



Tsunami: Nature and Culture (Earth)

Richard Hamblyn

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Tsunamis – ferociously dangerous sea waves – have caused widespread destruction to countries, populations and natural landscapes since antiquity. Crashing upon land with the entire weight of an ocean behind them, tsunamis cause unimaginable havoc and are stark reminders of the uncontrollable chaos our planet can unleash.

A major tsunami, such as the devastating one that struck the coast of Japan in 2011, can utterly overwhelm an area – not just with the sheer volume of water but also in terms of the economic, social and political consequences in its aftermath. Although the most destructive tsunamis are rare, smaller ones are familiar incidents in many coastal regions around the world. Despite this, however, our understanding of tsunamis is minimal: their triggers, from undersea earthquakes to nuclear weapons testing, have only been studied scientifically in the last 50 years.

In *Tsunami*, Richard Hamblyn explores these treacherous, remorseless sea surges: how they happen, what makes them so powerful and what can be done to safeguard our most vulnerable coastlines. Detailing their cultural significance in tsunami-prone places such as Japan, Hawaii and Chile, the book also considers what tsunamis mean in the more seismically stable West, where the waves reign in popular culture and blockbuster movies but are rarely, if ever, experienced first-hand. From the legend of Atlantis to the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, this book is a cultural, historical and scientific guide to one of the world's most spectacular and deadly natural phenomena.

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