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2011 Disaster in Context: Toward a Multi-Layered Understanding of the Great East Japan Earthquake

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A Disaster mythologizes both time and space. Some people say that from March 11, 2011, the term and period of “Post-war” Japan became obsolete and “Post-disaster” Japan began.

In Japan, after the 1990s, a neo-liberal restructuring of local governance and privatization of public facilities began. The Tohoku (North East) region typically witnessed a shrinking population over the last 20 years.

After the 2008 financial crisis, the Japanese economy experienced a serious recession. The country's unemployment rate became high, and new types of social movements arose, in which the younger generation was the main participant.

From a broader historical perspective, the Fukushima accidents are the result of the developmentalism in post-war Japan, which promoted the development and use of nuclear power plants despite the negative experiences by atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Post-disaster narratives ignore the more complex historical and geographical contexts behind the 2011

Disaster. However, we start with a resistance to all these types of reductionistic attitudes.

This special, first-number issue is titled "The Great East Japan Earthquake Chronicle". This Chronicle is based on many resources that were released and published until approximately two months after the earthquake. We expect that readers can reflect upon the facts, impact, and background of the 2011 disaster in multiple and multi-layered manners that include historical, geographical, political, economical, social, cultural, and scientific contexts.

The articles focus on the damage to the agriculture in the Ibaraki Prefecture (near Fukushima) in June, 2011, and the large scale anti-nuclear power plant demonstration in Tokyo in June 11, 2011.

This magazine is not a production of myth but rather a sharing of the experiences and memories of the 2011 disaster in Japan and the reactions to it in a global public sphere. The magazine will be published quarterly until March 2015. We hope you will join us in our creative analysis of this historical event and in sharing ideas about the rebirth of society.