

<Japanese Words and Phrases> —*Bousai* (Disaster Prevention)—

September 1 is *Bousai no Hi* (National Disaster Prevention Day).

This day was established to ensure that we do not forget the lessons of the Great Kanto Earthquake, a huge earthquake that struck before noon on September 1, 1923. The epicenter of this earthquake was directly underneath the Kanto region, and caused immense damage there. In addition, *Bousai no Hi* is established to help us to prepare for other natural disasters which occur in this period, such as typhoons.

September 1 falls within a period that is important for agriculture in Japan. In the past, it was considered a *yakubi* (unlucky day), because it was the beginning of a period in which there might be

<日本のことば> - 防災 -

9月1日の「防災(ぼうさい)の日」は、関東大震災(かんとうだいしんさい: 1923年9月1日の昼前に発生し、関東地方の広い範囲に大きな被害をもたらした直下型の大地震)の教訓を忘れないという意味と、この時期に多い台風等の自然災害への心構えの意味を含めて制定されたものです。

もともこの時期は、農事の上で大切な時期に台風(たいふう)が来襲し、田んぼが泥水につかったり、強風で稲の花が吹き飛ばされてしまったりして、せっかく丹精についたお米が実らなくなってしまうため、「凶作

typhoons that would fill the rice paddies with muddy water and blow the flowers off the rice plants, meaning the rice would not produce grain. This would result in a *kyousaku* (bad harvest), and the farmers' hard work would go to waste.

There is a Japanese proverb that says "*Sonae areba urei nashi*" (Be prepared and you don't have to worry). Follow this advice and prepare yourself for a disaster – make sure where the evacuation centers are in your area, get an emergency kit together, and have a three-day supply of instant foods and drinks ready – and you can feel secure. Your emergency kit should contain a flashlight, food (canned), water, a portable radio, a first-aid kit, socks, gloves, underwear, tampons or sanitary pads (for women), toilet paper and wet tissues, among other items. On *Bousai no Hi*, it's also a good idea to check the contents of your emergency kit, and replace anything that has become too old.

(きょうさく)に見舞われる「厄日(やくび)」とされていました。  
「備えあれば憂いなし(そなえあればうれいなし)」という日本の諺にもあるように、いざという時に備え、避難場所の確認や非常持ち出し袋の用意をしたり、3日程度のインスタント食品や飲料水を備蓄したりしておく目安です。非常持ち出し袋の中身として主なものは、懐中電灯・非常食(缶詰)・水・携帯ラジオ・救急キット・靴下・軍手・下着・生理用品・トイレットペーパー・ウェットティッシュなどです。防災の日、これらの内容を再点検し、古くなったものは新しいものに交換する日と決めておくのもいいかもしれません。