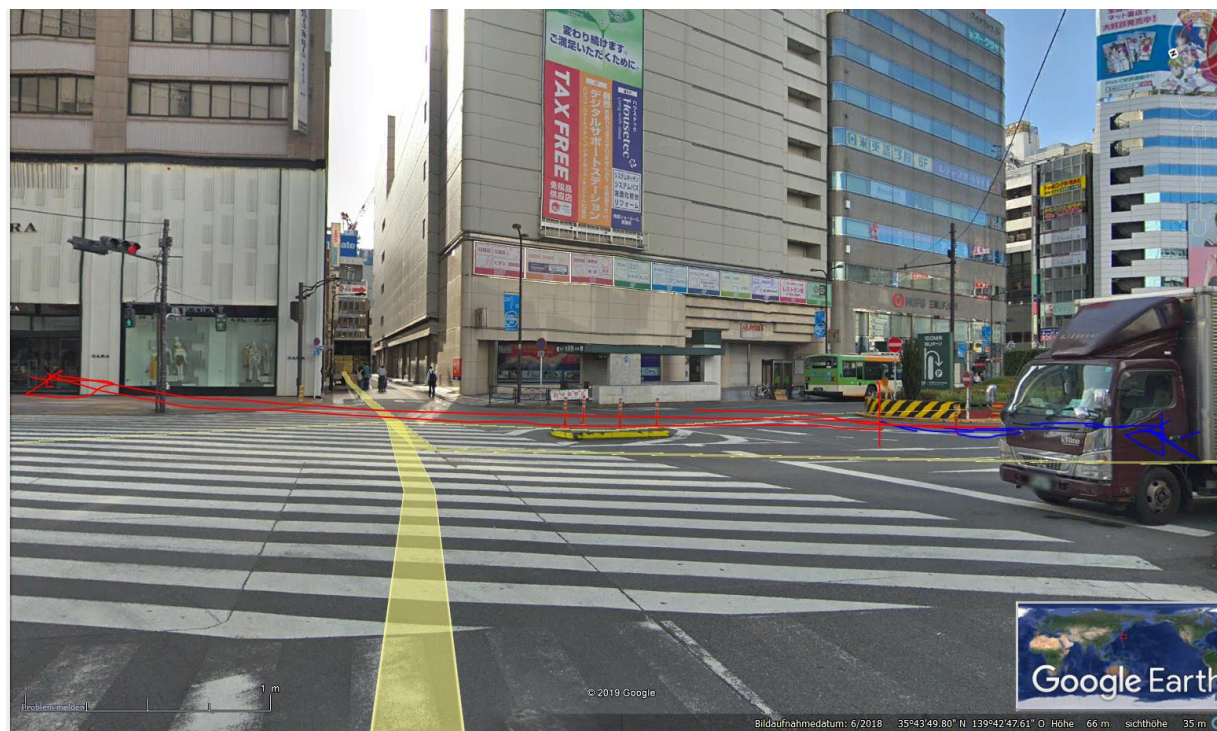


16.8.15 Tokyo Ikebukuro Station, Unfall eines Epileptikers

Er fährt aus der Tiefgarage, stoppt kurz und dann frontal über 50m in das Erdgeschoss des Zara-Ladens.



Sicht von der Fahrbahn neben Garagenauffahrt



Blau die ohne Schwierigkeiten absolvierte Strecke im Parkhaus.

Beim Auftauchen erst entsteht das „grand mal“.

Ikebukuro fatal accident puts spotlight back on epileptic drivers

<https://www.japantoday.com/category/crime/view/ikebukuro-fatal-accident-puts-spotlight-back-on-epileptic-drivers>

[Crime](#) Aug. 19, 2015 - 06:00PM JST ([31](#))

TOKYO —

The issue of drivers who suffer from epilepsy is back in the spotlight after a woman was killed and four other persons seriously injured when a car hit them on the sidewalk and then plowed into a clothing store in front of JR Ikebukuro Station in Tokyo last Sunday night.

Police have learned that the driver of the car, Shoichiro Kaneko, 53, who is a doctor, has suffered from epilepsy for 20 years and has been receiving medication for the condition from a hospital once a month for the past nine years.

Kaneko has been charged with negligent driving resulting in death. He was quoted by police as saying that he had no memory of the incident as he had dozed off at the wheel at the time when he drove his car into a Zara store on the first floor of a building in Ikebukuro. He said he was not drunk, nor on drugs, but was just exhausted after driving for about seven hours that day. A urine test showed no sign of any drugs in his system, police said.

Five men and women pedestrians ranging in age from their 20s to 70s were injured. Of the five, Toshiko Ebata, 41, suffered a severe cranial fracture and died in hospital early Monday morning, police said.

