

Kitao Abe. *Panic No Shinri* (Psychological Study of Panic). Tokyo, Japan: Kodansha Co., 1974. 200 pp. 350 yens (Japanese);
Kitao Abe. *Daijishin ni Kansuru Kitakumin no Inshiki-Chosa Tokyo-To Kita-Kuyakusho* (A Survey About a Major Earthquake Among the Citizens of Kita Borough, Tokyo) Tokyo, Japan. (Japanese).

For about ten years now, social, psychological and behavioral science studies into disasters have been conducted by Japanese researchers mostly under the direction of Professor Kitao Abe, a psychologist at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Some of the results of this work were first reported in Proceedings of the Japan—United States Disaster Research Seminar: Organizational and Community Responses to Disasters (Columbus: Disaster Research Center, The Ohio State University, 1972) and available in English from the Center. This review notes two other recent publications of the Japanese researchers.

The book on panic appears as part of a paperback, popular educational series similar to the Penguin Book series familiar to English-speaking readers. The book is a study of the psychology and the reactions of large aggregations of people engulfed in disasters. The content of the book is as follows.

Chapter I is entitled Tragedy Strikes. The author shows how, in the case of the Managua earthquake and of a department store fire in Japan, a large number of people were turned

into a mob gripped by panic. In the next chapter, Terror and Astonishment, the author analyzes people's reactions to danger. The initial terror is followed by a realization of the situation, and people seek to fulfill their roles in family and society in meeting the danger. Chapter 3, Behavior in Emergency, concerns psychological response to emergency. Professor Abe in this chapter analyzes the content of a disaster study he undertook and refers to various types of disaster situations. In chapter 4, Mob Panic, the author discusses the logic of panic behavior. This chapter is the highlight of the book. Panic behavior is analyzed in detail, particularly its psychological aspects reflecting the author's background. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the factors leading to panic and factors which lessen panic.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 involve a discussion of anxiety and the matter of escape from danger. A concluding chapter contains an analysis of information and rumor in times of disasters and mob panic, and ends with an examination of means of escape from disasters and from possible panic situations.

This book is not a strictly academic report. But in Japan where this kind of publication is lacking, it can be said that this book is a very significant and valuable work. It is also rich in suggestions for researchers contemplating disaster studies in related disciplines. However, one would have liked to have seen a little more attention to family relations and group behavior in disaster situations. This is, perhaps, a little removed from the intent of the book, but it is to be hoped, from the point of view of disaster research, that attention will be paid to these aspects in future studies of mass destruction.

The other publication being reviewed reports on the results of a questionnaire mailed to people in one borough of Tokyo who had suffered from the 1923 earthquake. Although Japan is a country that suffers frequently from earthquakes, precautions against such disasters have been inadequate. The book partly addresses this problem.

One borough of the Tokyo metropolitan region was divided into 16 smaller areas, and the areas

were classified according to their special characteristics as was ascertained by sampling. Then questionnaires were mailed out asking about anticipation of earthquakes, anticipation of earthquake damage, evacuation procedures, knowledge of designated evacuation points, preparation for evacuation, expectations concerning disaster-prevention policy, information, and rumors. The items in the questionnaire were constructed with a view to their possible social utility.

The questionnaires were mailed to all men and women over 20 years of age in the borough. A total of 1,303 completed questionnaires were returned. This was 32.7 percent of those mailed.

Among some of the results obtained are the following. A majority, 53 percent, thought that an earthquake was "likely" while 12 percent thought it was "unlikely". People living in wooden houses showed a higher level of anxiety. Of those anticipating damage, the largest number, 85 percent, listed fear as the most likely source of damage, and these replies tended to come principally from people living in wooden houses.

Many of the replies showed a relationship between anticipation of earthquakes and preparations for them. Answers concerning things to be taken in an emergency — foodstuffs, medical supplies — and discussion within the family and discussion in the community showed that preparedness tended to increase with age and with length of stay in the community. Generally, the level of organization for disaster prevention was low in the sampled area.

The time of the survey was one of increasing anxiety concerning the danger of an earthquake. A large number of the respondents, 85 percent, acknowledged hearing rumors of earthquakes. Nearly two-thirds, or 66 percent, heard such rumors of pending earthquakes from a woman. The survey found that in the studied area, an average of 1.47 persons per family were at home during the day. This offers a suggestion for the protection of families and communities in future urban disasters.

Shoji Watanabe and Seiichi Nakano
*Research Institute for Nuclear
Medicine and Biology
Hiroshima University, Japan*