Floating on the surface are the remains of houses washed away when the tsunami hit Shizugawa Bay.



Waters from the tsunami reached the hotel's main bath on the 2nd floor.

## Without access to power, water, or roads, isolation sets in.



Dinner was served amid aftershocks and oncoming darkness. Staff made do with snacks. Before retiring, we prepared menus for the coming week using ingredients on hand. Mobile phones provided minimal service, so we listened to the horrifying news coming in over the radio. Everyone passed a sleepless night, knowing little of the safety of their loved ones or the state of their neighborhoods.

Sunday, March 13 (Day 3)

## Guests begin to check out of hotel

Isolation remained a reality: the bridge to town was gone; roads to Sendai were destroyed or cut off by earthquake debris and fallen trees. On the third day we finally managed to climb out. At noon, police officers took the ill and injured to the Yokoyama evacuation site, where better equipment was available. Checkout started at 10 a.m. and the first bus left at noon. Staff were deeply moved when the departing guests, despite the difficulties they had endured, offered their thanks, best wishes, and promises to return.

Thursday, March 17 (Day 7)

## Checkout process complete

While guests headed home, staff whose homes had washed away began life as evacuees.



## Water trucks arrive

Thanks to Central Auto Co. (now Toyota Motor East Japan, Inc.), 20 tons of water arrived at the hotel by truck. The firm was kind enough to bring in 60 tons, later 80 tons per day (some 300 tons are used on a normal business day). We conserved as much water as we could, but without water the flush toilets were unusable, and we had to bring in portable toilets. Hygiene became a concern as laundries were impossible and bathing was kept to once or twice a week.

Central Auto brought in water from Tome City



Wednesday, March 23 (Day 13)

## Volunteers arrive in Minamisanriku

Angela Ortiz, a friend of one of the hotel's employees, arrived to report that OGA International School wanted to do something for the community and would arrange for the delivery of relief supplies. Hotel-based volunteers went door-to-door collecting information and distributing supplies to those who had not received them. A steady stream of volunteers came to use the hotel as their base of operations, making it a symbol of Minamisanriku's recovery.



## Health organizations also base their activities at the hotel

With the town's medical facilities destroyed, we provided rooms and meals for doctors making their rounds.

Saturday, April 9 (Day 30)

## A generator is set up at the hotel's childcare center

A donated generator made life at the childcare center more comfortable.



Sunday, April 10 (Day 31)

## Abecho Shoten, the hotel's parent company, celebrates 50 years in business

On what would normally be a day of festive events, we toasted the anniversary with fruit juice.



Friday, April 15 (Day 36)



## Minamisanriku's infrastructure gradually restored: Electricity returns to the hotel at last

Utility poles appear on the ruined streets. 36 days after the disaster, power is restored to the hotel. Two days later, volunteers put on a live jazz show in the lobby.



Saturday, April 23 (Day 44)

## Still without water, the hotel's barbecued seafood restaurant reopens

The hotel remained without water. Nevertheless, we reopened the restaurant Kai Food BBQ despite limitations on time, ingredients and dinnerware. Some patrons, evacuees themselves, were moved to tears by the hot meals, and wished they could enjoy them with their families. Most encouraging for the staff were the warm words of thanks for the simple dishes we could provide.



Thursday, May 5 (Day 56)



## As a designated secondary shelter, the hotel starts taking in local victims of the disaster



In preparation for accepting evacuees, we began making name plates, guides and other necessities. 600 Minamisanriku residents moved into the hotel. A residents' association was set up to meet weekly, with leaders chosen from each floor. The total number would reach 1,000, including health workers and construction staff.

Hotel Kanyo assumes new role as home for 600 evacuees!

Wednesday, May 18 (Day 69)

## Gymnastics and other events held for exercise-starved evacuees

Volunteers helped evacuees get needed exercise through lessons in gymnastics and massage. Other activities included raising sunflowers – symbols of recovery – and casual get-togethers over tea.



Evacuees enjoy yoga and massage



Thursday, May 26 (Day 77)



## Arrival of "laundry volunteers"



With water mains remaining blocked, laundry options were limited to carrying loads to the laundromat in the next town or – though it seems unbelievable – washing one's clothes in the river. In a bid to make life just a bit easier, we appealed to the Sendai Laundry Volunteers, and arrangements were made immediately.

Saturday, May 28 (Day 79)

## Promoting local employment with a welcome ceremony for 30 new employees of the Abecho Group

Thirty new employees, promising individuals all, were welcomed to the Abecho Group in a ceremony normally held in April. Two of them visited the Disaster Prevention Center to offer prayers and flowers. We applauded their determination to take up work in a place where life has its inconveniences even in the best of times.



Sunday, June 19 (Day 101)

## Educational programs for children: An abacus class

To assist children who had lost their books, educational tools, and even a place to study, we set up a temporary library with 10,000 donated books. Lessons in abacus and other subjects, as well as volunteer-led English conversation groups, helped children keep up with their education.

