

DON'T LET UZBEKISTAN OCCUR THE LOSS OF JAPAN IN 1995

By PULATOV ALIMIRZO

Disaster risk reduction is an essential aspect of sustainable development, particularly in earthquake-prone regions like Uzbekistan. Given the country's geographic location along active seismic zones, strengthening disaster preparedness and response mechanisms is crucial. Uzbekistan has made significant progress in improving disaster risk management, yet there is much to learn from international experiences, particularly from Japan's Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995. The earthquake, which struck the city of Kobe and surrounding areas, resulted in massive destruction and loss of life. However, Japan's systematic response and subsequent reforms offer valuable insights for Uzbekistan's disaster management framework. One of the key lessons from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake is the importance of earthquake-resistant infrastructure. In Kobe, a significant portion of the damage was due to the collapse of older, non-reinforced buildings. Following the disaster, Japan introduced stricter building codes and retrofitting programs to enhance resilience. Uzbekistan, particularly in cities like Tashkent, where high seismic activity is a concern, can benefit from similar regulations. Implementing stricter construction standards, enforcing compliance, and retrofitting vulnerable structures can significantly reduce casualties and economic losses in future earthquakes. Community engagement and public awareness also played a crucial role in Japan's disaster reduction efforts. Following the Kobe earthquake, the Japanese government

launched extensive educational campaigns and community-based disaster preparedness programs. Schools, workplaces, and local organizations actively participated in regular drills and awareness initiatives. Uzbekistan can adopt a similar approach by integrating disaster education into school curricula, organizing regular emergency drills, and encouraging local communities to develop disaster response plans. Public awareness and preparedness can significantly enhance the resilience of communities when disasters strike. Another significant takeaway is the importance of an efficient emergency response system. During the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, delays in response and lack of coordination among agencies exacerbated the crisis. Japan learned from this experience and developed an integrated disaster response system with clear communication channels between government agencies, emergency services, and local authorities. Uzbekistan can strengthen its disaster response mechanisms by improving interagency coordination, investing in early warning systems, and ensuring rapid deployment of emergency relief operations. Additionally, disaster recovery and reconstruction should focus on long-term resilience rather than just immediate restoration. The post-earthquake rebuilding process in Kobe emphasized urban planning, economic revitalization, and mental health support for affected communities. Uzbekistan can benefit from a similar strategy by incorporating risk reduction measures in reconstruction efforts and providing social and economic support to disaster-affected populations. International cooperation is another crucial element in disaster risk reduction. Japan has shared its expertise in disaster management with many countries, and Uzbekistan can benefit from closer collaboration with Japan in areas such as technology transfer, policy development, and capacity-building programs. Joint research projects, technical training, and experience-sharing initiatives can help Uzbek-

istan adopt best practices in earthquake preparedness and response. Uzbekistan must prioritize disaster risk reduction to safeguard lives, infrastructure, and economic stability. The lessons from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake highlight the need for stronger building regulations, enhanced public awareness, efficient emergency response systems, resilient reconstruction strategies, and international collaboration. By implementing these measures, Uzbekistan can significantly improve its disaster preparedness and resilience, ensuring a safer future for its citizens.





Disaster Etiquette: The Role of Respect and Selflessness in Survival



Created by AI

"On January 17, 1995, at 5:46 AM, Kobe, Japan, my family and I were sound asleep, unaware of the disaster about to strike. Suddenly, the ground trembled, waking us in an instant. My mind raced with two thoughts: one telling me to run, to save myself, and the other urging me to stay and help my wife and mother, who had trouble moving. In that moment, I chose to stay. It was a decision I'm proud of today, knowing that humanity won over fear when it mattered most..."
(Mori Yasushige, storyteller in Hokudan Earthquake Memorial park).

No one can truly predict when or where a disaster will strike. Earthquakes don't send warnings. Fires don't wait for us to be ready. In an instant, everything can change. But while disasters cannot always be prevented, our actions — both during and after — can make all the difference.

The Hidden Danger of Panic

Imagine a crowded building shaking violently during an earthquake. The instinct to survive kicks in, and everyone runs toward the exit. But in this chaos, people push, fall, and get injured. Fear spreads faster than fire, and panic becomes the real enemy. So, we should turn fear into discipline, chaos into order, and confusion into survival.

The Power of Selflessness

In times of disaster, it's natural to think only about ourselves and our loved ones. But true survival is not just about escaping — it's about making sure no one is left behind.

A simple act of kindness — helping an elderly person walk, calming a frightened child, or offering water to a stranger — can mean the difference between life and death. Even small actions, like staying quiet to hear emergency instructions or moving in an orderly way, can save more lives than we imagine. Survival is not just about speed; it's about strength — the strength to think of others.

After the Disaster: The Role of Volunteers

When the shaking stops, when the fire is put out, when the floodwaters recede — our responsibility doesn't end. If we and our families are safe, we must help

those who are not.

In every disaster, there are people left without homes, food, or medical aid. Becoming a volunteer, offering help in shelters, distributing food, or simply listening to someone who has lost everything is just as important as surviving the disaster itself. The real rebuilding of a community doesn't start with bricks and cement — it starts with kindness and solidarity.

Lessons for the Future

Disaster etiquette should be a lesson for every nation. Disasters will come. We cannot stop them. But what we can control is how we respond — not just in the moment of fear, but in the days, weeks, and months that follow.

In times of crisis, our greatest survival tool is not just speed or strength. **It is humanity.**

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