

Revisiting the concept of tsunami tendenko

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This paper discusses the concept of "tsunami tendenko," which has been very common, particularly, after the 3.11 Great Tsunami. Tendenko, in Japanese, means "everyone for him/herself" mindset, which guarantees a very quick tsunami evacuation in an emergency without waiting for anyone else, even one's parents and/or children. This word has been handed down as an important action code to be observed in local communities in tsunami prone area in Tohoku region, because a quick evacuation to higher place without taking care of anyone has been considered as an only way to escape from complete destruction by a killer wave. This principle looks focusing only on saving one's own life, however, this paper discusses, based on empirical data on evacuation behaviors in the 3.11 Tsunami, that tendenko has three more important facets: first, setting off other people's evacuation following initial evacuees' behavior; secondly, reducing preventable deaths/casualties caused by a desperate attempt to help someone failing to escape; and finally, easing survivor's guilt, in the aftermath, for evacuating with someone left behind.

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