



In October 2010 I was privileged to visit Iwate Prefecture in Tohoku, a very beautiful area of North East Japan, rural in most parts with stunning coastlines, the hospitality I received from the people of Tono and Miyako the two places I stayed in was wonderful and the memory of this stayed with me on my return to the UK.

On March 11th 2012 at 14.46 disaster struck the Tohoku Region of Japan in the form of a magnitude 9 earthquake, followed by a Tsunami that destroyed so much in its path, like many watching their TVs around the world I was horrified witnessing such utter destruction and loss of life. Immediately in the aftermath of the devastation many charities and organizations began relief projects to help in affected areas, providing shelter and food for so many people, despite very difficult weather conditions, and with the ensuing Fukushima Disaster, many of the organizations were able to undertake considerable amounts of relief work.

As the scale of the disaster, loss of life and missing people became more and more apparent, and due to the lack of difficulty in getting to some of the area's, local groups and charity organizations were set up, one of these being Project Next.

Project Next supports and encourages the survivors of the disaster especially many of those who for whatever reason failed to receive help. Project Next are able to supply and deliver directly, food, supplies, and other necessities required, directly to those that require help.

Since the events of 3/11 support has been given to businesses to try to help them get back on their feet, schools, clubs, families and nursing homes. Through a wish list on Amazon products requested are listed, anybody, anywhere can buy these products and they are delivered to Project Next for onward distribution. It is so easy to use, and via the photos page, you can always see the items arriving at their destination.

Most of us have an account with Amazon, so to help it really is as simple as buying a book, CD or whatever it is you buy from Amazon.

Just Click on the link to the wish list

<http://www.amazon.co.jp/registry/wishlist/3O2CC648GGOLV>

Listed are all of the items currently requested, this is updated regularly, find an item you wish to purchase, even if some of the items are too expensive there is the option for a gift card.

Click on the item you wish to purchase, and on the next screen in the top right hand corner you have the option to change the page to English

Checking out is now much easier and by following the instructions you can purchase the item and it will be delivered to Project Next and help them to help so many of the people that were affected by 3/11.

Just purchase the item by clicking Add to Cart

The screenshot shows the Amazon.co.jp website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Amazon logo, a search bar, and various utility links like 'Wishlist', 'Gift Guides', 'Gift Certificates', 'Gift Wrap', and 'Wish List'. Below the navigation bar, a yellow banner reads 'Hello. If this is your Wish List, please sign in.' The main content area is titled '【被災地】プロジェクトNext' (Project Next for Disaster-stricken Areas). It features a sidebar on the left with the Project Next logo and shipping information: 'Ship-to: 【被災地】プロジェクトNext, 遠野市上組町3-10, 岩手県 028-0517, Japan'. The main list shows two items:

- ニュースーパーマリオブラザーズ クロック 目覚し時計 SAP004BL by manuman**: Priced at ¥1,164. It is in stock and offered by Amazon.co.jp. There are 9 used and new items available. An 'Add to Cart' button is present.
- CITIZEN (シチズン) 目覚し時計 バルデジット R050 温度表示 8RZ050-019 by リズム時計**: Priced at ¥2,720 (original price ¥4,200). It is in stock and offered by 森本時計店. There is 1 used and new item available. An 'Add to Cart' button is present.

Before checking out click on the change the page to English



Then Proceed to Checkout, where you can set up your account all in English

When you arrive at the checkout be sure to click on the Project Next Shipping Address, and then follow through the payment procedure which is Standard to most purchases on Amazon.

It is that simple and purchasing these requested items really do help make a difference to people's lives.

Songs for Japan, One year after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

10 March 2012, London

On Saturday the 10th March 2012 on the eve of the anniversary of the disaster, Saori Nakazawa a Japanese Language Teacher based in London, aided by a team of volunteers, organised a concert at St Georges Church in Bloomsbury London to help raise money for Project Next. The concert had a varied programme including traditional Japanese songs, English folk, pop, rock, opera and musical theatre. Accompanied by pianist Max Pappenheim, fellow soprano Louisa Roberts Lynagh and guitarist Michael Dunnigan the concert raised over £1000 for Project Next. The concert was attended by over one hundred people and was a huge success in not only raising money but also raising awareness of the situation.

<http://vimeo.com/38554496>

In this clip, Saori Nakazawa sings Hatsukoi (First Love) accompanied by Max Pappenheim on piano. The song is about pain and nostalgic memories of first love. It's from a poem by Takuboku Ishikawa, who was a noted poet from Iwate prefecture, set to music by Tatsunosuke Koshitani.

A year on and there is still much to do, it will take many years to rebuild communities, rebuild towns and businesses, but the most difficult task facing many people in so many parts of North East Japan is rebuilding their lives.

I returned to Iwate in October 2012, 7 months on from the disaster, travelling along the coast through towns and cities, witnessing the aftermath first hand is a memory that will stay with me a lifetime, but at that time I got a sense of hope from the people I met, a sense of moving forward and an eagerness to rebuild. I was left in no doubt on my return home that this will be achieved, and with the help and support of Project Next and groups like them, the whole process will happen that much sooner.

Please help and support Project Next

<http://www.project-next.com/projectNext/English.html>

Songs for Japan Concert Team

Lee Todd

London 2012