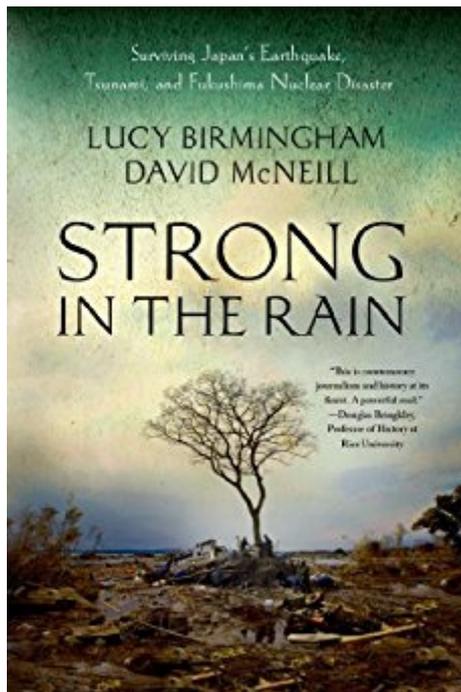


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Strong In The Rain: Surviving Japan's Earthquake, Tsunami, And Fukushima Nuclear Disaster



Synopsis

Blending history, science, and gripping storytelling, *Strong in the Rain* brings the 9.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Japan in 2011 and its immediate aftermath to life through the eyes of the men and women who experienced it. Following the narratives of six individuals, the book traces the shape of a disaster and the heroics it prompted, including that of David Chumreong, a Texan with Thai roots, trapped in his school's gymnasium with hundreds of students and teachers as it begins to flood, and Taro Watanabe, who thought nothing of returning to the Fukushima plant to fight the nuclear disaster, despite the effects that he knew would stay with him for the rest of his life. This is a beautifully written and moving account of how the Japanese experienced one of the worst earthquakes in history and endured its horrific consequences.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Strong In The Rain" is a book with the literary density of uranium, it penetrates deeply and leaves the reader with a personal and factual understanding of Japan's 3/11 mega-disaster that a simple narrative could never do. The most appropriate expression I can use to describe the book is from the Japanese *tsukan* (つкан) literally to "feel pain" the metaphorical meaning being "to keenly know"

something. I wasn't in Japan when the earthquake and the meltdown devastated the nation; I came back 10 days later. This book makes me feel like I was there--like I lived through it. It's that powerful and evocative. I know both the authors, so maybe I'm not objective. But this is a powerful and almost majestic book. It's a book I wish I had written...or could write. It is a book about some amazing Japanese heroes, like the Mayor Sakurai, who fought the yakuza, the complacent press, the Japanese government, and the nuclear industrial complex that is sometimes referred to as "the nuclear village" or by those in the underworld as "the nuclear mafia." He's not an action hero--he's a man of action, a man who changed the coverage of the nuclear meltdown with a simple heartfelt video uploaded onto You Tube in two languages. He becomes the embodiment in the text of the Japanese spirit and character. Ms. Birmingham and Mr. McNeill deftly weave together the accounts of the victims and heroes into a Rashomon like account of 3/11 that creates a 4D picture of the tragedy and it does it without the moral relativism or ambiguity of Akutagawa; some problems are painted in shades of grey, but the authors have the courage to put things in black and white where it matters. Sometimes, there is a right and a wrong, a true and false.

This is a book by two seasoned journalists at the top of their profession who happen also to be long-term Tokyo residents, and thus perfectly placed to write this chronicle. It certainly deserves such attention, if only because the world came so close to a major nuclear catastrophe on March 11, 2011. The book is well-constructed, selecting six people from different walks of life (the mayor, the fisherman, the housewife, the foreign teacher, the power plant worker, the high school graduate) and showing how the events unfolded on each of them in different parts of the disaster zone. What stands out is not only the courage and resilience of the Japanese people as individuals and the strength of their well-documented group mentality, but also the troubling arrogance and lack of foresight of the giant Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), and worse still the scorn poured on whistleblowers, the ignoring of expert advice and the attempts made to cover up the seriousness of what occurred. It is important that nobody forgets what happened in Fukushima, and after the dust has settled since last year this book is a welcome contribution to preventing just such an unfortunate outcome. Inevitably since the triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and meltdown the wisdom of building 54 nuclear power plants in a country so prone to earthquakes (including one plant in Fukui prefecture directly over a fault line) has come into question. Almost all of them are currently shut down with corresponding increases to consumers of about 8% nationwide in the cost of electricity at the time of writing this in 2012, but this is a price most Japan residents will gladly pay for greater safety. Meanwhile outside Japan nuclear power plant construction programs have been halted, and

in some countries abandoned altogether.

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