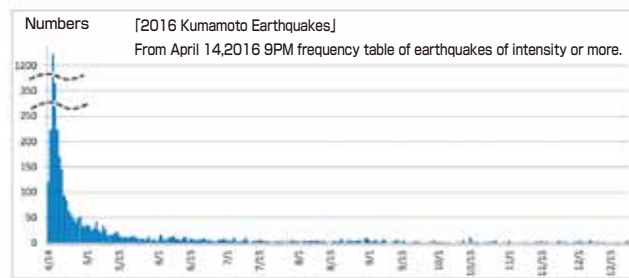


Looking back:Half a year passed

Time goes so fast. It is now the end of the year. Even though 8 months have passed, much of the damage caused by the Kumamoto Earthquakes remains. We cannot access Kumamoto Castle. Since Miyuki-zaka has been

closed, the only way to see the three castle towers is to view from Kato shrine or Ninomaru Park. Tourists who going to Ninomaru Park through the staircase from Johsai-en have been slowly increasing, and individual tourists as well as small groups of tourists from Korea and Taiwan have been seen. Large bus tour group have not increased yet.



From JMA HP

Daily life has returned to normal, and many recovery support events have been held varies location. About 110,000 people came out to see the 「Kira-kira Parade」 with popular Disney characters held on December 17. The road connecting Ninomaru Park to Gokoku Shrine was reopened, and the reconstruction plan of the damaged historic castle stone walls has begun. We can feel actual progress towards reconstruction.

On the other hands all evacuation sites were closed in the middle of September and 18,782 people have seen move to temporary housing. To maintain the original community will became big problem.

Individual or small groups of tourists are slowly increasing as previously mentioned. On foreign residents, It is obvious from the following chart that there is no any influence by the earthquakes from a numerical standpoint. We assume that foreign residents, such as international students who had evacuated elsewhere, have returning. Half a year has passed, and due to the start of reconstruction of damaged apartments, many of them have been forced to move out. Under such circumstances, as one case reported, they were not allowed to move into different apartment because they were foreigners. The reason of refusal was that foreign residents did not dispose of kitchen oil in a properly and clogged the pipes in the past. Refusing foreigners without any explanation is a matter of human rights. The society which receives foreigners needs to be a multicultural society. In cases where foreigners were refused, the varied reason included noise, disposal of garbage, subletting to friends and so on. We need to understand the difference in culture and customs among counties and it is also important for us to explain the Japanese rules and the structure of Japanese housing.

As our daily lives resumed, many cases of severe mental problems or domestic violence among couples (foreign residents married to Japanese) have been reported. Considering the cultural differences and the trauma caused by the earthquakes, we need to provide support suited to their specific needs.