

Introduction

GOTO Akira¹

This is a final report on the activities of the three-year Internationalization Promotion Project of Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan. The Anthropological Institute at Nanzan University obtained a subsidy from Nanzan University for this project from 2015 to 2017 (The Third Term Internationalization Promotion Project), which has prompted a follow-up project, “Establishing an Asian Anthropologists’ Network.”

This project originated from the idea that we should establish a network among indigenous Asian anthropologists for future collaboration and cooperation. Anthropology is a field originated in the western world and introduced to Asian countries. Today, Asian anthropologists in many countries are exploring ways to apply the discipline in indigenous contexts, and so, now is the time to exchange these indigenous efforts and share ideas.

Beginning just after the Great Disaster of Eastern Japan in 2011, awareness has continued to rise as many Asian countries face similar disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, typhoons, and man-made disasters. This collaborative work to establish a network of Asian anthropologists would be invaluable as we work with people who are currently suffering from such disasters and to develop more effective methodology and resources for the future.

The year 2015 was spent preparing for an international workshop in 2016. The responsible researcher, Chie Miyawaki, visited three countries, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines to discuss the plans for the work shop in 2016. Miyawaki also visited the Miyagi Prefecture, the center of the 2011 disaster Japan, to observe and investigate the present state of the reconstruction phase.

In 2016, the international workshop was held. Guests from India, Indonesia, and the Philippines were invited. Guests from these Asian countries talked about the consequences of recent disasters in their countries and discussed the roles of anthropologists in such events.

Gopalan Ravidran from India critically examined the role of journalism in the face of disasters, and his insight was useful to explicate good and bad aspects of mass communication during and after these occurrences.

Dedi Supriadi Adhuri from Indonesia provided information on the roles of local, national, and international communities in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction. He gave a persuasive proposal for the future as his analysis is based on successive fieldwork in the area.

Cynthia Neri Zayas from the Philippines provided information about the Pinatubo

¹ Professor/Director of the Anthropological Institute, Nanzan University

Volcano disaster and the situation of the Agta indigenous group. She also discussed the roles of anthropologists during a series of typhoons and volcanic disasters in the Philippines.

Two guests were also invited from Japan to comment on the reports presented from other Asian countries. Tomoya Akimichi offered a historical review of disasters that have occurred in Japan and emphasized the need to incorporate socio-cultural considerations in rehabilitation projects. Shuichi Kawashima, himself a victim of the 2011 disaster, commented based on similar disasters in Japan, such as the eruption of Mt. Ugen-Fuzen and past tsunamis. He also provided examples of indigenous efforts for reconstruction of a fishing village in the Miyagi Prefecture.

After the workshop, we made an excursion to the Miyagi Prefecture with three guests to see the stricken areas and talk directly with the local people.

The year 2017 was a time of summing-up the previous years' products and publish a final report in English. We also agreed to invite two guests from the Miyagi Prefecture to the follow-up workshop to discuss what needs to happen after a disaster. Both have lived through disaster. One is a taxi driver, Keiya Sakurai, who has continued talking about the disaster he experienced and is now known as the "story-teller taxi driver." Another is Koichi Sakurai, who is a leader of reconstruction for the Yuriage Morning Market. Because of his efforts, Yuriage Morning Market has increased its level of revenue to exceed what it was before the disaster. The contents of their talks will be published (in Japanese) in an Anthropologist Institute's Booklet.

Although our three-year project finished in 2017, we could obtain a subsidy for the next three-years of projects, including developing our initial project into the next stage. I sincerely thank all of the participants in our project for their valuable contributions. Disasters and suffering are never-ending, which makes the formation of an Asian Anthropologists' network critical now and in the future.