According to police, Kaneko drove out of an underground car park in front of Ikebukuro Station just before the accident. Witnesses said that he stopped his car for a moment, before then accelerating approximately 50 meters forward onto the sidewalk and then into the front of the shop.

Police raided Kaneko's home and found his hospital card and some medication for epilepsy, Fuji TV reported. Kaneko's doctor told police that he needed to take his medicine once a day, otherwise he could have seizures. He said that Kaneko's driving ability would not be affected as long as he took the medicine. However, Kaneko has not said whether he took the medicine on the day of the accident.

Under a new law that went into effect in May 2014, anyone who suffers from epilepsy and wants a driver's license must submit a letter from a doctor affirming that they are OK to drive. They must also reveal if they have any conditions or ailments that could impair their driving ability.

Police said that Kaneko apparently did not state that he had epilepsy when he last renewed his driver's license in 2013, Fuji reported.

Under the new law that went into effect last year, causing death while driving drunk or as a result of a chronic condition, such as epilepsy and hypoglycemia, is punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Furthermore, anyone who hides a medical condition that may affect their driving when they apply for a license faces a penalty of one year in jail and a fine of 300,000 yen.

Medical professionals who are aware that their patients suffering from epilepsy or schizophrenia are driving, are required to report it to public safety authorities.

The revision to the law came as the result of a series of deadly traffic accidents. Among them was an incident in Tochigi in 2011 in which six children were killed by a crane truck, and another in Kyoto in 2012 in which eight people were killed by a minivan. In both cases, the drivers had concealed their epilepsy when applying for their driving licenses and had seizures at the wheel.

Although the maximum imprisonment period for causing deaths due to reckless driving was 20 years, a loophole in the law meant that the severest penalty only applied to "incidents occurring under normal driving conditions." Because of this, most cases were labeled as involuntary manslaughter where the maximum sentence was only seven years.

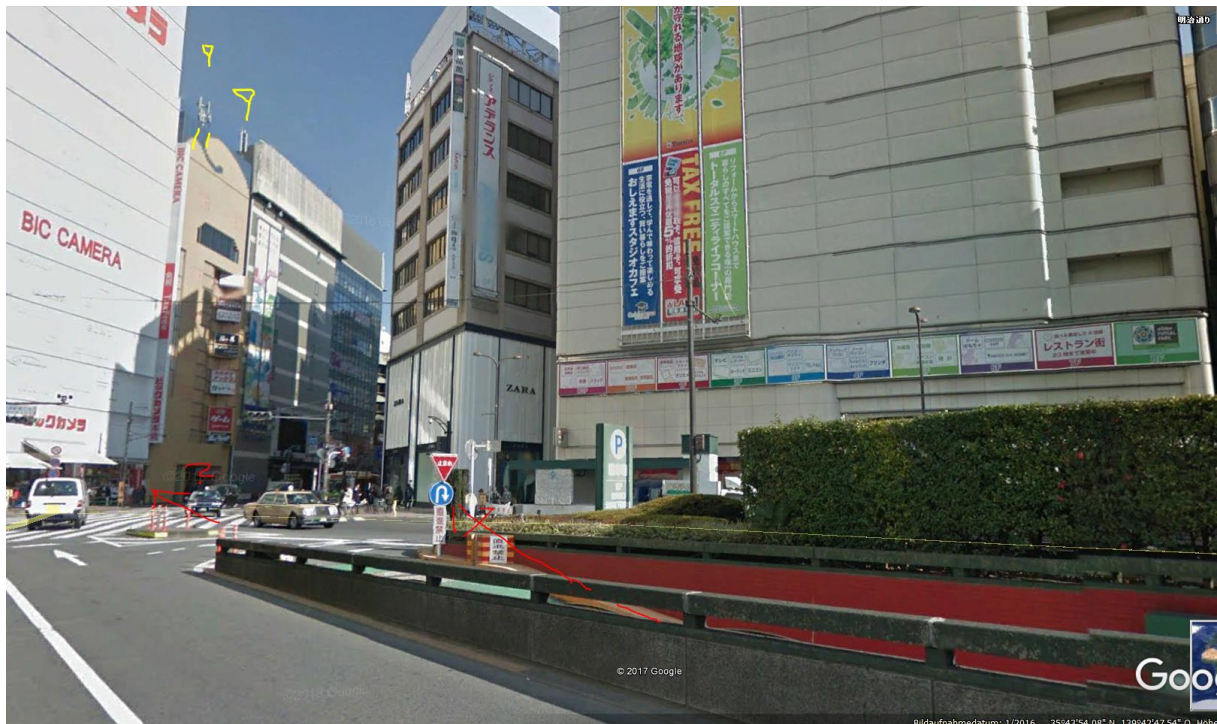
The new law changed the way courts deal with cases and sentencing. It expanded on existing regulations by stating that under the influence of alcohol, drugs and "special illnesses," the

normal ability to safely operate a vehicle is severely impeded and can lead to fatal casualties. The term “special illnesses” refers to conditions such as epilepsy and schizophrenia.

