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Residents remove debris from their homes in the destroyed city. Sankhu

PHOTO&TEXT
BY YUKI IWANAMI

Nepal Earthquake 1

Kathmandu, NEPAL — On April 25th, an earthquake measuring M7.8 struck central Nepal. As of May 15th, the total death toll in the country has exceeded 8,400, and has affected the daily lives of 8 million, or 30% of the population. Approximately 560,000 homes have been destroyed or severely damaged. Another M7.3 aftershock followed 12 days later, furthering the damage.

In the capitol of Kathmandu, buildings stand tilted and many of the temples in Durbar Square have been destroyed. Including those in the famed square, there are reports that 90% of the architecture listed as World Heritage sites in Nepal may have been totally destroyed or seriously damaged. Rows of old houses built from bricks and wood have crumbled in urban areas, leaving places like Bhaktapur and Sankhu deserted. Bodies were being brought to the crematorium, where the numerous columns of smoke represented another one of the many victims being put to rest.

The bus terminal was filled with people trying to leave Kathmandu for the countryside until the situation settled down. The Indian government even arranged buses for its citizens to evacuate.

The residents who could not live in their houses or were afraid of the aftershocks had started putting up tents in the parks and empty lots. Speaking to them in a park in central Kathmandu, I found out that most of them were families who came from rural areas to find work as migrant laborers. The cheap apartments they rented must have been old and the structures too weak to withstand the tremor.

Burga Bahadur Nepali, 45, along with his family of eight, came from Dolakha District east of Kathmandu to find work in textile manufacturing. His son has also been working there as a security guard. Mr. Nepali was under the Bhimsen Tower when the earthquake struck, but was able to escape to this park. The apartment he rented was destroyed, and he has been living here since. "There is no information from my village. I don't even know if my house is still standing there" he says. Without a car or money, he is unable to return.

Many climbers were also killed near the base camps of Mt. Everest where numerous avalanches were recorded.

In the mountainous regions where the damage was most severe, whole villages which once spotted the area have completely disappeared. Lacking roads fit for vehicles, many rural areas have yet to receive any emergency food or supplies, let alone grasp the extent of damage.

Translation by Taro Konishi



A mother mourns after her daughter's body is identified. Bhaktapur



A girl waits in line for relief supplies. Sindhupalchowk District



Residents light fires and spend the night by a tent set up in a park. Kathmandu



An elderly woman rests in the open after her house was destroyed. Kathmandu



Bodies overflow the morgue and lined in a hospital lobby. Kathmandu



Survivors rest inside a bus. Sindhupalchowk District



Residents light fires during the night. Bhaktapur



Residents frustrated by the lack of supplies take to the streets. Kathmandu



A 15 year old boy is rescued from a collapsed guesthouse 6 days from the earthquake. Kathmandu



A girl gazes at the destroyed city. Bhaktapur



Rows of tents line a terraced rice paddy. Sindhupalchowk District



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