

BOOK REVIEW

Tsunami! Second Edition

by Walter Dudley and Min Lee

University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1998

Ten years after publication of their unique paperback *Tsunami!*, Dudley and Lee have produced a new edition that is more than twice as long, fully updated, and far more comprehensive. Although the table of contents is largely the same, the emphasis has moved away from Hilo – the focal point for U.S. tsunamis – to a deeper, and wider treatment of the subject. The edition retains a mix of personalized information, scientific data, and history told in a style that satisfies both technical and lay readers.

Actually, publication of the original version produced many more contacts, stories, and photos that the authors have built on to enable major additions and improvements, resulting in far more than a “second edition”. For example, a new first-person account of the 1975 local tsunami in Hawaii brings the tragedy out in more detail. Observation of tsunami waves offshore visually and by radar will be new to many researchers. Portions dealing with the warning systems and research to improve them are current and comprehensive. Historic Japanese tsunami examples are included.

New chapters deal with very recent tsunamis in several Pacific locations, which show the scope of the threat; however these lack the depth of the other sections and seem more “newsy”. Readers will, however, find them factual and concise accounts of events they may recall from media reports. These stories do emphasize the need to prepare for tsunamis in places such as Hawaii, where we have not experienced a Pacific-wide damaging tsunami since 1964.

Progress in such preparations on the U.S. West Coast is reported, as the need there was formally recognized, and Federal funds became available. Such sections and the problems in obtaining such support and funds, will benefit politicians and those who have to deal with them in matters of public safety. Although the book mentions that the tsunami inundation project underway on the West coast will continue to Hawaii in 1999, the evacuation and zoning program was accomplished in Hawaii in 1991 with funds milked out the the Hawaii legislature; and the methodology was later used for two regions of California by University of Hawaii researchers. There are other minor ways the book could benefit from more review, but it will undoubtedly become a reliable guide for the public and researchers, just as the original edition has. In fact, the only real problem with the publication is the cover; it suffers from the current fad of a type of stock that is enameled on one side and so curls up in a humid coastal climate – where it is published. Let us hope the UH Press corrects that in the next printing!

Reviewed by George D. Curtis, University of Hawaii-Hilo and
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