Japan Today



Tiefgaragen – Einfahrt, 1 Sender auf dem Gebäude im Schatten sichtbar, zwei Sender auf dem beigebraunen schmalen Gebäude und auf dem weissen Gebäude ein kaschierendes Sender-Gehäuse.



Selected comments 1.3.17:



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[Frungy](#) Aug. 19, 2015 - 07:15PM JST

Epilepsy medication, like most medications that affect the brain, are slow-acting. On average they take 2 weeks to reach the desired level, and then a daily "maintenance" dose is taken thereafter. Skipping on day's medication would NOT cause the person to suddenly have a seizure if they've been under control for 9 years. The police have obviously misunderstood the doctor or the doctor doesn't understand how the medication works - this being Japan both options are about equally likely.

The reason here is simple. He drove for 7 HOURS!!! He was exhausted and fell asleep.

No magical thinking required here people, just a simple case of the typical Japanese "gaman" attitude instead of a little common sense and saying, "I'm tired, I should take a 30 minute nap before I drive so that I don't drift off and accidentally kill some people".

Experience in Japan has taught me that the vast majority of Japanese drivers are driving exhausted and this is probably the number 1 cause of accidents in Japan - but there are major cultural barriers to giving common sense advice like, "If you can't keep your eyes open then you really should pull over and have a nap"



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[praack](#) Aug. 19, 2015 - 07:42PM JST

Frungy is correct, there is so much misinformation regarding epilepsy that people with the disease do not report it , do not discuss it and do not tell anyone.

people even restrict relationships - do you want pass on a disease to children?

but if you have stayed on medication for that long frequently you are told to retake a sleep eeg and then you are offered the choice- come off the medication or remain on it.

99.9% remain on the medication for life with a negative sleep eeg- scared that one missed dose would do them in

this was probably just him falling asleep- still a bad act, just as criminal as anyone falling asleep at the wheel instead of taking time and resting- but probably not the result of epilepsy

but now i can see the push - sounds like special markings on the license, perhaps revocation of all licenses - the feeding frenzy has started



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[ThonTaddeo](#) Aug. 19, 2015 - 09:07PM JST

So there are substantial penalties if you have epilepsy and get caught causing an accident, but there are no incentives to just not drive to begin with?

Why is this? We need to use the carrot, not the stick.

Today's society is designed to favor automobiles and to get as many people as possible to drive. (Japan is actually much less of an offender in this regard than, say, the USA or Australia.) Many residences, businesses, and employers offer free parking. Property taxes offer incentives to have a garage rather than more living space. A driver's license costs only a few thousand yen per year - not enough for many people to voluntarily not obtain one.

We should instead be making the roads safer by offering incentives for people with epilepsy, impaired vision, and old-age-related slow reflexes to not drive. How about a substantial tax break in exchange for never being allowed to drive? Make it high enough that people who might be just barely able to drive, like Mr. Kaneko, will think seriously about giving up driving. Enough to make up for all the opportunities he will lose, and the increased costs he will bear,

Then watch how much safer the roads become with people like him (and the 85-year-olds who mistakenly step on the accelerator, and the folks with 0.601 eyesight, and anyone else whom the roads would be safer without) not driving.

Make it Y500,000 per year. Maybe Y1,000,000. The entrenched automobile industry will fight tooth and nail, but it's worth looking into. When you consider all the services that non-drivers cannot consume, I don't think this is too high. Then these people will be made whole and will not have an incentive to get behind the wheel and cause fatal accidents like this one



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[smithinjapan](#) Aug. 19, 2015 - 10:14PM JST

praack: "this was probably just him falling asleep- still a bad act, just as criminal as anyone falling asleep at the wheel instead of taking time and resting- but probably not the result of epilepsy"

Wrong! If you fall asleep you do NOT stop the car (or let it roll to a stop) and then slam on the gas. Nor do you get out after plowing through people and into a shop, get out your car, and shout in fits, "Dare ga warui no?? DARE ga warui no??" (which he is reported to have done, based on other posters and sources) and then claim to have no memory of ANY of it.



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[Monozuki](#) Aug. 20, 2015 - 01:57PM JST

Yes, I still vividly remember watching TV reports in 2012 about a similar epilepsy-related traffic accident which occurred in Gion, Kyoto packed with lots of tourists killing eight people including an epileptic driver if I'm correct.

From the above and the incident this time around, the matter of epileptic drivers should be gone over strictly once and for all.

<https://www.japantoday.com/category/national/view/13-seriously-hurt-after-minivan-rams-into-pedestrians-in-kyoto>