

「降灰による健康被害はない」

10月28日付当地 Nation 紙は、国際協力推進協会(A P I C)の「太平洋・カリブ記者招待計画」により訪日した同紙エバンソン記者の降灰の人体への影響に関する記事を掲載しているところ、概要以下のとおり。

1 鹿児島市は、九州の南西端に位置し、日本の有数な活火山の一つである桜島(標高1117m)がそびえ立っている。桜島は764年、1471年から5年間、そして1779年に大噴火があった。最後の大噴火は1914年で、現在でもその影響の一部を見ることができる。2011年には996回、2019年は228回、2020年は221回、2021年は84回の噴火が観測された。

2 桜島は、過去60年間、常に火山灰とガスを噴出し続けている。19日には3回の小規模な噴火があり、翌20日には少なくとも1回の噴火があった。しかしながら、鹿児島市危機管理課によると、降灰と喘息などの呼吸器疾患との間に相関関係を見出すことができない。同課は、1972年から2008年まで及び1979年から2003年まで、市民を対象として実施した健康診断の結果を引用し、降灰と直接関係のある気管支炎や喘息などの慢性的な健康被害は確認されていないことを明らかにした。

3 桜島の麓には、60万人が居住している。住民は、降灰が多いとき、傘をさしたり、タオルやハンカチで口を覆ったりして日常生活を送ってきたという。毎日の天気予報には、天気とともに火山灰の流れや風向きの詳細が含まれ、これらの降灰予報は、住民が洗濯物を「外干し」するか否かの判断基準になるとのことである。

'Ash fall not hurting health'

By Heather-Lynn Evanson in Japan

One Japanese city has failed to find a correlation between volcanic ash and respiratory illnesses like asthma.

This has been revealed by manager of the Crisis Management Division of Kagoshima City, Tomohiro Nakashima.

He was speaking to a cohort of journalists from the Caribbean and the Pacific who were participating in the Association for Promotion of International Corporation's (APIC) Journalism Fellowship in Japan.

Kagoshima City is on the south-west tip of the island of Kyushu. Its looming neighbour is the ever-rumbling, 1 117-metre-high volcano Sakurajima, one of the most active volcanoes in Japan.

Nakashima noted there were those who might question whether living with so much volcanic ash in the atmosphere was hazardous or bad for the health of citizens.

"But the chronic health damage by ash is not confirmed," he said through an interpreter.

"In Kagoshima City we have had ash fall health checks from 1972 to 2008. And we couldn't confirm any special diseases that had direct connection with the ash fall," he said.

"And we did the same sort of health check in Kagoshima City as well from 1979 to 2003. But we couldn't confirm any kind of disease that is directly connected to the ash fall.

"And there is no report that they had bronchial infections or asthma," he further said.

Meanwhile, assistant chief of the Crisis Management Division, Yomei Kuramoto, stressed that the checks did not come about because residents had expressed concern about their health.

"It's just we did this health check for research purposes. We ended that research in 2008, so we do not have any plans to do it again," he said.

There were major eruptions of Sakurajima in the years 764; 1471 – which lasted five years – and 1779.

The last major eruption was in 1914 and some of the effects can still be seen today.

In 2011, there was a record number of 996 explosive eruptions.

In 2019 there were 228 explosive eruptions; 221 in 2020 and 84 in 2021.

However, it has been constantly spewing ash and gas for the past 60 years. On Wednesday, there were three minor eruptions and at least one on Thursday.

Six hundred thousand people live on the island in the shadow of the volcano.

Nakashima further said the daily forecast not only contained details about weather but about the ash flow and wind direction.

This information, he said, was utilised by residents when they want to do laundry or "dry in the open air".

He added that when there was a lot of ash flow residents used umbrellas or covered their mouths with towels or handkerchiefs as they went about their daily routine.



The 1 117-metre-high volcano Sakurajima, one of the most active volcanoes in Japan, emitting a cloud of ash and gas. (HLE)