

Asian Network of Major Cities 21
Seoul and Taipei Participate in Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill

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Rescue teams from Seoul and Taipei, which are members of the Asian Network of Major Cities 21 (ANMC21), participated in the Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill hosted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, with Chuo Ward and Koto Ward as the co-hosts, on August 31. The rescue teams from Seoul and Taipei worked together with the Tokyo Fire Department Fire Rescue Task Force (Hyper Rescue Team) in a drill that included rescuing people from a collapsed building. This is the third joint drill with the two cities, following the drill in FY2006 with Seoul and the drill in FY2007 with Taipei.



Rescue teams of the Tokyo Fire Department, Taipei (yellow helmets), and Seoul (green helmets) undertake a joint drill as part of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill on August 31 (Harumi site).

It is said that 90% of global disasters, such as large-scale earthquakes, cyclones, typhoons and torrential rains occur in Asia, and in the event of a large-scale disaster, rescue teams are not only dispatched from domestic locations but also from neighboring countries to provide assistance to disaster victims.

For example, when on September 21, 1999, a massive magnitude-7.7 quake struck Taiwan, which, like Japan, is an earthquake-prone region, an international disaster relief team, led by rescue teams of the Tokyo Fire Department and the Metropolitan Police Department, arrived in Taiwan approximately 19 hours after the earthquake

struck, and carried out rescue operations at the site of collapsed buildings. Members of the Taipei Fire Department who participated in last year's Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill said, "Japan was the first nation to come to our aid after the earthquake struck Taiwan. If an earthquake occurs in Tokyo, we will immediately go to provide help and relief from Taipei."

When an earthquake strikes Tokyo, acceptance of rescue teams from metropolitan cities of neighboring countries that have extensive experience in international rescue activities is envisioned in order to quickly save as many lives as possible. Seoul Special City and Taipei City have a record of dispatching international rescue teams in the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, and since both cities are close to Tokyo (Seoul Special City is about two hours by air, and Taipei City is three hours by air), it can be expected that they will dispatch rescue teams to Tokyo.

- Joint Drill with the Tokyo Fire Department Fire Hyper Rescue Team

This was the third joint drill with teams from the two cities, following the drill in Seoul Special City in FY2006 and the drill in Taipei City in FY2007. Prior to the Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill, on August 29, a rescue drill was carried out jointly with the Fire Rescue Task Force of the 2nd Fire District Headquarters, Tokyo Fire Department (Keihin Island, Ota Ward). During the drill, a rescue operation was carried out from beneath wreckage that was arranged to simulate a disaster site.



Members of the Seoul rescue team enter a collapsed building under the guidance of Tokyo Fire Department members



Members of the Taipei rescue team retrieve victims from under the wreckage



Preliminary confirmation before the start of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill



Team members checking each other's rescue equipment

This rescue drill was a practical exercise conducted in a mixture of Japanese, Korean and Chinese and it achieved the following results.

First, with regard to language, which represents a significant barrier to rescue activities in the event of a disaster, in addition to interpretation-facilitated communication, English was used for the basic commands. The results showed that there are still issues that need to be improved in order to achieve prompt and smooth activities by rescue teams from foreign cities. One such issue is the interpretation of technical terms.

Another significant achievement of the joint drill was the fact that all sides got acquainted with the rescue equipment used by their counterparts. This equipment is different in each city and depends on the disaster situation, the structure of the buildings, and the rescue methods. Knowing and understanding the rescue equipment and methods of one's counterparts will not only result in the improvement of one's own rescue techniques, but also holds great importance for the smooth implementation of rescue and relief activities.

Furthermore, the joint drill elucidated the differences in the safety management systems of the rescue teams of each city. Tokyo Fire Department deploys officers in charge of safety management at all rescue operations, and thoroughly implements safety management. This system has resulted in an extremely low death rate in the line of duty, and the teams from Seoul and Taipei demonstrated great interest in it.

On the other hand, the proactive attitude of the team members from both cities, their

eagerness to learn about the rescue techniques and system of Tokyo Fire Department, and their energetic and diligent approach to the drills won the admiration of the Tokyo Fire Department rescue team. Furthermore, the participants were able to reaffirm the effectiveness and significance of practical joint drills.

Rescue and relief activities in the Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill



Commands were given in Korean and Chinese

The Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill took place on August 31. The drill was carried out under the premise that a massive earthquake whose epicenter was at the northern part of Tokyo Bay occurred, and rescue teams from Seoul Special City and Taipei City have arrived at Haneda Airport to provide support to Tokyo.



The two rescue teams receive words of encouragement from Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara

The two teams arrived at the site of a collapsed building at the drill site in Harumi, which is also the scheduled site for an Olympic venue, and, following orders from the onsite command headquarters, began rescuing people from the collapsed building. The activities of the two teams reflected the successful implementation of the preliminary training they carried out by the day before. Amidst a flurry of orders in Korean and Chinese, the drill proceeded smoothly and the two

teams, in cooperation with the Tokyo Fire Department Hyper Rescue Team, rescued more than 20 victims (dolls) from under the rubble.

After the completion of the drill, members of the two teams shared their impressions,

saying that the joint drill was extremely useful and informative, and they hoped that similar initiatives were carried out in the future. The representatives of Taipei City requested a more extensive long-term program, including acceptance of trainees and dispatch of Tokyo Fire Department officers as lecturers to Taipei. These outcomes prove that the participants evaluated highly the joint drill and demonstrated great enthusiasm about it.

At the ANMC21 Network for Crisis Management, we are engaged in various activities to improve the overall crisis management capacity of the entire Asian continent. Such activities include inviting Asian cities to participate in this year's Comprehensive Disaster Management Drill carried out by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, as well as the holding of the Asian Crisis Management Conference (the 2008 conference was carried out from October 22 to 23 in Kuala Lumpur), and implementation of training procedures on rescue techniques by the Tokyo Fire Department.

Please refer to the ANMC21 Network for Crisis Management homepage for detailed information.

<http://www.anmc21.org/crisis/index.html>

