



**DOCTOR**  
**Takeshi Kanno**  
**In Japan's**  
**tragic hour, he**  
**risks his life**  
**for others**

TAKESHI KANNO ALWAYS knew he would save lives in his line of work—but never as many at one time as he did on March 11. The 31-year-old doctor was on duty at the Shizugawa public hospital in the Japanese town of Minami Sanriku when he heard the tsunami alert. He immediately began moving patients to the highest floor, helping dozens of people in the short window between the 9.0-magnitude quake and the deadly wave. When the wall of water arrived, Kanno watched it swallow the street in three minutes, taking the patients he couldn't move with it. "We went downstairs, and everyone was gone," he says.

Over the next two days, Kanno refused to leave those he'd helped survive. When evacuation helicopters arrived, he waited until the last of his patients had gone before he too left. Three days after the quake, he at last made it back to his wife, just hours before the birth of their second child, a boy they named Rei. The name evokes two meanings: in English, a beam of light; in Chinese and Japanese, the wisdom to overcome hardship. —Krista Mahr, TIME Asia correspondent

Photograph by Dominic