

Remembering Disaster

Kabushima has been affected by two major earthquakes and subsequent tsunamis in recent history. The first, the Showa Sanriku Earthquake, shook the area on March 3, 1933. The second was the more recent Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, which devastated much of the Tohoku region, particularly the Sanriku Coast. This panel and the photos below illustrate the damage sustained here on that day in 2011.

The photos depict how the powerful waves from the tsunami destroyed buildings along the shore and washed away boats in the harbor. The waters rose past the first few steps leading up from the torii gate to Kabushima Jinja Shrine, and damaged the fence surrounding the hilltop, though the torii itself remained standing.

In the two weeks following the quake, some 3,000 volunteers worked to clean up the damage and debris. Plaques on the steps leading up to the shrine mark the levels of inundation by the tsunamis that followed both the Showa Sanriku Earthquake and the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Sanriku Fukko National Park, which includes Kabushima and the rest of the Tanesashi Coast area, was created in 2013. *Fukko*, meaning “reconstruction” or “recovery,” refers to the park’s role as a part of recovery efforts in the Sanriku region, which continue to this day.

The 2011 earthquake and tsunami had an indelible impact on the Tohoku region. In the years since the disaster, residents of the Hachinohe area have worked hard to foster an environment of respect and appreciation for the natural world around them, and to ensure that the trials and harsh lessons learned from the tragedy of 2011 are never forgotten.